Evaluating the Intellectual Assets of the Scholarship and Collections Directorate at the British Library

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**Abstract**

**Purpose**

This thesis aims to provide an evaluation of intellectual assets for the Scholarship and Collections Directorate (now Collections) at the British Library. Intellectual assets are assets which belong to and benefit an organization but do not have any tangible net worth, thus making it difficult to provide evidence of their value. An organization such as the British Library which is entirely dependent on the expertise of its staff, the way its collections are used and the relationships it forges with external stakeholders relies heavily on its intellectual assets and therefore a method for identifying and evaluating them in relation to the Library’s strategic aims is vitally important. This project is especially timely due to the financial constraints placed on the Library by the recent financial crisis and the changes to the Directorate’s infrastructure which have taken place since 2010.

**Methodology**

The data for this project was gathered on site at the British Library, using largely qualitative methods. Several in-depth interviews were conducted with Scholarship and Collections staff and stakeholders, and this was supported by a questionnaire distributed to all employees of the Directorate which was designed to collect further qualitative data as well as some quantitative data to support the findings. A phenomenographical approach was used during the data analysis process. This entailed focusing on the ways that individuals experience and interact with a particular phenomenon, in this case how Scholarship and Collections staff and stakeholders interact with intellectual assets.

**Findings**

Several suggestions were made based on the collected data for how the Directorate could improve its utilisation of intellectual assets, which were largely concerned with encouraging a matrix culture within the Library and greater promotion of staff expertise and the services they could offer. An evaluation tool was developed which would enable users to use KPIs to generate qualitative data for evaluating intellectual assets.

**Limitations**

As a case study, this research is naturally limited to a particular location and period in time. Limited resources also prevented certain ethnographic groups, such as British Library users, from being included. However, the model which has been developed can be adapted for application to other organisations wishing to perform an intellectual asset evaluation.

**Contribution to Research**

This project has formulated an intellectual asset evaluation tool which relies on qualitative methods, something which has not been fully accomplished before. It also provides a basis for the evaluation of IAs in libraries, an area of study which had not garnered much attention previously. The evaluation tool was designed so that it might be adapted for the use of other similar organisations.

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# Glossary of key terms

* **Assets**: Any object that is of value to the person or persons who own it. An asset in the organisational sense would be something, whether tangible or intangible, which is attributed with worth and adds currency to the organisation (*Oxford Dictionary of Business and Management,* 2006).
* **Tangible Assets**: An asset which can be seen and easily represented on a balance sheet.
* **Intangible Assets**: An asset that cannot be seen or touched, and is often difficult to quantify, but equally important to organisations as tangible assets. Edvinsson and Malone (1997) state that tangible and intangible assets are not completely separate: there is a flow between the two and they often depend on one another. For example, an organisation’s financial assets impact on the number of staff it can employ, and therefore the amount of expertise at its disposal. Conversely, the quality of service that an organisation can provide impacts on the financial revenue it can accrue.
* **Intellectual Capital**: The sum of an organisation’s intellectual assets. These are usually complex in nature, and include elements such as information systems, reputation and staff expertise (*Oxford Dictionary of Business and Management,* 2006). Intellectual capital represents the difference between the sum of the organisation’s parts (tangible assets) and its overall value (Witzel, 2004).
* **Special Collections**: Library collections which, because of their format, age, uniqueness or area of specific interest, are kept separately from the rest of the library’s collections (University of Northumbria Library, 2010).
* **Value**: The worth attributed to goods/services. In a library context, this often cannot be assessed through financial gain. Instead, the value of library services is discovered through its demand, its calculated value for money and feedback from users (Kennedy and Tyler, 2011; Corrall, 2000). Broady-Preston and Swain (2011) state that value is subjective and is dependent on individual objectives and environment, and thus most effectively considered in the context of a case study.

# 1. Introduction

This introductory chapter outlines the reasons behind the development of this project. Firstly the project outline, including a brief introduction to the concept of intellectual assets, and the background of the researcher is covered. Next, the aims and objectives of this research are outlined, followed by the rationale behind the project and an explanation of why this work is an important contribution to both library science studies and information management studies. After this, a discussion of the function played by national libraries is provided, followed by an introduction to the British Library and the Scholarship and Collections Directorate (now renamed as the Collections Directorate). Finally, a guide to the structure of this thesis is given.

## Project Outline

Intellectual assets are defined more thoroughly in the literature review chapter, but a brief introduction to the concept is necessary here in order to provide a basic understanding of what is a complex and confusing concept. In simple terms, intellectual assets (IAs) are assets that belong to an organisation and benefit the organisation, but are intangible and have no direct financial worth. For example, the number of people employed by an organisation is a tangible asset which can be quantified. The knowledge and expertise those staff members possess is an intangible, intellectual asset. Due to their intangible nature, they cannot be assessed using traditional quantitative methods. Nevertheless, these assets need to be capitalised on in order for the organisation to run as efficiently and effectively as possible, and so attempts to evaluate and exploit them should be made.

This study focuses on the IAs within the Scholarship and Collections Directorate (now the Collections Directorate) at the British Library. The main function of the Directorate is the interpretation and care of the Library's collections. As a non-profit organisation and one which has a primary function of sharing knowledge and maintaining cultural heritage, intellectual assets are key to the Library's success, and so an evaluation of the IAs attached to the Directorate would be of great value. As Poll (2008: 110) states, 'national libraries have indeed since several years seen the need for finding adequate performance indicators for assessing the quality of their services'. The intention of this study is to determine how effectively the Directorate is using its intellectual assets, indicating where its strengths lie and highlighting areas for development in order to enable the Library to improve the services it provides. It also uses these findings to formulate an evaluation tool which the Library can use and adapt to measure its intellectual assets and evaluate them over time.

## 1.2. Background

This was a project developed specifically for the British Library.

As an MA student studying Librarianship, I had a particular interest in special collections libraries, and how collections were being used and promoted. My MA dissertation focused on the issue of preservation vs access in special collections libraries, what librarians felt they should prioritise of the two, and how they were working to meet both requirements. This research drew my attention to an AHRC funded doctoral project at The University of Sheffield in partnership with The British Library, which would involve working with the Scholarship and Collections Directorate. I had used the British Library’s reading rooms many times as an undergraduate English Literature student in London, and benefitted greatly from the services there. Being involved in this project would allow me to experience the BL in a ‘behind-the-scenes’ capacity as a research practitioner. It would also allow me to further my research into libraries which cater for special collections, and how the library employees utilise their skills to provide the best service possible to their users. I was relatively unfamiliar with intellectual or intangible assets as a concept, but upon initiating my research I discovered that it was something I had been investigating, albeit unknowingly, in my previous studies. I was greatly intrigued by the potential to create a valuable piece of research, knowing that libraries and similar institutions rely heavily on intangibles for their success, and the fact that there had been little investigation on the subject of intangible assets in libraries.

## Aims and Objectives

With a project of this scale, a clear set of aims and objectives need to be defined at an early stage in order to maintain focus throughout the research process (Baxter & Jack, 2008). These can be referred back to during the period of data collection and analysis in order to ensure that only relevant data are used, and that the focus is always on the research question. The aim and objectives for this investigation are as follows:

Aim

*To evaluate the intellectual assets within the scholarship and collections Directorate at the British Library and suggest methods by which they could be measured.*

Objectives

* *To identify and classify the intellectual assets belonging to the Scholarship and Collections Directorate.* In order for the evaluation to be as comprehensive as possible, the researcher must gain an understanding of what intellectual assets the Directorate benefits from, and determine what type of intellectual assets they are. For example, are they concerned with human knowledge, relationships with stakeholders, or with the way the collections are utilised?
* *To investigate how the employees view IAs and how they fit into the Library*. The employees of the Scholarship and Collections Directorate will have first-hand experience of its IAs and the strengths and weaknesses concerning how well they are being utilised, and will therefore be able to provide valuable data.
* *To investigate the views of external stakeholders on the Library’s IAs and whether they differ from those of the employees*. While employees will be able to provide information concerning the infrastructure of the Directorate and the expertise the staff members possess, the Library's purpose is to provide a service and distribute knowledge. Therefore Library stakeholders will be able to give their perspectives on how well the Directorate provides these services which staff members will not necessarily have.
* *To develop a method of evaluating the IAs so the BL can see where its strengths lie and can see areas which would benefit from more attention. If successful, the model could be used as a blueprint by other libraries for improving their own services*. Producing a report that the Library can use will help to maximise its effective use of IAs. In addition, by putting the evaluation model to the test, it can be determined whether it is effective or not, and may suggest ways in which it could be improved upon.

These focus points were all kept in consideration throughout the research process.

## 1.4. Rationale

To further emphasise the importance of conducting this research, it is necessary to outline the rationale behind it. First, there is the changing role of libraries. Libraries do not only have the problem of reduced public funding to contend with. Many other influences, such as the rapid increase in availability of digital information, are pushing them to adapt their traditional role in order to remain relevant. Brophy (2007) adds that while ‘many changes are driven by technology, others are responses to societal opportunities and governmental pressures or are a result of deliberate attempts to reposition library services in relation to those serving similar needs’ (Brophy, 2007:4). In order to manage these changes effectively, it would be of great value to develop a means of assessing and evaluating intellectual assets in libraries, as this would enable insight into areas which require development, and also what services library users value most highly.

The British Library, specifically, has undergone several changes in recent years aside from those mentioned above. 2010 saw the implementation of several alterations to the Library’s infrastructure, including dramatic changes to the internal structure of Scholarship and Collections (see Section 2.3 for further details). There have also been changes in leadership, most significantly the appointment of Roly Keating as the new Chief Executive, who replaced Lynne Brindley in 2012. It will take time for staff to grow accustomed to their new roles within the Library, and it is imperative that this is managed effectively due to the instability of the current financial climate and the changing needs of information seekers, who value immediacy and have expectations of accessing the information they need via technology. Hinterhuber and Stadler (2006) write that ‘firms with charismatic leaders; effective strategies and efficient execution outperform comparable firms more during difficult economic conditions than during strong economic years’ (Hinterhuber and Stadler, 2006:237). They add that intangible assets such as leadership and strategy are integral for influencing the success of an organisation, even more so than tangible assets, and therefore by enabling the Library to enhance these qualities through a comprehensive IA evaluation would help to create a more successful and positive environment.

Lastly, this research would be extremely valuable for intellectual asset scholarship. The literature review chapter will go into detail on the gaps in the currently available research, but the most significant of these are that there are no IA evaluation methods designed specifically for libraries or similar public institutions, and also that the existing models still focus too much on tangible measures of value. Bornemann (2006) agrees that while there are many methods for organisations to regulate and assess its monetary assets, they largely overlook the less tangible assets which greatly contribute to an organisation’s success. By focusing only on the intangible assets in a culturally important institution like the British Library, this research will greatly advance the understanding of IAs and their great value in terms of the success of similar organisations.

## 1.5. Thesis Structure

This thesis demonstrates the development of a comprehensive IA evaluation tool from the initial research stages, to the collection and interpretation of data, to the formulation of suggestions for how the BL could progress into the future and the presentation of the evaluation tool itself.

Chapter 3 is comprised of a comprehensive literature review which will cover the current available research concerning intellectual assets. This includes how IA theory was formulated, what evaluation tools have been suggested by other practitioners, and how intellectual assets function in a library environment. It also includes two shorter sections which relate to current issues in special collections libraries which are relevant to this project, and a brief review of literature covering the management of change in organisations, libraries in particular. This is in order to place the case study in context and support later suggestions for changes the British Library could make to improve the use of its intellectual assets. Chapter 4 details the methodology of this project, including how the data was collected and examined, and explaining the phenomenographical approach the research has taken. Chapters 5-13 present the findings taken from the data, relating them back to the philosophical approach of phenomenography as well as intellectual asset theory. Chapter 14 provides a discussion of these findings in relation to existing literature, including suggestions for how Scholarship and Collections, and the British Library at large, can use them to improve and optimise its intellectual asset management. The IA evaluation tool developed for this project is presented in Chapter 15, along with an explanation of how it can be utilised. The concluding chapter summarises the thesis, state how it has contributed to intellectual asset scholarship and make suggestions for further research.

# The British Library

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a contextual background for the project. This is a case study, and as such a firm understanding of the setting for the research is essential. This chapter starts by discussing national libraries, their definition and their importance to scholarship. Next, a brief history is provided of the British Library, including aspects of how it has developed in terms of research services and strategic objectives. Finally, an account of Scholarship and Collections (the focus of the case study) is provided, detailing its structure and the developments it had undergone before the research took place.

## 2.1. National Libraries

National libraries are difficult to effectively define or categorise as their characteristics are largely determined by the nation they belong to: David Mearns (1979) states that ‘national libraries have but few common characteristics’ (Mearns, 1979:9). However, there are some universal traits. National Libraries act as institutions for preserving a country’s cultural heritage and are legal deposit libraries, receiving a copy of everything published by a nation, including audio, digital and video items, and often hold additional specialist collections as well. They are owned by the government and funded by public spending. Cullen (2006) observes that national libraries are subject to political agendas which could change at any moment, and that benchmarking is a necessity because the library must keep track of its assets in a rapidly changing climate. A national library must also provide services at an international level, and be a pioneer in providing user services (Meijer, 1987). It must span past, present and future, through preservation, access and anticipating what the next generations of researchers might need. Brophy (2007) emphasises the importance of this, writing that ‘the national library provides a cultural focus point which transcends the present and reaches into the past, in terms of the “stuff” it secures, and into the future, in terms of transmitting human knowledge to future generations’ (Brophy, 2007:26). It is important for the library to keep abreast of all these elements, something that has become far more challenging due to the recent global economic downturn and reductions in public spending.

## 2.2. The British Library

The British Library (BL) is the UK’s national library. This means that it is one of Britain’s six legal deposit libraries (the others being the National Library of Scotland, the Bodleian Library, Cambridge University Library, Trinity College Library and the National Library of Wales). It is publically funded and has a responsibility to provide the nation with access to knowledge as well as represent the UK in matters of learning on an international level. It is also responsible for the care and safekeeping of the nation’s published material; the BL currently has over 150 million items in its collections with three million new items added every year.

The Library originated as a part of the British Museum, which opened in 1753. The library’s foundation collection, contributed by Sir Hans Sloane, was broadened in 1757 when the royal collection was added to it and further enhanced in 1823 with the addition of the collections of George III. During the 19th Century the library flourished under the leadership of Antony Panizzi, who was a key figure in establishing the role of the modern national library. This included the principle that national libraries should be publically funded, encouraging the acquirement of foreign works for the Library, establishing legal deposit and providing access to the collections for all who needed it (Brophy, 2007). Green (1979) writes of the British Library that ‘the main objective of its creators was to weld into a coherent and flexible entity a variety of national or para-national institutions which had previously functioned independently, in a way which would yield the maximum benefit to the communities they served’ (Green, 1979:195). It was created as a centre for knowledge, a public service and a means of preserving the nation’s cultural heritage.

In 1971 the lack of space for the Library’s collections reached a critical level, and while a large number of items were being kept at the Boston Spa location, it was determined that the Library needed a new London location, within easy access of the British Museum. Construction was started on the current Euston Road complex in St Pancras, where readers would have access to a number of reading rooms, exhibitions could be held and, critically, the collections could be stored in a large underground complex where they could be kept in a temperature-controlled environment. The Library’s new site was opened in June 1998, offering readers better access, increased services and allowing the Library to become a key feature in the UK’s cultural and educational scenes.

The British Library attempts to meet the multitudinous demands placed on national libraries by putting an emphasis on providing excellent customer service. Brophy (2007) writes that ‘the British Library has shown, in recent years, how the function of preserving the national published memory and that of broadening and deepening access can be combined, with innovative products like Turning the Pages and the Business an Intellectual Property Centre’ (Brophy, 2007: 27). Former Chief Executive, Lynne Brindley, states that the Library is making efforts to be as externally-focused as possible, and concentrating on marketing, management and leadership, as well as keeping track of developments in user demands (Brindley, 2005). Brindley was a strong supporter of outreach and collaboration, pushing the Library’s business models to make this a priority so as to complete more effectively in an ever more connected information society. In 2003, Brindley stated that:

‘We are working closely with international partners including the Library of Congress, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and colleagues from Scandinavia and Canada, to agree distributed global approaches to web archiving. The consortium is likely to be working with the Internet Archive to develop next generation web crawlers and acquire retrospective content from the mid-nineties. We are also working with UK partners, such as JISC, the National Archive and the Wellcome Trust to refine our UK website collecting policy, taking into account important UK collaborations’ (Brindley, 2003: 127).

This collaborative drive is still emphasised a decade later in the 2013 annual report (The British Library Board, 2013), which prioritised excellent customer service provision, and a push for digital access to the Library's collections. Anticipating future research needs is also a priority. In 2010, the Library produced a ten year plan for improving its services, The 2020 Vision (The British Library Board, 2010). In this report, the following values were emphasised as being key to the Library's aspirations:

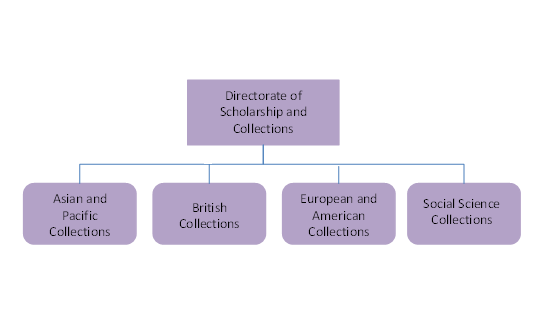
* To inspire with the Library's collections and expertise
* To be innovative in the services it provides
* To collaborate with other organisations
* To enable learning
* To respect the needs of users and stakeholders
* To exercise continuous improvement.

The aims for the next ten years were very much focused on providing complete access to the Library's collections, and promoting and sharing knowledge. Taking these things into consideration, it is clear that rather than expansion of its material collections, the Library feels that its ability to provide a service and disseminate knowledge is integral to its value. It is intellectual assets, rather than tangible assets, which will ensure the BL's future success, and therefore an evaluation of these assets would be of great value.

## 2.3. Scholarship and Collections Directorate

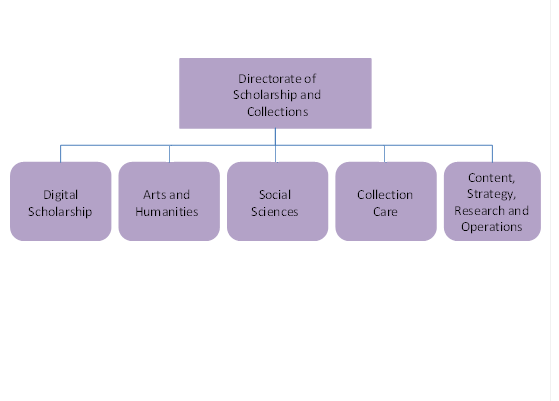
This research project focuses on one section of the British Library: the Scholarship and Collections Directorate, redefined in 2013 as simply Collections. Scholarship and Collections (S&C) are responsible for the care, interpretation and development of the BL's collections of over 150 million items (Hay Group, 2008). The Directorate has just under 200 members of staff, comprised of curators, archivists, restoration specialists, as well as individuals who have no direct contact with the collections at all. Without the collections, the Library could not exist. However, the collections as tangible assets are without value unless they are accessible, well utilised, and supported by human expertise. Therefore, capitalising on the Directorate's intellectual assets is essential in order to improve the Library's services.

An evaluation of the IAs in Scholarship and Collections is of especial value at this time because the Directorate underwent a major restructuring in 2009-2010. The final report of the review (Director of Operations and Services, 2010: 6) states that this change was prompted by a new emphasis on digital scholarship, as well as the 'changing external landscape in information provision and communications'. The report indicates that the Library wished to demonstrate its change of priorities from the collections to access, and felt the need to be more recognisable in structure to users who were used to an academic library structure (Director of Operations and Services, 2010: 11). Figure 2.1 outlines the former structure of S&C, which was determined by the format and geographical origin of the collections.



###### Figure 2.1: Former structure of Scholarship and Collections (2010)

The new structure, which can be seen in basic form in Figure 2.2., is based on subject matter. A section was developed exclusively for digital scholarship to enable the Directorate to focus more on this new priority, and employees specialising in preservation and restoration were brought together in Collection Care. The Content, Strategy, Research and Operations department was also established, bringing together non-curatorial roles, including legal deposit, training, and staff research managers. The Social Sciences department was relatively unaffected, but the new Arts and Humanities department entailed a great deal of rearrangement, and saw certain roles becoming obsolete and employees changing who, and what, they worked with.



###### Figure 2.2. New Structure of Scholarship and Collections (2010)

While the 2010 report (British Library Board, 2010) indicates that the restructuring was generally a success, it is inevitable that it will have caused a certain amount of disruption, and therefore an evaluation on the Directorate's IAs will hopefully allow it to see where its strengths lie, and indicate where it needs to improve.

# 3. Literature Review

This chapter examines the literature relevant to the areas of study in this research project. Because the project has such a wide scope, this literature review is divided into three sections covering intellectual asset theory: the first examines the literature concerned with intellectual assets (IAs) and how IA theory has developed, the second deals with some of the models that practitioners have developed to measure IAs, and the third focuses on the literature which applies IA theory to libraries. A fourth section pertains to special collections libraries and their concerns, in particular the pressures to both preserve valuable material and provide access as widely as possible. The final section briefly covers change management literature which was deemed relevant to this project.

# 3.1. Intellectual Assets

This first section covers the evolution of the concepts which define intellectual assets. Key practitioners are identified, efforts to categorise IAs are discussed, and the problems that practitioners have encountered with intellectual asset management are examined. It also covers the most significant evaluation models which practitioners have developed in an attempt to measure IAs, and a discussion of how effective these models are.

## 3.1.1. The Importance of intellectual assets for organisations

The subject of intellectual assets is complex, especially as there are so many different terms used to describe the phenomenon: ‘intellectual assets’, ‘intangible assets’, ‘invisible assets’, ‘intellectual capital’, ‘knowledge assets' and ‘intangibles’ are all terms used throughout the literature, sometimes synonymously, and sometimes referring to different concepts. For the purposes of this project, the researcher will be using the working term 'intellectual assets', as specified in the project title, to refer to all assets of a non-tangible nature.

While the definitions of terms being used in this project have already been outlined in the introduction, it is felt that in order to fully understand what is meant by ‘intellectual assets’, why they are so important to organisations and why there is so much dispute over their definition, it would be helpful to look at the evolution of intellectual asset theory.

First, a brief discussion of the language used by researchers when discussing IAs. Chaharbaghi and Cripps (2006: 31) state that the terms surrounding IAs are ambiguous, and ‘can be used in different ways to obscure and deliberately exclude a wide mix of agendas and practices’. Steenkamp and Kashyap (2010: 368) also take issue with the ‘plethora of terminologies’ used in this area of research, and believe that this is due to the multi-disciplinary nature of IA research. There have been some attempts made to narrow these definitions down and reduce ambiguity. Caddy (2000) attributes separate meanings to ‘intellectual’ and ‘intangible assets’, believing that ‘intangible assets’ cover a wider scope that includes things like copyright items and technology, whereas ‘intellectual assets’ refer only to the assets that are purely knowledge-based. Oppenheim and Stenson (2004) agree that these assets are ‘resources that are or should be documented and which promise future economic benefit’, (Oppenheim and Stenson: 2004: 4). However, because the terms are more often used interchangeably in the literature, this review will be using the blanket term of 'intellectual assets' in order to avoid confusion. However, Knight (1999) provides another, more useful definition between ‘intellectual assets’ and ‘intellectual capital’, asserting that intellectual capital is the sum of an organisation’s intellectual assets. Oppenheim *et al* (2004) add that ‘intellectual capital has a dual role in enhancing structural agility through technology and customer relationship management and providing a focus on internal skills and competencies.’ This provides a useful distinction between raw assets and assets that are recognised and utilised, and will be used in this investigation.

The three most significant researchers in the field of intellectual assets are Kaplan (Kaplan & Norton, 1992) who developed the Balanced Scorecard to measure the success of an organisation in a way that evaluated intangible as well as tangible assets, Karl-ErikSveiby (1997), who promoted the concept of intangible assets as being essential to the success of businesses and developed the Intangible Assets Monitor, and Edvinsson (Edvinsson and Malone, 1997) who took inspiration from Sveiby’s (1997) research to further develop the concept of IA and develop the Skandia Navigator to measure intangibles. The models they developed will be discussed in section 2.2 of the literature review. For now, we will examine what these key practitioners meant by ‘intangible assets’. Sveiby (1997) stated that intangible assets provided the difference between market and book value, and this appears to be the common consensus across the literature, with various researchers (Kaplan & Norton, 1992; Edvinsson & Malone, 1997; Marti, 2003; Brennan & Connell, 2000; Canibano *et al*, 2002; Abhayawansa & Guthrie, 2010) concurring that there is often a significant gap between an organisation’s book value and its true worth, and that this gap is filled by the organisation’s intellectual assets. But what are intellectual assets? Sullivan (1999: 133) provides a good definition, stating that they are ‘the sum of a firm’s ideas, inventions, technologies, general knowledge, computer programs, designs, data skills, processes, creativity and publications’. Sveiby (1997) adds relationships with customers and clients to this list, an important addition to IA theory, considering that relational assets are now one of the three main widely accepted categories of IAs, along with human assets and structural assets. In other words, they are the invisible factors that contribute to the success of an organisation: its collective knowledge, the relationships it forms, its structure, its intellectual property. Edvinsson and Malone (1997) use the metaphor of a tree to describe the modern organisation: the branches, leaves and fruit represent the financial and tangible aspects, while the roots of the tree represent the intangible assets. They cannot be seen, but the organisation would die without them.

Sullivan (1999) observes that modern business organisations are becoming increasingly knowledge-centred, relying on expertise, relationships, and employment of relevant technology for their worth, and they must therefore capitalise on their IAs in order to keep ahead of the competition. Sveiby (1997) states that the traditional financial measures used to assess an organisation’s success are no longer sufficient. Edvinsson and Malone (1997) also find that the organisational balance sheet only provides a snapshot of where the company has been, not where it is at present, or where it is going. Bismuth and Tojo (2008) and Allee (2000) concur, stating that financial measures have limited scope for identifying the benefits reaped from IAs, and therefore cannot represent the true value of an organisation. Abhayawansa and Guthrie (2010) performed association studies which found a positive correlation between an organisation’s utilisation of IAs and subsequent stock prices and returns, indicating that intangibles generate a large amount of organisational value and that this cannot be reflected in traditional financial reports. This complements the findings of Stewart (1997: 58), who states that the ‘chief financial officer can tell you how big the company’s payroll is, but cannot tell you the replacement cost of employees’ skills’. A forward-thinking and competitive organisation must therefore develop a method of capitalising on their intellectual assets if they are to be sure of their future success.

