User Feedback Research Project on the University of York Digital Library (YODL)

A study submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MA Librarianship at

THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

by

Mary Edwards

September 2012
Structured Abstract

BACKGROUND: The University of York Digital Library (YODL) is a good practical example of a functioning digital library, and it is within the wider context of digital library and evaluation related literature that this project is situated.

AIMS: The aim of this project was to obtain user feedback on YODL to ascertain what needed improving.

METHODS: A mixed methods approach was taken, combining quantitative results from Google Analytics and a questionnaire (providing background on who uses the digital library) with qualitative feedback from the questionnaire and a further student focus group and staff interview (obtaining users’ opinions on the current functionality of YODL). Although not all research was eventually carried out as predicted, good results were obtained from all stages.

RESULTS: YODL currently provides an excellent basic service; however lack of publicity and awareness is a major issue standing in the way of user group growth. Content coverage is not yet comprehensive, and minor issues such as inadequate metadata and an “unfriendly” search box and interface need addressing by the YODL team. A lack of integration with other University websites such as the Virtual Learning Environment was also raised repeatedly by respondents as a barrier to use.
CONCLUSIONS: A successful methodology allowed the project to draw useful conclusions which have been and continue to be addressed by the YODL team. Recommendations for future work include a more focused study to obtain a detailed profile of the users of YODL, as well as their motivation for use. Additional projects include a usability study involving a small group of new users to ascertain how easy and intuitive use of the current interface is, and a methodical updating of the site’s content and metadata (potentially broken down into a number of small collection based projects for University of York students).
Acknowledgements

Thanks to my supervisor Paul Clough for his support and advice on dissertation writing; thanks also goes to Paula Goodale from the University of Sheffield Information School for her help with constructing a viable questionnaire.

I am also grateful for the patience and continued helpfulness of the team at the University of York Digital Library, particularly Julie Allinson and Matthew Herring, without whom this project would not have been possible.
# Contents Page

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Background</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>External companies &amp; organisations</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>Known challenges &amp; issues facing YODL</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Aims &amp; Objectives</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Structure of Dissertation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>YODL in relation to the wider digital library context</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>What is a digital library?</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Why assess; and what is “evaluation”?</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>A user centred perspective</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>What is usability?</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Qualitative over quantitative</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Mixed methods</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Aims of each stage of research</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Questionnaire methodology</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Focus group methodology</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Ethical considerations</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Results</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Google Analytics</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Questionnaire results</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>General respondent profile</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>Quantitative results of questionnaire</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>Feedback comments from questionnaire</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>User concerns raised by questionnaire</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Focus Group results</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Usability problems: the need to prioritise</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Discussion of recommendations</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>Wider Issues</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>Ranked list of recommendations for improvement</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>Conclusions &amp; Future work</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>Reference List</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>Appendices Contents Page</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## List of Diagrams

- Google Analytics 6 May – 31 May
- Google Analytics 14 June – 9 July
- Respondents by Course / Dept.
- Undergraduate use of YODL for searching and browsing images
- Postgraduate use of YODL for searching and browsing images
- Undergraduate use of YODL for searching and browsing exam papers
- Postgraduate use of YODL for searching and browsing exam papers
- Number of comments received via Questionnaire
1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

The project detailed in this report can be briefly described as a process of obtaining user feedback and opinions on a digital library constructed at the University of York. If we look to the wider literature of the subject of digital libraries, there are multiple different definitions of what constitutes a digital library, including but not limited to “the logical extension of a physical library” (Robinson & Bawden, 2010, in Heradio et. al., 2012, p.1). A digital library must make it easy for users to find information, as well as having a structure that is easy to remember and come back to (Kani–Zahibi et. al., 2006, in Heradio et. al., 2012). Heradio et. al. (2012, p.2) go on to state that the ultimate and final aim of a digital library is to “enable people to access human knowledge at any time and anywhere...overcoming barriers of distance, language and culture”.

The York Digital Library (YODL) fits well into the context above, describing itself as "an online repository for multimedia resources at the University of York. YODL provides access to over 69,000 resources, which include images, past exam papers and Masters theses. Our collections are constantly expanding and support research, teaching and study in a range of subjects including History of Art and Archaeology."

(http://www.york.ac.uk/library/electroniclibrary/yorkdigitallibraryyodl/)

The following section will describe the current content of the Library, as well as giving a brief overview of the stated purposes of YODL. Section 1.11 describes the purpose of the research, and Section 1.12 details some of the issues affecting the digital library that were known to the staff team at the outset of the project. These points are worth mentioning as they should be taken into consideration when viewing the results of the research and the subsequent recommendations for improvement.
What is YODL for? Current collections within YODL

The following is a select list of some of the collections currently held in YODL: however there are many more, including a large collection of archaeology slides which have recently received a lot of attention within archaeology circles.

(For an example of this, see the website of The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland at http://www.socantscot.org/article.asp?aid=1933)

- Past exam papers: The digital library currently holds the majority of the University of York’s collection of past exam papers in all subjects.


- Jane Hawkes and Amanda Lillie: Digitised slides and digital images from these two History of Art scholars are being added to YODL.

- Vickers Instruments: Over 6,000 digitised glass plate negatives from the Vickers Instrument Archive, originals held in the Borthwick Institute for Archives, were added to the Digital Library in 2012.
- Tuke Family archive: The whole of the Tuke Family archive (an influential local family) has been digitised and 20,000 images will be added to the Digital Library in 2012.

(http://www.york.ac.uk/library/electroniclibrary/yorkdigitallibraryyodl/currentprojects/)
1.11 External companies/organisations

This research was carried out based at the University of York Digital Library, Heslington, York. The digital library interface is undergoing a process of continual updating, and it has changed considerably since the last (and only) small user testing project was undertaken. For this reason the research was not just an academic exercise, but the results are intended to be of practical use to the YODL team, resulting in a ranked set of recommendations for making the digital library more user friendly, i.e. easy for users to understand and navigate, with information displayed in a way that is both logical and familiar to users, all of whom have previous experience of using internet websites and databases.

Funding from the digital library budget provided each student focus group participant with a £10 incentive; this was deemed to be worthwhile as the majority of the qualitative data was collected from the student focus group. The focus groups took place in a group meeting room of the University Library. The room is equipped with a large screen with which it was possible to demonstrate what the digital library looks like for the benefit of those participants who were not already familiar with the system.
1.12 Known challenges / issues facing YODL

Prior to beginning the data collection via questionnaire and focus groups, a discussion took place with Julie Allinson (Head of the Digital Library team) in order to ascertain any existing or potential issues that YODL might be facing. The outcomes of the discussion are outlined in the bullet pointed list on the following page, and although they had no direct influence on the structure of the focus group or questionnaire, it was felt that an understanding of the staff’s ideas of existing issues would be helpful.
– Is the digital library trying to do too many different things? Is it better to put lots of different types of resources into it, thus avoiding the problem of multiple different systems (what YODL currently aims to do) or is this simply confusing for users, resulting in nobody having a clear idea of what YODL is for? This will have an impact on marketing and ease of understanding of YODL for library, ICT and other university staff.

– Could it / should it be more integrated with the University of York VLE?

– Lack of understanding from the ICT department. It became clear that staff from the digital library felt that the ICT department as a whole doesn't understand the point of the digital library. This makes it difficult to create enthusiasm and co-operation across departments.
1.2 Motivation

My personal interest in this area arose from a short period of summer work digitising content for YODL, and conversations with the team who built the digital library in which it was asserted that there had not been a huge amount of user testing undertaken. The staff felt that they had become so familiar with their own digital library system and interface that they could no longer see it from a new / outside user's perspective, and that an external study to ascertain what users like, dislike, struggle with, and would like changed, would be of value. Given that resources for working on the digital library are limited, these potential changes needed to be ranked by order of urgency and importance.

The project was also intended to raise awareness of YODL within the Library, as well as providing hard rather than anecdotal evidence for students' opinions on the existing service. This would in turn serve to raise the profile of YODL among students and staff (including library staff), resulting in an increased awareness of what the digital library has to offer.
1.3 Aims and Objectives

The detailed objectives of this project are listed below; however, the overall aim is to obtain a picture (supported by research) of how users feel about the current YODL service, and how the service could be changed to better meet users’ needs and expectations.

1.31 To survey current theory and practice in the fields of qualitative research to obtain user feedback, and Digital Library evaluation. To be achieved through desk research and a resulting literature review.

1.32 To investigate who currently uses YODL. What do they use it for, and why? This information will be provided through sections 1 and 2 of the methodology: the initial usage data provided by Google Analytics, followed by a questionnaire for users of YODL.

1.33 To obtain feedback on YODL from a user's perspective. To be achieved by means of two focus groups, one for students (postgraduate and undergraduate) and one for staff.

1.34 To provide a final ranked list of recommendations for the improvement of the YODL service.
1.4 Structure of Dissertation

Earlier sections of this chapter have already discussed the wider context in which YODL exists, as well as the stated purposes and contents of YODL. Already identified issues facing the digital library were explained in section 1.12, and the motivation for and aims and objectives of the current project are set out in sections 1.2 and 1.3.

Chapter 2 comprises a review of the existing literature on digital libraries and the evaluation and assessment of them, particularly in the light of a user centred perspective. A brief discussion of the term “usability” is also included.