The literature expounds on this idea that IAs are a key source of organisational wealth, and that despite their absence on balance sheets, they should be invested in. Marr (2005) puts emphasis on corporate strategy and the competitive advantage organisations could obtain through investment in IAs, as do Sullivan (1999) and Canibano *et al* (2002). Bismuth & Tojo (2008) also emphasise the idea that organisations need to optimise IAs in order to earn long-term economic returns and maintain competitive advantage. Oppenheim *et al* (2004) observe that ‘information isn’t invested in because it is shared so easily and thus cannot be owned’ (Oppenheim *et al*, 2004: 6), and this is something that organisations are attempting to resolve. The 2002 Meritum report (Meritum, 2002: 7), which provided a guideline for managing and reporting on IAs, also recognised that the focus of the business world has moved away from traditional financial measures and that ‘the key drivers of value creation are now mainly of intangible nature’. They identified the need for research into the way that knowledge is assimilated and shared, and for some universal tool for identifying and utilising intangibles to be created. Bakhshi (2012) emphasises the need for ‘tools that embrace the concept of cultural value which, unlike economic value, derives from a cultural discourse that cannot be expressed in monetary terms’, (Bakhshi, 2012: 2). The question is whether such a tool is possible, or even desirable.

## 3.1.2. Categorisation of intellectual assets

The first step in understanding IAs in an organisational context is to identify the intellectual assets an organisation possesses. Edvinsson & Malone (1997) make the initial steps to categorise IAs in order to aid this identification process. They divide them into human assets, which include the knowledge and expertise of staff; structural assets, which include the infrastructure of an organisation, its intellectual property and the use of its technologies; and relational or customer capital, which includes relationships with customers and stakeholders. Some practitioners choose to divide IAs differently from this. For example, Brooking (2006) perceives intellectual property as a different category from structural assets, and Kaplan and Norton (2004) expand on their 1992 scorecard to separate informational capital and organisational capital. However, the tripartite method of division is met with a general consensus in the literature: Marr (2005) uses the same tripartite division, as do Brennan & Connell (2000), and the Meritum report (2002). Some researchers have chosen to focus their investigations on one particular category of IAs. Stewart (1997) focuses on human capital, investigating the ways that IA evaluation can help to draw out the tacit knowledge of an organisation, while Wexler (2008) conducted a similar study on organisational memory. Allee (2000) conducted a study on the ways that organisational structure can be optimised to improve intangible assets. Steenkamp and Kashyap (2010) chose to focus more on the ways that relationships with stakeholders can be improved in small organisations. This potential for conducting research on relatively narrow areas of IAs indicates the breadth and complexity of the subject, and suggests that an identification and evaluation of all of an organisation’s IAs will be no small undertaking.

However, there is some dispute over whether categorising intangibles in this way is actually beneficial. Bismuth and Tojo (2008: 232) state that the three elements of IAs overlap and ‘are not always separately identifiable’. Steenkamp and Kashyap (2010) agree, and feel that separating IAs into the three categories is only helpful for aiding managers in the identification of their key value drivers, and should not be used in any IA reports. Abhayawansa and Guthrie (2010) agree that the three values are interrelated and depend upon each other for survival, and Marti (2003: 215) believes that the traditional breakdown of IA into three categories is ‘artificial’ because it does not allow for the fact that the three types of IA work together and depend on each other for success. Relying too heavily on these three categories, Marti (2003) argues, puts an organisation in danger of reductionism because they overlook the dynamism that exists between all intellectual assets, and may mean that important aspects, such as what an organisation *does* with what it has, are overlooked. Knight (1999) does not explicitly discuss the three-part categorisation of IAs, but does warn against making the evaluation of IAs too prescriptive, asserting that each organisation needs to set its own objectives for utilising its intellectual capital. No two organisations, even those working towards similar ends, are exactly the same, and each organisation must consider its own aims and objectives when evaluating its intellectual assets. What can be taken from this is that the categorisation of IAs posited by Edvinsson & Malone (1997) amongst others can be useful for initial identification of intellectual assets, but that any further evaluation or analysis calls for a system that allows for the interrelated aspects of IAs and how they impact on each other. However, no such system was positively identified in the literature and it remains a matter of conjecture.

## 3.1.3. Problems with intellectual asset theory

One clear problem with the research to date is that while there is a great deal of information concerning the theory of IA management, there are very few publications showing theory being put to practice. Wexler (2002) complains of a lack of guidelines in current research which would enable organisations to implement IA evaluations. Larsen *et al.* (2001) blame lack of disclosure amongst organisations for this problem, and Davenport & Desouza (2003) and Brennan & Connell (2000) agree, believing that organisations are unwilling to disclose their IA reports because as knowledge of an asset broadens, its core value decreases which creates a motivational problem for developing assets.Johnson *et al.* (2006) expand on this, stating that organisations working on developing their IAs face a challenge of uniqueness versus comparability when it comes to reporting on their results. On the one hand, they wish to keep their competitive advantage if they have an asset which is unique to them, but on the other hand they have no way of determining how well they are doing in comparison to other organisations unless they report on their assets. As long as this fear of disclosure remains, it will be difficult to fully determine the most effective methods of IA evaluation and employment being used, or set up any kind of benchmarking system.

Another issue holding back the development of IA theory identified in the literature is reluctance on the part of managers to spend time and money on developing their IAs. Sveiby (1997) observes that the investments in IAs, such as staff training programmes, can appear as a negative on balance sheets because there is no obvious or immediate financial return, and this can make managers unwilling to spend money on intangibles, a problem which is also discussed by Edvinsson & Malone (1997). Bakhshi (2012) is in agreement, stating that ‘policies that create measurable value are favoured. Those which enhance social welfare in ways that are less straightforward to measure are often seen as lower priority and fall victim to the spending axe’ (Bakhshi, 2012: 3). Edvinsson & Malone (1997: 145) also emphasise the point that IA management requires careful planning:

‘no matter how strong an organisation is in one or two of these factors, if a third factor is weak, or worse, misdirected, that organisation has *no* potential to turn its IC into corporate value’.

A full and thorough IA development programme is a large and expensive undertaking, and this may deter organisations with limited resources. The lack of a universal system for evaluating and managing IAs causes another problem. Sullivan (1999) states that there is no model that will suit every organisation, and that methods of evaluation must be tailored to fit an organisation’s own strategic aims and priorities. The idea that there is no common consensus for which IAs are of most value is supported by the fact that studies conducted by Steenkamp and Kashyap (2010) found that organisations valued relational capital as the most important, whereas an investigation by Brennan and Connell (2000) found that human capital was prioritised. Each organisation has its own needs and its own priorities. While an organisation-specific IA evaluation system, once developed, will have the great benefit of being adapted to suit an organisation’s specific requirements, the development of such a model will inevitably use up time and resources, which may act as a deterrent.

However, the development of IA theory is not limited to problems surrounding its adoption by organisations; there are also gaps and flaws that have been identified in the theory itself. Stenson and Oppenheim (2000) point out that because investment in information is usually long-term and does not display immediate results, it is extremely difficult to prove its benefits and be seen as a priority. One problem is the fact that the vast majority of the research has only focused on the benefits that can be gained from IAs and not paid attention to the drawbacks that they could also carry. Caddy (2000) feels that the focus on intellectual *assets* has meant that research has failed to consider intellectual *liabilities,* the unseen aspects of an organisation which may hold it back, which require just as much attention. Caddy (2000) and Marti (2003) believe that intellectual capital can more accurately be described as a net figure which subtracts intellectual liabilities from intellectual assets in order to provide a more accurate estimation of an organisation’s IC wealth. A lack of dynamism in the thinking surrounding IA management is another flaw detected by researchers. Edvinsson and Malone (1997) point out that the missing element in systems of IA evaluation is time, and how organisations evolve or adapt their values. Organisations must therefore be careful to regularly update their performance measures and perform frequent reviews of their organisational objectives to prevent the management of their IAs from becoming redundant. Marti (2003) criticises the lack of dynamism in current models of evaluation, and the lack of focus on the actions organisations take to utilise their IAs once they have been identified. The idea that once identified, IAs can be measured in the same way that tangible assets can has also been called into question. Marti (2003) warns against attempts to quantify IAs, believing that efforts to assimilate intangible and tangible assets are abortive, and stating that a more qualitative and strategic model for developing IAs needs to be used. Chaharbaghi and Cripps (2006) also believe that IAs are impossible to calculate, and call for a more qualitative evaluation which current models of evaluation do not allow for. Mouritsen *et al*. (2001: 364) concur, stating that reports should focus not only on ‘what’ but also on ‘why’, ‘how’ and ‘who’ when it comes to reporting on IAs. In other words, simply knowing what IAs an organisation has is of limited value without also knowing who is responsible for them, how they are being used and why the organisation values them.

Intellectual assets, simply *because* they are intangible and do not have the years of evolving assessment measures that tangible assets have, are surrounded by ambiguity and complications. Because organisations need to capitalise on their IAs *now* in order to compete in an increasingly knowledge-based market, there is not time to fully develop IA theory. The key points that can be taken from the literature are not just that IAs are essential to the success of organisations, but also that there is no ‘one size fits all’ method for identifying and evaluating intellectual assets. Each organisation must start by identifying its strategic aims and priorities, and develop a method of IA management from that starting point. Several practitioners have developed IA evaluation models in an effort to measure and develop intellectual assets, and these will be discussed in the following section.

# 3.2 Models of evaluation

The previous section provided an overview of the developing theories concerning intellectual assets. This section continues to focus on general IA theory, and will discuss the intellectual asset measurement and evaluation models developed by various practitioners. First, the review will discuss what exactly is meant by ‘measuring’ when it concerns intellectual assets, and why organisations need to measure their IAs. Next the most influential models will be discussed, and then the review will examine their strengths and weaknesses, and what gaps still need to be filled in order to achieve a comprehensive and all-inclusive IA evaluation model.

## 3.2.1. What is meant by ‘measure’?

Before discussing the models, it would be useful to consider what is actually meant by measuring intellectual assets. Marr and Chatzkel (2004: 226) state that practitioners should be clearer when defining terms, and whether ‘measures’ signify a performance tendency, a scientific measurement, or a financial value. There is very little evidence in the literature as a whole to specify the type of measurement intended, aside from the obvious attempts to quantify and benchmark intellectual assets, and a set definition of IA measurement would be valuable, especially as much of the data provided by intellectual assets are difficult to quantify. Marr et al (2003: 442) define IA measurement as the ‘attempt to develop metrics that inform strategy formulation and implementation, improve disclosure, benchmark performance, and predict future business performance’, suggesting value drivers and strategy maps as a means of quantifying and evaluating intellectual assets. However, the findings in the first section of this review indicated that while some IAs, the number of patents owned by an organisation, for example, are relatively easy to place a quantitative value on, others, such as staff expertise, prove far more difficult.

The reasons for measuring IAs also need to be specified before moving on to the models themselves. Kannan & Aulbur (2004) state that while some intangibles may already be obvious to the organisation, using IA evaluation tools can lead to the discovery of assets that had been hidden, knowledge flow patterns and best practice identification. It can also help to identify areas that require more attention, and assets that have fallen out of use. This compliments Canibano et al (2002), who add that relying on financial measures to evaluate organisational wealth could lead to funds being wrongly allocated to resources that have fallen out of use. Marr et al (2003) add that having a method of benchmarking IAs can help an organisation to see where it stands in relation to competitors. The question is whether IAs can be quantified in a way that will allow for this, and to determine that an examination of existing IA evaluation tools is needed.

## 3.2.2. Measurement models

This section will consider the most influential and commonly cited IA evaluation models. Many of the existing methods of evaluation are adapted from the three seminal models developed by Kaplan & Norton (1992), Sveiby (1997) and Edvinsson & Malone (1997), and these three will be discussed first. Next, one of the more complex adaptations will be examined: the Dow Intellectual Asset Measurement model (1996), which took inspiration from the research being conducted by Edvinsson at Skandia. Finally, one of the more recent models, the FIVA model by Green & Ryan (2005) will be discussed in order to see how IA management models have developed.

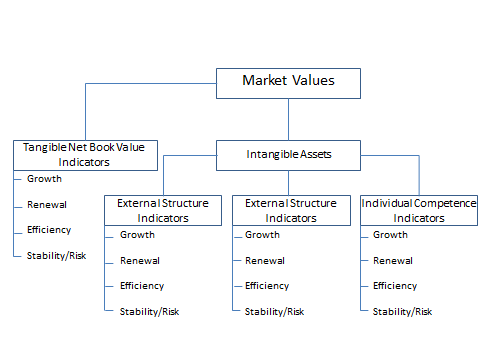
In 1992, Robert Kaplan and David Norton developed a business model which would allow organisations to think laterally about their strategic aims and consider intangible assets alongside traditional financial measures. The model was called the Balanced Scorecard (BSC), and consisted of four management perspectives: financial, customer, internal business perspective, and learning and growth (Figure 3.1). The financial perspective allows the organisation to assess how it is seen by shareholders, the internal business perspective allows them to consider what the organisational priorities are and what they must excel at, the customer perspective allows them to consider their value in the eyes of stakeholders and customers, and the learning and growth perspective allows them to look to the future and consider how organisational value can be improved (Kaplan & Norton, 1992: 72). These four perspectives are then given a maximum of eight sub-categories each, acting as key performance indicators (KPIs). Limiting the number of these KPIs forces an organisation to prioritise, and think carefully about its strategic aims. The scorecard can then be used to observe diverse aspects of the organisation as one and track their progress over time, and has the additional advantage of allowing managers to ‘see whether improvement in one area may have been achieved at the expense of another’ (1992: 73).



###### Figure 3.1. The Balanced Scorecard (adapted from Kaplan & Norton: 1992, 2001)

Marr et al (2004) discuss the value of employing the BSC to evaluate intellectual assets, believing that the linking of performance drivers and the combination of financial and intangible assets provides the best overall view of organisational health. Evans and Alire (2013) and Mengel and Lewis (2011) agree that the Balanced Scorecard has proven itself extremely useful for tracking how well an organisation is meeting its objectives. Self (2004) provides a case study for the implementation of the Balanced Scorecard within a library, and states that the limitations imposed on the number of performance drivers is valuable as it allows an organisation to realise its strategic priorities, and this enables the organisation to utilise its IAs in the most productive way. Mackenzie (2011) states that one of the benefits of the scorecard is its flexibility, which means that it can be adapted and used by a variety of different organisations. However, Self (2004: 104) also states that while the implementation of BSC in the case study was an overall success, there were some drawbacks, namely that while the scorecard can indicate where weaknesses lie, ‘it does not reveal the solution’. Similarly, while Bourne and Bourne (2005) acknowledge the various benefits of using the BSC as an evaluation tool, they acknowledge that it has pitfalls: the amount of time it takes to develop and implement the scorecard, the fact that not all assets can be easily quantified, and the effort needed to keep the scorecard relevant in an ever-evolving climate.

Another key measurement tool is the Intangible Asset Monitor developed by Karl Erik Sveiby (1997). The monitor divides intangible assets from the tangible net book value. It then separates the intangibles into three categories: Internal structure indicators which measure the formal and informal infrastructure of the organisation, external structure indicators which measure the organisation’s relationships with external bodies and stakeholders, and individual competence indicators which measure staff expertise and effectiveness (Figure 3.2). These three measures parallel the traditional tripartite division of intellectual assets into structural, relational, and human capital. Each section is then given four measures: growth, renewal, efficiency, and stability/risk.



###### Figure 3.2. The Intangible Asset Monitor (adapted from Sveiby, 1997)

Choong (2008) states that the widespread use of evaluation models based on the intangible asset monitor indicates that it has a good success rate, and that its focus on the dynamic aspects of IAs allows for more long-term evaluation. Brennan & Connell (2000: 224) believe that the asset monitor has an advantage over the balanced scorecard when measuring IAs in that it looks at organisations specifically from a knowledge perspective, and the development of IAs over time. However, Levy & Duffey (2007) observe that the model has no method for comparing the intellectual assets of one organisation with that of another.

Edvinsson (1997: 210) also created a measurement model to evaluate the intellectual assets at Skandia, designed to ‘compliment and augment’ traditional financial measures rather than replace them. The model takes inspiration from both Sveiby (1997) and Kaplan & Norton (1992) to produce a balanced navigator designed to aid strategic planning. The navigator is composed of five focus areas: financial, customer, process, human, and renewal and development, with the main focus being on human assets (Figure 3.3). Key performance indicators are provided for each focus area which are then quantified and tracked over time. The intention is to provide an organisation with an overview of its health from past (financial measures) to present (customer, human and process measures), and provide targets for the future (renewal and development).



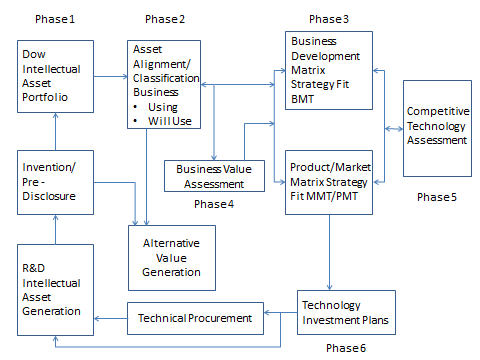
###### Figure 3.3. The Skandia Navigator (adapted from Edvinsson & Malone, 1997)

Brennan & Connell (2000) state that the navigator’s focus on predicting future performance will inevitably lead to more considered and successful managerial decisions. However, Kannan & Aulbur (2004:393) state that while the model has definite value, it, like the intangible asset monitor, does not ‘factor in the effect of human behaviour and attitudes, social networks or the importance of tacit knowledge transfer’. Levy & Duffey (2007: 385) observe that the navigator may not be useful to investors in an organisation because there is little correlation between stock-based market value and the navigator’s metrics, but concedes that as the navigator was designed primarily as an internal evaluation tool, it is useful for monitoring performance goals.

Another frequently cited IA measurement model is the Dow Intellectual Asset Management Model demonstrated by Gordon Petrash (1996). They also set out to track organisational health through IAs over time, developing a complex six step asset evaluation process. The six phases of evaluation are as follows:

* the portfolio phase where the organisation’s IAs are identified
* the classification phase where the use of the IAs are identified
* the strategy phase which integrates the IAs into organisational strategy in order to optimise them, the valuation phase where IA management is developed
* the competitive assessment phase which evaluates the assets in the context of their competitive environment
* the investment phase where technology essential for achieving strategic objectives is purchased (Figure 3.4)

The process is then repeated.



###### Figure 3.4. The Dow Intellectual Asset Monitor (adapted from Petrash, 1996)

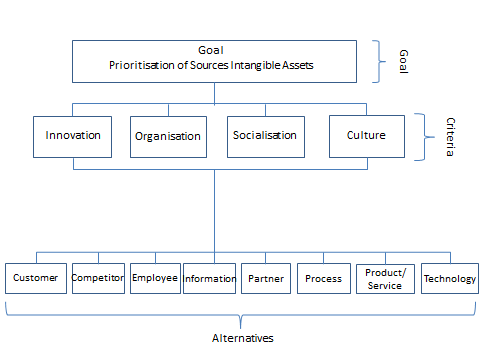
Brennan & Connell (2000) believe that the reiterative nature of the model will allow for a more continuous and dynamic evaluation and utilisation of IAs. However, the scale of this model is a possible drawback. Petrash (1996) states that 75 teams were utilised for the management of the asset management project, which took several years to develop. While Dow is a large and financially lucrative company, many other organisations may not have the resources for a project of this nature.

A more recent evaluation model is the Framework of Intangible Valuation Areas (FIVA) developed by Green and Ryan (2005:47). A bottom-up strategy is used to assess the advantages and disadvantages of each identified asset in order to develop strategic objectives (Figure 3.5). The IA value drivers are divided into eight sections:

* customer, evaluating the organisation’s external relationships with clients
* competitor, evaluating the reputation of the organisation in the market
* employee, evaluating the human capital and expertise of the organisation
* information, evaluating the organisation’s intellectual property
* partner, evaluating the advantages of the organisation’s collaboration with external bodies; process, evaluating the organisation’s internal structure
* product/service, evaluating the organisation’s ability to develop and deliver its services
* technology, evaluating the value gained from the organisation’s hardware and software.

These value drivers (alternatives) are quantified and the results are combined with the four IA objectives (criteria): innovation, organisation, socialisation, and culture. This allows the organisation to monitor the progress of a wide range of intangibles, and use them to set

strategic goals.



###### Figure 3.5. FIVA (adapted from Green & Ryan, 2005)

The FIVA model differs from those previously mentioned in that it focuses entirely on intellectual assets. Green and Ryan (2005) intended it as a framework for ranking objectives and performance drivers specifically concerned with IAs, working with the theory that organisations would be more productive if they developed their strategic goals after evaluating the IAs in their possession, rather than formulating the goals first then trying to fit their intellectual assets into them. Levy & Duffey (2007) note that the model’s design allows for repeated and continuous evaluation of IAs, but conclude that it has not yet proved to be a superior method of measurement to those created before it. In fact, Green and Ryan (2005:48) concede that the FIVA model is an ‘initial step’ in reporting on intellectual assets, offering only a method of identification and strategy creation rather that any way of benchmarking assets or indicating how organisations should use them.

## 3.2.3. How effective are these models?

What becomes obvious from an overview of the existing intellectual asset measurement models is that while they have each proved successful to an extent, none have managed to provide an accurate and thorough evaluation of all intellectual assets. Kannan & Aulbur (2004) feel that none of the existing models are completely effective for measuring intellectual assets because none of them are able to account for human behaviour and approaches to their work, intra-organisational relationships or tacit knowledge and how it is communicated. Much of this is due to the inherently intangible nature of IAs. Bontis (1998:72) discusses the challenges of measuring intellectual capital, stating that the main flaw in existing models is the reliance on purely quantitative data: ‘the tacitness of intellectual capital may not allow analysis to ever measure it using economic variables’. Choong (2008) finds flaws with the lack of holistic measures in the models, believing that intellectual asset measurement is in need of a method that will accommodate changes in IAs over time on a continuous basis. Levy & Duffey (2007) conclude their review of IA evaluation tools by stating that none of the existing models have proved themselves superior, and that an effective method for placing a value on intangible assets has not yet been established. It is possible to conclude from this that a different kind of assessment is needed to manage IAs from traditional evaluation tools. The first section of this review demonstrated that intellectual assets are very different in nature from traditional financial measures, and therefore it is possible that the attempts being made to quantify and attribute a financial value to IAs are erroneous. It is possible that a new method of evaluation, one which relies on qualitative measures, needs to be developed.

# 3.3 Intellectual Assets in Libraries

This section initially discusses why it is important for libraries to take steps to evaluate their IAs. It will then cover the complications found with measuring IAs in a library environment. Next the methods used for assessing intellectual assets in libraries will be discussed, and finally the review will cover the gaps in the literature which is currently available.

## 3.3.1 Why should libraries measure their intellectual assets?

The 21st century has witnessed an increasing awareness that public and non-profit organisations have as much to benefit from intellectual asset management as private businesses (Bezhani, 2010). However, it is generally agreed that the same evaluation models cannot be used: Bezhani (2010) observes that the public sector has very different aims and purposes from private businesses and therefore needs to develop alternative IA measurement strategies, and Showers (2015) agrees that the things that make libraries of such great value ‘are difficult to measure and often resist definition by numbers’ (Showers, 2015: 48).

Library practitioners have suggested that further modification is needed in order to adapt intellectual asset management to their specific sector: Kostagiolas and Asonitis (2009) observe that research into IA measurement in libraries is very limited, and this is an issue which needs to be resolved in an increasingly competitive atmosphere where libraries are facing funding cuts and have to prove their worth to their parent organisations. Bezhani (2010) agrees, observing that while more and more information organisations have been recognising the need to measure their IAs, there have not been enough studies to accurately identify trends or generate statistics or methods of best practice. Cullen (2006) states that there is increasing pressure on libraries to prove their worth, especially as the emergence of alternative providers of information via the Internet is ever on the increase. Kettunen (2007: 409) agrees, stating that libraries are ‘increasingly accountable for results and face growing expectations’ which makes it essential that they develop methods of proving their worth and implement strategies for measuring their assets. Corrall and Sriborisutsakul (2010) suggest adapting IA categories for libraries to include a fourth section: collections and services. This is the area that library users would be the most familiar with, and as they are the key stakeholders it would be advisable to give them special attention in the evaluation process.

There is a paucity of research on IAs within libraries. In addition to this, all of the data provided in the research are case-specific and thus not easily adaptable to providing best-practice recommendations or synthesis of results. The reasons for this will be explored later. A further complication arises from the fact that there are very few studies which examine a library institution as a whole when evaluating its intellectual assets, from managers to front-line staff to library users, or that focus on more than one of the four aforementioned aspects of intellectual assets. These gaps in the data also make it difficult to synthesise results. The following sections will explore the difficulties found with evaluating IAs in libraries, the methods that have been attempted, and what gaps in the research still need to be filled in order to produce an effective IA evaluation tool for libraries.

## 3.3.2. Problems identified with IA measurement in libraries

A key theme in the literature is the emphasis researchers put on the fact that the evaluation of IA in libraries must inevitably be context-specific. Corrall and Sriborisutsakul (2010: 1) found in their multi-site case study in Thailand that institutional culture is very important, and that a library’s IA evaluation ‘cannot be separated from its context’. Brophy (2008) agrees, stating that when measuring IAs in libraries it is essential that the specific organisation’s aims, environment and services are taking into account. Bezhani (2010) admits that differences between libraries would make it difficult to develop a universal method of measuring IAs because each separate organisation would need to adapt it to meet its own needs. Showers (2015) adds a further complication by stating that the rapidly changing needs of library users and the constantly evolving field of information technology mean that library priorities and values need to be constantly changing as well in order to remain relevant. This adds greater difficulty to evaluating library assets.

This is very similar to the findings discussed in section 2.1.3 of this chapter concerning different organisations and businesses, and how there can be no ‘one size fits all’ IA evaluation model. Pors *et al* (2004) argue that the main priority for libraries should be identifying organisational culture and encouraging communication. Their study compared libraries in Denmark and the UK, and discovered that the differences in organisational culture between institutions in the two countries made developing a set quality assessment tool redundant. Duren (2010: 167) concedes that it is very difficult to implement a successful method of benchmarking for library IAs because of the ‘influence of its organisational culture and leadership style’. There is also some disparity in the literature concerning which element of intellectual assets should be given priority by librarians. Kostagiolas and Asonitis (2009) emphasise relational capital as the most important, arguing that a library’s primary function is to provide a service to its users and stakeholders, and that this is especially true within the academic sector because of the growing needs and demands of higher education students. White (2006), on the other hand, argues that human capital is the most important aspect of IA in libraries, as it is the staff who provide the greatest resource of information because they have first-hand, and often long-term, experience of the strengths and weaknesses of their organisation's IAs. This also serves to support the theory that each separate library has its own priorities and must design an IA measurement model to suit them.

## 3.3.3. Methods of evaluation

There are various IA assessment methods for libraries suggested in the literature, with varying degrees of success. Asonitis and Kostagiolas (2010) performed a case study in Greek libraries using the Delphi method and analytical hierarchy process (AHP) to measure IAs. This method involves professionals within the organisation in several rounds of questionnaires which are responded to anonymously. The largely qualitative data are then analysed in order to reveal patterns and priorities which can then be used to create strategic aims for developing the library’s IAs. This allows libraries to tailor their strategic plan to meet the needs of their specific library. However, the library’s external stakeholders are not mentioned in the study, and it is not clear whether the method was used to evaluate all intellectual assets.