Chapter 3 contains the Methodology for the project, including references to best practice and previously successful methods as described in the literature. This chapter covers the specific methodology for the questionnaire and focus group sections of the project, including an assessment of the merits of qualitative over quantitative research, the benefits of a mixed methods approach, the exact aims of each stage of research, and a discussion of data analysis methods. The chapter concludes with a brief section on the ethical considerations that were taken into account when conducting the research.

Chapter 4 is split into three main sections; data obtained from Google Analytics, qualitative and quantitative results of the questionnaire (a short profile of questionnaire respondents is included here), including a resulting ranked list of user concerns, and
finally a section on focus group results and the issues arising from this.

A discussion of the results and their implications for YODL, taking into account how these findings relate to the literature discussed in chapters 2 and 3, forms the basis for Chapter 5. The report finishes with a short conclusion and recommendations for future work on YODL.
2.0 Literature Review

“Digital libraries marry the missions, techniques and cultures of physical libraries with the capabilities and cultures of computing and telecommunications.”

(Marchionini, 2000)

2.1 YODL in relation to the wider digital library context

To begin, it is necessary to define the scope of the YODL project in relation to wider literature on digital library research. Much of the best regarded literature concerns digital library “evaluation”; as this section will later discuss, “evaluation” (as defined by Saracevic (2000)) is in fact a very specific term, and the research on YODL would perhaps be more correctly described as “user feedback gathering". However as use of this term proved almost unavoidable throughout a review of digital library literature, the reader must bear in mind that when “evaluation” is discussed, direct parallels with the YODL project should not be drawn; rather, the criteria and standards that affect an evaluation must also be borne in mind when conducting a user feedback exercise such as this.

2.2 What is a Digital Library?

Any study of a system must begin by defining what the system
is and what it is for. There are multiple different definitions of what constitutes a digital library, including “the logical extension of a physical library” (Robinson & Bawden, 2010, in Heradio et. al., 2012, p.1), and the above description by Marchionini, quoted at the top of this section. If this is the case, it follows that for a user to be able to easily familiarise themselves with the library, and quickly find information within it, are primary goals of a digital library (Kani-Zahibi et. al., 2006, in Heradio et. al., 2012) as well as a physical library. In two separate studies, Xie reports the additional but complimentary goals of interface usability, system performance, and collection quality. (Xie, 2006 & 2008, in Heradio et. al., 2012). Bringing together these requirements, Heradio et. al. (2012, p.2) state that the ultimate and final aim of a digital library is to “enable people to access human knowledge at any time and anywhere...overcoming barriers of distance, language and culture” before concluding that “the quality of [digital libraries] needs to be judged by their users”. This judging of quality by users, and feeding the information back to the design team, is a good description of the work undertaken at YODL.

Saracevic supports this assertion of the user centred nature of digital libraries by quoting one of Borgman's definitions of a digital library as “constructed, collected, and organized, by (and for) a community of users, and their functional capabilities support the information needs and uses of that community” (Borgman, 1999, p.230, in Saracevic, 2000, p.361). Like a physical library, it is of vital
importance that the collection, and information contained within it, is managed (Saracevic, 2000).

While the definition reached by Heradio et. al. may appear comprehensive, its generalised nature means that it provides part of a framework for understanding the concept of a digital library, rather than providing specific goals against which to measure when thinking about undertaking an evaluation of a digital library system.

2.3 Why assess; and what is “evaluation”?

But why evaluate or attempt to assess quality? Sharp et. al. (2007) describe evaluation as a process of finding out whether or not a product fulfils its goals. This description of “evaluation” is certainly applicable to the work carried out at YODL. However Saracevic defines this process further for the two different communities involved in digital libraries; researchers and practitioners. While researchers are unrestricted by practice and evaluate in order to direct broad future visions of digital libraries, the practice community evaluate within the context of real life economics and restrictions, concentrating on improving the product for its market (Saracevic, 2000, p.351). Ferreira and Pithan (2005) concentrate on the second of these two, describing the role that evaluation plays within systems development. Likewise, Sharp et. al. (2007) also place evaluation within the framework of interaction design, describing it as the fourth step after identifying needs, developing alternative designs, and building interactive
versions of those designs.

It is important at this point to briefly state what an evaluation is; or perhaps to be more specific, what it is not. Saracevic (2000) states repeatedly that evaluation is a complex process, and must have a closely considered focus to be of any value. He describes evaluation as “an appraisal of the performance or functioning of a system” (p.359) and is clear that studies of user behaviour do not by themselves constitute evaluation, although they may inform and influence the criteria used in evaluation. It is here that it begins to become clear that the user feedback research carried out on YODL is perhaps too broad to constitute an evaluation; a study of user behaviour is part of the research itself, rather than simply a preliminary step. Saracevic's five components of an evaluation occur repeatedly within digital library literature, and are cited so often that it seems worth briefly repeating them here. He argues that construct a true evaluation, all the following points must be taken into consideration.

• **Construct.** What to evaluate? What is a digital library? What elements to involve in evaluation?

• **Context.** What is the goal, framework, or viewpoint of the evaluation? Ultimately, what objective(s) to select for evaluation?

• **Criteria reflecting performance as related to the selected objectives.** What dimension(s) or characteristic(s) to evaluate?

• **Measures reflecting the selected criteria to record the**
performance. How exactly to measure how well the digital library is performing?

- Methodology. How to collect and analyse data?

(Saracevic, 2000, p.359)

Although these are all broad points, a consideration of each builds a structured framework for the evaluation of a digital library, and means that any data collected and conclusions drawn are firmly placed within the practical context of the individual digital library. This should prevent the drawing of any broad and inaccurate conclusions on the part of the researcher. The current research on YODL is rather too broad to be defined as an evaluation; it would be more accurate to describe it as a process of collecting user feedback. There is no way of quantitatively measuring how well the digital library is currently performing, and the framework and resulting areas on which the research is focused are too broad. As already mentioned a large part of the research is based on ascertaining user behaviour, i.e. what do they currently use the system for, and how satisfactory do they think it is for these purposes. Saracevic's 'closely considered focus' is absent (Saracevic, 2000). However, this is not to say that the research is any less valid or important than a true evaluation would be.

2.4 A User Centred Perspective

We have already mentioned the centrality of the user to digital
library testing; this type of evaluation is referred to in the literature as having “a user centred perspective”. In their own literature review, Heradio et. al. (2012) aim to address the questions “what criteria are proposed to evaluate DLs in a user centred fashion? How are these criteria measured and processed? What are the most important challenges to be faced in the future?” (p.2) These questions are in many ways similar to those Saracevic poses regarding digital library evaluation, although they place a more explicit value on the user. Heradio et. al. go on to describe digital libraries as “destined to serve user communities” with the user's opinion being “one of the main aspects to be considered in the quality evaluation of DLs” (p.9). In other words, it doesn’t matter how good a digital library is if it fails to serve the needs of its user community. This idea of assessment to ensure the provision of services relevant to the user group is also increasingly becoming a point of focus within the physical library community. Heradio et. al. then state that in order to focus on the user, qualitative data collection such as interviews and questionnaires are their favoured and focused upon method.

Saracevic (2000) breaks down digital library evaluation into user centred or system centred, with the “user” subdivision further split into social, institutional, individual and interface levels. He describes the individual level as being an assessment of how well a service supports the information needs and activities of people as individuals or common groups of users. Although any results drawn on this level do not generalise well to a larger population, this is the level on which
a practical evaluation of a particular digital library system is likely to be carried out, given that the user group and their needs are probably already known.

2.5 What is usability?

It has therefore been illustrated that a digital library may be evaluated on the basis of to what extent it provides the service(s) required by its targeted user group. To conclude, we will briefly look at the idea of usability; what that is, and what defines a problem with it. Nielsen (1994) defines a usability problem as “any aspect of a user interface that is expected to cause users problems with respect to some salient usability measure (e.g. learnability [or] performance) and that can be attributed to a single design aspect” (p.388). Sharp et. al. (2007) specify the various areas in which usability problems may occur; these are effectiveness, efficiency, safety, utility, learnability, and memorability (p.20). A digital library may be evaluated with any or all of these points in mind; however, as Nielsen (1994) states, “given that one can never fix the complete list [of usability problems], there is also a need to prioritise” (p.389). For an evaluation or study of an existing digital library service to be of practical use, the outcome of the research will ideally take the form of a list of usability problems, ranked according to the size of their negative impact upon the stated user group. This point was considered so important in the YODL research that it is stated in the research Aims and Objectives in Section 1.3.
3.0 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The methodology chosen for the obtaining of user feedback on YODL was threefold. Starting by looking at Google Analytics to gain a better overview of usage statistics for the site, a simple questionnaire was then drawn up, publicised, and made available via the YODL site. The final stage was to draw on the qualitative aspects of the questionnaire to provide some starter discussion points for a student focus group. Although the focus group was intended from the beginning to cover these predetermined points, there was also scope for individuals to express opinions that had not previously been raised by the questionnaire.

3.2 Qualitative over Quantitative

Early on in the project it was decided that largely qualitative, rather than quantitative, methods should be used in the collection of data on users’ opinions of YODL. Wilson (2000b) describes the two potential reasons for evaluating; to “establish some kind of index of ‘success’ for the service” or “a desire to draw policy conclusions…from data on aggregated behaviour”. The former seeks to understand the motives of the users, i.e. why they want what they do from the service; the latter looks merely at how they behave and how this impacts service policy. Wilson goes on to state that “a total
view of the information user will demand attention to all of these aspects, and any partial view demands rigorous definition of which context applies”. So what is the context surrounding the YODL project? Given that the purpose of the questionnaire and focus group is to determine how the site could be improved to better meet users’ needs and expectation, it is necessary to gain at least some deeper understanding of what they want, and how successful (or otherwise) they feel the site is currently being in meeting those wants.