Broady-Preston and Felice (2006) also placed emphasis on the importance of conducting qualitative reviews of an organisation. They believe that IA quality, specifically that relating to customer service, can only be accurately measured through interacting directly with library users and allowing them to expand on issues which the librarians themselves may not have considered. Broady-Preston *et al* (2006), using the University of Malta library as a case study, focused on Customer Relationship Management (CRM) to identify how the library’s relational assets can be improved. They used focus groups and questionnaires to collect qualitative data which were then analysed in order to detect patterns and improve service quality. However, this method only considered the relational capital of IA and would therefore not provide sufficient data for a complete IA analysis. Cullen (2006) suggests using a variant of SERVQUAL methods as an IA evaluation tool, where focus groups are employed to examine service components of the library and assess how they could be improved upon. Cullen (2006) argues that this would encourage intra-organisational communication and help to develop cohesive strategic aims throughout the library. Again, there is no mention made of external stakeholders, and this process seems to be appropriate only in the initial stage of developing strategic aims for the library. Evans and Alire (2013) discuss LibQual+ an evaluation method adapted from SERVQUAL and Total Quality Management research. LibQual+ entails the measurement of user quality perception and expectation in regards to three areas of library service: Affect of Service, Information Control, and Library as a Place. McKnight discusses Customer Value Discovery, which is described as being similar to LibQual+ except that it allows users to express what they think is important to them in the library rather than asking them to evaluate categories which the librarians think is important. Both methods have been described as valuable in terms of determining user satisfaction with library services, but again only focus on the relational aspect of IAs.

Four studies focused on the employment of Return on Investment (ROI) as a method of measuring IAs (Kostagiolas & Asonitis, 2009; Simon, 2011; Poll, 2003; White, 2007). This is a quantitative economic methodology developed to evaluate intangibles based on an estimation of how much money a stakeholder would be willing to spend in order to retain a service (Kostagiolas & Asonitis: 2009). Simon (2011: 138) believes that ROI provides a ‘standard financial metric’ which allows libraries to both measure the value of their services, but also provides a benchmarking tool by which they can compare their services to those of other libraries. Poll (2003: 5) argues that it is vital for academic libraries to ‘prove the benefits achieved by their existence’, and that while there is no proven method of assessing a library’s service value, generating proxy prices by estimating the financial value of library services can provide data to indicate quality of service. White (2007) discusses the use of Return on Assets (ROA), which is similar to ROI except that it allows for the fact that a library may not have financially invested in an asset that they are using to great value (e.g. staff expertise, which could have been acquired before a staff member joined the library team). This enables the library to measure its human capital. Arvidson *et al* (2010) discuss another adaptation, Social Return on Investment (SROI). This is a process which ‘combines, in the form of a cash flow, the ratio of discounted costs and benefits over a certain period of time’ (Arvidson *et al*, 2010: 4). They argue that while SROI cannot determine how and why certain assets have the impact that they do, and that the quantification process does little to identify asset value concerned with more intangible aspects like relationships and expertise, this process helps to express the intrinsic value of a library’s assets. Kennedy and Tyler (2011) also discuss the use of SROI in libraries, arguing that ‘the SROI model was chosen for its ability to measure social benefit and its ability to translate outcomes into tangible monetary values which are effective headline figures to attract the attention of Ministers and policy makers’ (Kennedy and Tyler, 2011: 192). However, the essential principles of attributing a hypothetical price to services remain the same. The main shortcoming of the ROI method is that it is based on conjecture and there is no way of determining whether library users would *actually* be willing to pay the amount they suggest for services. Also it only focuses on two aspect of IA: human, and relational assets. While this is obviously a valuable component, it does not take into consideration aspects like organisational structure and intellectual property, which are also important contributors to a library’s IAs but cannot easily be attributed financial worth. In 2012, the ALMA UK project conducted an evaluation of library services which aimed at quantifying their assets. The process involved a nationwide series of case studies which calculated ‘the costs to a library user in addition to payments via taxes for the operation of the library. These costs provide a proxy for how much the user values the services by considering time invested and incidental expenditure, such as travel expenses’ (ALMA UK, 2012: 13). These figures were considered alongside community benefits, such as revenue created from library users patronising local cafes, etc. and the savings for the library users by not using alternative services (bookshops, Internet cafes, etc.) in order to calculate a quantitative value for the library service. Again, however, this process does not consider the more intangible assets such as staff expertise or how well the library functions internally, and is also based on the conjecture that, for example, a library user *would* use alternative services. For example, a library user may not be able to afford to buy books in a shop, and therefore their calculated savings are not applicable.

Overall, the most popular method of measuring IAs in the literature is the employment of the Balanced Scorecard (BSC). Developed by Kaplan and Norton in 1992, the scorecard allows organisations to give equal attention to the assessment of all their assets by splitting them into four categories: financial, customer, internal process, and innovation and learning. Each heading would then be given around eight sub-categories which act as key performance indicators, and the organisation can use the scorecard to assess and track the progress of each KPI in order to improve its overall performance. The greatest advantage of the scorecard is that it allows an organisation to give equal attention to the various components that benefit it. Kaplan and Norton (2004) further developed the Scorecard in 2004 in order to include intellectual assets more explicitly, by making divisions in the Learning and Growth capital section to specify Human Capital, Information Capital and Organisation Capital, thereby encouraging users of the scorecard to give special attention to the more intangible aspects of their organisation's worth. Jones (2003) applies the Balanced Scorecard model to special interest libraries, conducting a case study of the UK’s Financial Services Authority and developed the Knowledge Management Scorecard. This allowed the organisation to attribute key KM objectives to the scorecard’s four areas and generate KPIs which would be necessary for the organisation to achieve those objectives.

Kostagiolas and Kitsiou (2008) and Bezhani (2010) agree that the development of KPIs which evaluate the quality of library services as seen by both staff members and library users is the best way of assessing IAs and identifying areas for improvement. While the scorecard is not targeted specifically at evaluating IAs, Kostagiolas and Asonitis (2009) question the need for a separate measurement system especially tailored for the measurement of library intellectual assets, believing that intellectual asset performance indicators should not be separated from tangible assets if a library is to reap the most overall benefits. Ceynowa (2000: 162) agrees, stating that the BSC as it stands would allow for wider evaluation by ‘systematically linking the user perspective with strategically significant evaluations of finance, processes and potentials’. Kettunen (2007) also suggests that the scorecard can be used by academic libraries in its original form as designed by Kaplan and Norton, believing that tangible and intangible assets should be considered as one. Duren (2010) agrees, providing that the library employs key performance indicators within the scorecard which are culture-specific. Leitner (2002) applied BSC to the measurement of intellectual assets in Austrian university libraries, developing performance indicators to assess the input, output and impact of library services and internal management. Leitner (2002) found that the process allowed libraries to think more cohesively about their organisational goals, and that the BSC increased transparency and communication. However, he also discovered that it was impossible to generate a generic scorecard to suit the needs of all libraries, which suggests that some modifications may be necessary if the method is going to be effective for libraries. Taylor (2011) adds that a further complication may arise from staff resistance to being evaluated in this manner, stating that while some employees might lobby for an area they are involved with to be considered as a performance indicator, others might feel that they are being scrutinised and become resentful.

Self (2003: 62) employed the BSC for a case study at the University of Virginia Library. While the study did not focus specifically on intellectual assets, Self finds that the project had great success when it came to assessing and developing service quality, but that ‘some values could not be translated into metrics’. Poll (2008) emphasises the importance of frequently updating the performance indicators when using the scorecard in a library environment in order to reflect the changing needs of users in the rapidly developing world of information provision. Self (2003) identifies weaknesses in the scorecard method, such as the fact that some assets are very difficult to measure or prove too costly to measure. However, he concludes that the employment of the scorecard in the University of Virginia library was an overall success. White (2004) and Somers (2005) suggest that the BSC can be adapted for the measurement of IAs in libraries and other public sector organisations. The scorecard could be adapted specifically for IAs to measure the four library IA components posited by Corrall and Sriborisutsakul (2010), and would allow a library to think laterally, make decisions about where their IA priorities lie, and track their progress.

Corrall and Sriborisutsakul (2010: 5) suggest that using a mixed methodology is best for assessing the IAs in academic libraries in order to fulfil ‘both theoretical and practical aims’. That is, a library should seek to analyse both the qualitative data provided by employees and external stakeholders, they should also attempt to provide some quantitative data and benchmarking in order to fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of their IAs. Voobij (2009) and Poll (2008) agree, arguing that while qualitative evaluation is essential in order to get an idea of a library’s organisation-specific IC requirements, benchmarking is also useful. Brophy (2008) and Poll (2008) also both recommend using mixed methods for assessing IAs in the academic library environment. One of the main shortcomings in the literature is that too few of the studies have attempted a mixed methods evaluation of library intellectual assets. While the qualitative studies that have been performed have produced some interesting data, their findings could be verified if triangulated with a degree of quantitative data drawn from the same research area.

## 3.3.4. Gaps in the research

What becomes clear from the literature is that there is a definite lack of comprehensive research for assessing intellectual assets in libraries. Simon (2011), Kostagiolas and Asonitis (2009), Bezhani (2010), and Self (2003) all bemoan the absence of studies in the field. Another notable point is that every case study surveyed in this review made clear that their findings were limited and should not be applied widely. This is partly because of the very culture-specific aspect of IAs in libraries which has already been discussed, meaning that any kind of statistical benchmarking of assets is tenuous and debatable. It is also notable that very few researchers have attempted to measure *all* intellectual assets owned by a library. Many focus on only one aspect, e.g. relational capital. Only Corrall and Sriborisutsakul (2010) and Bezhani (2010) have attempted a more complete evaluation process. The fact that these studies have only emerged in the last year may indicate that the recent cuts in public spending for libraries has made practitioners increasingly aware that they must prove their worth in order to survive.

Significantly, despite researchers (Kostagiolas & Asonitis, 2009; Broady-Preston & Felice, 2006; Broady-Preston *et al*, 2006) stating the importance of relational capital to libraries, there is next to no research which targets external stakeholders specifically. The studies that do tend to only focus on the relational capital of libraries at the expense of human and structural capital: only Cullen (2006) and Broady-Preston and Felice (2006) proposed a method of including external stakeholders directly through widespread and frequent customer surveys and the methods they used excluded other elements of IAs. Also, the studies that do mention collecting data from library users do not offer any in-depth analysis of the collected data and do not reveal any actual results. This, however, could be because of the ethical implications which restrict sharing information about service users which may be deemed private.

It is obvious from the tentative findings offered in the literature that most of the data generated can only be applied locally. No single method of evaluating library IAs has been put forward which indicates that it would be suitable for the whole profession. Most of the researchers were unwilling to produce any definite results. Simon (2011) admits that there is very little research available which identifies best practice in the area. However, this review has indicated that while each library may have to tailor evaluation tools to suit their specific institutional requirements, the development of an IA measurement tool for libraries would not be impossible. The CRM method posited by Broady-Preston and Felice (2006) is only suitable for measuring relational assets. Similarly, the ROI methods employed by four studies has the obvious drawback of being conjectural, but also cannot be used to assess all IAs. The Balanced Scorecard, however, appears to have strong potential. The main drawback in the majority of the findings is that many of the researchers have proved unwilling to adapt the BSC to the evaluation of intellectual assets, despite Kaplan and Norton's (2004) own attempts at doing just that. Most consider adapting the KPIs in each of the four scorecard categories sufficient. However, in an examination of assets that are specifically intangible, this method is inadequate. White (2004) and Corrall and Sriborisutsakul (2010) have both suggested that the scorecard could be modified to specifically evaluate IAs in libraries, but further research needs to be conducted for any definite suggestions to be put forward.

In conclusion, the lack of available research into the measurement of intellectual assets in libraries makes it impossible to offer up any suggestions for best-practice, and gives an opportunity for research. However, while it is evident that libraries are defined by their organisational culture and cannot be grouped together under one universal method of assessment together with profit making organisations, there is potential for the development of a method of evaluation that can be tailored to meet specific needs, that still focuses on intellectual assets. The Balanced Scorecard appears to have the most potential for this venture, because it could be modified further to specify the IAs which apply to libraries, but much more research is required before any definite conclusions can be made.

# 3.4. The role of special collections libraries

This chapter will explore literature focusing on the changing role of libraries in the twenty-first century, specifically libraries which house extensive special collections like the BL. The major themes within the literature will be discussed, starting with that which relates to the conflicts between preservation and access, as this is one of the key concerns for the modern librarian, and is mentioned as an ongoing issue at the BL by many of the participants in this research. This section will go on to discuss the perceived role of special collections in twenty-first century libraries, with particular emphasis on national libraries, the demands for increased access to collections, and the pressure librarians face to preserve their resources. The issue of digitisation, and its perceived benefits and shortcomings, will be included in the next section.

## 3.4.1 Conflicts between Preservation and Access

The conflict between preservation of resources and widening access features heavily in the literature concerning special collections libraries. Bradshaw and Wagner (2000) observe that with demands for wider access to information ever on the increase, the place of special collections, to which access is often restricted, becomes uncertain. Traitser (2000) writes of the conflict between user demands and the need to preserve fragile or rare material for future generations, and indicates that this will not be an issue that can be easily resolved. In addition to this, libraries are being increasingly assessed by how much traffic they can generate, either physically or online. This also applies to the collections held at the British Library. Pritchard (2009) argues that if special collections are not being made regular use of their perceived importance will be diminished, in spite of the exclusivity and monetary value of the items they hold. The Internet, she argues, has done much to promote special collections and bring them back into public consciousness, but because of the underlying problems of lack of qualified staff and funding to properly catalogue the collections and get them into a usable condition, they are largely ‘rendered invisible’ to users (Pritchard, 2009: 177). Mandel (2004) emphasises that special collections librarians must develop a strategic plan for making their catalogue of material accessible to users while not causing undue damage to the collection, and Albanese (2005: 40) expands on this, stating that librarians can only fully capitalise on the full potential of their collections through ‘funding, innovation, institutional strategy, and, perhaps above all... leadership.’ However, the issue of funding is vital here. As Traitser (2000) observes, unless librarians have the money to implement conservation and comprehensive cataloguing, the conflicts between demands for increased access to special collections and the need to care for the collections themselves will continue to be problematic.

## 3.4.2 The Importance of Special Collections

Special collections, as Gundersheimer (2000) observes, have always had a role as emblems of their governing body’s prestige, and as a means of attracting scholars. Pritchard (2009) argues that large collections of generally available texts are becoming increasingly ubiquitous in libraries, and it is the possession of unique special collections that make institutions stand out. Mandel (2004: 110) writes that ‘it is especially important to build Special Collections that are integrated into the organisation.’ Collections that stand alone and play no part in promoting the governing body that holds them, whether it is a national library, a university or a private business, will quickly fall out of use.

An additional concern is that the same prestige which makes institutions unique and attractive can also make the collections themselves seem elitist: Waters (2009) emphasises that these collections have a reputation for only being accessible to select academic groups. Allen (2003: 65) concurs, naming the traditional users of special collections as ‘scholars, scientists, and graduate students affiliated with academic and cultural institutions around the world and independent scholars with appropriate credentials’. Special collections can be forbidding, as Traitser (2003) observes, even to those potential users who are part of the academic community. This being kept in mind, special collections run the risk of being considered outdated and irrelevant for the researchers of today especially, as Carter (2009) observes, given the fact that libraries are under more pressure now than ever before to fit in with the goals of their parent institution, which largely involve attracting new users. This pressure to lose the reputation of elitism is in direct conflict with the need to preserve the quality of collections which may be fragile or one-of-a-kind and, as Novotny (2008) writes, this is not an issue that will easily be resolved.

Several authors have focused on the methods used to advertise special collections as a means of promoting both the collections themselves and their governing body. Traitser (2003) states that librarians should be proactive when it comes to advertising the special collections in their care, and develop an outreach program to make people aware of what the collections have to offer. The methods of promotion which are discussed most frequently in the literature are websites, seminars and exhibitions. Brindley (2004) argues that websites have been the key tool for advertising special collections at the British Library as ‘it is viable for [the Library] to reach students, lifelong learners and the general public via digital channels,’ and these are the non-traditional users that the BL need to attract. Traitser (2003) writes of the benefits attached to holding seminars which focus on special collections. It is a method of promotion which is especially useful in collections attached to universities, he argues, as students can be introduced to the collection as part of their studies, and will be made aware of resources which they may not have previously thought to make use of. However, Huttner (1999) argues that exhibitions held by special collections have a wider appeal and will attract the interest of individuals outside of academia. This method has been adopted by the British Library, which has produced many successful and popular exhibitions of its collections since it opened in the late 1990s.

## 3.4.3 Demands for Increased Access

Judging by the literature, the demand for greater access to special collections has grown steadily over the last decade and, according to Bradshaw and Wagner (2000), these new demands are undermining the traditional roles of Special Collection librarians to ensure the upkeep of the items in their care. In a study of new principles set for special collections in the digital age, Kenney and Kroch (2009: 22) report that Special Collection librarians are being encouraged to promote the ‘broadest possible access’ to their collections through digitisation, and Waters (2009) supports this, claiming that increased access to resources improves productivity in scholars. The British Library is already a forerunner in this movement: online access to special collections is excellent, and Novotny (2008) reports of the success of the BL’s 2005 project to widen access to its reading rooms and educate users in how to care for the material they handle.

Many of the authors reviewed discuss the positive sociological implications of widening access to special collections. James (2002) enthuses about making cultural treasures available to the public, and Huttner (1999: 102) believes that rare books and manuscripts should be ‘put into the hands of common folk’. Others discuss the benefits it could bring to the library: Byrd (2001) indicates that wider access will decrease the marginalisation of special collections, and Cloonan and Berger (2003) second this, and claim that digitisation of special collections will increase interest in the originals, and thus add to library traffic. Nogueira (2010) enthuses about Special Collections libraries using Web 2.0 applications such as Flickr.com and LibraryThing.com to increase access to a more diverse user base. One concern raised by Bradshaw and Wagner (2000) is that librarians must not be pressurised into rushing digitisation before they know they can make it sustainable because bad electronic access will deter potential uses rather than attract them. This is something that Baker and Dube (2009: 21) concur with: they warn that the increased demand to libraries’ ‘hidden’ collections mean that a lot more attention will have to be given to ‘stabilising artefacts’. By this they do not just mean ensuring that digital access to collections is of a high standard; they are also concerned about the standard of cataloguing to ensure that users are able to find the resources they require. Albanese (2005) agrees with this, stating that making collections available and usable is the biggest challenge faced by librarians, and that priority should be given to processing the collections themselves and making individual items easy to access before getting the processed collections online can be considered. Overall, the literature demonstrates a positive response to the increasing demand for access to Special Collections, yet also presents an awareness that it will not be an easy thing for institutions which have traditionally only needed to accommodate a select number of users.

Some of the authors who have cited the positive outcomes of allowing wider access to Special Collections have already been mentioned. However, Bradshaw and Wagner (2000) also mention that digital access to Special Collections will enable easier referencing and cataloguing for researchers. Li (2009) describes digital libraries as ‘an electronic information platform for accessing, locating, managing and storing digitised library information resources’ (Li, 2009: 75). In other words, making Special Collections digital not only aids information access and information seeking, but also acts as an archive, storing the collections in a different format. Lynch (2009) is also very positive about digitisation, stating that for the requirements of most users, modern technology can provide facsimiles which are just as good as the originals. Cloonan and Berger (2003) conclude that digital access to collections works as an excellent promotional tool for both the library and its governing body. Huttner (1999) provides what is perhaps the most convincing argument of all for widened access: if a collection is worth saving then it is worth sharing. Albanese (2005: 41) believes that the move towards digitisation signifies a ‘golden age’ for Special Collections, and states that a large part of this is that librarians are able to share knowledge and resources more easily, and create partnerships in order to collaborate on digital preservation. Digital preservation is defined by Dobreva and Ruusalepp (2012) as ‘a key aspect of digital libraries because, without it, future users will not be able to access the wide range of digital resources created and collected today’ (Dobreva and Ruusalepp, 2012: 193). There is also evidence to support the drive to widen access to physical collections. Cloonan and Berger (2003: 91) argue that predictions of a purely digital future for libraries are ‘unfounded and short-sighted’, and that for librarians to think providing digital access to collections is enough would not be pragmatic. Gundersheimer (2000) concurs, based on personal experience of the enjoyment users get from accessing hard copies. Mandel (2004) also believes that access to physical resources in special collections libraries should be readily available, and that librarians should view the challenge in a positive light. Strategy, she argues, is vital if collections are to still be cared for, and although the problem is national, the solution has to be a collaborative effort within each separate institution. Every collection has special requirements, and the library must gain the full support of its governing body to find the solution to the conflicts between access and preservation. Bradshaw & Wagner (2000) go so far as to say that without increased access, special collections will soon become a thing of the past. Special collections are appearing increasingly outmoded in an age of ‘libraries without walls’, and if they do not make a concentrated effort to appeal to a wider user group, they will become ‘easy targets for cutbacks’ (Bradshaw and Wagner, 2000: 526). Ultimately, there are many compelling arguments for widening access to special collections libraries, and the literature indicates that if librarians put in the effort to thoroughly organise their collections and come up with a preservation strategy, there should be no real disadvantages in regards to preservation.

## 3.4.4. The Pressure to Preserve

In contrast to this push towards access, the literature presents an equally convincing argument that it is a librarian’s priority to preserve the items in their care. While the opinion has evolved since Cove (1976: 52) wrote that ‘for purpose of conservation the use of rare books has to be restricted to those who really need them’, the fundamental attitude that preservation is of vital importance for special collections remains. Roberts and Rowley (2004) caution that:

‘It is important to emphasise that university and other libraries also continue to have an archival function, and some manage major special collections of rare books, original manuscripts from significant literary, political and cultural figures, items of original artwork, and a wide variety of other artefacts. All of these need to be preserved and maintained at considerable cost, including staff time and expertise’ (Roberts and Rowley, 2004: 191).

The importance of physical collections is emphasised, and their importance as objects is equally as important as their preservation through digitisation.

Lynch (2009) states that special collection librarians have a responsibility to preserve cultural heritage, and Carter (2009) emphasises the intense personal connections that users feel when able to access an original item, and how they must therefore be preserved for future generations. Traitser (2000) agrees, commenting on the importance of special collection libraries in preserving items for posterity. Forde (2005) believes that thorough and comprehensive cataloguing in special collections is essential, not only for easier access, but also for preservation. If librarians know where every item in the collection is kept, she argues, less time will be wasted in looking for items, and there will be ‘less damage inflicted on papers as readers riffle through them in a more and more agitated way’ (Forde, 2005: 196). Organisation and a great deal of commitment on the part of librarians are needed if the care and preservation of special collections is to be maintained in spite of more frequent use. Baker and Dube (2009: 31) agree that the preservation of collections depends largely on organisation on the parts of librarians, and argue that if special collections are to be effectively cared for in the light of increased access there is a ‘need for a more current and comprehensive manual of conservation treatment practices’ in libraries. They argue that librarians would do well to take the needs of contemporary users into account, and attempt to build a system of preservation around it, rather than keeping preservation methods as they have always been and making users adapt to them. The aim, they believe, is to keep special collections alive and relevant, while at the same time doing everything possible to care for the collection itself.

Novotny (2008) takes recent technological developments into account, stating that those in charge of preserving special collections will have to use different tactics in order to incorporate new technologies such as digitisation, a tool that can be used to forward preservation as well as widen access. Kenney and Kroch (2009) also cite digitisation as a modern solution to the need to preserve collections, with the priority being with items that are rare, unique or fragile. They argue that online facsimiles, as well as scans and photocopies can be used by library users as a substitute for a fragile original document, thus reducing the risk of wear and tear. Rusbridge (2006) agrees that librarians need to become more familiar with digital preservation, although he emphasises that it is not the only method of collection care and there is no way of anticipating what future library users will deem significant. Showers (2015) also points out that the process of digitisation and digital preservation itself is somewhat unstable as ‘the technology will not remain static, but threatens to develop at even more rapid speeds’ (Showers, 2015: 170). A digital facsimile which is accessible and usable today may not be in two years’ time. Therefore, while digital preservation is certainly important, librarians should think of it as an enhancement to, rather than a substitute for, more traditional preservation methods. Nevertheless, the overall consensus is that digitisation can help to solve the conflict between preservation and access.

## 3.4.5 Digitisation

With this in mind, it is hardly surprising that the majority of the literature concerned with the steps that are currently being taken to widen access to library collections focuses on digitisation. Digitisation is defined by Prabhat and Misra (2014) as ‘the process of converting analogue information to a digital format’ (Prabhat and Misra, 2014: 136). Bradshaw and Wagner (2000) and Gundersheimer (2000) both emphasise the usefulness of users being able to handle a digital surrogate of a collection item without causing any damage to the original. Novotney (2008) again mentions the British Library, and its plans to involve users directly in the digitisation process by fitting overhead scanners to the desks in the reading rooms. Albanese (2005: 3) gives a very positive opinion about the future of digitised special collections, stating that students will be able to interact with the collections ‘as never before’. Potten (2009) believes that digitisation is highly useful for promoting collections and attracting non-traditional users, demonstrating that ‘historic libraries are not dead, not stuck in the 19th century.’ However, as vital as digitisation clearly is to libraries which hold rare or fragile material, some authors point out that it may not be enough as far as widening access is concerned. Traitser (2003) argues that having access to a digital facsimile may only make some users want to view the original even more, and that this should not be discouraged. However, there are few suggestions as to how these needs can be met. Byrd (2001) suggests extending opening hours, but concedes that this will have additional costs in staffing and security. None of the literature suggested how these difficulties might be overcome, although it is clear that providing access to originals, not just digital copies, is a valuable asset.

An additional problem to arise from this debate is the preservation of the digital resources themselves. Albanese (2005) observes that no digitised document has yet proved to be as durable as a physical copy. In this sense, digitisation adds to the existing preservation concerns faced by libraries. Pritchard (2009) points out the difficulty of preserving born-digital items, such as audio-visual records, which some collections contain. As technology develops so quickly, there is no way of determining how long a certain method of digitisation will remain relevant and usable, and it is hard for librarians to determine what would make a worthwhile investment. Rusbridge (2006), however, sees the digitisation movement in a more positive light. He argues that digitisation is a relatively new cost, and librarians have not yet worked out how to factor it into their budgeting. This, he continues, is a priority. Librarians cannot afford to be intimidated by the digital movement because it is essential to the preservation of cultural history, and investments in it should be a priority. However, even if enough was invested in the durability of digital resources, Albanese (2005) argues, it cannot be thought of as a substitute. Looking at a digital facsimile, he believes, will never be the same as seeing the original. Hyams (2009) agrees with this, declaring that the idea that digital facsimiles could replace the originals in term of access is unrealistic, and Potten (2009: 31) states that rather than discouraging access to original items, digital copies ‘have galvanised interest and increased research use’ of the libraries themselves.

However, the literature is not entirely positive in its approach to widening access. Carter (2009) and Albanese (2005) agree that digitising library collections is an expensive and complicated process, and Allen (2003) states that the costs will be even harder to meet for smaller independent collections that do not have the support of a parent institution. Finance, they argue, is the main problem when it comes to widening access. They point out that it is easy enough to encourage librarians to catalogue thoroughly and develop strategies for preservation, but when there is so little funding available, not only for preservation materials but also for staff to take on the huge challenge of a complete cataloguing programme, it is entirely unrealistic. Knight (2009: 8) agrees with this. As a member of staff at the British Library, he has helped to implement many of the increased access developments within the BL. However, he is also aware that the British Library has access to far more financial support than most libraries in order to maintain the conditions of the collections in its care. Other, smaller collections have far less funding and resources available to implement the level of collection care that the BL can and this, he believes, ‘implies similarly large differences in the rate of deterioration in these locations’ (Knight, 2009: 8). Cloonan and Berger (2003) emphasise the problem with digitisation in that there are as yet no long-term strategies for preserving digital resources. In addition to this, Traitser (2003) observes that there are many potential users who do not have the means or the skills to access online collections, who will remain isolated if a library only offers digital access. Nevertheless, the evidence shows that widened access will have to be, at least in past, digital: both Cloonan and Berger (2003) and Traitser (2003) discuss the threat of wear and tear posed to physical collections if access to them does not remain selective. These issues were still relevant in 2014, when Prabhat and Misra discussed copyright laws, evolving technology, funding and the deterioration of digital material as hindrances to digital libraries, alongside inadequate digital scholarship and inadequate technological infrastructures. While no authors, at least in the past two decades, have indicated that they believe access to rare and fragile library material should only be the preserve of academics, there is an obvious awareness that it will cause difficulties for librarians, as well as trepidation about how increased access will affect the condition of the collection itself. It is clear, therefore, that the issue of extending access to these collections will cause problems that will not be resolved quickly or simply.

# 3.5. Managing change in a large non-profit organisation

To conclude, this review examines more general management issues within information-focused non-profit organisations, specifically strategies for dealing with change and financial cutbacks. The aim of this is to provide a theoretical background for the issues that the British Library is currently facing and to enable a better understanding of the importance of intellectual assets in overcoming these difficulties.

The preceding section addressed issues specifically pertaining to the management of special collections and the changing role of libraries in the twenty-first century in terms of the demands being placed upon them. There is, however, more general organisational management literature which is applicable to this project. Chapter 2 of this thesis discussed the current situation of the Scholarship and Collections Directorate, which has to manage changing user demands and decreased funding as well as adapting to the changes imposed by the 2010 restructuring. A comprehensive review of literature concerning organisational change would be far too extensive to be covered here, and so this section will cover only the literature concerning organisational practice within libraries or similar large-scale organisations which would be applicable to this project at the British Library.

Showers (2015) states:

‘Libraries across the different sectors, as well as archives, museums and galleries, face unprecedented challenges, from financial and technological pressures, through to social and cultural changes more generally; and libraries, as well as academic and cultural institutions more widely, are increasingly expected to demonstrate the value they bring to students and users’ (Showers, 2015: 48).

Managing change effectively is therefore of paramount concern for all information-focused non-profit organisations, and especially for the British Library which is expected to be a pioneer in information provision and research support. Pertinently, the main cause for change which is cited in the literature is economic constraints, which is particularly applicable to the BL at this time due to significant budgetary cuts. Mearns (1979: 13) writes that ‘no national library can be greater or perform better than its financial support allows’ Smallwood and Burkey Wade (2013) concur, and state that it is very important at times of financial downturns for managers and administrators to be confident enough to adapt to the change in resources while at the same time mitigating the drop in morale that comes with the budgetary uncertainty. They add that ‘libraries must limit the stressful impact of the budget cuts through innovation, creativity and flexibility’ (Smallwood and Burkey Wade, 2013: 135). Handy (1993: 31) suggests that because financial incentives are often lacking during fiscal downturns, managers should encourage staff and raise morale through what he terms ‘satisfaction theories’ and ‘incentive theories’. An example of rewarding staff through satisfaction would be allowing them to input ideas and be creative, and an example of an incentive reward would be offering acknowledgement of good work in a non-financial way. This could be a mention in a newsletter or meeting, or a free invitation to the opening of an exhibition.

Roberts and Rowley (2004) argue that managers should give a lot of attention to the satisfaction of their staff during times of change, because low morale can have a significant negative impact on the efficacy of developments within an organisation, and ‘people are a commodity that needs maintenance, management, effective deployment and utilisation like any other resource’ (Roberts and Rowley, 2004: 98). Hinterhuber and Stadler (2004) encourage managers to allow their employees to think and act independently, especially at times insecurity within the organisation. They argue that if job security is uncertain either because of financial constraints or because of the implementation of a new organisational structure (both of which have had an impact on Scholarship and Collections in recent years), employees should still feel free to be creative without fear of any negative consequences. They continue that managers can help to maintain the morale of the organisation through ensuring that employees have some control over their jobs and the direction their careers are going in. Jordan and Lloyd (2002) concur, discussing the importance of staff motivation during times of change. They argue that while motivation depends partly on the individual, it is also reliant on managerial support and the way in which new tasks are presented to them. Handy (1993: 291) believes that managers should consider change as a positive thing, calling it ‘a necessary condition of survival’, and that all employees should work to ensure that they use the change to improve the way that they perform their roles, while also accepting that different people work in different ways and may adapt to the change in their own manner. Bornemann (2006) writes that this acceptance of individuality is difficult, especially in a large and diverse organisation like the British Library:

‘A further challenge is to integrate highly autonomous teams with very specific knowledge bases and little common ground into new innovative groups which share specific models, but frequently lack a uniting mental model which could offer orientation for the decision-making process.’ (Bornemann, 2006: 262)

Large-scale changes to the infrastructure and focus within such an organisation are often an arduous process, and Bornemann (2006) argues that the process will encounter many impediments before the organisation can reach the level of understanding and acceptance essential for effective change can be achieved. Corrall (2000) agrees that ‘it is easy to underestimate the time and effort required to manage change effectively’ (Corrall, 2000: 207). Evans and Alire (2013) state that ‘there is no way to know what will or will not be stressful for any staff member, nor is there a single “cure” for resolving the stress once you identify it’ (Evans and Alire, 2013: 223), and it should be accepted that some employees will be more adversely impacted than others. The British Library is what Handy (1993: 185) terms a ‘Role Culture’. That is, an organisation which has one universal role but many different departments which work towards that role in their own ways. This structure can be seen in Scholarship and Collections, where each of the five departments have very different responsibilities, functions and ways of working, but all are designed to achieve the same goals of promoting use of the collections, aiding scholarship on a national level and promoting and preserving the UK’s cultural heritage. While the strength of such an organisation rests on these differences, but that they also make changes harder to adapt to. The BL is also what Roberts and Rowley identify as a ‘top-down organisation’ (Roberts and Rowley, 2004: 22), in that it identifies goals that need to be achieved and then works towards meeting those objectives by identifying which employees can achieve which tasks. While this is an effective method of running a large, goal oriented organisation such as the British Library, it can have an adverse impact on the morale of employees, who are at risk of feeling that their personal goals and abilities are not being taken into account.

Smallwood and Burkey Wade (2013) state that change of any kind leads to individual insecurities and fears amongst employees that they might no longer be deemed useful to their organisation. They write that although there may be temptations amongst employees to keep a low profile at these times in case of drawing negative attention, it is important that they resist doing this because ‘this approach leads to stagnation at a point where it is essential to be proactive’ (Smallwood and Burkey Wade, 2013: 139). They add that it is important that managers provide a nurturing and supportive environment where their employees feel that it is possible to exercise this freedom. Pors *et al* (2004) argue that the main priority for libraries at times of change is identifying their organisational culture and how their employees work best, and encouraging communication. They state that employees should not only feel able to communicate their own ideas and concerns but should also be kept informed of managerial decisions and the reasons behind them. They argue that ‘staff are far more likely to work with and accept change if they know how it affects them, understand why the chance is essential, and feel they have some element of influence on how the changes will affect them’ (Pors *et al*, 2004: 13). Evans and Alire (2013) agree, stating that ‘open and honest communication is a key component to achieving a successful change. People who understand the change and its necessity are more accepting of change than those who do not understand’ (Evans and Alire, 2013: 218). Handy (1993) agrees that it can be dangerous to deny employees participation in managerial decisions which could affect them, but cautions that ‘this does not imply that the opposite is always true’ (Handy, 1993: 280). Brophy (2007) and Smallwood and Burkey Wade (2013) agree that some level of transparency is necessary but that management must appear united and confident in their decisions. Brophy (2007) adds that difficult decisions might have to be made for the good of the organisation as a whole, and that managerial staff members need to show that they are confident in these decisions and their long-term benefits in spite of any contention they might receive. The British Library’s 2011 staff survey states that ‘the leader must allow the people in a company to think and act independently during the implementation phase while still being in charge’ (British Library Board, 2011: 245). Hinterhuber and Stadler state that high leadership skill and managers who appear confident in their convictions lead to stronger organisations, prevent morale from becoming critically low and make change easier to adapt to. They add that ‘enterprises can be steered towards a successful future even when the market conditions are unattractive… but this can happen only if the decision-makers in the company exercise good leadership and if the strategy is right.’ (Hinterhuber and Stadler, 2006: 241). They add that a healthy organisation exercises a balance between allowing employees to think and act independently and feel that they are being kept informed while also exercising strong, decisive leadership at a managerial level. The British Library’s 2011 staff survey emphasised the importance of line managers in this process:

‘An employee’s perception of an organisation are shaped – to a very great extent – by their relationship with their line manager and how effectively their manager is communicating with them… a balance between “owning” some of the rougher corporate messages as well as being supportive during the difficult times.’ (British Library Board, 2011: 15)

The importance of effective lateral communication is emphasised here as being key to effectively managing change.

The literature on managing organisational change frequently addresses the problems that can arise from having a workforce with diverse roles and responsibilities. This is something that closely affects Scholarship and Collections, which manages five diverse departments. Corrall (2000) emphasises the importance of organisational culture, stating that ‘culture underlies much human activity in organisational life, and in pervades decision-making and problem-solving. Lack of cultural awareness can result in decisions with unanticipated and undesirable consequences’ (Corrall, 2000: 279). Bornemann (2006), however, acknowledges that it can be difficult to integrate autonomous teams into a changing organisation. These teams, he argues, often have specific ways of working and have little common ground with one another, so changing these groups or introducing new focuses can be problematic. He suggests that before and during the change process, managerial staff at such an organisation should introduce and emphasise a ‘uniting mental model which could offer orientation’ (Bournemann, 2006: 262). Porter (2010) warns managers that this process will not be easy, stating that it will take a great deal of energy and time and that attempting to enforce new goals on employees should not be attempted as this will lead to resistance. Smallwood and Burkey Wade (2013) add that ‘in times of change, a workplace is particularly susceptible to widespread and negative rumours, breeding stress and anxiety in its workers (Smallwood and Burkey Wade, 2013: 137). This becomes particularly problematic in organisations with many autonomous groups, like the British Library. Evans and Alire (2013) write that:

‘The organisational structure of the library can influence the way in which staff interpret messages. A large archive or library is a series of overlapping and interdependent units, each with its own immediate and long-range objectives and managers. Each manager has his or her preferred managerial style. So members in each unit first interpret messages in light of their shared experiences; only once after they finish that assessment do they take a broader view’ (Evans and Alire, 2013: 187).

Therefore, communication is emphasised as being especially important at this time, particularly in terms of finding common ground through the organisation and providing staff with a clear set of universal aims. This is a point which was emphasised in the BL’s 2011 staff survey, which stated that ‘people are more likely to accept and embrace change if they can easily make the link between the organisational strategy and what is happening to them’ (British Library Board, 2011: 19). It is acknowledged that dissonance between an employee’s role and what the organisation’s objectives are can cause role uncertainty and mistrust. The Library recognises the importance of communicating its developing strategic aims in ways which are tailored to individual groups within the BL. Handy (1993) concludes that while organisational diversity can cause added tensions at times of change, it should be seen in a positive light overall. He suggests that diversity and differentiation play a vital role in ensuring that organisations move forward, and that these differences should be embraced at times of change.

# 3.6 Summary

This literature review provided a thorough examination of the current research on intellectual asset theory, providing a history of its development and its importance to organisational management. An account of the most significant existing IA evaluation tools was provided, outlining their strengths and weaknesses. It was discovered that previous practitioners have relied too heavily on traditional tangible evaluation techniques for evaluating assets which are intangible and essentially impossible to quantify. Research into intellectual assets within libraries was found to be limited, indicating that an IA evaluation tool designed specifically for the information sector would be of great value. A discussion was made of current concerns in LIS literature pertaining to special collections libraries like the BL. A key issue was the surge in demand for access to collection items and the need to balance this with ensuring the care of the collection. This provided a context for this project in order to emphasise the concerns affecting the British Library and indicate how its intellectual assets could be best directed. Finally, a brief discussion of change management literature was provided. The British Library has recently undergone some structural changes as well as having to adapt in order to accommodate its depleted budget, and it was expected that this literature could be used to support any suggestions that might be made as to how the Scholarship and Collections Directorate could best utilise their intellectual assets to support them through these changes.

# Methodology

After reviewing the relevant literature in order to ground the project in the research which has already been conducted in the area, it was essential to consider the methodology which would be most effective in achieving the desired results. Clough and Nutbrown (2002: 68) write that ‘methodology is about making research decisions and understanding (and justifying) why we have made these decisions’. When considering the methodology, it is advisable to first refer back to the aims and objectives of the project. In this case, the aims are to evaluate the intellectual assets within the Scholarship and Collections Directorate at the British Library and suggest methods by which they could be measured. The main objective isto develop a method of evaluating the IAs so the BL can see where its strengths lie, and can see areas which would benefit from more attention. Using this as a starting point, a set of sub-questions were developed to extrapolate from the key research question.

These questions will be considered alongside the aims and objectives of the thesis, as outlined in Chapter 1.2.

**Key Question:** How can the IAs in Scholarship and Collections be evaluated?

**Sub-Questions:**

**RQ1: How do S&C staff members view intellectual assets?**

This corresponds with the thesis objective: “*To investigate how the employees view IAs and how they fit into the Library”.*

**RQ2: Where do staff members think the Directorate’s IA strengths lie?**

This corresponds with the thesis objective: “*To investigate how the employees view IAs and how they fit into the Library”.*

**RQ3: Which areas do staff members think are falling short of expectations?**

This corresponds with the thesis objective: “*To investigate how the employees view IAs and how they fit into the Library”.*

**RQ4: How do external stakeholders view their relationship with the Directorate?**

This corresponds with the thesis objective: “*To investigate the views of external stakeholders on the Library’s IAs and whether they differ from those of the employees*.”

**RQ5: How does the library’s strategic plan reflect on its IAs?**

This corresponds with the thesis objective: “*To identify and classify the intellectual assets belonging to the Scholarship and Collections Directorate.”*

The fourth objective (*to develop a method of evaluating the IAs so the BL can see where its strengths lie and can see areas which would benefit from more attention*) is not considered at this stage, as it is something that will emerge as a result of the data which is to be collected.

Keeping these questions in mind, one can then develop a strategy for answering them by considering the methods and philosophies which would generate the most useful data. This chapter provides an overview of the investigatory methods being used in the project, and offers a justification for them.

# 4.1 Philosophical Background

In order to get a deeper understanding of the reasons behind choosing a particular methodology for a particular investigation, the researcher should consider the philosophies that have been developed for social research, and consider at an early point in the investigation which philosophy is best suited to the approach they wish to take. Creswell (2003: 16) writes that ‘philosophical assumptions consist of a stance towards the nature of reality (ontology), how the researcher knows (epistemology), the role of values in the research (rhetoric), and the methods used in the process (methodology)’. Taking these things into consideration means that the researcher must think about their own ideas about, and experiences with, the subject of their investigation, and being aware of these preconceptions makes them less likely to bias the data collected. It also entails close consideration of the meaning of the research and what it is hoped will be gained from it in terms of understanding. With these considerations in mind, it is easier to formulate a clear methodology for data collection and analysis.

## 4.1.1. Research Assumptions

To gain a clear view of which philosophical standpoints would provide the most useful, the researcher first has to consider what the assumptions of this research are, based on the project outline and the findings of the literature review.

The first assumption in this case was that while categories of intellectual assets have been identified by previous researchers, as outlined in the literature review, this research should be contextually rich. It should also aim to develop an evaluation tool tailored to libraries, and which was usable by a large organisation such as the British Library. This tool should identify patterns and recurring themes in the data, but also highlight any discrepancies. An interpretivist paradigm would be used to generate the data compiled of participants' anecdotes and opinions. This relates to Silverman's (2005) theory that knowledge and the participant's understanding of a phenomena can only be developed through experience and interaction with the phenomena, and that a reflective process involving the sharing of anecdotes and opinions is the best way to at least partially construct the 'reality' being investigated.

The second assumption was that the research would take a constructivist approach, with the researcher and participants forming the data as a collaborative process: the researcher prompting ideas concerning intellectual assets, and the participants elaborating on their experiences with, and perceptions of, the phenomena. The research would therefore not be objective, as with quantitative studies, but would be focused on individual perceptions and the building of ideas. Consequently, categories of data would not be pre-formed, but would emerge as part of the data analysis process. Mason (2002) writes that this type of investigation has an ontological approach which does not divide subject and object, i.e. the participants are intrinsically connected to S&C's use of IAs, and the 'reality' lies in their perception of IAs.

With this in mind, there were two philosophical standpoints which were identified as useful for this project.

## 4.1.2. Phenomenology

On first consideration, it appeared that phenomenology would be of most value as a philosophical approach. Cresswell (2003: 57) states that phenomenological philosophy ‘describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon’. It is considered to be the best for studying a unit of people who have shared an experience, in this case, an experience of intellectual asset management. The key, as Cresswell (2003) states, is in finding the essence of a phenomenon, the elements that all the research subjects have in common when describing the phenomenon. Gobo (2011) writes that the phenomenological researcher must learn the code and language of the individuals who have shared the experience, and try to detect any discrepancies in the code. The data analysis will therefore involve close reading of the transcribed interviews taken from staff at the BL concerning their experiences with intellectual assets, and identifying similarities and differences in the language they use to describe the phenomenon.

Cresswell (2003) writes that phenomenology entails intentionality of consciousness on the part of the researcher: the focus of the research is always directed towards an object, and the investigator should concentrate their attention on interpreting the meaning of a lived experience of the chosen phenomenon. King (2004) adds that the researcher must reflect on the presuppositions they hold and be alert to how they could affect the research process. Cresswell (2003) states that the researcher should exercise ‘bracketing’, which is the exclusion of their own experience of the phenomenon, and only use the data they have collected. This will mean that the researcher will not be trying to fit data into pre-formed categories. For this project, the researcher must therefore consider their own experiences with intellectual assets at the British Library, as well as the preconceived ideas about intellectual assets within organisations which were conceived from the literature review, and treat the data collected from the BL staff as free from bias or outside influence as possible. This bracketing process is difficult, and cannot be complete, but a partial success can be achieved by maintaining a critical self-awareness throughout the research process, and scrutinising data sets to determine whether they are a natural product of the data or whether they are in some way pre-formed by the researcher's conceptions.

Data collection for phenomenology typically involves a large number of in-depth interviews, and can also utilise documents produced by the social group under investigation which concern the phenomenon being explored. Again, this supported the idea of using a series of interviews for the project, in conjunction with the analysis of documents produced by the library. Doing this would allow the researcher to identify similarities and differences in the language describing, and attitude towards, IAs between the interviews and the official documentation that was being produced. However, it was felt that phenomenology had an approach that was too impersonal, focusing only on the phenomenon itself, and not the way the phenomenon is experienced. The literature review demonstrated that much of intellectual asset evaluation is determined by the ways that individuals experience the assets. Without the traditional evaluation methods of statistics and profit, IA evaluation must be determined by the personal experiences of a selection of individuals with various IAs, and how those experiences have either enabled or restricted their ability to 'get on' in the environment.

## 4.1.3 Phenomenography

During the pilot study, the researcher began to consider phenomenography as a more useful approach for this project. Phenomenography is an approach developed in the 1970s by Ference Marton and other researchers at Gotenburg University in Sweden. It was intended originally as a means of studying education and the ways that individuals learn. Marton (1999) found that experiences of learning fit into a limited set of learning methods and that these methods led to a set number of learning outcomes. These initial experiments brought Marton (1999) to the conclusion that phenomenography could be used as a philosophical approach separate from phenomenology, providing the researcher with a different method for working with qualitative data.

The approach is similar in many ways to phenomenology, except that rather than focusing on the phenomenon itself, Ashworth and Lucas (2000: 295) state that it ‘seeks to identify the qualitatively different ways in which individuals experience such aspects of their world’. Phenomenology explores an individual's notion of truth (McLeod, 2001), and focuses on the individual experience (Barnard et al, 1999). Marton and Fai (1999) define it as 'a study of variation... between qualitatively different ways of seeing, experiencing and understanding the same phenomena' (1999: 3). It is based on the assumption that everyone experiences the world differently, and people’s views on a phenomenon are influenced by their personal experiences (Ashworth and Lucas, 2000), and has been defined by one of its founders as 'a research method adapted for mapping the qualitatively different ways in which people experience, conceptualise, perceive and understand various aspects of, and phenomena in, the world around them' (Marton, 1986: 31). The aim of phenomenography is to reveal variation in experience in the human world; the variation between qualitatively different ways of seeing, experiencing and understanding the same phenomena (Martona & Fai, 1999). It is therefore more concerned with how a subject experiences a phenomenon, not the phenomenon itself (Webber *et al*, 2005). Therefore, while phenomenography and phenomenology are alike in that both are concerned with a particular phenomenon within a particular environment, there are key differences. While the former tends to focus on the researcher’s perception of a phenomenon, the latter focuses on the research subjects’ experience of the phenomenon in order to formulate categories and find patterns of collective experience (Andretta, 2007). Also, while phenomenology emphasises individual experience, phenomenography attempts to reveal a collective experience by highlighting different facets of the phenomenon as experienced by different individuals (Trigwell, 2000). This would be more useful for this particular project, which deals with a diverse set of individuals within Scholarship and Collections who may experience the phenomenon of intellectual assets in very different ways. Figure 4.1 (Trigwell, 2000) outlines the key elements of phenomenology, most significantly its emphasis on revealing relationships between different variations of experience. It also demonstrates how phenomenography relates to other philosophical approaches, and in particular, how it is different from phenomenology. It also demonstrates the subjective nature of information as it relates to experience. While objective results (e.g. the management of IAs) can be documented from a first order perspective, phenomenography allows the researcher to investigate the second order perspective which focuses on the participants' internal understanding of the phenomenon and document how this relates to the ways they manage IAs.



###### Figure 4.1: The departure between phenomenography and other research approaches (adapted from Trigwell, 2000)

While phenomenography is still primarily used in educational research, Barnard *et al* (1999) write that a new strand of the approach has developed known as 'pure' phenomenography, which focuses on 'describing ways in which people conceive of various aspects of their world' (1999: 214). Marton (1996) states that this approach allows researchers to investigate how an individual's understanding and experience of a phenomenon allow them to deal with it successfully. As this project focuses on how effectively staff in Scholarship and Collections cope with the phenomenon of intellectual assets, pure phenomenography was identified as being the most useful approach.

Bowden (2005) states that in phenomenography experiences are non-dualistic: no experience of the phenomenon in question is independent of any of the other experiences, but work together in a mutual relationship to form a cohesive whole. Again, this adapts itself to one of the original research assumptions of this project that employees within S&C will have different experiences with intellectual assets, but that these experiences must be considered as a whole in order to form an evaluation tool which can be used by the BL. Phenomenography focuses on how a particular phenomenon appears to, and is experienced by, individuals in order to construct a cohesive impression of the phenomenon (Marton and Booth, 1997). It aims to reveal differences in experiencing a phenomenon by focusing on individual impressions within the human world in order to obtain a multifaceted overview of the phenomenon. As intellectual assets are intangible and rely so heavily on individual perception and experience, the phenomenological approach seems to fit most closely to the epistemological and ontological priorities of this project.

As with phenomenology, it is necessary for the researcher to attempt to 'bracket' their own personal views and expectations concerning the subject and the participants, in order to concentrate the focus on how those involved react to the phenomenon. It is also suggested that a researcher pays attention to any omissions in the data provided by the subjects: Ashworth and Lucas (2000: 298) state that ‘the lack of response to a question is as interesting as the response itself’. The collected data should then be sorted into categories of experience, with an emphasis on describing the ways that the participants experience the phenomenon, and searching for patterns within these descriptions. The phenomenon is consequently described in terms of central meaning. This means that for this project, the researcher will be closely analysing the transcripts taken from the interviews, and identifying shared experiences with intellectual assets amongst BL staff, as well as any gaps in experience, and using them to determine which IAs are proving to be most, and least, valuable and inclusive. Practitioners working with phenomenography should select participants due to their relationship with the phenomenon being investigated, and that they should have a context in common with one another (Limberg, 2002). As this project is limited to the S&C Directorate, this aspect should not provide any difficulties. Participants should also be varied in order that a wide range of experiences can be documented, even though the sample will not aim to represent every individual experiencing the phenomenon in the given context (Åkerlind and Kayrooz, 2003). The researcher aims to sample participants from all five sections of S&C and from different levels within the hierarchy in order to create a data set that it as varied as possible.

Phenomenography deals primarily with 'conceptions', or the ways individuals experience the phenomenon in question, as units of analysis. Marton and Booth (1997) define this as the individual relationship of the person experiencing the phenomenon and the phenomenon itself. Limberg (2000) states that these conceptions represent the correspondence of 'the research subject, the person experiencing something and the object, that which is experienced, which are not viewed as separated' (Limberg, 2000: 54). Marton and Booth (1997) expand on this, arguing that the world can only be described through human experiences of it, and that while objects around us would still be there without humans, they would exist in a different way, because they would not have our experiences of them to define them. This indicates that an objective description of a phenomenon is not possible to achieve because every phenomenon is dependent on individual perception for its definition. (Marton and Booth, 1997: 113). Furthermore, actions and experiences are intrinsically linked, because 'you cannot act other than in relation to the world as you experience it' (Marton and Booth, 1997: 111). In the case of this research, this would indicate the relationship between the ways in which people experience intellectual assets to the ways in which they utilise them, and also posits the theory that ways of experiencing can be placed in a hierarchy determined on the effectiveness of individuals' actions in relation to IAs, and how this relates to their conception of the phenomenon.

In more recent years, phenomenography has been applied to LIS research. Limberg (2005) believes that phenomenography allows LIS researchers to '[compare] studies of individuals' information behaviour with collective patterns of information seeking and use' (2005: 280). In other words, it allows researchers to produce more universal results and solutions while still working within the necessity of using data from individual research participants. Fisher *et al* (2005) cited phenomenography as an approach which could be used by LIS researchers, and it has been used in several studies over recent years (Kirk, 2002; Boon *et al*, 2007; Alsop and Tompsett, 2006).