Kitzinger (1995) states that “people’s knowledge and attitudes are not entirely encapsulated in reasoned responses to direct questions” (p.299), and it is for this reason that more open, qualitative methods provide richer background information than a rigidly structured questionnaire of the sort that easily provides either primary or secondary quantitative data. Wilson (2000b) continues to say that people look for different information in different ways depending on the roles they need to fulfil; given that improving the YODL site involves learning how people use it, some understanding of their motivations is clearly necessary. Again writing on the importance of an understanding of context in the area of evaluation / user satisfaction, Dalrymple (1991) asserts that

“...the situations in which information is sought and used are social situations, [therefore] objective measures such as retrieval sets and transaction log data may have limited usefulness in determining retrieval effectiveness....A different framework...that is contextual in
nature is needed.”

Dalrymple’s quoted examples make the point that any evaluation (to use the term in a less specific sense than that defined by Seracavic (2000)) of an information provision service such as YODL can be of only limited usefulness if it fails to take into account the surrounding context in which users operate. For this reason, as supported by the theoretical input of Wilson, Dalrymple, and Kitzinger, it was decided that a largely qualitative methodology would yield the most insightful results. However, as entirely qualitative data would take a long time to process, the initial stage of gaining an understanding of YODL usage statistics was done using the quantitative data provided by Google Analytics. The first few questions on the questionnaire were also designed to provide quantitative background to the lengthier and more in depth responses received to the final, open ended question.

3.3 Mixed Methods

Although the majority of this Methodology chapter will be spent discussing the qualitative aspects of the research (i.e. the open ended question in the questionnaire, and the focus group), the initial quantitative elements were also important. This section will look at the reasons why a mixed methods approach was employed.

The methodology devised comprised of a brief study of existing Google Analytics data for the YODL site, followed by a questionnaire,
after which a focus group was run in order to explore in more depth issues raised in responses to the questionnaire. The initial plan was to run two focus groups, one for staff and one for students, on the assumption that these two groups would be likely to use/ assess/ criticise YODL in different ways, given their different motives for using the site. However it proved difficult to obtain enough staff for a focus group, and we ended up speaking instead to one staff member with a previous background in website analysis and evaluation. Although this did not produce the typical user feedback hoped for, it did provide some interesting points for discussion on more technical issues such as metadata, which student users tended not to dwell on so much as it is not an immediately obvious issue to the non expert.

3.4 Aims of each stage of research

**Google Analytics:** Quantitative. To give a brief statistical overview of the current usage of YODL, from which an expected timeframe for the research was derived.

**Questionnaire:** Mixed. Largely quantitative; obtaining information on the types of activities carried out by current users. Final open ended question to gather qualitative information on the opinions and suggestions of those people who completed the questionnaire, both users and non users.
**Staff Interview:** Qualitative. Initially intended as a focus group but due to insufficient time and channels for publicity only one member of staff was available; however this did provide useful information on potential improvements to technical aspects of YODL that the majority of student focus group participants chose not to dwell on.

**Student Focus Group:** Qualitative. To gather information on the opinions of students as to how YODL in its current form fulfils / fails to fulfil their information needs.

The use of a questionnaire followed by focus groups has theoretical support as well as known success in previous studies. Clough et. al. (2008) used a two stage methodology comprising an online questionnaire (to gather background information on users’ typical tasks and needs) followed by a task based user evaluation involving 14 participants (to obtain qualitative feedback on the prototype system created in response to questionnaire replies). Lending support of a methodology involving more than one type of information gathering, Dalrymple (1991, p.85) states that “Qualitative methods such as case studies, focus groups, or in–depth interviews can be combined with objective measures to produce more effective information retrieval research and evaluation”. With regard to research methods, Wilson (2000b) writes that “‘user studies’ is a term which covers a very wide range of potential research...this implies the use of not one model of the research process or one method of
research but multiple models and methods.". Given that different stages of the YODL project sought to cover various research aims, a mixed methodology was appropriate. The knowledge obtained from Google Analytics statistics on usage could not have been gathered in anything other than a quantitative way. The majority of the questionnaire also provided quantitative data on users’ needs and objectives.

3.5 Questionnaire Methodology

The first stage of new research (other than using existing Google Analytics data) took the form of a questionnaire. The time frame for the project was not ideal, as the bulk of the research necessarily occurred during students’ summer holidays. This meant that in order to obtain users’ opinions on YODL and information on how they used the digital library, it would be necessary to find a research method that could efficiently cover a large geographical area. This need was furthered by the fact that YODL has been used in the past by non members of the university, and the views of these users would ideally also be included. An online questionnaire, linked to the front page of the digital library, was chosen as the best way to target all users, wherever they might be. Sharp et. al. (2007) describe geographical spread of a target group as a primary reason for using questionnaires as a data gathering method. However they go on to mention the problem of motivation; questionnaires only work as a method if the target group are motivated enough to complete them.
For the YODL questionnaire, participants were invited to leave their email addresses and be entered into a prize draw for a £25 Amazon voucher. Combined with the fact that the questionnaire’s final open question offered users a chance to freely express their views, this incentive meant that 47 responses were received.

In constructing a questionnaire, an existing questionnaire from a project with similar aims and methodology to those of the YODL research was drawn upon. Search25 (http://search.inform25.ac.uk/blog/) aims to “strengthen electronic access to research consortial holdings [with] in [the] M25”, and the questionnaire was designed to obtain user views on library catalogues in general, and the existing service provided by Infor25 (a joint library catalogue for higher education institutions in London and the South East). Given that a lot of testing had already gone into this questionnaire, it seemed sensible to use it as a base for the much shorter and simpler YODL questionnaire. The final version of the YODL questionnaire adhered to the basic points of good practice in constructing a questionnaire, including the use of a 5 point Likert scale where appropriate, with the negative end of the scale last, i.e. on the right (Sharp et. al., 2007). The major remaining issue with web based questionnaires, that of respondents being self selecting and the resulting sample not being representative, was rendered relatively unimportant because it was largely responses from existing YODL users that were wanted. The questionnaire was pilot tested by members of staff and students from the University of Sheffield.
Information School as well as members of the YODL team at the University of York.

The questionnaire was linked to from the front page of the YODL site, but it was not until wider, social media based publicity was extended that responses rose above more than one or two per day (see illustration below). Screenshots from the University of York Library’s Twitter and Facebook accounts are included in the Appendices to this report. Messages about the questionnaire and follow up focus group were also placed on the library’s electronic display boards.

Illustration taken from Google Docs: “summary of responses” to YODL questionnaire

3.6 Focus Group Methodology

Kitzinger (1995) identifies one of the primary advantages of focus groups as being “access to such variety of communication...because people's knowledge and attitudes are not
directly encapsulated in reasoned responses to direct questions” (p.299). This is the reason for the choice of focus groups as the second data collection method; the theory was that opinions expressed in the focus group would serve to explain and elaborate on the brief comments supplied in responses to the questionnaire. In order to capitalise on shared experience (Kitzinger, 1995), the initial plan was to run two focus groups, one of university academic and library staff, and a second group of undergraduate and postgraduate students. In this way there would ideally be little conflict of interests within the group, and group members would be able to support each other and elaborate on each other’s opinions. Sim (1998) adds to this by describing the focus group as a safe place for participants to express views (i.e. they are under no obligation to respond to every question, unlike in a questionnaire) and encouraging a greater degree of spontaneity in response than might be provoked by any other type of data collection method.

Pickard (2007) states that when running a focus group, the researcher “must remain in control of the situation and ensure that...research goals are achieved” (2007, p.219) She goes on to discuss the potential for dominance of the group by a strong individual, and the role of the researcher as facilitator; they should be paying attention to the discussion and available to “probe for more detail when appropriate” (p. 222) rather than being distracted by note taking or recording. It is for this reason that Bertrand et. al. (1992) recommend that focus group sessions be recorded simultaneously by
a tape recorder and by a non participating person whose only role is to record the discussion by taking notes. Sim (1998) provides plenty of practical points for running a focus group, including a reiteration of the previously mentioned points on simultaneous tape recording and written note taking by a co–researcher. Sim (1998), Pickard (2007) and Bryman (2001) all highlight the potential problem of “no shows” and the subsequent need to over recruit. This point was illustrated effectively by the number of people who turned up to the YODL student focus group; out of an expected fourteen participants, only eight showed up. The amount of over recruiting was therefore ideal, as it took a group of eight people approximately an hour to express all the views and opinions they considered important. Any more participants (and the subsequent longer meeting time) would have been difficult to moderate and record.

The problem of no shows was more of an issue for the staff focus group; as it was planned that this should be run first, there was less time to promote it. As described earlier in this chapter, the focus groups were publicised through University Library social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as by using the electronic display boards in the library. At least half of student focus group participants initially expressed an interest in attending the focus group by leaving their email address on the bottom of the online questionnaire. Given the small number of participants to be dealt with, any expressions of interest were responded to by a personal email, and all focus group participants were offered ten pounds to
thank them for their taking part. It appeared to be more difficult to encourage staff than students to engage with the feedback process, perhaps due to the fact that staff tend to be busy during the day (the focus groups were held during work hours) or maybe because paid staff are less likely to be motivated by a financial incentive. Whatever the reasons, the result of this was that only one staff member turned up. However this did serve to provide some useful “practice” at conducting and recording a focus group in a low pressure environment with only one participant (who had previous experience of website evaluation and was therefore very easy to elicit opinions from!).