Åkerlind (2005) concedes that one criticism of phenomenography might be that by forming a collective meaning from individual experiences detracts from the variety of experience found in the raw data, and that the end result might provide conclusions that the research participants cannot identify with. However, Magub (2006) states that this collective meaning can be related back to individual data sets in order to demonstrate how conclusions were drawn and to highlight any discrepancies. Åkerlind also thinks that providing collective meaning is valuable because it allows experience to be viewed holistically, 'despite the fact that such phenomena may be perceived differently by different people and under different circumstances' (Åkerlind, 2005: 72). Another criticism of phenomenography which is highlighted by Alsop and Tompsett (2006) is that it does not factor the context of the experiences being analysed. Context, they state, is an essential factor when it comes to understanding different ways of understanding and behaving. However, Dunkin (2000) argues that 'people's unique ways of experiencing phenomena result from the unique interaction of their understanding of the phenomenon and the situation in which they must apply that understanding' (2000: 141), and therefore phenomenography is valuable in that it draws attention to the ways in which individuals perceive the phenomenon. As this particular project is limited to the Scholarship and Collections Directorate at the British Library, it was deemed that there would be no variable of context so great as to cause any significant disadvantage when using the phenomenographic approach.

## 4.1.4 Reliability and validity

In order to perform successful research, steps must be taken to ensure that the data being used is as reliable (thorough and as free from bias as possible) and valid (its accuracy in representing the 'reality' of what is being researched) as possible. Judging these qualities in qualitative data is more complex than in quantitative data, and a number of qualitative practitioners have attempted to resolve this. Lincoln and Guba (1985) feel dubious as to whether validity and reliability can be assessed in qualitative data at all, but there are steps that can be taken to ensure the integrity of the research.

Maxwell (2002) and Cho and Trent (2006) write of the difficulties in ensuring the validity when working with in-depth interviews, as the data is always presented through the perspective of the researcher and their theoretical standpoint. The validity of the findings depends on the presentation of the participants' meanings rather than the researcher's. Charmaz (2004) states that the researcher has to be aware of this and take steps to remove their own standpoint from the data being presented, and that the use of quotations from the interviews can aid this process. However, Charmaz (2004) also concedes that quotations removed from their original context lose some of their validity. Another problem arises from the fact that, unlike with quantitative data, qualitative data cannot be submitted for external evaluation due to the need to protect the identity of the participants (Ward Schofield, 2002). Guba (1981) writes that the issue of context adds a further complication within qualitative data, and that the researcher must take steps to ensure that there is enough similarity between the context of two different data sets before the results can be transferred and compared. Guba (1981) adds that the researcher must provide a detailed account of the context in which the data were collected in order to prove that transferability is justifiable. Åkerlind (2005) states that within a phenomenographic study, researchers can also apply pragmatic validity checks which evaluates the applicability of the findings in practical means, in ways which will aid the group being studied to perform better. In this case, the researcher will be taking steps to ensure that the results will be useful to the S&C Directorate in terms of performing evaluations on their intellectual assets.

In quantitative terms, reliability is defined as results which are free from researcher bias and the development of a tool which produces results that are reliable every time and free from variables. Again, qualitative research is more complicated because, as Harland (2010) states, 'the researcher is the instrument, so reliability has to assume a different meaning as researchers, by their nature, are subjective beings' (2010: 89). Even if the utmost efforts are made to be objective, researchers will inevitably bring some of their own judgement to bear on the results. Additionally, if the qualitative process is considered as one of construction, the relationship between interviewer and interviewee is essential for the formation of data, and in this sense the researcher's input is necessary for the investigation. It is also something that cannot be replicated by a different researcher or in a different context (Cope, 2004). One step that can be taken to ensure the authenticity of results is to present an outside party with an example of the different data categories and reasoning for their formation (Marton, 1988). This will provide feedback on the reasoning for the placement of raw data into certain categories, and provides a second review of the researcher's ability to present objectively.

# 4.2 Qualitative research

When considering the nature of this project, it soon becomes apparent that most of the collected data would be qualitative. The research plan involves two extended periods of investigation on-site at the British Library, interacting with S&C staff. Cresswell (2003: 18) states that ‘conducting a qualitative study means that researchers try to get as close as possible to the participants being studied’, and that field investigation benefits most from direct interaction with those directly involved in the area of investigation. The definitions of intellectual assets further support this reasoning: they are assets which are intangible and cannot be measured by traditional statistical methods. Their value depends on the perceptions users have of how effectively service is provided, and on the contentment of the staff concerning their performance as an organisation. Qualitative research is concerned with human behaviour and perceptions, and considers how certain decisions are made, and needs met.

Mason (2002) outlines two approaches that can be adopted by qualitative researchers: excavation and construction. Excavation is the idea that the researcher is uncovering existing data, and construction is the idea that the researcher and participant create the data as a collaborative process. For this project the construction approach will be adopted as it is felt that participants may not have consciously considered how they handle intellectual assets, and therefore the interview process will act as a means for them to construct their ideas when prompted by the researcher.

## 4.2.1. The Case study

Case study research involves the researcher focusing the subject of their investigation on a particular ethnographic group. Baxter and Jack (2008: 545) write that case studies 'ensure that the topic of interest is well explored, and that the essence of the phenomenon is revealed'. Yin (2013) states that a case study methodology would be appropriate in the following circumstances:

* The research focuses on how and why questions
* The researcher is not able to manipulate the behaviour of the participants
* The research covers particular contextual conditions
* The boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and its context

Yin (2009) adds that a case study allows for the investigation of a particular phenomenon and how it applies itself in the real world, ‘especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’ (2009: 18). This is certainly the case with this project as intellectual assets differ widely depending on the organisation that possesses them, and need to be put into context in order to determine their value.

This project involves a considerable amount of on-site investigation at the British Library. Cresswell (2003) states that the more time researchers spend in the field, the more they know about their subject from first-hand information. A pilot study for this project took place over a period of four months between May and August 2011, with some time being spent away from the Library in order to write up the data that had been collected. A second, longer session took place between March and August of 2012. While on site, the researcher was able to work within the Directorate, and interact directly with staff members, as well as get an impression of the organisational culture of the Library.

The pilot study was conducted in order to obtain preliminary data, familiarise the researcher with the field, and help to determine what methods of data collection would be more effective during the main collection period, scheduled for the summer of 2012. The second data collection period involved the conduction of more interviews, this time including a small selection of other BL employees outside S&C who worked closely with the Directorate, and with a selection of key external stakeholders. These had been identified by BL staff as having close links with S&C and being able to offer an external perspective of IA management in the Directorate. It was determined that a sample study of S&C employees would be selected for this investigation, and invited to interview. When conducting an investigation of this nature, the researcher must consider how they should sample participants in order to obtain the most useful data. Subjects should ideally represent a cross-section of the field being investigated. Marshall and Rossman (2006) suggest that when planning a sampling study of participants, researchers should consider four categories: diversity of experiences relating to the phenomenon under investigation, diversity of setting (in this case, different areas of S&C), diversity of actors (in this case, employees from different levels of the hierarchy within S&C), and artefacts (in this case, the subject areas the employees work in). Because the researcher's knowledge of the Directorate was limited to documentation, candidates for the pilot investigation were selected by the project's on-site supervisor after a meeting to discuss the ideal variables had taken place. Candidates were selected on the basis of their roles, their location within S&C and what levels of responsibility they had, as well as what level and type of experience they had. Out of the 20 employees contacted about the project, ten were available for interview at the time of the pilot study. A further 16 became available for interview in 2012.

When conducting on-site research, it is advisable to anticipate possible problems that may occur with the data collection process. There is the obvious risk that there will be reluctance on the part of the potential participants to take part in the research, or that they may pull out of the investigation, limiting the data that can be collected. This risk was mitigated by enlisting the help of BL staff already involved to promote the project. The researcher also gave presentations at an S&C open house meeting which informed employees about the project and why it would be valuable to them. However, even if enough individuals take part, Gobo (2011) warns that researchers should be aware that there is often a difference between what people say they do when being interviewed or surveyed, and what they actually do. Researchers should therefore closely observe the working environment of their case study, and analyse documentation produced by the organisation in order to determine the accuracy of the information received from participants. Further problems can occur at the stage of data analysis. Hartley (2006) states that there is a danger of pushing interview data into neat categories, and that it is often convenient to overlook data which contradicts the theories being developed. Researchers should therefore always consciously look for disconfirming data, because this can often be as valuable to the study as confirming data.

## 4.2.2 Mixed methods

While much of this project will entail qualitative investigation, quantitative methods should not be completely discounted. The objective, after all, is to produce a measurement and evaluation tool, and therefore some degree of statistical analysis will be inevitable. Silverman (2001) warns against the danger of relying too heavily on anecdotal evidence in purely qualitative data, because it might make the investigation too objective and biased, ignoring the ‘bigger picture’. Hammersley (2008: 51) concurs, adding that there is a risk of ‘forcing reality into categories that do not fit’ when a researcher is looking for patterns in data collected from interviews. Bryman (2006) says that using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis is useful when a researcher is pursuing an examination of the internal workings of one social group, which is the case with this project.

Richards (2010: 37) believes that it is impossible to completely separate qualitative and quantitative methods of investigation: ‘any qualitative study collects, and must require, some information in numbers’. Additionally, both Silverman (2001) and Richards (2010) state that the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data can validate findings. This view is supported by Creswell *et al* (2006) who state that ‘mixing methods can enhance and extend the logic of qualitative explanations about the social world’ (Creswell *et al*, 2006: 2). If conclusions drawn from interview data are supported by statistical data, they are far more likely to be accurate.

While only qualitative methods of investigation were used in the pilot study, the main investigation included some quantitative methods through the use of a questionnaire formulated from the initial findings of the pilot study which was used in order to support the qualitative findings. The questionnaires were distributed amongst S&C staff, and provided a more thorough overview of the opinions of employees, as only a limited number could be interviewed. The qualitative data generated from these surveys were supportive, and used to validate and verify the conclusions drawn from the qualitative data. It was important that, given the intangible and often abstract nature of IAs, any attempts to quantify should be limited in number. Therefore this is still considered a qualitative investigation, which uses some quantitative measures as a supportive device.

# 4.3 Research ethics

All research involving human participants must necessarily entail ethical considerations. This can relate to both subject matter and the way data are collected. One ethical aspect to consider is that of confidentiality and anonymity, which means that readers of the research will not be able to guess who the participants were, and that the data collected will not be made public in their raw form. Another ethical mandate dictates that no harm should come to the research subjects as a result of their participation. Lastly, it is essential that participants in a research project must understand the nature and purpose of the research and must consent to participate of their own free will (Burns, 2000). Participants should be kept fully informed throughout the process: if trust is established between researcher and subjects, field relations are more likely to be positive (Ryen, 2011).

However, while it is essential to abide by ethical rules, they can cause complications. For instance, Burns (2000) argues that individuals who volunteer to take part in a study do not tend to represent a true cross-section of society. This is less of a problem in the instance of this particular research project, which has been limited thus far purely to members of staff in the S&C Directorate, and is therefore limited in scope by necessity. Another possible problem arises with the necessity to fully inform research participants of the nature of the project and their role within it. Silverman (2001) states that it is often difficult to find a balance between wanting to keep participants fully informed and not ‘contaminating’ the research with the information which they are given. While this was not a great risk with this project as it did not involve research that was personal or concerning moral issues, the researcher kept in mind that participants may exclude certain information which would in any way be detrimental to the image of their organisation.

While this project does not involve information of a personal nature and is purely based on the subjects’ perceptions of a phenomenon within their environment, some data may be sensitive as it could involve negative opinions the staff hold of the Directorate, and ethical regulations still needed to be adhered to. An ethics application form was completed by the researcher, and approved by Sheffield University and the British Library. When contacting potential participants in the study, an information sheet (Appendix A) was provided which outlined what methods would be used for the study and what would be expected of them. They were informed that the interviews would be recorded, but that they would remain completely anonymous and confidential, and that all recordings would be deleted once they had been transcribed. Participants had to agree to these terms before the investigation could proceed. During the interviews, the researcher began by outlining the project and what their information would be used for, reminding them that the session would be recorded and would remain confidential. Because some staff members hold very specialist roles and identity may be revealed through their responses in interviews, further anonymization of data might be necessary in some cases. Subsequent to the transcription of the interviews, participants were sent copies of their individual transcript. This allowed them to fact-check the data, thus ruling out any inaccuracies the researcher may have inadvertently made, and also allowed them to indicate if they were uncomfortable with any of the information they had provided being used in the project. It was important that participants felt fully informed and comfortable with the proceedings. This would enable a better rapport between researcher and interviewee, and it was hoped that by forging positive relationships within the field, the project would get positive feedback, making it easier to attract participants.

# 4.4 Sampling

In order to carry out a successful case study, it is important to carefully consider the methods used for identifying and selecting research participants. Henry (1990) states that while time and resources prohibit the profiling of an entire ethnographic group, it is important to sample participants from throughout the group so as to obtain data which are representative of the whole, and as free from bias as possible. The data collection for this project involved the dissemination of a questionnaire to all S&C employees, the intention of which was partly to provide all interested parties with the opportunity to contribute. However, large amounts of the data were extracted from in-depth interviews, and the selection of the interviewees required a careful sampling process. It was decided that the sampling would be non-random (the selection of participants who are likely to have the required information) and purposive (selecting participants based on their characteristics) (Brophy, 2006). This approach was decided on because the project focused on a case study of a specific Directorate within a specific organisation. The structure of the Directorate was complex, with five separate departments with distinct purposes which employed staff at a range of grades (see Appendix E for a more detailed overview of the Directorate’s structure at the time of data collection). By observing a detailed map of the Directorate, which named employees, their area of speciality and their grade of seniority, the researcher was able to identify a total of 35 employees from across the Directorate who were contacted and invited to interview. The researcher had not previously met any of these potential participants and did not know of any investment in the project on their parts, therefore eliminating the potential for personal bias. Of those contacted, 20 were available. While this did leave gaps in the anticipated data, it was determined that the bias would be lessened by the survey which would be distributed to all S&C employees.

Overall, this study draws upon 71 sources of qualitative data, 64 of these from Scholarship and Collections and the remaining seven from stakeholders (three external and four internal). While the qualitative data from the interviews comprise the foundation for the investigation, they are supported by qualitative and a small amount of quantitative data gathered from 93 S&C staff members who participated in the online survey. Statistically, from the information made available[[1]](#footnote-1), data were collected from the following areas of S&C:

* 24 from Arts and Humanities
* 8 from Social Sciences
* 7 from Content, Strategy, Research and Operations
* 9 from Digital Scholarship
* 10 from Collection Care

The remaining contributions came from staff members who did not disclose what area of the Directorate they were employed by.

Again, from the information made available[[2]](#footnote-2), data were divided within the employment hierarchy in the following ways:

* 6 from SB3 – These represent heads of departments. The researcher was able to talk with departmental heads from all five areas of S&C, and one senior staff member from another Directorate within the Library.
* 10 from SB4 – e.g. team leaders for each of the boxes under the heads of departments, seen in Appendix E.
* 16 from Band A – e.g. lead curators, technicians and managers, conservation operatives.
* 11 from Band B – e.g. curators and middle managers.
* 9 from Band C – e.g. junior curators and conservators.

While the data shows a bias towards Arts and Humanities, it should be taken into account that this is the largest department in Scholarship and Collections and this will reflect on the number of employees able to participate in this study. Nevertheless, this was kept under consideration during the data analysis process. Special care was taken to examine what percentage of data in each data set came from A&H as this could determine whether certain statistics were applicable to the whole Directorate or more specific to A&H.

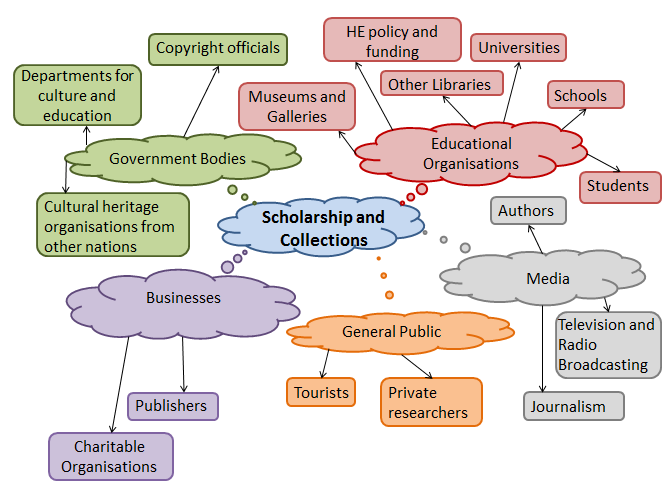
## 4.4.1. Stakeholders

Determining key stakeholders to contact was a more complex issue. It was decided at an early stage of the project that while BL users (either in reading rooms or through remote access) were one of the most important stakeholders, to include this group in the research would broaden the scope beyond manageable proportions. Additionally, the BL regularly conducts user surveys and encourages user feedback, so it was reasoned that this data could be considered by the Library alongside the findings of this project.

Internal stakeholders (BL staff members outside S&C) were contacted first by identifying senior staff members in other parts of the Library and asking them to interview. External stakeholders proved to be more complicated. During the pilot study, interviewees were asked to identify who they considered to be key external stakeholders. No stakeholders identified were the same. However, when examining the list it was realised that the stakeholders fell roughly into three groups:

1. Stakeholders who could provide funding or other tangible assets for the Library.
2. Stakeholders with whom the Library might collaborate on projects, exhibitions or outreach programmes.
3. Stakeholders who could help to promote the Library and its collections.

Obviously many stakeholders could be applied to more than one of these categories, but it helped to formulate an idea of the motivations behind the Library choosing and prioritising its stakeholders and therefore suggested how the researcher could prioritise which stakeholders to contact. It was decided that at least one stakeholder should be contacted who would be able to discuss their relationship with the BL from one of the three perspectives identified above. Figure 4.2 is a basic stakeholder map showing the main categories of external stakeholders.



###### Figure 4.2: Stakeholder Map

1. Government bodies, including ministers responsible for culture and public funding, as well as other similar organisations from other countries. These stakeholders can provide financial aid through the allocation of funding, and promotional and collaborative aid through exhibitions and projects. One stakeholder, an employee from a large museum with close contacts with the BL, participated in this project.
2. Educational Organisations, including school, colleges, Universities and other HE institutions, as well as museums and galleries. These stakeholders can promote the BL’s collections and services to students, and collaborate on scholarly projects. Two stakeholders from the field of Higher Education was interviewed as a part of this project.
3. General Public. While undeniably important, this stakeholder group was not included in this investigation, for reasons previously discussed.
4. Media, including television and broadcasting, journalism and authors as well as other creative enterprises. Obviously this group can provide the BL with promotional services, and can also collaborate on projects.
5. Businesses. This group includes not only private sector organisations, but also publishers and charities. Publishers are obviously a key stakeholder for the Library as they are the main provider of the Library’s collections and it is important to retain good relationships with them. The BL also relies on external sources for digitisation funding, and has participated in several high-profile digitisation projects with major private sector companies.

The sampling of external stakeholders was one of the most dissatisfying aspects of this research, as most of the individuals contacted were either not responsive or not available for interview during the data collection process. This meant that the external perspective on S&C’s intellectual assets was not investigated as thoroughly as it should have been. This is something, however, which can be addressed in future research projects and is discussed further in the Conclusion chapter.

# 4.5 Interviews

It was decided that in-depth interviews should form the basis of the research. While focus groups can often be useful in this type of investigation because it allows the individuals being studied to share experiences and expand on what they know, it was not deemed suitable for the purposes of this study, primarily because it would not have allowed for individual perspectives to be conveyed as effectively as private interviews would.

It has already been indicated in this chapter that interviews are widely considered to be the most valuable method of collecting qualitative data, and they are also the most frequently used data collection method in phenomenography (Booth, 1997). Phenomenography also applies the theory that the interview process is dependent on time and context, allows participants to communicate their experiences in the most effective way, and is a dynamic interaction between interviewer and participant (Svensson, 1997). This relates again to the construction approach to data collection previously discussed in this chapter. The researcher determined that at the early stage of data collection, it would be most valuable to gain a deeper understanding of how S&C operated, what role intellectual assets played within the structure, and what employees considered to be the strengths and weaknesses of the Directorate's IAs. A total of thirty interviews were conducted for the investigation, mostly comprised of employees within the S&C Directorate, but also including BL employees in other Directorates and some external stakeholders. As previously discussed, maximum variation in selecting interview subjects gives the researcher the best chance of getting varied results and detecting difference (Cresswell, 2003), and effort was put in to drawing participants from a variety of areas within Scholarship and Collections.

One disadvantage of using interviews for data collection is that of 'recall bias'. Participants may not remember to mention all relevant information, or they may not believe certain information is relevant to the investigation. However, it was concluded that this would not be of great detriment to the research as the primary concern is the ways in which participants perceive intellectual assets, and therefore their immediate responses when questioned will be the most important. It was also communicated during the interviews that the participants were welcome to contact the researcher with any additional information that occurred to them at a later date. Another opportunity for participant feedback was provided when the researcher sent them copies of their interview transcript for fact checking. Mason (2002), Roulston (2010) and Silverman (2008) all observe that interviews may not generate data that represents the most accurate portrayal of the participants' interactions with the phenomenon, it is a constructive process which documents the ways in which the participants make sense of the phenomenon at the given time.

The interviews took place at a time and place convenient to the interviewee, and an estimated time of one hour was allotted for each session. A portable audio recorder was used during the interviews so that they could be transcribed by the researcher at a later date. Britten (1995) recommends starting an interview with a general question which can be answered easily, and the participant can then be led on to questions more pertinent to the phenomenon depending on their responses. Ashworth and Lucas (2000) also advises that when conducting a phenomenographic interview, researcher and participant 'must begin with some kind of (superficially) shared topic, verbalised in terms which they both recognise as meaningful' (2000: 299). The researcher for this project therefore used asking participants what their role at the BL was, which could be answered easily and could indicate other relevant questions. This also applies to Entwistle's (1997) statement that phenomenographic interviews should move from 'concrete' questions to 'abstract' ones, from questions that can be answered with solid facts to questions that invite participants to share ideas and perceptions.

Silverman (2001) suggests that in order to get the most out of qualitative investigation, the researcher should confine themselves to open-ended questions. The aim is to ensure that the interviewee is an active participant in the research, not a passive one (Cassell and Symon: 2004). Therefore, rather than a set of specific, leading questions, groups of open-ended questions were developed, as well as a series of prompts which would hopefully allow the researcher to get an impression of interviewees' experiences of IAs without imposing assumptions or restrictions on them (Appendix B). These prompts were modified slightly depending on what area of S&C each participant was involved with. For example, an employee who worked exclusively with staff training would have a different set of prompts to an archivist. The open-ended method also allowed the interview to take the form of a conversation, where the subject had leave to expand on certain topics that occurred to them, and allowed the researcher to go 'off script' if a previously unconsidered topic emerged. Silverman (2001) identifies the following elements of interview data:

* facts
* beliefs about facts
* feelings and motives
* standards of action (what people think could/should be done about situations)
* present or past behaviour
* conscious reasons

While the questions and prompts were designed to focus attention on the four areas of intellectual assets within libraries which were identified in the literature review (human, structural, relational, collections and service), the researcher also kept the elements identified by Silverman (2001) in mind when designing the interviews. The researcher made a point of being reflective throughout the interview process, making notes of new themes that arose, and trying to include them in subsequent interviews.

# 4.6 Supporting data

While the interviews provided the bulk of the data that would be used, it was considered necessary to support the findings through other means of data collection. The researcher therefore analysed documentation produced by the British Library, and produced a questionnaire which was distributed to all S&C staff. The main purpose of this was to discover whether there was anything to support or refute the interview data, and also to cover any gaps in the data.

## 4.6.1 Document analysis

Prior (2011) states that while document analysis is rarely sufficient on its own to completely understand what is going on in the field, and a case study researcher should always aim to conduct some on-site investigation, studying the documentation produced by the organisation is useful for linking the ‘word’ and the ‘world’. Silverman (2011) concurs, and suggests that document analysis is a valuable initial step in researching a phenomenon within an organisation. It allows the researcher to discover what the organisation is doing and how they are doing it, and they can then go on to investigate why they are doing it. Reports and official documents produced by the BL were studied, and used in comparison to the data collected from the interviews. The documents were also used to inform the researcher as to possible prompts which could be used in the interview process.

## 4.6.2. Questionnaire

It was determined that in order to enrich and support the interview data, a questionnaire would be disseminated to all staff members in S&C. The main motivation for this was to allow as many people as possible to contribute to the study. While care was taken to ensure that interviewees were from different areas of the Directorate and with different levels of responsibility, a questionnaire would ensure that all gaps were filled as far as possible. This data would also be used to either confirm the interview data or draw attention to any anomalies. The researcher followed Czaja and Blair’s (2005) model for carrying out surveys (Figure 4.3). While this model was designed to suit corporate surveys, the basic structure was useful in this case because it provides a clear and thorough outline for incorporating surveys into a research project.



###### Figure 4.3: The Stages of a survey (adapted from Czaja & Blair, 2005)

It was determined that a web survey would be used, as all BL employees have internet access at work, and this would cause them the least inconvenience and ensure a higher return rate than a mail survey. Czaja and Blair (2005) also state that web surveys are useful for their low cost and the speed of dissemination and return, and it is also easier to collect and analyse born-digital data.

The research questions were divided into the four areas of intellectual assets: human, structural, relational, collections and services. The questions were very similar to those asked in interview, but were less open-ended to give participants more opportunities to tick boxes rather than provide detailed answers, although they were given the option of providing written answers to some questions if they chose. Even though the survey’s main purpose was to provide supportive quantitative data to support the interview data, the researcher wished to make it as close to being qualitative as possible. Likert scales were used for many of the questions, where participants were asked to rate how successful they felt the Directorate was at supporting certain intellectual assets on a scale of one to five. For example, they were asked to rate how satisfied they felt with the opportunities to conduct research at the Library, 1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied. The researcher used Limesurvey to design the questionnaire, as it is an approved tool for Sheffield University, and is secure and user-friendly. It was determined that the questionnaire should take no longer than ten minutes to complete, as this was suggested by Czaja and Blair (2005) that this was the longest a questionnaire could typically be before participants grew bored.

Once an initial set of questions had been compiled, the questionnaire was piloted using a sample of professional librarians. They were asked to provide feedback concerning the clarity and usability of the survey. Once changes had been made, a cover letter was drafted (Appendix C), which provided participants with key information about the study and informed them of what the data they provided would be used for. This, along with the revised questionnaire (Appendix D) was forwarded to British Library personnel to be distributed to all staff members in the Scholarship and Collections Directorate. After a two-week period, a reminder email was sent out to catch any potential participants who may have missed the first notification.

There was a 65% response rate. It is conjectured that the reasons this was not higher was because the questionnaire may still have been a little too long, and the interviews all suggested that BL employees are increasingly stretched for time since the budget cuts. Nevertheless, there were respondents from all areas of the Directorate, and the process enriched the existing data and gave S&C staff a chance to contribute to the study if they had not been interviewed. All questionnaire data was completely anonymous, save for the provision by participants of the area of the Directorate they worked in and their level of seniority. This information was solely for the use of the researcher to help determine how wide the range of data was, as well as to track patterns in the data. For example, it was used to determine whether a particular intellectual asset was mentioned more frequently by a particular ethnographic group, e.g. a department within the Directorate, or staff at a certain level of seniority within S&C. This could then be used to help formulate the evaluation tool so that it was as relevant as possible to Library staff.

# 4.7 Using interview data

The process of coding and analysis took place throughout the data collection process, and new ideas were recorded and explored as they occurred. The researcher kept a reflective journal during the pilot study, which was used to note down themes that were developing within the data, and possible conclusions that could be drawn. Clough and Nutbrown (2000) emphasise that the interpretation of data has to be done faithfully, and not just confined to the predefined approaches which had been decided on. In other words, while the researcher should always keep in mind the philosophical and methodological approach they chose to make when undertaking the investigation, they should not allow those assumptions to cause them to omit data which do not necessarily fit with the patterns they had been developing. All interviews were transcribed directly from the audio recordings that had been made, and the researcher was careful to make note of any pauses or breaks in speech which occurred, as these can be indicative of confusion about the subject matter, or ambiguity of opinion.

Silverman (2001) states that the reliability of research is determined by its consistency amongst participants and over time. While the nature of this project does not allow for long-term research in the Scholarship and Collections Directorate, it was possible to collect data from employees in different specialist fields within S&C. As demonstrated in the introduction to this paper, the Directorate is large and includes a great variety of roles. There were differences of opinion concerning intellectual assets depending on the fields the interviewees worked in, but some universal themes were detected, and it is probable that these themes are reliable as they are taken from data extracted from different subject fields within the Directorate from individuals who rarely if ever have opportunity to collaborate.

It was also important for the researcher to be reflective when analysing interview data. Marton (1992) and Barnard *et al* (1999) observe that the purpose of a phenomenographic interview is to generate data which demonstrates the perceptions of the participants, and that the researcher should consider his/her role in prompting the vocalisation of these perceptions, as well as making efforts to discard his/her own perceptions of the phenomenon being discussed so that the analysis focuses only on the meanings assigned by the participants. The analysis process is one of description and interpretation: describing the experiences of IAs as cited by participants, and interpreting how these experiences are applied to the ways in which IAs are managed.

Boon *et al* (2007) emphasise that in the phenomenographic analysis process must involve the removal of barriers between individuals. The purpose is to uncover different types of experiencing a phenomenon which can then be put into a hierarchy. Therefore, once the initial data extraction process is complete, the individual participants should be set aside in favour of the sets of experiences the interview data provides. While some quotations from transcripts will be used, this will only be in order to illustrate a category, not to form it. Boon *et al* (2007) advise that similar experiences found within the data should be removed from their original context and pooled together in order to develop categories of description. These categories will provide the main outcome of the research. Harland (2010) states that 'categories of description help to explain the differences and similarities between conceptions and to denote the critical aspects of variation that delimit the boundaries between them' (2010: 86). Categories will therefore be formed from groups of collective experience. Marton and Booth (1997: 125) provide the following list to convey what each category of data should provide:

1. Each category should reveal something distinct about a way of experiencing a phenomenon;

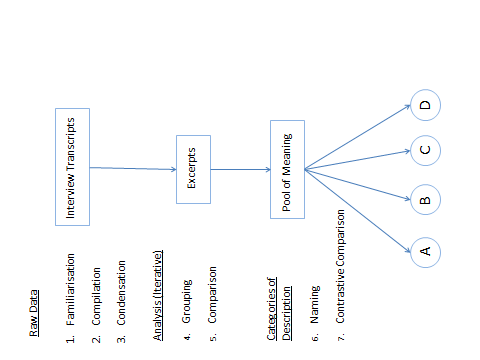
2. Each category should stand in logical relationship with other categories;

3. The number of categories in a set is determined by the extent of variation. In any event, it is limited in number.

This helps the researcher to limit the categories to only the most relevant data rather than attempt to represent an all-encompassing analysis. Bowden (2000) states that phenomenographic data analysis should be inductive, and should not be imposed on a pre-formed framework. The categories should emerge during the analysis process. This will be beneficial for the purpose of this project, as it has already been stated in the Literature Review chapter that while the four facets of IAs (human, relational, structural and collections and services) are useful when compiling data, the researcher should move away from them when it comes to compiling results.

## 4.7.1. Application of data analysis

Figure 4.4 illustrates the seven stages a researcher should go through, as outlined by Marton (1988) in order to successfully develop theories from raw data. Using this as a starting point, the researcher extracted information from the raw data in order to form theories concerning the S&C Directorate's interaction with intellectual assets, and where their understanding and treatment of the phenomena could be developed.



###### Figure 4.4: Producing meaning from data in a phenomenographic study (adapted from Marton, 1988)

### 4.7.1.1. Raw Data

The first step in the analysis process was ensuring a complete familiarity with the data. The interview transcripts were read through multiple times, and then the audio file was listened to again in order to detect any nuances that had been missed during transcription. Any significant passages in the transcripts were highlighted and noted so they could be easily referred back to during the analysis process. Each transcript was labelled with a number, and notes were made of what themes occurred in each transcript so that the researcher could later examine which themes within the developed categories occurred within a single transcript as well as across the board. Longer sections of data were condensed to the essential meaning they contained, to avoid excess of repetitive data. Due to the data collection taking place over the course of a year, this was an on-going process. However, full analysis and comparisons of the data did not take place until the data collection sessions were complete.

### 4.7.1.2 Analysis

Saldaña (2009) writes that in qualitative research, coding of data is an essential part of extracting vital information, and these codes can be used to develop theories based on groups of data. Figure 4.5 illustrates the condensation of codes into theories throughout the analysis process.



###### Figure 4.5: A streamlined codes-to-theory model for qualitative inquiry (adapted from Saldaña, 2009)

Three successive coding methods were used when coding the raw data. The first approach is one outlined by Saldaña (2009) as Initial Coding. This consists of 'breaking down qualitative data into different parts, closely examining them, and comparing them for similarities and differences' (Saldaña, 2009: 81). This initial step allowed the researcher to identify themes in the data, and make initial groupings. This was followed by Focused Coding, which 'searches for the most frequent or significant Initial Codes to develop "the most salient categories" in the data corpus' (Saldaña, 2009: 155). These two processes allowed for the data to be grouped separately from the individual interviews, and allowed the researcher to identify themes free from context. Finally, the researcher applied Magnitude Coding to the data. While Saldaña (2009) identifies this as a first cycle coding method, it's a technique for attributing elements of value to data, which was considered valuable in the light that this research aims to provide an evaluation of IAs. It consists of 'a supplemental alphanumeric or symbolic code or sub-code to an existing coded datum or category to indicate its intensity, frequency, direction, presence, or evaluative content' (Saldaña, 2009: 88). The following code was therefore attributed to each data unit:

POS: Positive

NEG: Negative

NEU: Neutral

This allowed the researcher to examine each data category in terms of the value the participants placed on them. For example, a high reoccurrence of a topic in interviews means that it will probably form the content of a data category, but it does not indicate whether the attitude to the topic in question was positive or negative amongst participants, which is an essential element of an evaluation. See Appendix F for an extract from one of the interview transcripts with the addition of the coding process, which shows these methods applied directly to the data.

### 4.7.1.3 Categories of description

The final stage of analysis was to group the pools of meaning which had been developed by coding into categories of description. This was a lengthy process, but as Marton (1988) observed, it means that data can be sorted and resorted until the point where meanings become stable and clear categories emerge which signify the 'essence' of the data. These categories were representative of the general themes which had arisen from the data, and grouped similarities of experience in relation to IAs. The categories could then be compared with one another in order to detect whether there were any similarities in the ways in which IAs were understood and interacted with, and if so, whether these similarities resulted in any common results in regards to the use of IAs. From this, theories could be developed relating to the possible evaluation of intellectual assets, and how behaviour and conception impacts on the ways IAs are utilised. The initial pools of meaning which had been established at the beginning of the analysis process did not remain as the process continued, as new sets of meaning were formed, and data were moved from one set to another as understanding of the themes became more comprehensive.

# 4.8. Summary

This chapter has provided a description of the methods used in data collection and analysis thus far in the project. An overview of qualitative and case study research was provided with indications of how both apply to this case. The philosophical approach of phenomenography was investigated and determined to be the most useful for this research project. The processes of data collection were discussed, including in-depth interviews, document analysis and questionnaires, with justification for each approach. Finally, the methods of data analysis being used were outlined, from assembling the raw data to the processes involved in breaking down the data sets so they can be used. The following chapter will present the results and the conclusions drawn from the pilot study, and how this could influence the direction the project takes in the future.

# Findings

While the four categories of intellectual assets discussed in the Literature Review chapter (Human, Structural, Relational, and Collections and Services) were used as a template for gathering data, they will be set aside at this stage. Marti (2003) argues that over-reliance on these categories limits the interpretation of IA data and may result in reductionist findings. The categories help when gathering data and understanding intellectual assets, but when examining the collected data it becomes apparent that there are intellectual assets which span more than one category. For example, conference attendance feeds into relational assets (by enabling staff to make contacts), human assets (by allowing staff to expand their personal knowledge) and structural assets (through value added from any conference papers produced). Therefore, the following 11 chapters will be structured around categories which emerged from the data themselves. The phenomenographical approach was also kept in mind throughout the process of establishing findings. As phenomenography focuses on how individuals experience a phenomenon, presentation of the findings will emphasise the ways in which different participants perceive the intellectual assets within the Directorate. It will also emphasise the ways that different ethnographic groups within the Directorate impact on the perceptions of intellectual assets.

The first topic to be addressed is the impact of tangible assets on IAs, a subject that came up frequently throughout the research process. This will lead into the issues of morale within S&C and how it has altered the ways the various departments interact with their IAs. Staff expertise is obviously a key IA at the Library and a substantial section will be dedicated to exploring the ways in which the staff feel their expertise is being utilised, and the similarities and differences between the various departments and the ways they promote their knowledge. Next the chapter will cover the channels of communication in S&C, and how this varies depending on departments. This will include the perception of communication within the Directorate, with other areas of the British Library and with external stakeholders. This section will also include data collected from three external stakeholders and their perceptions of communication with the Directorate. The internal structure of the Directorate is covered in the next section, including how various staff members feel that the restructure has helped or hindered the work they do, and a discussion will be made of whether this is affected by ethnographic groupings. The final sections will focus on the ways in which participants are working to meet the requirements of the British Library. This includes the utilisation and promotion of the collections, what the Directorate’s priorities are felt to be, and the perceived conflicts between various formats of the collection. Again, emphasis will be placed on the various ethnographic groups within S&C (both inter-departmentally and laterally) and how this impacts the perceptions of how best to serve the Library’s needs. Lastly, the chapter will cover the various ideas participants had concerning the role of both S&C and the British Library as a whole, highlighting differences between groups within the Directorate, as well as viewpoints that spanned all of S&C.

The chapters will focus on the different subcultures within Scholarship and Collections, and how these might impact on the ways in which the participants interacted with intellectual assets. An individual’s culture impacts on their perception and meaning of intellectual assets, and employees from different departments and different levels in the structural hierarchy, and only by exploring this can an accurate overall impression of the Directorate’s interaction with IAs be gained.

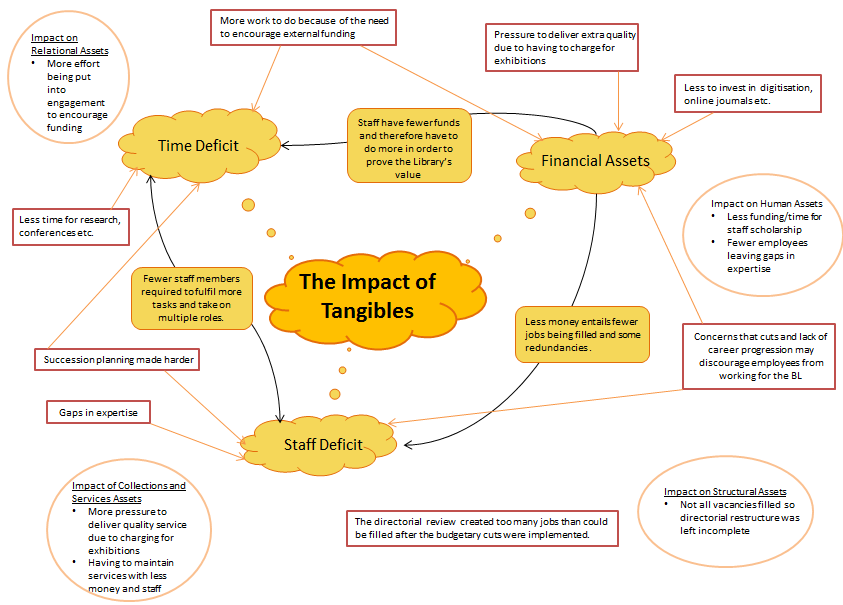
The concept map below represents the thematic areas generated from the data gathered at the British Library.



###### Concept map of the thematic groupings generated from the data

These groups were used to generate the chapters, each of which focused on a key theme. At the beginning of each chapter a more detailed concept map is presented which shows the relevant area of the map above, indicating the relationships between the sub-categories and the theories which were generated from them.

# The Impact of Tangibles



###### Figure 6.1: Concept map detailing key themes in data relating to the impact of tangibles

## 6.1.1. Introduction

While the focus of the data was on participants’ experiences of intangible assets, all participants addressed the issue of the Library’s tangible assets and the impact they have on their work. These assets can be divided into three interlinked categories: the money available to the Directorate, the number of staff the Directorate can employ, and the number of hours available to the staff. As Employee 5 commented, ‘**a lot of the problems are out of S&C’s hands’**. Scholarship and Collections, and the British Library as a whole, are largely powerless to change these tangibles, but in order to evaluate the intellectual assets they have to be taken into consideration as they determine the environment and limitations in which the staff have to work.

## 6.1.2. Financial Assets

The recent financial crisis has dealt a considerable blow to the funding available to the British Library (around £23 million a year less since 2010). As a result, the library has been limited in what it has been able to do, not only in terms of acquisitions, but also in digitisation, staff development and employment. As Employee 50 observed, ‘**money is short, so you can't necessarily do things you would want to do’**. One employee expressed concern that the poor funding will discourage talented employees from working at the British Library which in turn would entail a drop in quality of service: **‘low salaries and lack of career progression will enforce people to seek employment elsewhere’** There were also concerns amongst interviewees over the areas affected by the budget cuts: Employees 43 and 15 expressed concern over the added pressures to deliver quality that comes with having to charge for exhibitions, and Employee 65 felt that cutting the BL’s budget for online journals would alienate users outside of Higher Education.

Financial concerns were clearly at the forefront of S&C employees’ minds, as they were mentioned in every interview conducted. Employee 28 felt that decreased finances has led to an environment where employees are too concerned with working to meet costs rather than using the talents of the staff to their best advantage, and Employee 26 concurred, stating that morale within the Directorate has been hit through **‘pay freeze, flexi-time alterations, budget cuts [and] doing more for less’** which has all discouraged and distracted employees from taking full advantage of their intellectual assets. There are also fears for the future; Employees 44 and 50 indicated that many employees are concerned about further financial cuts, especially after 2015, and Employee 46 credited drops in morale with the impact that decreased finances have had on what the Directorate is able to do: ‘**we have to make some hard choices at the moment because we don’t obviously have enough money to do everything we’d like and in fact we’ll have even less money going forwards.’**

As Employee 46 observed, the Directorate’s objective has become how to achieve more with less money. Some employees mentioned the positive impact of the financial cuts. Discussing their department of the Directorate, Employee 47 felt that in spite of budget cuts they ‘**have been able to prioritise very well because they have created this register of what they want to do by when, they think they've got a twenty-year window to digitise everything at current funding, it will take them twenty years at current levels of funding’**. Employee 54 agreed that the budget cuts had made their department more focussed and Employee 57 stated that the Directorate has had to become more innovative and flexible in order to deliver the same quality of service with the reduced assets. Employee 32 said **‘I think that certainly since the spending review, the library as a whole is becoming very centralised’**, and they felt that financial constraints were inhibiting staff from being creative and experiment.

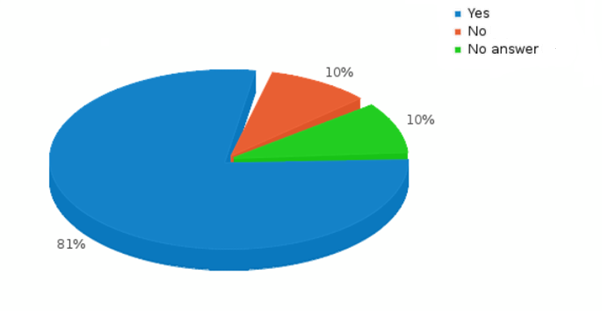
One area which has taken priority due to the reduced funds is that of digital scholarship. As the British Library has no internal budget for digitisation, the Directorate relies on external funding, which is increasingly hard to come by following the financial crisis. As Employee 46 observed, **‘digitisation’s an expensive business’**, but access to the Library’s collections in a digital format is an increasing necessity for modern scholars. Employee 55 discussed their frustration with difficulty in obtaining money: ‘**it is a bit... a bit galling to have ideas but not to be able to implement them simply because of the funding situation, but that’s... we’re not alone in that, other departments face the same issue’**. Employees 47 and 59 commented on frustrations that arise from projects being left half completed due to funding running out at the end of a fiscal year: areas of the collections are digitised but the money to put them online is currently unavailable so they cannot be accessed. Employees 29 and 59 both discussed plans for improving the library’s catalogue and online access to collections, but these plans cannot be implemented until more money becomes available. Employee 47 talked about the strategy the Directorate has adopted for providing digital access on a decreased budget by creating digital collections which can be improved in quality once money becomes available Employee 57 states that as ideas for improvements to access occur, the department **‘are then constantly trying to do more and more to draw in more funding, and so it goes on’**, with a large proportion of staff effort being focussed on courting external stakeholders for financial support rather than working on the projects they have in mind. While the Directorate evidentially have the drive and skills to provide comprehensive digital access to the BL’s collections, the tangible asset of funding prohibits these plans.

Employees also mentioned that budget restrictions have inhibited the Directorate’s ability to retain staff. One employee mentioned a colleague working alongside them on a project who was employed on a contract basis: ‘**unless we find some money from somewhere else, this person will also leave, and I will be a singleton where previously I'd been one and a half’**. Employee 67 added that there were a lot of singleton posts in their part of the Directorate and so people now have very little opportunity to shadow or get the benefit of longer expertise. Employees 48 and 12 also commented on the frustrations faced by the Directorate over their lack of funds for employment. This was not helped by the fact that several positions in the Directorate created by the 2010 review could not be filled due to subsequent financial cuts. Employees 67 and 17 said that this had led to a great deal of uncertainty in their department, and that the restructure had been unrealistic. Employee 63 felt that **‘the big problem with the restructure was that it was never completed, so there’s a lot of posts that are vacant at the moment, and that’s slightly arbitrary the way that’s happened.’** Employee 67 added that they had personally felt very stressed about the situation because the restructure had gone on for a long time and it had become apparent to them that the financial situation was about to get very tough and some of the goals of the review would not be met. These issues lead into the second tangible asset to impact on this research: the number of staff the Directorate is able to employ.

As this was something that all participants mentioned, it can be assumed that concerns over financial shortages are not influenced by ethnographic groups. However, there were divisions concerning how the Directorate could best handle the problem. Staff from SB4 and above discussed their frustrations over the financial situation and the difficulty they have had when implementing the cuts. Staff at the lower end of the scale, however, often stated that they did not understand the reasoning behind many of the cuts and felt that the work they had to do had not been taken into account, indicating a breakdown in communication between top management and staff from Grade B and below. Unsurprisingly, staff in Collection Care had the most negative reaction to the current financial deficit as theirs was the department that lost the highest number of staff. Arts and Humanities were the most divided in their reactions, ranging from those who felt that they were coping well and planning ahead for how to deliver good service with reduced funds to those who felt that they could not cope with the pressure that the limited resources had placed on them. Content, Strategy, Research and Operations appeared to have the most philosophical approach overall, and the focus of their concerns was largely on the other departments within the Directorate.

## 6.1.3. Staff Deficit

While largely connected with financial assets, the issue of staffing deficit in S&C merits a category of its own. As the financial crisis took place after the directorial restructure, there are several positions that have been left unfilled. Employee 12 stated that **‘vacancies have existed in my department for a long time and annoy some of my colleagues a great deal.’** Employee 70 believed that while some staff members see all of these gaps as staff cuts, they are more often the result of the directorial review creating too many roles which could not realistically be achieved within the staffing budget. As a result, existing employees are required to cover the gaps. Employees 25 and 69 complained of the lack of staff resources to deal with the amount of work S&C has to do. Employee 15 believed that morale was low in the Directorate due to ‘**staff covering for admin gaps, managers doing role of HR, curators covering multiple specialist areas’**. Employees 51 and 41 also commented on the problem of staff having to take on additional duties, and Employee 45 felt that the Directorate has **‘inadequate staff resources to cope with fundamental issues.’** The Directorate has several singleton roles, with only one curator working with certain parts of the collection. Employee 12 discussed the added pressure this entails, when large parts of a collection are not catalogued and one person who may only work part time cannot keep up with the demand. Figure 5.1 displays data from the online survey. Participants were asked if there were gaps in expertise within their department due to shortages in staff. 81% indicated that this was a problem they had encountered, indicating a large IA deficit.



###### Figure 6.1.2: Perceived gaps in expertise due to staff shortages

Statistically, the largest proportion of perceived expertise gaps came from Arts and Humanities, and the lowest from Content, Strategy, Research and Operations and Social Sciences. This is unsurprising given that A&H is the largest department and had the most number of unfilled positions after the review, while both CSR&O and SS were newly formed departments, developed with an awareness of the limitations the financial crisis might inflict. Social Sciences had been largely untouched by the review, and CSR&O was put in place by the review. However, this does indicate that Arts and Humanities staff may have lower morale due to feelings of being understaffed, and that they might feel more pressure than other departments to deliver the same excellence of service despite the lack of resources. This should be taken into account when evaluating IAs, as morale and belief in service delivery and utilisation of collections may be lower in areas where there are staff gaps purely for tangible reasons.

In addition to these gaps, the BL has had to implement some voluntary redundancies, most of which were in Collection Care, where around 30% of staff were lost. This has meant that the Directorate has to deliver the same (or higher) quality service as it did before, but with previously filled roles being made vacant; Employee 59 discussed the anxiety felt by some staff members who have to conduct the same amount of work as before without enough employees to fill all the roles. Employee 57, a Collection Care staff member, stated that:

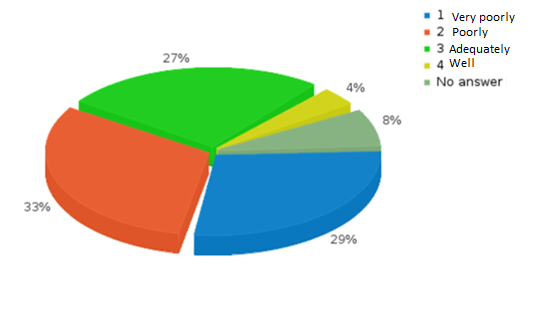
**‘I suppose part of the budget cuts are losing members of staff, and there's 18 gone in the last year, and it's starting... it's that side that it's starting to really bite on us, that we find that, um, with the massive digitisation program that's going on at the moment, and Conservation's there to make sure that the items are ready to be digitised, we find that we're struggling to meet all the demands.’**

They added that these losses are hard to come back from, and it has severely lowered morale within the department. Employee 50 feared that the redundancies had inhibited the Directorate’s ability to be progressive, stating that ‘**amongst those who have taken a voluntary exit are often sort of younger ones who are more go ahead, if you like, who would have been, you know, an asset to the library had they remained.’** Inevitably, when staff members leave they take their expertise with them, which is a problem Employees 69, 48, 52, 24, 48 and 28 all brought up. Employee 69 added that ‘**there have been big losses of positions that were very specialised. They knew the collections, and none of these have been replaced, and it's not really the best opportunity for getting new positions.’** However, this has meant that the Directorate has had to think critically about what expertise is absolutely essential to the Library’s continued success even though, as Employee 52 stated, these decisions are not easy and it is impossible to tell before the fact whether these losses will actually be severely detrimental. These staff losses have also caused problems with the Directorate’s succession planning. Employee 59 commented that **‘we are losing a lot of people through voluntary redundancy and so forth, some of those people were people who we had lined up’**. Employees 42 and 69 added that the Directorate rarely has the funds to replace leaving staff, and their duties are often merged into the role of another staff member. There is rarely time in these cases for the remaining team members to learn everything the role entails.

Employee 3 discussed the drop in staff members’ ability to engage in development programmes:

**‘because of staff cuts and financial stringency there just aren’t the bodies on the ground to do the things which have to be done *and* to give lectures, go to conferences, write for learned journals, give tours of exhibitions and so on’**

This was also brought up by Employee 54, who said **‘now we have to think more carefully about who does what and why, and how we're going to pass that information on, and what training we are needing to do’.** Figure 5.2 presents statistics from the online survey. Staff were asked to rate how effectively they felt the Directorate was dealing with the redundancies from 1 (very poorly) to 5 (very well).

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###### Figure 6.1.3: Perceptions of how effectively S&C is dealing with the job cuts

Tellingly, none of the participants felt that were completely satisfied with the management of these cuts, and over half of the participants were dissatisfied. While the highest degree of dissatisfaction understandably came from Collection Care, there did not seem to be a pattern in satisfaction levels depending on the participant’s place in the structural hierarchy indicating that the general sense of upset has been felt by all levels of staff. Again, the loss of staff is not something that could have been prevented considering the Library’s reduced resources, and this should be taken into account when evaluating IAs especially in areas of the Directorate which have been badly impacted by cuts, as morale is likely to have been lowered significantly there.

## 6.1.4. Time Deficit

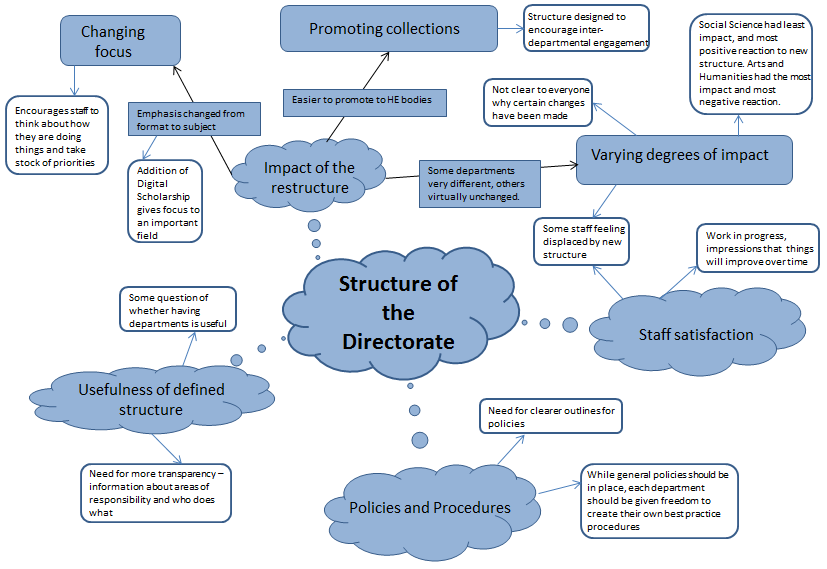
Given the reduced staff numbers, it should not be surprising that 92% of participants in this study mentioned that they were stretched for time and cannot complete all the work that they would like to do. When asked, most staff exhibited a desire to attend more training sessions or create a portfolio of their work, but do not have the time to do so on top of their workload. Employee 23 said that they wanted to share their expertise with team members but had too many ongoing projects to do so effectively. Employee 54 was asked about opportunities to attend conferences, and said that **‘the difficulty is finding the time when we are expected to produce a certain level of work, we have to be efficient, we have to fill in our key performance indicators and so forth, and there are certain expectations placed on us, actually finding the time to allow people to do that is difficult.’** Employee 58 concurred that while attendance at conferences and training courses and writing papers is increasingly important it is also harder to afford both financially and in terms of time available. Employee 3 discussed the problem of workloads and responsibilities expanding while the number of staff is reduced, meaning that existing S&C employees are under a lot of pressure, and Employee 67 added that **‘there is frankly just an awful lot more to do on a day-by-day basis, and the expectations are that it's done a lot quicker’**.Employee 61 also mentioned the increased workload, and felt that the added responsibilities employees have to do their own admin etc. have meant that they have little time to focus on work related to their areas of expertise. Employee 68 argued that ‘**it's no good just expecting people to [conduct research] on top of everything else. You have to clear space for them somehow’**, which is difficult when additional responsibilities leave so little spare time. Employee 67 stated that this situation is not helped by the sheer bulk of the collections employees are responsible for. There is a significant backlog of cataloguing, an issue mentioned by 43% of participants, and Employee 67 believed that staff can feel overwhelmed by the scale of what they need to achieve. Employee 47 discussed the build-up of accessioning and cataloguing which meant that was taking longer to pick away at them, which was causing frustration within the department. Employee 69 concurred, stating that **‘we had an overload, and we're doing jobs that we shouldn't be doing, so it takes you away from the developing of expertise’**. The largest proportion of staff complaining about the lack of time at their disposal came from Arts and Humanities. This could be attributed to the number of gaps in this department’s structure and the wide range of the collections they are responsible for. Again, time deficits were mentioned by participants from all tiers of the structure.