The student focus group was recorded by a tape recorder (as well as by an iPhone as a backup) and notes were taken by a member of the Digital Library staff. This left two of us to explain the digital library to participants, as well as encourage discussion. This approach proved to work very well, with all participants except one taking an active role during at least part of the focus group.

3.7 Data Analysis

When considering data analysis of focus group data, it is first important to remember that it is not possible to generalise findings from specific situations (Sim, 1998 and Wilson, 2000b). This is particularly true in the case of digital library related research, where the context in which the library exists and the research takes place is
integral to a full understanding of any results or feedback obtained. Sim (1998) describes that by saying that the focus group “provides an in-depth insight into the social interaction occurring in a particular context, but does not permit...generalisations that extend beyond this context” (p.350). While the data produced by the YODL focus group is clearly only applicable to YODL and the University of York library context, it is worth bearing in mind that opinions expressed by undergraduate students cannot necessarily be assumed to be shared by staff, postgraduate students, or even undergraduates on a different course. Wilson (2000b) states that “application of results must take place through a comparison of a given situation with that reported” (p.20).

In terms of the practical issues in analysing focus group data, the major problems relate to transcription of recordings, coding the subsequent transcription, and the question of ongoing analysis versus conducting all the analysis at the end of the project. Regarding transcription, Bertrand et. al. (1992) explain that “Real life discussions and complete transcriptions tend to be full of false starts, irrelevant remarks, and repetition. A good reporter can...write the main points while the discussion is in progress”. (p.202). It is for this reason that the YODL focus group recording is only partially transcribed, and supported by notes taken during the course of the discussion. Bryman (2001) also cites the time consuming nature of complete transcription as a reason for only doing it if enough time is available. On this basis, Bryman also recommends that analysis should be ongoing; this
approach also allows the researcher to maintain an awareness of how the research is progressing. In the case of the analysis of YODL feedback, the research was in stages, meaning that analysis was necessarily ongoing.

Finally, Bertrand et. al. (1992) recommend that the transcript be coded with reference to the themes originally identified; use of this method meant that the qualitative responses provided on the end of the questionnaire responses could be turned into quantitative data for statistical analysis. The same was true for the transcription from the focus group discussion. Overall, the methodologies used to obtain feedback on YODL have theoretical support, and many of the problems identified in the literature were illustrated by issues faced in carrying out the YODL project. However as the problems encountered were (to a large degree) not unexpected, none of them proved overly problematic for the research.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations for the YODL project were relatively easy to cover, as all participants were non vulnerable adults, and the data collected was not of a sensitive nature. Data collected from Google Analytics was entirely anonymous, and the online questionnaire started with a statement of confidentiality.
“In this 10 minute survey, we want to find out about how people use YODL; this will help us update the service with users' needs in mind. All responses will be strictly confidential. By starting the survey, you agree to the information you supply being used for research purposes; participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any point by closing the browser window.”

The questionnaire also stated that all email addresses would be kept confidential. Focus group participants all signed a form to state that they were happy to be recorded, any shared data would be rendered anonymous, and that they were free to leave at any time. Copies of these forms, as well as the questionnaire, can be found in the appendices.
4.0 Results

4.1 Google Analytics

Google Analytics was used initially to obtain an idea of the basic usage statistics of YODL, and therefore how long the questionnaire should run for in order to obtain a useful number of responses. It also served to give a broad overview of the usage of the digital library. Shown overleaf is a screenshot from the Google Analytics site, showing usage statistics for YODL between the specified dates of May 6th and May 31st (a period of 26 days).

A total of 4,909 visits to the site took place over this 26 day period, with 2,861 of these being unique visitors. The graph shows that overall visits were evenly spaced over the four weeks, and were slightly more frequent during the working week than at weekends, which is consistent with the site’s purpose of providing a service for students and academics. Of those visits, approximately 52% were returning visitors, with 48% new visitors.
Google Analytics:

Visitors Overview

% of visits: 100.00%

Overview

Visits

2,861 people visited this site

Visits: 4,909
Unique Visitors: 2,861
Given that there were 2,861 unique visits within an approximately 4 week period, this was a potential audience of 2,861 for the questionnaire. However, summer term at the University of York finishes at the end of June, with exams starting several weeks before that. Those students with exams would presumably be revising, and those without were likely to leave the university towards the beginning of June. These two factors could be predicted to considerably decrease the available pool of respondents, but predicting the degree to which this would occur was more difficult. It was decided to leave the questionnaire online for a 26 day period and increase publicity if the number of responses was not adequate.

The second set of Google Analytics results (overleaf) clearly shows that initial predictions were correct, with 1,517 visits to the site over the 26 day period between June 14th and July 9th. Of these, 1,173 were unique.
Over the 26 day period for which the questionnaire was online, 47 responses were received. As Google Analytics shows a total of 1,173 unique visitors over this time, this represents a very low response rate of 4%. However this makes certain wide assumptions such as

- All visitors to the site were already aware of the questionnaire / noticed the link to it on the site’s front page
- No visitors had already decided they didn’t have time for a questionnaire
- No visitors felt that their opinions were irrelevant
- The type of visitors received by YODL does not change during the vacation period; i.e. it may in fact be that a greater percentage of vacation visitors are academics not linked to the University of York.

Given that it is not possible to know the exact percentages of visitor types during term time and the summer vacation period, it must be remembered that the questionnaire responses received may have been different to those that would have been received if the questionnaire had been conducted during term time.
4.2 Questionnaire Results

A copy of the questionnaire used can be found in the Appendices. Of the four questions on the questionnaire, the final one provided qualitative results in the form of user opinions. Both quantitative and qualitative results are shown in the section below, with the qualitative data marked up by number according to the category into which each comment falls.

4.21 General Respondent Profile

Before presenting the results of the questionnaire, a brief description of the respondents is worthwhile. Of the total of 47 respondents, 79% were students, with 24 Undergraduates and 13 Postgraduates. Although the questionnaire allowed respondents to specify whether or not their academic institution was the University of York, it turned out that all students respondents were from York. Of the remaining 21%, one was a member of academic staff at the University of York, six were non academic University of York staff, two were public users (i.e. no affiliation to a specific academic institution), and one failed to specify their status. This failure to specify status was apparently rendered possible by the unintentional construction of the online questionnaire in such a way as for partially filled in response forms to be accepted.
For the purposes of presenting the data, respondents were categorised by the departments or courses as described in the chart below.
4.22 Quantitative Results of Questionnaire

Analysis of quantitative data was undertaken bearing in mind the relevant research objective 1.32, “To investigate who currently uses YODL. What do they use it for, and why?” With reference to this research objective, quantitative data resulting from the questionnaire has been used to look at the following points:

- Image related usage of YODL by Undergraduates
- Image related usage of YODL by Postgraduates
- Exam paper related usage of YODL by Undergraduates
- Exam paper related usage of YODL by Postgraduates
- Usage of YODL by both Undergraduates and Postgraduates for unspecified functionalities other than searching & browsing images or exam papers
Image related usage of YODL by Undergraduates

The following graph illustrates Undergraduate usage of YODL for both searching (blue bars) and browsing (red bars) images. Of the 24 Undergraduates who responded, the majority (60%) of them had never before used YODL to look for images, either by searching or browsing. Of those who had previously used YODL, browsing was slightly more frequent than searching for specific images.
**Image related usage of YODL by Postgraduates**

Compared to Undergraduates, Postgraduates appeared to make approximately the same use of YODL to find images. Five out of the 13 Postgraduate respondents had previously used YODL to find images by either searching or browsing, that is, 38% compared with 40% of Undergraduates. Overall, Postgraduates appeared to make slightly more use of the ability to search, compared with Undergraduates who preferred to browse for images related to a general topic. However given the relatively small sample size it would be unwise to draw too many conclusions from the available data; although it indicates a slight difference in Undergraduate and Postgraduate usage habits, there is scope for more research into this specific area.
Exam paper related usage of YODL by Undergraduates

It would appear that the exam paper content of YODL is more widely used than the image content; 14 of the 24 Undergraduates (that is, almost 60%) stated that they had previously used YODL to find exam papers. Searching and browsing figures were very similar, as illustrated by the graph below, with searching for specific papers being slightly more common than browsing for any relevant content.

![Graph showing undergraduate use of YODL for searching and browsing exam papers]
Exam paper related usage of YODL by Postgraduates

50% of Postgraduate respondents (7 out of a total of 14) stated that they had previously used YODL to find exam papers. Searching and browsing behaviour were once again roughly equal; given the small size of the samples it is not possible to draw any more accurate or specific conclusions from the data.

![Postgraduate Use of YODL for Searching and Browsing Exam Papers](chart.png)
Other (unspecified) Usage of YODL

28% of Undergraduates and 60% of Postgraduates stated that they used YODL between once a month and a few times a week, for activities other than searching or browsing images or exam papers. As the questionnaire provided no way to specify what these activities were, this question would be worth covering in more detail as a part of any further research.