Several S&C staff members are working on a temporary contract. Employee 62 stressed that this can lead to problems where the work these contract workers do is ongoing but the Library cannot keep them on, and they run out of time. One contract employee added **‘given the opportunity to stay at the library I feel I would be able to contribute a great deal more, but it has been made clear to me this will not be possible’**, and Employee 28, also on contract, said that they would have liked to be involved in training programmes but that they did not have time with the project that had to be completed before they had to leave. These staff members tended to be lower in the hierarchy, but two participants from SB4 and above mentioned their frustration at not being able to keep employees on beyond their contract and losing their expertise. This indicates that it is something that impacts on all staff, whether directly or indirectly, and that concerns of not having enough time to complete tasks are increasing the stress level in the Directorate which, in turn, may inhibit staff members’ ability to use the time they do have in the most effective way.

However, one positive outcome of staff working with limited time is that it appears to have improved focus, indicating that the majority have not allowed the increased pressure to negatively impact their approach to their job. Employee 54 stated that ‘**we have to be careful what we agree to a little bit, and we have to think more carefully about who is doing what work now’**, and Employees 54 and 62 said that the Directorate was concentrating on what was absolutely necessary so as to make best use of their resources. Employee 65 emphasised the importance of maintaining the BL’s quality of service, saying that **‘it’s really a question of trying to find the appropriate tactics for the conditions we’re in, and not just chopping and reducing services’**, and Employee 54 agreed that while methods have been amended, it is important to staff that they maintain the same quality of service but with a different, more time efficient, approach. Employee 67 said that while having less time to do work has been stressful, it has also made staff more adaptable and open to considering ways of doing their jobs. This attitude appears to have been successful: Employee 48 stated that in terms of customer service, surveys indicated that the average reader hadn’t noticed much difference. There is no discernible pattern to positive and negative attitudes to the time restrictions, indicating that it is determined more by the approaches of the separate teams rather than by differences between departments or levels of seniority.

A clear cause-and-effect pattern can be observed with the impact of decreasing tangible assets. Decreased funds have led to decreased employment resources which in turn have led to the remaining staff members having less time to carry out everything they want to. This is out of the hands of S&C and its impact on intellectual assets is not something the Directorate can resolve. However, it is evident that many staff members have seen these reduced resources as a challenge rather than allowing it to cause a decline in services.

# The structure of the Directorate



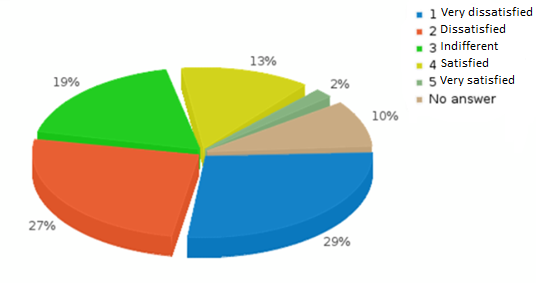
###### Figure 6.2: Concept map detailing key themes in data relating to the structure of the Directorate

This section will cover the infrastructure of Scholarship and Collections. While the recent restructure of the Directorate has been discussed in previous sections in relation to morale and communication, the following will go into more depth concerning how effective the new structure is in enabling the Library’s functions to be performed and allowing S&C to achieve its aims and objectives. Finally, the policies and procedures within S&C and how they impact on the ways employees work will be addressed. The section will also cover the different ethnographic groups within S&C, how the various departments have been impacted by the review, and what this entails in their perceptions of intellectual assets within the Directorate.

## 6.2.1. Impact of the restructure

Employee 56 talked about how the 2010 review instigated the change in structure to counteract the silo cultures that had developed in the Library and help researchers have a clearer idea of what the Library has to offer. As mentioned in previous sections, many employees felt adversely effected by the restructure, but Employee 63 stated that despite this, **‘most people from outside haven’t noticed what’s been going on here, and that’s not necessarily a bad thing if there’s a continuity of service.’** This section will discuss staff’s reactions to the restructure, including the change of focus, how the Directorate’s different subcultures have been affected by varying degrees and how effectively the new structure has promoted collaboration and the hierarchy of S&C.

Figure 6.1 shows how satisfied staff members are with the outcome of the directorial review. Participants in the online survey were asked to rate their satisfaction from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied).



###### Figure 6.2.1: Satisfaction with outcome of the directorial restructure

Of those who answered, only 2% thought the restructure was very successful, and over half felt dissatisfied by it. The following subsections will explore why this might be, focusing on the changing focus the new infrastructure has entailed, how effective it has been in promoting collaboration across the Directorate and how the different ethnographic groups within S&C have been impacted to varying degrees.

### 6.2.1.1. Changing focus

As mentioned above, the new structure of the Directorate, with five departments dedicated to Digital Scholarship, Arts and Humanities, Collection Care, Social Sciences, and Content, Strategy, Research and Operations was designed to place the focus of S&C on the subject areas of the Directorate opposed to the previous structure which was focused on the format. Employee 49 said that **‘it’s better that it’s geared towards studies not collections’**, and Employee 59 said that they could see definite advantages to the new focus in many areas of the Library, as they were much better able to service subject areas than they were in the past. Employee 63 stated that **‘having those kind of key lead figures for each of the subject areas I think will probably work in the long run’** and Employee 64 said having a subject based structure would help the Library’s core audience of researchers in higher education understand what the BL had to offer them. Employee 42 said that due to the restructure **‘we’ve all had to take stock and think about how we do things, and that’s always useful’** because there was a danger of stagnation if the Directorate has been left to work within the same boundaries forever. While Social Sciences is the department with the overall highest morale levels, the positive comments above are largely from Arts & Humanities staff who rated significantly lower in morale. This indicates that in this department staff have been impacted by varying degrees, with some roles being left unchanged or being made simpler, while other staff members have had their jobs change dramatically. Allowances should also be made for personal temperament, with some individuals being naturally more disposed to see change as a positive opportunity while others are wary of it.

Some employees commented on the formation of departments for Digital Scholarship and Content, Strategy, Research and Operations. Employee 48 said that the emphasis of the Directorate was now much more focused on digitisation projects and training for digital scholarship, which they felt would help staff to cater to changing research needs. Employee 53 agreed, stating that **‘the creation of a Digital Scholarship group is a definite plus, because the library has arguably been fairly behind the curve on that area of scholarship.’** Employee 49 was similarly enthusiastic about the development of the CSR&O department because it had **‘given focus to activities that before were kind of... nobody really wanted to do that type of thing, so I think that’s been very helpful.’**

Other participants were less enthused about the change in focus. Employee 53 felt that all the restructure had achieved was to change the service shortcomings to a different area: **‘Whereas before we were muddling our way through the subject connections, we’re now muddling our way through format connections.’** Employee 55 agreed, saying that there were areas of their collections which did not run as smoothly under the new structure, and Employee 67 had had similar experiences, saying that many of the users they had serviced under the old structure were now feeling isolated because their area of interest had been very much focused on the format of collection material. They added that some curators were also struggling in their new roles, because they were being required to work across a range of formats whereas before they had been responsible for just one. Employee 56 thought that not enough consideration had been given to how relationships were going to work after teams had been put in different departments or even different Directorates, and what the long-term ramifications of this adjustment would be. One external stakeholder said that in their opinion:

**‘Quite a lot of the restructure [was] not particularly sensible. I didn't really understand, for example, I think it's completely understandable to divide collections up into geographic areas. I used to use the library's collections a lot, the material they had on 17th and 18th century material related to the West Indies, and I used to know exactly how to ask for the material, whereas if I did it now, I don't know if I'd find it.’**

Employee 59 talked about jobs that were no longer possible because there were fewer staff working on the physical collections, and Employee 42 feared that by putting responsibility for cataloguing outside the remit of Scholarship and Collections, the curators’ familiarity with the collections would decrease. However, Employees 7, 19, 29, 70 and 52 all referred to the new structure as a **‘work in progress’**, which should be given time to establish itself before it would be fair to criticise it. Many of the negative reactions came from Arts & Humanities, suggesting that this department in particular has been divided by the restructure.

### 6.2.1.2. Varying degrees of impact

The restructure had had a varying degree of impact depending on which department staff members were a part of. When asked how happy they were with the structure of the Directorate, Social Sciences had the highest percentage of positive feedback, followed by Digital Scholarship and CRS&O. A higher percentage of negative responses came from Arts and Humanities and Collection Care. This can be tracked back to the amount of disruption each department had had during the restructure. Social Sciences had not been in place for long at the time of the review, so it was decided that it should be left relatively untouched with the exception of some staff members being moved there from other Directorates. Content, Strategy, Research and Operations and Digital Scholarship were formed as part of the review, and employees from these departments talked about being confident that their jobs were designed specifically to work within the new structure.

An employee within Social Sciences said **‘I like shake-ups. I think you can get really... sort of narrow sighted if you’re always working in exactly the same context.’** They added that their department was only really negatively affected by the review in a second-hand way, and that the challenge of maintaining contacts and connections within Arts and Humanities was far greater than it was for them. Another Social Science employee said that they were enthusiastic about the review and positive that people would grow accustomed to the new structure. A Content, Strategy, Research and Operations team member said that they had been affected **‘indirectly, because we've had to take on work which was previously done by other Directorates, or *an*other Directorate, and kind of fell through the crack’**, but that overall their team worked together cohesively. Similarly, a member of the Digital Scholarship department said that they were working together with immediate colleagues successfully, but that other departments were finding things more difficult.

Collection Care, however, is a department which deals with collection formats and many talked about being alienated by the new structure Employee 47 said that **‘the structure… does not work in a number of areas, a lack of real communication, and the impact of the restructure on conservation was particularly... difficult.’** Employee 48 agreed that they did not think conservation and preservation had been particularly well considered in the restructure, and that the Library had not really thought the Library had considered the skills and intellectual capital that would be lost. They added that **‘conservation has changed, preservation has changed, from being very much part of the collections to now just a service area, providing a service. We're no longer part of the intellectual engagement with curators, with the collections in the library.’**

Arts and Humanities included many staff members whose job titles had been completely changed and were working in different teams, and many discussed struggling in their new roles. Employee 49 said **‘there were some people who didn’t really want to do things or didn’t want to take anything extra on because they didn’t think- they didn’t know where they were going to be, and their sort of area had been restructured, so maybe it caused a kind of hiatus in communication.’** Employee 51 said that the department was fractured with people who had come in from different parts of the Library, and people were still adjusting to their new roles, and Employee 48 agreed that the department was not currently balanced properly. Special care should therefore be taken when evaluating IAs in this area of the Directorate. Arts & Humanities as an ethnographic group has been broken into smaller sub-cultures who have different perceptions of the infrastructure as an intellectual asset depending on how positively or negatively it has impacted on them. It would be unwise to generalise any results here because it might mean disregarding nuances of opinion in the department and overlooking areas which could be improved upon.

### 6.2.1.3. Promoting collaborative work

One of the reasons for the review was to encourage matrix working within the Directorate. Opinions were divided over whether this had been a success or not. Employee 51 said **‘I think on the whole it will enable people to integrate better’**, Employee 53 said that work in their department has been made easier because they were able to connect with people and collections where they were not able to before. Employee 56 also felt that the new structure helped S&C staff to think more laterally about the collections, and that **‘the multidisciplinary, cross-disciplinary elements are crucial for the academia and for the library as well.’** Employee 61 said that the review had made staff aware that they needed to work harder to work collaboratively because many had to form connections with their new immediate colleagues as well as maintain the links they had had previously. Employee 63 and External Stakeholder 2 said that the new structure had helped with external relations because more people were able to recognise what the Library had to offer after it had been arranged thematically, although Employee 59 cautioned that this only held true for the academic community, more specifically Russell Group universities, and that outside of this circle the new structure would be just as opaque to users as the old one was. Employee 61 felt that while it would take a while to adjust, positive results could already be seen in the inner workings of the Directorate: **‘I think it’s just concentrated our minds really, it’s brought [matrix working] up the list of priorities, because we always had a perfectly good working relationship there, I think it’s probably just got better.’** New ethnographic groups are being formed and new connections made.

Employee 53 cautioned that the challenge for the Directorate now is to ensure that the expertise and knowledge flow around the format of the collections was maintained now that those structures are no longer in place. Employee 64 felt that the move had only been partly successful at that time. They felt that while it may have helped Scholarship and Collections engage with other Directorates in the Library, they did not think it had done much to improve communications within the Directorate itself. However, Employee 63 pointed out that it was too soon to say if the move had been successful in relation to matrix working, and they thought that ultimately the steer the restructure had given towards focusing outwardly and creating relationships was the most positive thing that had come from it, and Employee 1 said that they had noticed a definite increase in effort amongst staff to involve more people in projects they were doing.

## 6.2.2. Staff satisfaction with structure

Previous sections have already outlined how the directorial restructure have impacted the morale of many employees. Employee 55 expanded on this, stating that:

**‘There are problems that haven’t been resolved within the structure as to how we work within it, and inevitably those are going to emerge over the course of time, and will hopefully be solved over the course of time, but it’s... morale has taken a hit as well, because of people losing their jobs, people who have been doing something for 25 years suddenly being told it’s not central to the library’s concern and they can either go and do something else or push off.’**

Aside from the emotional impact, there was some division of opinion concerning how the new structure would enable the Directorate to carry out the BL’s aims and objectives. Employee 70 said that **‘I think it really depends who you talk to as to how they see it’**, and that some employees felt hindered by it while others saw it as a great opportunity which had enabled them to do their work more effectively. Employee 7 stated that they were suffering from **‘unresolved issues dating from the 2010 restructure.’** They talked about confusion in their department over reallocation of responsibilities, leadership roles being unfilled and the implementation of matrix management not yet being put into effect, all of which had led to uncertainty about strategy at a local level. Employee 47 disagreed, saying that aside from the added stress and impact on morale which is inevitable with such a big structural change, they believed that the majority of staff felt that the new structure would improve the way the Library functions. Overall, seven employees said that changing the focus to subject rather than format had hindered their ability to do their work, six said that it had helped and the remainder of participants said that it was still a work in progress but thought that once S&C got used to it things would be better. Employee 46 said **‘I won’t say has led but is leading towards an improvement.’** Unsurprisingly given that it was left practically untouched by the review, Social Sciences had the highest rate of satisfaction with the Directorate’s structure. Digital Scholarship and Arts & Humanities had the lowest overall satisfaction levels. The review had altered a significant amount of A&H, and Digital Scholarship is a new department still trying to find its place within the Directorate.

Some staff members suggested ways in which the structure could be altered in order to make their jobs function more effectively. Employee 5 suggested **‘simplifying the Directorate’s structure, and taking out presently obstructive layers of management’**, and Employee 6 suggested having more Directorate-wide policies for general things like outreach and project management rather than allowing each department to work separately which they felt had led to some patchy results. Employee 70, however, suggested that staff allow the new structure to settle before trying to amend things. They felt the new structure had helped the Directorate in that it had raised the profile of S&C and made the role of the curator easier to understand. Employee 67 said that it was the responsibility of staff to ensure that the Directorate functioned effectively regardless of the structure, and Employee 48 agreed, stating that **‘unless you change the mind-set of the people in the organisation, all the moving in the world isn't going to alter the way the structure functions or doesn't function, flow or doesn't flow.’**

## 6.2.3. Usefulness of a defined structure

Some employees questioned the usefulness of having any defined structure with set departments at all. Employee 51 felt that however the Directorate was structured it would not change the fact that departments tend to work separately: **‘I’m not saying that if it had been left as it was it would’ve been any worse, it just would’ve been different.’** One external stakeholder felt that there were overlaps between many of the departments and that having a set structure had broken up channels of communication and collaboration which might otherwise exist. They singled out the departments of Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences, which they saw as interdisciplinary and cross boundaries, and that by pigeonholing certain subjects into one Directorate or another, the Library was not thinking laterally enough. Employees 5 and 42 felt that having a complete switch from format to subject focus, the Library had inhibited staff from working to accommodate both. Employee 51 said that **‘there is no perfect structure’** and that the Directorate would benefit from a more fluid, matrix way of functioning.

## 6.2.4. Policies and Procedures

All participants were asked about their opinions on the Directorate’s policies and procedures, and how they helped or hindered the effective management of work in S&C. Employee 34 felt that management needed to establish firmer goals for the Directorate to work towards as a whole, and Employee 32 said that **‘direct reports need to have information to plan, create strategies and communicate to their areas of responsibility’** rather than leaving middle management to guess exactly what was expected. Employee 48 agreed that **‘there are general library policies, and then each section will have its own policies and procedures, and they can sometimes conflict.’** Employee 57 agreed that while having clearer outlines for policies would be helpful in some areas, they should also allow separate departments to manage their own ways of working: **‘I think they're important that we have them and we follow them, but it should be... how we work, and not trying to do it a different way, because that doesn't work.’** Employee 49 agreed that not all policies should be imposed across the whole Directorate and should allow for differences in job functions, and the different styles of working that members of staff have. For example, Employee 17 discussed how they felt that the introduction of Optimum clocking in for all staff was insulting to the permanent employees and treated staff like automatons. While this was an effective method of helping staff on a temporary or job share contract keep track of the hours they work, implementing the same policy across the Directorate did not take into account the fact that there are several ethnographic groups within S&C who would not all benefit from the same strategies.

Employee 59 felt that the Library sometimes over-complicated their procedures, giving an example of recent efforts to put a part of the collections online where the Library created its own programmes for interfaces and catalogues whereas similar tools could have been found for free online. They argued that putting that time and effort into working on the collections themselves would have produced a much more satisfactory result for users. Employees 46 and 8 agreed that the Library’s policies and procedures could sometimes be overly-complicated and that the reasons behind decisions were not always made clear.

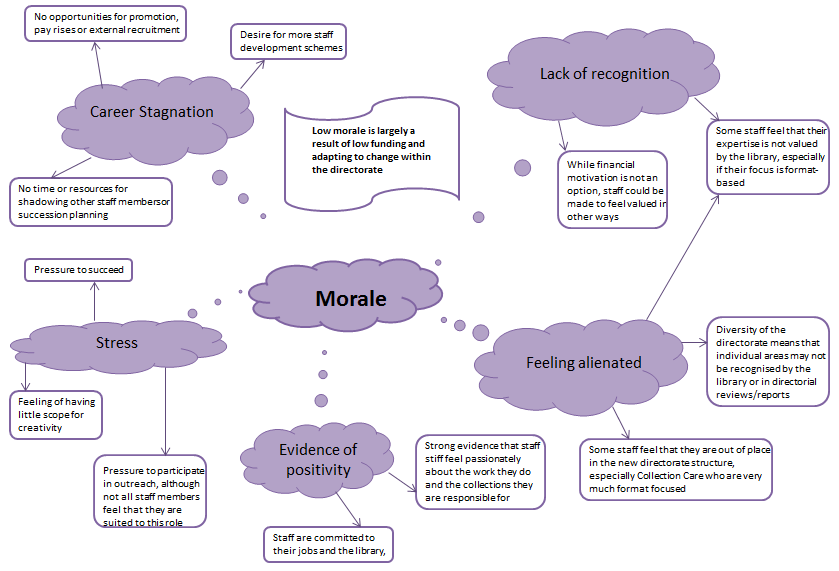
Seven employees talked about finding the levels of bureaucracy they had to go through to achieve goals challenging. Employees 67 and 38 wanted the Directorate to make the process for proposing digitisation projects or exhibitions clearer and simpler. Employee 47 agreed that there are too many hoops to jump through in the current system, and Employee 59 wanted to see the Library operating in a more flexible manner. Employee 46 felt that there should be a clearer policy for dealing with funding bids:

**‘We tend to kind of... put in the same amount of effort depending on... and overhead depending on... you know, whether it’s on fifty thousand or five million. And you think, well hang on, we or to be able to prioritise, we ought to streamline some of this, you know, to try and get some of the smaller ones out more quickly and easily.’**

They added that even when funding bids were in place and there was an external partner willing to provide money, there were frequent hindrances before a project could get underway and that **‘it is frustrating… but you have to occasionally calm those external people down and say actually we can't move that fast.’** Employees 53 and 60 also talked about their frustration with how slowly the Library operates at time. They gave the example of social media where it takes a while to put strategies in place and then training would have to be initiated, and in such a fast-paced environment it was counter-productive to have to wait up to eighteen months before staff knew what parameters they could operate in. Employee 68 felt that the Library did not allow for the time constraints staff members were under, stating that the new policy of writing up a report after attending a conference was off-putting. Many of the participants who expressed concern regarding this issue were line managers. From a phenomenographical point of view, these are the individuals who are tasked with implementing the policies put in place by top management but who also liaise closely with the staff in their department and know how it functions most effectively. Consideration should be taken in an IA evaluation of the perspectives provided by these staff members as they have unique insight into how policies could be developed which would both benefit the Library and fit with the way that their staff do their jobs.

Employee 46 argued that in an institution the size of the British Library, there will always be examples of procedures being over-bureaucratic and it cannot always be avoided because of the nature of the Library and the fact that it is a public body. Employee 67 had similar sentiments and added that there was a positive side to working in such a large organisation because **‘when [the Library] swings in behind something, it really is like being the pilot of an oil tanker, you feel the power of it moving forward, everything gets pushed away, and it happens. I think that's when the Library's at its best.’** In this sense, the slow pace of change in the Library is somewhat inevitable considering its size and the sheer number of ethnographic groups it is comprised of, and this slowness is not necessarily an intellectual liability as it is a consequence of the power of the Library.

# Morale

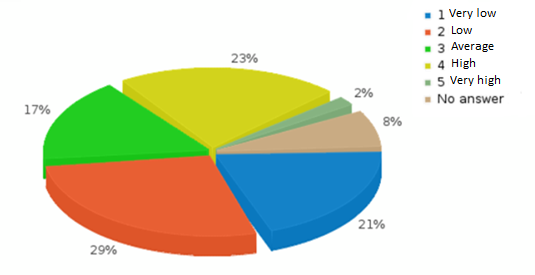


###### Figure 6.3: Concept map detailing key themes in data relating to morale in the data.

It should be noted at the beginning of this chapter that the researcher is aware that morale is a somewhat contentious issue. In any organisation there will be complaints of demoralisation and dissatisfaction with the way that things are being run, and therefore expressions of negative emotion should not be taken as hard evidence and more as a subjective response on the part of the participant. Nevertheless, this chapter has been included because, as Caddy (2000) observes, poor morale is an intellectual liability, and even if expressions of dissatisfaction do not give an accurate representation of the reality of an organisation, that dissatisfaction is ‘true’ for the participants experiencing that dissatisfaction. These feelings of unhappiness can have an impact on an employee’s willingness to engage with the organisation and can even impact on the quality of their work, so while it is unrealistic to expect staff satisfaction to be universally high, low morale should be considered as a threat to the quality of an organisation’s IAs and care should be taken to monitor it and attempt to improve it where possible.

In consideration of the case study, two major factors at the time the research was being conducted can be seen as direct contributors to the poor morale discussed by participants. Firstly, the financial cuts discussed in Chapter 5.2 had impacted on what S&C staff members were able to do. It also meant that pay rises were put on hold, and some positions within the Directorate could not be filled, as well as the introduction of voluntary redundancies in some places, in order to save the Library money. Smallwood and Burkey Wade (2013) note that a lack of financial resources can adversely affect the mood of an organisation, and it should be seen as a major contributor here in the case of Scholarship and Collections. The other contributing factor is the change in structure that the Directorate had recently undergone. While change in itself is inherently neither good nor bad, and is essential for any organisation which does not want to become stagnant, the implementation of change (especially on such a large scale) can cause significant amounts of stress, which can in turn lead to low morale. Roberts and Rowley (2004) note that organisational change can have a negative impact on employees’ emotions, and Corrall (2000) adds that changes should be monitored carefully and will cause an inevitable amount of dissention amongst staff. Again, while inevitable given the circumstances, this dip in morale should not be ignored as it will directly impact on the Directorate’s IAs in the form of an intellectual liability.

All participants in this study mentioned that they were feeling a direct or indirect impact from a drop in morale within the Directorate. A significant cause of this was the reduction in tangible assets mentioned in the previous section. Morale itself, however, is an intangible, and when it is low can become an intellectual liability. Employee 2 stated that they felt the Directorate was **‘consistently challenged by the extremely low morale among colleagues’** and Employee 48 commented that people were less willing to put themselves forward and take risks due to low morale. This section will cover the elements identified within the data that have contributed to a lower morale in S&C which are outside of the tangible asset losses mentioned in Chapter 5, such as feelings of career stagnation, stress, perceived lack of recognition and alienation from the Library’s goals. It will also identify the ways in which employees are tackling these problems and seeking to overcome morale issues, and whether this is affected by what area of the Directorate the participants work in. Figure 7.1 presents data from the online questionnaire. Staff were asked to rate how good they felt morale was in their area of the Directorate, from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).



###### Figure 6.3.1: Perception of morale in participants’ areas of S&C

Only 2% felt very positively about morale, while half of the participants thought it was below average. Collection Care and Digital Scholarship suffered most from low morale with Social Sciences and CSR&O rating it higher. Morale in Arts and Humanities was the most variable. Staff higher in the directorial structure had higher morale than staff at Grade B and below, but not by a significant amount.