4.23 Feedback comments from questionnaire

Comments were numbered according to the profile of the respondent (e.g. UGY1 means “Undergraduate, University of York, No.1”). They were then coded according to the subject category into which they fell, with a total of 12 categories (i.e. each time a “[1]” occurs, it indicates that the comment relates to “relevance of search results”, as this is the category designated [1]). The number of comments on each of the categories gives some indication of how important to users each category is. The categories can then be ranked according to importance.

The following section contains user comments from the questionnaire; the way in which numbers are assigned to categories is arbitrary rather than indicating any order of relevance. A ranked list can be found in the conclusion of this section.
The graph above illustrates in pictorial form the number of comments received on each particular subject category.

[1] **Relevance of Search Results**

[UGY7] “It could be improved in terms of easiness of searching for past exam papers by key words [1], currently the best way to pinpoint a paper is by entering the module code which is not always to hand.”

[PU2] “Seem to get some odd results [1].”

[UG1] “More keywords [1] would be easier, i.e. exam works but examination doesn’t– despite examination being within the paper title of most papers.”

[UGY13] “A better search algorithm [1] should be considered as some irrelevant material usually precedes the content actually desired.”
[2] Publicity & Awareness

[UGY15] “Make people more aware of it! [2]”

[UGY18] “I have never heard of it but it sounds like a great resource [2].”

[UGY19] “I didn't even know YODL was an available resource for me to use. I think more needs to be done to make this service more well known. [2]”

[UGY20] “More awareness of the service, it was only until a few months ago I found out about YODL through screens across campus. I am now graduating [2].”

[UGY2] “I think that the awareness [2] of the site must be increased. In Archaeology department there's a lot of stress on ADS and no mention was made of this (As far as I recall)!”


[UGY10] “I don't think I've ever heard of this! [2]”

[PGY13] “I just heard about YODL is an image and exam paper server. At first, I thought that it is a new York's ebook library. [2]”

[3] Knowing where to look

[UGY16] “I think it's sometimes hard to find something e.g. an exam paper if you don't already know where to look [3].”

[PGY9] “Name is a bit misleading – is it just for exam papers? [3]”

[PU2] “Difficult to understand the best way of searching for a general topic [3].”
“My overall impression is that you almost feel you need to know exactly what is in the archive and what you're looking for *before* you start looking for it [3]. It doesn't feel user–friendly if you're looking for general documents or just to see what kind of info is held in the archive...”

“Featured Items” & other features

“(the Featured Items is a step in the right direction...) [4].”

Interface

“For such visual content, the initial screen and interface seem very plain and text–driven [5]; that feels like a missed opportunity to really showcase the collection and the work that has been put into making it available.”

Integration with other University resources

“Would like to see more linkage between the digital library and other library resources [6], particularly on library web site.”

“There could be a better integration between the current electronic resources section of the library website and what YODL has to offer [6] so that we know where to go when we need electronic resources; and so that if we do not search in necessarily the best place, to our knowledge, we would anyhow receive what we are looking for.”

Ease of searching

“The search function is easy to use and identifiable [7]. Finding exactly what you are looking for is slightly more difficult to begin with and only through trial and error was it possible for me to use it effectively.”
[8] User help

[UGY5] “Perhaps instructions on how to make searches more effective should be used? [8] Or if it is already available, direct new users or even existing users towards it.”

[PU2] “Not always clear what a non–academic user has to do or what they can access [8].”

[9] Availability of library resources online

[PGY3] “Also, manual photocopying, printing and scanning is perfect. The 24/7 library excess should be continued [9].”

[UGY13] “Having access to past exam papers as far back as 2002 has been very useful for revision purposes” [9]"

[10] Content

[PGY5] “I would have liked to use it for looking at MA dissertations in Women's Studies but you have not included them? The section on dissertations is quite patchy. I think it needs to be more comprehensive [10] to be worthwhile so mandatory for all MA dissertations to be submitted as electronic versions that could be included here. That would be so helpful.”

[PGY11] “More content such as access to lectures [10].”

[PGY12] “There is nothing relevant to my MSc there [10].”


[PU2] “Collection descriptions and individual entries could be more informative [11].”

[12] General positive comments

[PU1] “I have 2 interests in YODL – firstly I am a freelance consultant &
trainer in digital libraries technology and use YODL as an example of an excellent DL [12] and to show librarians what is openly/freely available for their users online.”

[PU1] “Secondly, my BA degree was in early medieval history with some archaeology, and I like to browse YODL for images relating to this period – it's a fantastic resource [12]”

[PGY3] “Digital library is excellent [12].”

[PGY7] “The service is good on the average [12]”
4.24 User Concerns raised by Questionnaire

(Note: Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers with a resulting total of 99% rather than 100%)

- 24% of comments related to publicity and awareness issues, with users repeatedly stating that they had never heard about YODL. In the case of one Archaeology student, it was specified that the department did publicise to students at least one relevant database, but YODL had never been mentioned. This is useful information to have, as it serves as a reminder that no matter how good the digital library service is / can be, it is of no use to students if they have not heard about it.

- Three categories each received 12% of comments, these being relevance of search results, the problem of users not knowing where to look, and general positive comments. Users repeatedly stated that too often it is difficult to find a resource without knowing exactly how to search for it. The search function therefore needs to be modified to return better results using more general search terms, e.g. the best way to find a particular exam paper is to search by module code, but module codes are not information that users tend to remember “off the top of their heads” when conducting a search. The term “keywords” occurred, suggesting that users would appreciate the ability to obtain results through a simple keyword search. On a related
issue, 4 comments were received to the effect that the digital library needs to be better signposted, making it clearer to users that their desired information is or is not available, and if so, in which section of the library is it stored.

- 9% of comments concerned the current inadequacy of content, with one respondent making a detailed comment to the effect that in order for using YODL to be worthwhile, coverage of content needs to be more comprehensive. Potential solutions to this issue will be discussed in the “Discussion” section of this report.

- Integration with other University resources, the potential availability of built in user help, and the accessibility of library resources online each received two comments. Library resources being available online at home, and 24/7, is very welcome to users, but YODL needs to be better integrated with other University resources such as the VLE. A built in user help system for YODL would also be useful, although this would perhaps not be necessary if ease of searching could be improved.

- “Featured Items” feature / Interface / Ease of searching / Meta-data related issues: These issues were all commented on, with the “Featured Items” feature being praised. The current interface is perhaps too plain and text driven, and could be brought into line with current standards of web design. The information provided for each item within YODL could be improved and / or standardised.
4.3 Issues Arising from Focus Group (Focus Group Results)

Displayed below are comments on issues raised in the focus group. All comments have been edited for coherence, but they remain an accurate representation of the opinions expressed by participants in the student focus group. As it was not possible from audio files and notes to determine exactly who said what, the comments have not been marked up by speaker but have been sorted into categories according to the subjects to which they relate. For the most part, these categories relate directly to the categories identified through user responses to the questionnaire, but in some cases it has been necessary to add additional, more specific, categories such as “download ability”, as these were issues that focus group participants discussed at greater length than questionnaire respondents.

Integration with other University Resources

YODL ideally needs to be integrated with the VLE. Publicity would be aided by integration with the VLE; it could be somehow stated that the content being viewed was from YODL. YODL needs to be searchable through Yorsearch. A link to YODL within Yorsearch, perhaps next to the link for the VLE, would be helpful.

Student lectures need to be surfaced in the VLE, as users want to be able to access content from one place.

It would be helpful if content contained within the White Rose...
Repository were to be searchable within YODL.
Exam papers need to be linked to within the VLE.
Exam papers need to be searchable by keyword through the VLE.

**Interface and Site Design**

The home page is uninviting and perhaps needs better pictures. It could be tailored to the department of a user, once they log in.

The home page needs to be organised in such a way that the most important links / pieces of information are larger, or in some other way more conspicuous, than the less important things. At the moment, it is difficult to know straight away which elements of the home page are the most important ones.

An ideal screen design for YODL would be to have featured items displayed in static form down one side of the screen, with a prominent main panel showing them all one by one on a rotating basis. This also catches people’s attention and makes them more likely to click on one.

YODL has too much white space. The placement of the search box is okay, but the white space is a problem.

People expect websites to look the same as other websites. YODL needs to follow web design conventions more closely.

It needs to be more obvious how to go “back” to the page you accessed the current one from. Users need to know that going “back” is safe.

It’s important to consider how people recover from errors; how do you find your way “back”?
A site map would be useful.
The design needs to be consistent with YorkWeb.

**Download ability**
Download buttons are not particularly useable; the names of the files are not helpful and the position of the button is not prominent enough.
The download button is a mess.
Links to different types of download need to be directly on the page (not in a click to drop down menu) and closer to the image.
The download button needs to be always in the same place, and generally more consistency is needed between the way that exam papers and all other individual items of content are displayed.

**Publicity & Awareness**
A lot of advertising is needed. A sign could be placed on the main university/student homepage, perhaps next to timetable on student homepage.
Advertisement on university or student homepage.
YODL could be more widely publicised outside the University, on lists like the National Libraries List.
YODL could be included in information skills training and in departmental handbooks.

**Relevance of Search Results & Ease of searching**
Although it is good that a search for exam papers can be sorted by
time period, a date really needs to be obviously displayed for each item when browsing through them.

Most members of the focus group agreed that an immediately available “advanced search” option, in which users could fill in the fields themselves, would be preferable to the current simple search box.

When a user views the search box, it is totally blank. One or more “sample searches” displayed under or within the box would be helpful.

The search box needs to give a user more information about what to do.

Google visibility needs to be improved, particularly for exam papers.

Do people use Yorkweb search? Some do, others use Google. The Yorkweb search is not very good because it brings up too much information, much of which is not relevant.

**Featured Items, Preview Ability & other similar features**

It would be good if you could preview exam papers, as well as making it more obvious how to read them online without having to download them.

Thumbnail preview of exam papers would be good.

The ability to preview the image, as well as zoom in to exam papers would be good.

It would be good if YODL could suggest “similar resources” based on what a user is currently viewing.

A summary on the homepage of what’s available on YODL would be
helpful.
A bar or news feed on the homepage could highlight things which have been updated.

**User help**
Any helpful text needs to be immediately obvious; having text appear when you hover over a feature is just confusing.
“Hover over” boxes are confusing.

**Library Online & Availability of User Specific Resources**
It would be good if YODL could give each logged in user specific recommendations based on their department or course.

**Content**
Content eventually needs to be expanded to include audio.
Can users submit content? Usage of YODL needs to be built up first, as users are unlikely to bother submitting content for a very small user group.
The focus group agreed that it would be useful to put public lectures onto YODL.

**Metadata related issues**
Users don’t understand what Dublin Core is. It’s better not to display that heading to a user viewing metadata for an item.
The order of displayed metadata for each image or entry is not helpful or logical to a user.
The screen displaying exam paper metadata / information needs some redesigning to make it more consistent and clear what each thumbnail or piece of information is.

Downloaded exam papers need meaningful filenames that are based on the subject (or title) and date of the exam.

**Other Points / Further Work:** One Human – Computer Interaction student suggested running a group with five participants totally new to YODL in order to look at usability. He also suggested ensuring that YODL complies with Nielsen’s Heuristics.
5.0 Discussion

5.1 Usability Problems: the need to prioritise

To begin a discussion of the results and implications of the YODL research, we will return to Nielsen’s 1994 definition of a usability problem as “any aspect of a user interface that is expected to cause users problems with respect to some salient usability measure (e.g. learnability [or] performance) and that can be attributed to a single design aspect” (p.388). In creating a list of recommendations for the improvement of YODL’s service to users, it is first necessary to identify some of the usability problems that need correcting. During the course of the focus group, some participants stated explicitly what they felt to be existing problems with YODL, as well as how they felt it could be improved. Others simply described what they would like to be able to use the digital library for, and from these ideas and complaints usability problems and their solutions can be inferred.

Within the first chapter of this report the four aims and objectives of the project are stated. Point 1.31 (“To survey current theory and practice in the fields of qualitative research to obtain user feedback, and Digital Library evaluation”) was achieved as predicted through the Literature Review in Chapter 2. However as the research progressed it became clear that quantitative research would also have to be utilised, and Chapter 2 was therefore expanded to include a discussion of mixed methodologies and data analysis. Point 1.32 (“To investigate who currently uses YODL. What do they use it for, and
why?”) was answered almost but not entirely fully by Google Analytics data and questionnaire responses. Google Analytics provided a picture of the number of people using YODL, and when they tended to use it. Questionnaire responses expanded on this to describe what a small group of users (i.e. the questionnaire respondents) use YODL for. The question “why?” was not fully answered; this is perhaps a question for further research, to be included in a later assessment of users’ satisfaction with YODL one the improvements detailed further on in this chapter have been made. Although Point 1.32 was therefore only partially fulfilled, the absence of a complete answer to why people use YODL did not adversely affect the reliability or usefulness of the practical suggestions as to how user experience could be improved. Point 1.33 (“To obtain feedback on YODL from a user’s perspective”) was achieved successfully by means of the questionnaire and the student focus group; although the projected separate focus groups for Undergraduates, Postgraduates, and Staff were modified into one focus group, the opinions of all three groups were represented at some point during the research. Point 1.33 can therefore be said to have been successfully achieved. The final point, 1.34 (“To provide a final...list of recommendations for the improvement of the YODL service”) can be found further on in this chapter. Nielsen (1994) can be cited in support of the idea of ranking potential improvements according to importance, stating that “given that one can never fix the complete list [of usability problems], there is also a need to prioritise” (p.389).
5.2 Discussion of Recommendations

In this section we will first look at the three wider issues affecting YODL; these are problems that require a more long term collaborative approach in order to affect any great improvement. The second part takes the form of a ranked list of issues that can be improved by the digital library staff team.

5.21 Wider Issues

- **Integration with VLE and other University resources**

Throughout the focus group and also within the responses to the questionnaire, it was repeatedly stated that integration between the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) and YODL needs to be improved. This specific point was made 7 times during the focus group, as well as occurring twice within the answers to the questionnaire. This was clearly a major concern for users, and as well as the VLE, the White Rose Repository ([http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/](http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/)) and Yorsearch (the primary search system for the University library catalogue and databases) were both mentioned as being systems that need better integration with YODL. Participants stated that they needed content stored in each of these different systems to be searchable from the front page of any system; e.g. “It would be helpful if content contained within the White Rose Repository were to be searchable
through YODL” and “Exam papers need to be linked to within the VLE”. This has been designated a “wider” issue on the basis that this sort of integration is likely to require collaboration between the developers of YODL and those responsible for content within the other systems mentioned.

There is plenty of theory to support the idea that users require a simple learning environment with which they can easily familiarise themselves (Kani–Zahibi et. al., 2006, in Heradio et.al., 2012), and integration of systems is one means to this end. If users can navigate relatively seamlessly between complementary systems, finding information becomes much easier.

It is possible that having one single login point to allow users to login to and therefore access content from all of these systems would contribute to solving the problem described in the previous paragraphs, and work on achieving this single login is currently in progress.

- Content

Saracevic (2000) states that it is of vital importance that the collection, and information contained within it, is managed. Xie (Xie, 2006 & 2008, in Heradio et.al., 2012) also mentions the importance of collection quality. This point is illustrated clearly by the feedback from YODL users regarding the current comprehensiveness (or lack thereof) of the digital library under discussion. As well as existing content needing management, it is clear that the entry of new content
needs to be coherently planned and executed.

The outcomes of the focus group included an agreement that it would be useful to make public lectures accessible through YODL, probably in the form of audio files. The expansion of YODL to include audio files was discussed and agreed to be a goal for mid to long term achievement. It was also enquired whether users could submit content, but this raised the greater issue of the adequacy of current content, which was mentioned several times in the questionnaire responses with comments such as “More content”..."the section on dissertations is quite patchy"..."needs to be more comprehensive"..."nothing relevant there”.

In order to achieve any sort of comprehensive coverage, a planned approach would be necessary; one possible way of beginning to solve this issue would be to decide exactly what content is to be focused on (e.g. all MA dissertations from several specific subject areas) and then to make it compulsory for students to submit work within this area. However, this begins to encroach on the territory of the White Rose Repository, so it may be that a better way to solve this is to achieve better integration with other relevant databases and make the content of these searchable through YODL.

- **Publicity and Awareness**

  The need for better publicity was the main issue arising from the questionnaire. Almost a quarter of comments made related to these issues, with four of the twelve respondents stating that they
thought it sounded like “a great resource”, but they had never previously heard about it. One person said that it had not been publicised by their department (despite the fact that it contained relevant material), and another person mistakenly thought that YODL was a new ebook library. As the focus group participants were essentially self selecting, publicity was not discussed so much in the focus group, as participants were mostly previous users (or individuals with an interest in digital libraries and website evaluation) who felt they had developed opinions on YODL that they wished to express. Given that this is the case, it can be fairly assumed that the prevalence of comments on publicity received through the questionnaire is an accurate representation of the current state of YODL publicity.

Heradio et.al. (2012) state that (in essence) it doesn’t matter how good a digital library is, if it fails to serve the needs of its user community. Lack of publicity and knowledge is a more basic, but related, point. If the intended users are unaware of the existence of a digital library, it is already failing to serve its purpose. Clearly, publicity and awareness is an area that it is worth expending time, effort and resources in.

Suggested ways of improving awareness of YODL, raised through the questionnaire and the focus group, include publicising by individual staff in relevant departments, use of the electronic screens around campus, a banner on the main university homepage for students, and inclusion in departmental handbooks and information
skills training. It was also suggested that YODL could be more widely publicised outside the University, for example on mailing lists run by national libraries and other relevant organisations with a large and potentially interested membership. This is described as a “wider issue” as improving it would ideally involve successful liaison with various University departments and subject librarians as well as external organisations. However a great deal can be done internally to raise the profile of YODL by improving its visibility and prominence on University websites frequently visited by students, effective use of electronic screens, and by including it in any library and research related sessions for new students.

5.22 Ranked List of Recommendations for Improvement

1. Interface and Site Design

Interface usability is an issue raised repeatedly within digital library literature, with Xie (2006 & 2008, in Heradio et.al., 2012) citing it as a primary goal of any digital library. Much of the discussion in the focus group centred on usability of the interface, beginning with the appearance of the digital library home page. Common remarks related to there being too much white space, rendering the home page “uninviting”. It was generally acknowledged that relevant pictures on the home page were a good thing, drawing the user’s gaze and catching their attention. These pictures could be tailored to the logged in user’s department or course. Other practical suggestions for improvement included organising the home page in
such a way that the most important links and pieces of information were displayed to be larger or somehow more conspicuous than other less important information. An “ideal design” was described by one user, who referred to a successful retail website, citing the featured items displayed in static form down one side of the screen, with a prominent main panel showing each of the static images one by one on a rolling basis. Clicking on any of these images took the user to the relevant page displaying more information on the image. Participants agreed that this was an appealing site design.

Discussion also centred on the need for users to be able to go “back” safely and without getting lost, and to track where they had come from on the digital library site. Recovering from errors was an important concern, and one participant felt that the site design needed to make it more obvious how to go back to the menu or search results you had just come from. This could be done by making individual search results open in a new tab, thereby not losing the page of search results, or simply by flagging up a “back to search results” button. Finally it was stated that a site map would be very useful; this could be accessible from the front page of the digital library and would also act to make users aware of the exact content contained within or accessible through the library.

2. Relevance of Search Results and Ease of Searching

Although it was stated during the focus group that the positioning of the search box was functional and acceptable, it was
generally acknowledged that the initial blankness of the box was off putting. One or more “sample searches” displayed either within or underneath the box would serve to help users formulate a successful query. Most members of the group also agreed that rather than having one simple search box, it would be more helpful to immediately have the option of an advanced search, with the ability to fill in elements of the search yourself.

Many focus group comments related to searching for and viewing exam papers; one particular problem described is that when viewing exam papers as a page of search results, a date is needed on each item on the results display page. Users also stated a desire for the Google visibility of results, particularly exam papers, to be improved, as it became apparent that some students preferred to use Google rather than Yorsearch, on the basis that the University’s own search service brought up too much irrelevant information within the search results.

The display of search results is also slightly problematic; ideally the results of all searches need to be ordered alphabetically so that a user can see quickly how they are ordered and how to keep track of navigating between pages of results.

3. Download Ability

Of all the specific features discussed in the focus group, the download feature and its associated button were picked out for particular criticism by focus group participants. The button was
described as “a mess” and “not particularly usable”. Suggestions for improvement included moving the button to a more prominent position related to the image or exam paper, and changing the names of the files available to download, so it is clearer to a user exactly what they contain. Jenny Mitcham described it as “user friendly aesthetics”; users are not used to seeing capital letter and underscores within item titles, so these would ideally be replaced by a description in a more standard text format. The “click to drop down” style of the menu underneath the download button was not popular, with participants stating that they would prefer the links to different types of download to be immediately obvious in one area of the page. Consistency of display was also raised as a problem, as the download button does not always appear in the same place on the screen; the exact location changes depending on what type of item it is that the user is downloading.

Related to the issue of downloads is the ease of viewing exam papers online; currently it is not obvious how to do this, and several people requested that it be made clearer, perhaps with a different and labelled button next to the download options. It appears that users do not intuitively make the mental link between downloading an item and viewing it online, and it therefore does not follow that they should have to click the same button to access both download and view online options.
4. Featured Items etc.

This section contains recommendations and comments relating to several different and unrelated features that YODL either currently contains, or users would like it to contain. The “Featured items” rolling images on the front page was described as “a step in the right direction” in terms of home page design; a member of staff also stated that it would be nice if the Featured Items section could tell users which collection each item was from. Other feature that users would like to see included:

- Thumbnail previews of exam papers (already mentioned in the above section but worth noting again)
- A “zoom” function when previewing exam papers
- A “similar resources” or “other items like this” feature, based on what the user is currently viewing
- A summary on the homepage of the content and collections currently contained within YODL
- A highlighted or scrolling bar or news feed on the homepage to draw the users’ attention to any new content or features within the digital library
- When viewing an image item, the link labelled “about the image” should perhaps be renamed;
when clicked it takes the user to metadata about the image’s rights information. However to many users “about the image” means the same as “about the work”, so the fact that it is actually metadata and/or rights information could be made more clear.

The above bullet points are all direct requests from users, either drawn from questionnaire responses or (largely) raised during the focus group.

5. Metadata Related Issues

Although metadata was discussed during the focus group, as some of the students were studying computer, database or web design related courses, the bulk of the feedback on metadata was obtained through the interview with Jenny Mitcham. The full notes of the interview can be found in the Appendices, and for the sake of clarity the section will present the major outcomes of the interview as a series of bullet points.

• YODL currently uses simple Dublin Core; this means that the available categories for entry of relevant item metadata are very limited, which makes it difficult to accurately describe exactly what the piece of information being displayed is; e.g. does the term “title” relate to the module title on which the exam is based, or the title of the actual exam paper? However, as discussed during the interview, the choice of a simple or
more complicated version of Dublin Core is a hard one to make.

- Using the current simple version, the metadata displayed to users is not in a particularly logical order as it appears on the page. This is because of the way in which the system stores the metadata and subsequently presents it on screen. This was noted by focus group participants, who also explained that most users have no idea what “Dublin Core” is; heading up the page of information / metadata with the title “Dublin Core” is confusing and meaningless, and this title should probably be removed or replaced with something more understandable.

- For the sake of being user friendly, it was suggested that the “about this image” link could be replaced with something along the lines of “how do I use this image?” This could then explain exactly how it is possible to use any particular image, including a description or icon relating to the Creative Commons licence, if relevant. This section could also contain an email address or other method of contacting the digital library team for more information or help on using an image.

6. User Help

The current lack of help and support for users in how to use the site was commented on by Jenny Mitcham, as well questionnaire respondents and focus group participants. It was generally agreed that having “help” boxes pop up when hovering over any particular
feature was confusing and unhelpful; however a line of immediately obvious text underneath a feature such as a search box or download button would be better. It would perhaps also be worth introducing a FAQ section relating to how to use the various different features of the digital library.

7. Library Online

Several respondents and focus group participants suggested that it would be nice to have personalised content based on a logged in user’s course or department. However to conclude this Recommendations section, a significant number of comments were generally supportive of the digital library, seeing it as part of the wider 24/7 availability of the library. One public user described it as “an excellent example of a digital library” and “a fantastic resource”, so the basic service provided by YODL is clearly along the right lines, and simply requires some additional work to bring the digital library site into line (with regards appearance, functionality, ease of use etc.) what users expect from a successful website.
6.0 Conclusions and Future Work

Although not all research went exactly to plan (e.g. the intended staff focus group became a detailed and specific interview with one member of staff) the information received in feedback, both qualitative and quantitative, was plentiful and detailed enough to draw useful conclusions.

During the weeks that elapsed between the undertaking of the research and the writing of this report, the team at YODL used feedback received to make a number of improvements to the digital library site. Those that have already gone live include:

- An enhanced description of YODL on the homepage, as well as enhanced “help” information, also on the homepage.
- A dedicated “help” page, linked to from the bottom menu.
- A clickable “help” icon next to the download button when viewing an item of content in detail.
- An updated “featured items” section, with a corresponding commitment to regularly refreshing the specific items featured.

Other updates include the following (to go live on the day following the completion of this report, i.e. 2012/09/04):

- Reorganisation of information display when viewing items in detail;
this will make information for each item display in a consistent and clear manner.

- Removal of the label “Dublin Core”; heading to be changed to instead read “Information” so as not to confuse users.
- Enhanced collection information.
- Correction of the sort order for displayed items, particularly when browsing, to enable viewers to see an alphabetically sorted list of results.
- Removal of confusing items from search results.

The final (current) predicted improvement relates to updating the search function to allow a user to search items by “creator”.

As demonstrated by the above lists, the research has already enabled changes to be made to the site based on users’ opinions and expectations. Recommendations for future work include a more focused study to obtain a more detailed profile of the users of YODL, as well as their motivation for use.

Additional potential projects include a usability study involving a small group of totally new users in order to ascertain how easy and intuitive use of the current site interface is (as suggested by one Human–Computer Interaction student who took part in the focus group) and a methodical updating of both the site’s content and metadata (potentially to be broken down into a number of small collection based projects for University of York students).
Finally, to return once again to Saracevic (2000), evaluation and assessment of any system, including digital libraries, are an integral part of the ongoing improvement and maintenance of that system. Once all the recommendations contained within this report have been made (including those relating to publicity) a further YODL user feedback exercise should be carried out. As well as ascertaining whether or not (or to what degree) the improvements made as a result of this report have been successful, this should also identify any further issues that may have appeared relatively minor (or indeed not appeared at all) in the initial piece of research described here. In this way, YODL will continue to improve, becoming increasingly efficient in “supporting the information needs of [the] community” (Borgman, 1999, p.230, in Saracevic, 2000, p.361).

13,902 words
7.0 Reference List


study based on the areas of information science and human computer
interaction”. _OCLC Systems and Services_, 21 (4), pp. 311–323

Heradio, R. et. al. (2012) “A review on quality evaluation of digital
libraries based on user's perceptions”. _Journal of Information Science_,
April 19th, pp.1–15

Hill et. al. (1997) _User Evaluation: Summary of the Methodologies and
Results for the Alexandria Digital Library, University of California at
[Accessed 2012/05/27]

retrieval systems with users.” _Foundations and Trends in Information
Retrieval_, 3 (1–2), pp.1–224.

311, pp. 299 – 302.

and Multifaceted View” (Draft). Chapel Hill, University of North
Carolina

digital libraries: a qualitative approach”. In: Tsakonas, G. and
Papatheodorou, C. (Eds.), _Evaluation of Digital Libraries: An Insight to_


The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (2012) *Key archaeology images*
by Rahtz made available online. [Online]


8.0 Appendices

8.1 YODL Questionnaire

8.2 YODL Publicity Screenshots
   8.21 YODL Questionnaire
   8.22 YODL Facebook page
   8.23 YODL Twitter feed
   8.24 YODL blog post
   8.25 YODL home page

8.3 Ethics form: consent to participate in focus group

8.4 Notes of interview with Jenny Mitcham

8.5 Access to Dissertation Form

8.6 Confirmation of Address Form

8.7 Employment Destination Form
8.1 YODL Questionnaire

About this survey

In this 10 minute survey, we want to find out about how people use YODL; this will help us update the service with users’ needs in mind. All responses will be strictly confidential.

By starting the survey, you agree to the information you supply being used for research purposes; participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any point by closing the browser window.

If you wish to take part in the focus groups that will comprise the later stages of this study, please give your email address at the end of the survey. Focus groups will take 30 - 60 minutes and participants will each receive £10.

Which of the following best describes you?
[Check one box]

☐ Undergraduate, University of York
☐ Postgraduate, University of York
☐ Academic staff, University of York
☐ Staff (other), University of York
☐ Undergraduate, other academic institution
☐ Postgraduate, other academic institution
☐ Academic staff, other academic institution
☐ Staff (other), other academic institution
☐ Private user (no academic affiliation)
☐ Other

2. If you are a student or staff member of an academic institution, which course or department are you part of?

☐ History of Art
☐ History
☐ Other art or humanities course
☐ Sciences
☐ Social sciences
☐ Other

In the table below, click the applicable boxes to let us know what you use YODL for, and how often.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Less than once a month</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Every 2-3 weeks</th>
<th>A few times a week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Searching for specific images</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browsing for images on a general topic</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searching for a specific exam paper</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browsing for any relevant exam papers</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do you have any additional comments on YODL? Is there anything you think is good, bad, or needs to be changed/improved?

Further Participation
If you would be interested in taking part in a 30-60 minute focus group regarding what you think of YODL, please leave your email address here. Staff and students from any departments and levels of user experience are needed. Focus groups will take place at the library over the course of June and July; participants will be contacted via email and will receive £10 each.

Enter our Prize Draw
To be in with a chance of winning a £25 Amazon Voucher, please provide your email address in the box below. We will not use your email address for anything else.

Submit

Powered by Google Docs
8.2 YODL Publicity Screenshots

8.21 The questionnaire as it appeared on the YODL site
8.22 Questionnaire publicity on the University of York Library Facebook page

8.23 Questionnaire publicity on the YODL Twitter feed
8.24 Screenshots from the YODL blog, publicising the questionnaire and focus group
8.25 Screenshot of the YODL home page, with publicity for the questionnaire
8.3 Ethics form

Consent to Participate in YODL feedback Focus Group

Gender:  M /  F

Age:  18-25  26-35  36-45  45+

Current level of Study (Undergraduate, Postgraduate, Staff etc)

Academic Department (Computer Science, English etc)

Please read the following and sign overleaf if you are willing to participate

i) The purpose of the group discussion and the nature of the questions have been explained to me.

ii) I consent to take part in a focus group about my experiences and expectations of the services and user experience provided by the York Digital Library.

iii) I also consent to be tape-recorded during this focus group discussion.

iv) My participation is voluntary. I understand that I am free to leave the group at anytime.

v) If I decide not to participate at any time during the discussion, my decision will in no way affect the service that I receive at the University of York.

vi) None of my experiences or thoughts will be shared unless all identifying information is removed first.

vii) None of my experiences or thoughts will in any way affect the service that I receive at the University of York.
viii) The information that I provide during the focus group will be grouped with answers from other people so that I cannot be identified.

Print name

Signature Date

Witness Signature Date
8.4 Notes from Interview with Jenny Mitcham (Library staff)

Conversation with a member of Library Staff (with previous experience of website evaluation)

Jenny Mitcham

Julie Allinson (head of Digital Library)

General conversation / issues arising

What are your first impressions of the site?

Quite minimalist

The little circle buttons on the right corner of the 'featured items' panel are confusing...I tried to click them and nothing happened

Featured items and highlighted collections are quite similar...they're a good idea

Something to highlight new items and most used items might be good (like in the archaeology website)

Perhaps the Featured Items need to change automatically?

It would be nice to know which collection they (Featured items) are part of...maybe with a little clickable link for more information about them (Julie agreed that even though some of the featured items are from very important collections, you can't tell this at all by looking at them displayed on the front page)

Is image searching for just things that have an image? And “all” is searching for everything? We might add some more tabs, like audio, in the future.

Going back to the front page, I would just put a line of text describing what each of those searches do...just a little line...I never really
thought of using the Image Search. Or, make your tab headings say “search everything” and “search for images.” We thought about a help box...oh yes, that'd be good.

If you do an image search you get better metadata

The zoom feature is neat, but I'm not sure people necessarily realise it's there...the same for the manuscript feature.

So zoom in is different from the full screen one?

No it's exactly the same, but you do have a hover function – it's the same set of four interactions

(commenting on a zoomed in image)  ah...see I thought the home button would send you back to the Home page. I just assumed that the Home button would send you home. I don't know what picture you'd have instead though...what you'd call it?

I've clicked on that (the “about the image” link)...I've not had a problem recognising that that's a link. I think the tricky thing is, to us (well, to any kind of slightly geeky people) “about the image” means something different to “about the work”, but to normal users it's the same. Some discussion about the best way to explain that it's metadata about the rights information. Making other people understand that distinction can be quite hard.

They (the download buttons) could be made a bit more user friendly. It can be a bit off putting...to see capital letters and underscores. I'm used to seeing things behind the scenes, but for a user you could have a friendlier way of displaying that. It's just aesthetics isn't it? We've put in a little box displaying some “help” information, things like “if you're not seeing the image...email us”.It might work all over the site...I'll show you it and see what you think of it...

Just as an aside...I don't know if Fedora can do this...when I've put documents up for download...(on another site) I've made a thumbnail of the PDF, so you see a mini icon...it's quite nice because it's like
seeing a preview of the document.

Maybe being able to pull up a document and look through it? That (what Jenny described) would be the first step, the next step would be having that full document preview...some of the theses are quite long. For exam papers it would be good to view it first...

Yes that would be nice.

*Problem with the way the system stores metadata information – it's not in the order it that it would ideally display on screen.*

Why do you need the identifier there? (Dublin Core info. On an exam paper) And is the title the module title, not the title of the exam paper? Can you store a qualifier for your identifiers in there? *(Not in simple Dublin Core)* I think we always used an extended version of Dublin Core...it's a bit richer and allows qualifiers. Dublin Core's quite useful...but we've had the same problem recording identifiers. It's useful (i.e. the “identifier” module code) but it's currently not obvious to the user what that number is.

It might be worth calling the format “file format”? *Ideally I'd like that to be only used for file format and populated by the system.*

Is it better to use a simple metadata scheme or a more complex one? They both have their pros and cons...it's a really hard decision to make

So I guess the next thing would be “browse”. And I do think it's not terribly useable as it stands.

I've just noticed they're not in the same order (the left hand side bar list of collections, and the thumbnail main screen display of collections). That's rubbish, I'm sure I can change that!

It might be better if that Collection Information box was moved to the right hand side. As a user, that collection information isn't really rich enough to tell me what it is. When you first go into that tree and see
all those collections, I want to know what they are – who's Amanda Lillie? Maybe have a little eye or a little question mark, so you can think “oh what is that” and get a bit more information about it. *(Problem of the collection information not being immediately obvious)*

*Problem of users not using browsers properly and blaming the website – IE!*

*Maybe use a pop up (around the site in various places) to give extra information and / or help to users*

Listings need to be made alphabetical *(with regard to the archaeology slide collection display screen)* and the quality of both images and metadata is quite low. Perhaps it's a good idea for a student project? *(re-scanning the slides)*

Is there a way...if someone came across that and thought...I want to know a bit more, what would they do? Would they go to the bottom of the screen and click Contact Us? Would it send you the identifier? **No,** but someone contacted us the other day....if they wanted that picture of Bradford on Avon, we've got about ten of those...I'd have to ask them to go back and describe it. It would be quite nice if you could copy out a reference...in APA?!

But say, if someone was to re-use this image in a dissertation or whatever...you could even just have a little line saying “if you want to cite this image”...Instead of having “about this image”, maybe have “How do I use this image”? It's a bit friendlier. Have a line of text that they can paste to reference it? **We could have the Creative Commons icon? It's a bit dry at the moment, and who's going to scroll all the way down to read that? We do need better ways of people getting in touch.**

I wonder if...being a bit more obvious on the front page, perhaps you could have subject areas to pull people in? To showcase the things different students might be interested in? The front page needs more information.
We could list different collections that would be relevant for different users...sciences, social sciences etc.

*Necessity of proper publicity for new collections that are of interest to outside users.* You could have a news feed and pull that in...or something? To highlight new things.

It's providing lots of different ways in, isn't it? To catch people's attention. I think you just need to make the assumption that users don't understand...it's obvious to us, but users need to be told what happens if I click this button? What happens if I type this in? If it's not obvious they'll just go somewhere else.

The interface is clear, it just needs a few more things to pull people in.

*It would be good to know what people are actually downloading – that way we could showcase collections that people don't seem to be using.*

In YODL, is it just that one search box? An advanced search might be quite useful. At the moment you don't know what it's searching – title, description? I know that advanced searches are often underused....I guess maybe as YODL expands more and more it might become more useful. *It might also be a good way of getting people to use more of these option tabs...if we use those. They could have different sets of search fields depending on the type of media.* It's really useful to have (a media type search).