## 6.3.1. Career Stagnation

Six employees, all from Arts and Humanities, identified a lack of career progression within Scholarship and Collections as a key contributor to low morale. Employee 16 commented that ‘**there are very few (and in some areas no) prospects for younger staff, unequal grading, no promotion opportunities, low pay, no recognition for the work we do’**. Employee 1 felt that there was no provision of academic or professional development schemes, and Employee 45 expressed frustration at how few opportunities there were for advancement. Employee 40 said that while existing financial restraints made this stagnation inevitable, it has had a demoralising effect on some members of staff. What is significant here is that all employees who voiced these concerns were from the same department. This indicates that career stagnation is an intellectual liability which is especially prevalent in Arts and Humanities, and that this is perhaps an area where the staff’s intellectual assets are not being fully utilised.

## 6.3.2. Stress

Stress is an inevitable part of any workplace and it would be unrealistic to think of it as something that can be completely eliminated, but nevertheless it is something that should be taken into consideration as an intellectual liability. Eight employees specifically mentioned stress as a contributor to lower morale within the Directorate. Employee 28 mentioned the lack of job security which made them worry about the decisions they made within their role. Employee 48 concurred with this, and believed that the British Library was no longer tolerant of the prospect of failures: **‘If something goes wrong it's panic stations immediately, and things will go wrong, that's life. We learn from it and move onto the next thing.’** Employee 68 added that they felt **‘constantly hemmed-in, and there's no room to be creative or innovative. And you're not allowed to fail. Any healthy organisation has to allow failure.’** They believed that this aversion to risk made it difficult for staff to put forward ideas or try anything new in case of failure, and that this was adding too much anxiety to their jobs. Employee 49 agreed that it was difficult for staff to be entrepreneurial in the current climate and that they felt discouraged and anxious about the decisions they made. Employees 70 and 8 felt that the Directorate was under an enormous amount of pressure to produce results and that this was making some employees very stressed. Interestingly, at least one member of staff from each S&C department mentioned the negative impact stress was having on them, indicating that it is a liability which spans all the ethnographic groups within S&C.

## 6.3.3. Lack of recognition

Eleven employees, eight of whom were from Arts and Humanities or Collection Care, connected lower morale with a lack of recognition for the work conducted by teams or individual employees within the Directorate. Employees 22 and 1 stated feeling under-appreciated and Employee 16 believed that **‘my expertise is not valued inside the library’.** Employee 13 stated that in order to capitalise on staff expertise, **‘such utilisation begins with respect for staff, their skills, knowledge and experience.’** Employee 2 commented on feeling isolated and unsupported, and Employee 39 felt that their hard work had not been recognised by the organisation. Employees 2, 69 and 67 felt that the Directorate was not acknowledging or fully utilising staff members’ expertise and contacts, and Employee 38 stated that the way they did their job was under attack. Employee 67 stated that **‘I think a lot of the morale issues, a lot of the anxieties that arise out of this are maybe not entirely perceived but felt, in the sense of not being valued. Not individually, but just at the core of the organisation.’** Employee 69 agreed, but added that a lot of the lack of recognition stemmed from employees being unwilling to put themselves forward or publicise what they do because of feelings of job insecurity. They added:

**‘There are no economic rewards, we earn very little, and it's a lot expected from us, a lot of knowledge, a lot of professionalism, but the salaries are technician's salaries. So there are other ways of recognising people, and I think if there is not the money, you can try to do it differently.’**

They continued that because of the losses in tangible assets, it is all the more important for the Library to ensure that cost-free rewards such as acknowledgement and praise are forthcoming in order to make employees feel that the work they do is worthwhile. The focus of these sentiments in Collection Care and Arts and Humanities is not surprising given that these are the departments most affected by redundancies and changing roles due to the directorial review. However, when evaluating intellectual assets this should be taken into account as an area which requires particular attention for these two departments.

## 6.3.4. Feelings of alienation

The Scholarship and Collections Directorate is, as mentioned in previous chapters, very diverse; it is comprised of several ethnographic groups with varying agendas. Some S&C employees, in Content, Strategy, Research and Operations for example, have little to no contact with the collections themselves. Some, in Collection Care, work with the collections purely in a restorative capacity. Even amongst curators, the collections they work with are diverse and require unique scholarship. Some employees found that this diversity has meant that not all the different roles within the Directorate are fully understood, and four participants in this research felt that they were alienated from what the Directorate as a whole was aiming to achieve, and that this had lowered morale. Employee 13 said that **‘I and my colleagues have been simply pushed aside. We have no clear place in the new structure; our skills, knowledge and experience are entirely discounted. We have no voice.’** Employee 53 stated that in a Directorate with so many different roles it is inevitable that not everyone will feel like a priority and that the 2010 review will have effected some areas worse than others, but that the fact that the review coincided with the economic cutbacks has made these feelings worse. Employee 68 added that **‘what the library wants us to do requires a tremendous cultural change, which is a huge shock for people within the Directorate.’** Employee 27 felt that the work involved with curating the area of the collections they were responsible for wasn’t understood by the Library, and the skills set involved had not been taken into account. Employee 5 felt that they couldn’t reconcile the work they were doing with the new structure of the Directorate, and that they didn’t know how to integrate themselves. Employees who expressed these feelings of alienation came predominantly from Arts and Humanities and Digital Scholarship. Arts and Humanities have been faced with a great deal of disruption during the review with several staff members having to take on new roles and lose control over collections they had previously been working with, and Digital Scholarship is a new department which has yet to fully establish itself, and is met with misunderstanding from some staff members (see section 6.1 for further elaboration). Therefore an effort needs to be made to ensure that these departments in particular are made aware of what is required of them by the Library, and that other staff members are familiar with them and the jobs that they do. With one exception, the staff members who discussed feeling alienated were grade A and below. This suggests that more effort should be made to communicate laterally in order to ensure that staff below SB4 know what is their responsibilities are, and that top management is aware of them and the skills they possess.

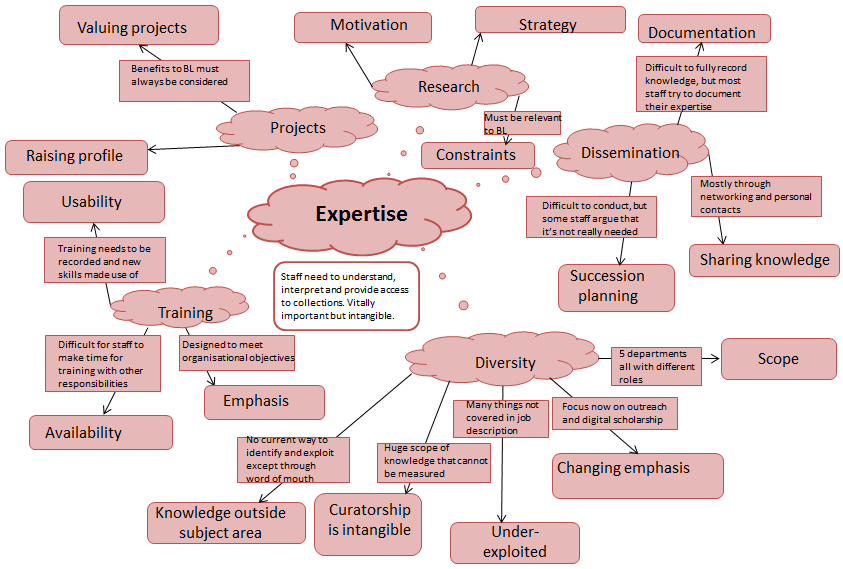
## 6.3.5. Evidence of positivity

When discussing morale and intellectual liabilities, encountering negative viewpoints is inevitable. While a large number of employees discussed issues they had with morale, many countered this with a more positive reaction to working in the Directorate. 52% of participants mentioned the enthusiasm that S&C employees have for the work they do. Employee 8 stated that **‘overall morale is still high because people have a great passion for what they do at the BL’**, and employee 47 said **‘I'm always staggered by the knowledge of curators at the British Library, but also their commitment to their job’.** Employee 52 stated that staff are dedicated to the collections and want to find new ways of introducing people to them and new forms of presenting them, and this is what keeps them in their jobs despite any frustrations they might face. They added that while it takes some employees longer to adapt to the new directions and priorities of the Directorate (e.g. actively promoting and selling the collections), the enthusiasm they have for the material they are responsible for remains constant. Employee 48 said that generally, people in the Directorate enjoy the work they do and are dedicated to the collections, and that this is what the Library needs to capitalise on in order to increase support. Employee 61’s opinion of the Directorate’s staff was very positive:

**‘There’s quite exceptional commitment and enthusiasm… the range and depth of knowledge that people have in the Directorate never ceases to amaze me, I must say, so that’s really quite extraordinary. And many of the people are very good communicators as well, very good at putting it across which is important, it’s no good if you’ve got lots of knowledge and don’t do anything with it, so I think that’s really important as well.’**

Their lasting impression was that while the Library was suffering from a dip in morale, the passion employees have for their work and their extensive knowledge of the collections would ensure that the quality of their work was assured. There were no patterns in this data regarding the different areas of the Directorate or the seniority of participants. This would suggest that having a positive approach depends more on the individual employee rather than the challenges faced by particular areas of S&C.

# Expertise



###### Figure 6.4: Concept map detailing key themes in data relating to expertise

In a Directorate as diverse as Scholarship and Collections within an internationally important organisation like the British Library, there is an extensive wealth of expertise amongst staff members. Employee 65 stated that **‘there’s a tremendous amount of knowledge and authority [in the Directorate], and it’s a question of just harnessing that and using it in the right ways that enable it to be sustainable.’** This section will discuss the diversity of S&C expertise, including areas where it may be under-exploited. It will also cover staff training, research opportunities, project management, and the dissemination of staff expertise. It will also explore how this expertise varies between departments and whether this has any impact on how IAs are managed and exploited.

## 6.4.1. Diversity of S&C expertise

As discussed in Chapter 8, the staff members of S&C have an extensive range of responsibilities, and this entails a great wealth of diverse expertise. This ranges from the scientific, practical knowledge of Collection Care staff to the complex subject knowledge of curators to the communications knowledge of Content, Strategy, Research and Operations. Employee 46 felt that this diversity is what makes the Library unique and vital as a centre of research and Employee 28 stated that in order to ensure its continued success the British Library must ensure that it fully utilises the extensive expertise that staff possess. Employee 25 agreed with this, saying that **‘the understanding and interpretation of [collections] is pivotal to the success and reputation of the Library, and this can only be done by having long-term expert staff in Scholarship and Collections, who are supported, and adequately rewarded for their dedication and contribution to the Library.’** Employee 59 talked enthusiastically about the team of experts they worked with and how it has made their job more enjoyable and that it is this expertise that researchers find especially rewarding when using the Library. Employee 68 discussed the fact that not only does the Directorate employ a wide range of experts, but that these experts have to have a range of knowledge to do their jobs, not just of the collections but also of how to publicise the collections, linguistics, publishing and how to go about liaising with external stakeholders. The following subsections will cover staff who have expertise outside of their job description, expertise that is not being fully utilised, the intangible nature of jobs like curatorship which makes it difficult for staff to demonstrate their value, and how changes in the Library’s focus have affected the utilisation of staff expertise. It will also explore the differences in ethnographic groups and how able they are to capitalise on their particular expertise within the current structure.

### 6.4.1.1. Knowledge outside specified area

7 participants mentioned that they had expert knowledge that extended beyond their job description. Employee 5 said that **‘many of us have expertise that isn’t used because it’s in “someone else’s area.”’** Employee 9 felt that this was not being exploited by the Library, and that it wasn’t understood that Scholarship and Collections employees aim to be good generalists and expand their knowledge beyond their specified area of expertise. They added that **‘curators sometimes have a good knowledge of Library collections other than those they’re responsible for… there is currently no way of measuring or exploiting this.’** Employee 54 discussed finding out by chance that a colleague had extensive knowledge of a subject they themselves were planning a project on, and that there was no way for staff to find this type of expertise except accidentally. Employee 67 felt that this problem has been exacerbated by the review which changed the focus of the Directorate from format to subject, as it has meant that format-based expertise amongst staff is now not easy to identify, but concedes that in the former structure it was the subject-based expertise that was harder to locate. Employee 62 expressed a desire for the Directorate to establish a way of capitalising on the extent of its employees’ knowledge and find a way of making these untapped resources more accessible:

**‘That is what they do, they understand the collections, the depth of it, how it all connects. And they are advocates of the collections, they promote bits of the collections, they're interpreters, their knowledge goes beyond their job specification. They give life to the collection, for the researchers and all our audiences, and this knowledge should be exploited.’**

Apart from one employee from Digital Scholarship, one third of employees who discussed having knowledge outside of their specific area were members of the Collection Care team and the remaining two thirds worked in Arts and Humanities. They were all Grade A and below. As previously mentioned, Collection Care and Arts and Humanities have faced the most disruption in the last few years. This could account for feelings amongst these staff members that they are not being fully utilised. Additionally, as Employee 54 observed, the majority of Arts and Humanities staff are curators who, along with being experts in their field, cultivate other areas of interest. Due to the practical nature of Collection Care, there is currently no system for evaluating the work the department does in relation to the other areas of the Directorate. Therefore, special attention should be given to these two areas when evaluating human assets there to ensure that no valuable areas of expertise are overlooked.

### 6.4.1.2. Under-exploited expertise

8 participants expressed concern that the Library was not fully utilising the knowledge of its staff, and that it was difficult to identify where certain expertise could be found. Three were from Arts and Humanities, three were from Digital Scholarship, one was from Social Sciences and one from Collection Care. Employee 53 said that **‘we come in with our own knowledge and expertise in the area, but also our own networks and existing partnerships, existing peers outside the organisation’** and this was not being fully recognised. Employee 25 added that **‘apart from the obvious manifestations of the work, the job has many roles and responsibilities that remain unnoticed.’** Employee 1 feared that this under-utilisation would lead to a decline in expertise as there would be no motivation from the Library for employees to extend their expertise, and Employee 2 felt that not enough was being done to promote the knowledge of junior staff and that this may discourage them from continuing at the Library. Employee 48 concedes that **‘part of [the under-utilisation] is sort of reticence to speak up and put their head above the parapet and say 'I did that'. But again it's not an organisation that seems to encourage that, promoting of skills and ability.’** Employee 67 felt that the Directorate underplayed what its staff has to offer, and Employee 55 said that without specialised expertise provided by curators, the collections could not be accessed and this expertise should be promoted as an essential part of how the Library functions. Employee 64 argued that **‘[our diverse expertise] ought to be one of our key selling points, and at the moment I think we’re fragmenting rather than bringing together. We’re creating these intellectual, sometimes discipline- sometimes commercially-based ring fenced resources, and we need to break away from that.’** Employee 64 felt that the expertise that comes from working closely with the collections is the most important and should be better promoted, as subject-based knowledge can be gained outside of the BL. In many ways, this fear some members of staff have about speaking up about what they are doing is inevitable. With the voluntary redundancies and changing responsibilities that have been taking place since 2010, there is a certain amount of job insecurity amongst S&C staff which may make them reluctant to draw attention to themselves. However, attention should be made in an asset evaluation to encourage staff to promote themselves, especially in areas where staff members have identified feelings of under-utilisation. This will not only improve job satisfaction by allowing employees to feel that they are being recognised for what they can do, but will also make the Directorate more productive by fully exploiting all the intellectual assets available.

Some employees, however, were less enthusiastic about the idea of promoting their expertise. Employee 68 felt that **‘being known for what you know is a two-edged sword’**, and that the job of a curator should be to promote the collections and not themselves. Nevertheless, the majority of the participants in this research believed that the collections alone cannot be fully exploited and that the extensive knowledge within the Directorate must be fully realised in order for the material to be accessed in the most productive way.

### 6.4.1.3. Intangible nature of curatorship

Many of the curators who took part in this study commented on how difficult it was to produce tangible evidence of how their knowledge benefitted the Library. One contributor to this is the fact that today’s curator has multiple roles in their job: Employees 46, 63, 14 and 27 discussed how difficult it was to explain exactly what they do succinctly. Employee 46 said that

**‘In most other jobs in the library, you can tell when someone’s doing a better job than someone else because they’re doing more of something, or they’re doing it kind of be- There are often sort of measurables and things. It’s actually very much harder in... in Scholarship and Collections to do that because it’s a lot about... policy, it’s a lot about, you know, intangible things which are very hard to describe, and so on.’**

This comment illustrates the need for this project, as it will enable staff to demonstrate the value of what they do which had hitherto been overlooked.

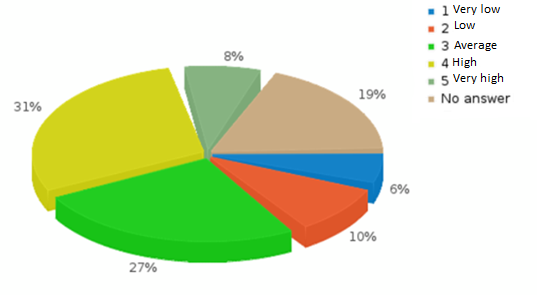
Despite these frustrations, many employees discussed how vital the curatorial role is to the running of the Library. Employee 53 said that **‘that descriptive, interpretive role that the curator plays has become more important as we’ve entered the information world because somebody won’t find it if it’s not correctly described and interpreted, or they won’t know they want it if it’s not in the right place or in the right context.’** Employee 50 also mentioned the importance of having individuals who understand and are able to interpret the collections who can help information seekers find what they need, and Employee 64 said that **‘I think that’s very important, the contextuality, the ability to create intellectual links between bits of data and information that nobody else has thought of and hasn’t been linked before.’** Employee 55 stated that curators are now much more in demand in terms of interpreting collection items, but that it is very hard to demonstrate the value of this in a way that is tangibly evident. Five employees working in the curatorial field expressed concern that this inability to demonstrate their value tangibly would lead to the Library losing valuable expertise. Employee 48 said that **‘by letting internationally recognised, renowned experts go, we've lost status, and how we get that back again I don't know.’** Employee 11 also felt that the expertise developed by curators through their understanding of the collections in terms of being conduits of knowledge needed to be valued more highly by the Library, stating that **‘curatorship is a mostly transferable skill. Being a curator is not.’** Unsurprisingly, the majority of staff members who brought up this issue were in Arts and Humanities, where the majority of curators in S&C work. Therefore, special attention needs to be made when evaluating IAs in this particular ethnographic group to find a way to convey the value of what curators do.

### 6.4.1.4. Changing emphasis

Nine employees talked about the change of emphasis concerning the goals of the British Library, which has become much more outward-facing and requires employees to promote collections and draw more people in. Employee 30 said that this has increased the intellectual value of S&C staff who now need to combine expert knowledge of the collections they work with and a knowledge of how to be outward-facing and draw people in. Employee 46 said that while all areas of the Directorate contribute something unique, employees have to keep in mind that they all have to serve the main objective of engagement and service. However, some employees commented on the difficulties this shift in focus has caused. Employee 52 stated that **‘often people come into the organisation with a love of the subject, the collections and so on without necessarily an outgoing personality’**, and Employee 5 concurred that some staff members have found it difficult to effectively convey their expertise. Employees 50 and 53 mentioned that very few S&C employees have library training, and that this has meant that they aren’t necessarily trained for the work in engagement and promotion they are now required to do. Employee 49 argued that the role of the world experts in subject matters was becoming obsolete in the Library and that they now need experts in more traditional library skills such as finding information and making connections, but Employees 7 and 52 both stated that having world-renowned individuals in their subject field at the Library plays an integral part in drawing in external stakeholders and establishing the prestige of the British Library, and that other skills, such as engagement, can be built on top of this. At least one member of staff from all five areas of the Directorate mentioned this issue, indicating that it is an issue affecting all of Scholarship and Collections. Similarly, the staff who mentioned the changing emphasis of the Directorate were from different places in the hierarchy. This indicates that all members of staff need to receive communication on how they can personally contribute to the new emphasis of the Directorate and how they are still a valuable part of what the Library needs to do.

## 6.4.2. Training

All participants were asked about opportunities for training and career development within the British Library. This section will cover how available training courses are, what emphasis these courses take, the scope of training and how relevant the skills taught in training sessions are for the work S&C employees do. Figure 8.1 demonstrates satisfaction with training amongst participants in the online questionnaire. Staff members were asked to rate training from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). In this instance, the overall attitude is positive, with only 16% of those who answered having a poor opinion of training.



###### Figure 6.4.1: Satisfaction with staff development programmes

This indicates that while the overall view of training and the role it plays in developing intellectual assets in the Directorate is high, there are pockets of discontent, and this section of the chapter will focus on identifying whether this discontent is particular to any ethnographic groups and what could be done to resolve the issues.

The following subsections will discuss the availability of training to S&C staff, the emphasis and scope of the training courses, and to what extent staff are able to use what they have learned on courses in their job.

### 6.4.2.1. Availability of training

When asked about how easy it was to access training sessions, the general consensus among employees was that the provision of courses was good, but that sometimes it was difficult to find the time to participate. Employee 62 stated that **‘[training is] a great thing, but quite hard to fit into a day's work.’** Employee 1 said that often the courses were booked up too quickly due to the demand, and Employee 9 felt that the courses sometimes erred on the long side and that having shorter courses that took place more frequently would ensure more staff could participate. Employee 60 suggested that another thing that would improve the time management issue would be enabling staff to provide informal training for one another by clearly signposting expertise: **‘I'm sure lots of people here have looked at different models of e-learning, and I can see people with e-learning in their job description on the intranet and things like that, but to have a brief summary of the types of things they have done would be very useful.’** Four employees commented on the issue of budget restrictions limiting what training programmes can be set up, but overall the response to training in S&C was very positive, with 66% of participants rating training good to excellent. Employee 57 stated that **‘in all forms of training I think they're very good.’** There was no one area of the Directorate that rated the availability of training poorly, although staff from Arts and Humanities were the most likely to state that they struggled to find the time to attend training sessions. This indicates that the number of training sessions staff members attend is not an accurate way to determine intellectual assets in that area as other factors can contribute to how involved in training staff are. Therefore, a more holistic approach should be used to judge how training is targeted.

### 6.4.2.2. Emphasis of training

Employee 70 said that the Library has identified three key areas where staff members feel they would benefit from training: engagement, digital scholarship and project management. The Content, Strategy, Research and Operations department have been working to develop new training programmes to accommodate this. Employee 51 stated that there were varying degrees of anxiety in the Library concerning the new focus on being outward-facing and digital scholarship: **‘there’s different degrees [of anxiety], different people, and I think it depends on how involved you are in it.’** They continued that it was the intention of those involved with training programmes to enable all staff to feel included in the various aspects of working at the Library. The Directorate is actively gearing training towards the needs identified by staff, indicating a conscious awareness of intellectual assets and where they could be enhanced.

Employee 52 conceded that **‘trying to word stuff isn't an easy thing for some people, and we could train people in that.’** Employees 14 and 28 agreed with this, both stating that learning to communicate with confidence is integral to the Library’s mission of raising awareness of the collections, and that these are skills that can be taught. This shows a need for training that is specific to raising the profile of the Library and, consequentially, proving the value of the BL.

Employee 46 mentioned a Directorate-wide task currently in development to train all staff members on the process of digital curation. Employee 51 believed that this would be a great help to all staff members, but said **‘I worry about people feeling, you know, none of this actually touches anything that I do, so does that mean I don’t get any development?’** The aim is to encourage involvement in all aspects of digital scholarship and ensure that staff members feel comfortable with it. Employee 51 added that **‘learning and development needs aren’t obviously going to be ignored’**, and that the push for training on digital scholarship will be an addition to, not replacement of, existing training opportunities. Employee 68 was optimistic about this, saying that **‘now the up-skilling of us would be very useful when it happens. If they can put together a kind of training package, both personal and interactive, on how to do different aspects of digitisation and how to cope with various software, et cetera, that would be invaluable.’** They said that rather than each department of the Directorate having a digital curator, the digital curators would be working to up-skill others. This move may help to alleviate the feelings of isolation experienced by Digital Scholarship staff mentioned in Chapter 8 by making other employees familiar with what they are trying to achieve, and may also counteract the disconcertion experienced by other members of staff regarding their position in the Directorate with its new focus on the digital.

Employee 51 talked about feeling that there was a need for training in basic project management, as the Library has recently taken a more project-focused approach. They wanted basic guidelines that would enable them to approach both long- and short-term projects, from writing business plans to managing the different aspects of the project itself. Employees 14, 32 and 3 also mentioned the need for more awareness of how to successfully run a project, and mentioned that there were some upcoming training sessions which would address this. Again, staff responsible for training in the Directorate are working to target areas which are potential intellectual liabilities and boosting expertise in these specific areas which are tailored to be relevant to particular ethnographic groups.

### 6.4.2.3. Scope of training

Employees were also asked about the scope of training programmes, and how well they thought programmes catered to the Library’s needs. Five participants indicated that there was a degree of disorganisation concerning who would benefit from the courses. Employee 2 said that ‘**often staff are sent on [courses] at the wrong level or inappropriately, while other staff do not get any choice.’** Employee 43 felt that this inconsistency was due to courses being organised by teams, preventing the Directorate from having proper channels of communication concerning training needs. Three of these respondents were employed in Content, Strategy, Research and Operations, the part of the Directorate responsible for staff training, indicating that this is an issue. Others mentioned that they found many of the courses too general. Employees 1, 4, 7, 47, 33, 43, 10 and 60 said that they had found training sessions to be too basic to match their specific needs. These employees were from all five areas of the Directorate, indicating that this was an issue that was not located in one specific area. However, Employee 4 said that they were aware that tailor-made courses could be offered by request. Employee 47 discussed a session they had attended on fundraising, and said that they realised that due to the size of the Directorate and budget restrictions, the course had to be relatively basic:

**‘it was a very good session, but by its very nature it had to be pretty general, because there were people there from all sorts of parts of the library who were fundraising for different purposes, either fundraising for endowments, or major collection, you know, future preservation, or people wanting to apply for an AHRC small grant to digitise a collection, or whatever it might be’**

They did not feel that their specific need had been catered for, and that they would not have expected it to be. Overall, the experiences of training courses amongst the staff were mixed: some left them satisfied but others were unrewarding. Employee 60 said that **‘some of [the courses] appear to be quite basic, and I wonder if there's an opportunity for things that are a bit more high level, to take something to the next step.’** Employee 47 also commented on this and suggested setting up informal forums after training sessions to enable staff members to talk about their specific needs and inquire who in the Library they could talk with who might be able to help them.

### 6.4.2.4. Usability of training courses

Eight members of staff, most of whom worked in Arts and Humanities, expressed frustration that while they had attended courses and found them beneficial, they had little opportunity to put what they had learned into practice. Employee 16 said **‘I have been sent on a number of courses and have frequently not been required to use the newly-gained skills afterwards – it is easy to lose them if you don’t use them.’** Employee 59 agreed that **‘the Directorate’s been quite poor at… getting staff to develop skills in particular areas, and then forgetting about it.’** Employee 16 felt that the coordination of training sessions had been disorganised, and that staff members have been asked to train in specific fields only after the skills addressed in the session would have been needed for a particular job. Employee 59 felt that the frequent changes in senior management over the last couple of years had contributed to this, as it meant that there was little awareness of what courses had and hadn’t been offered. They said that while they were happy to attend a course that they had gone to a few years previously because they benefitted from refreshers of certain skills, they thought it was disconcerting that senior managers were often unaware of what had already been offered. Employee 13 stated that courses would be more usable if there were more follow-up sessions available, and Employee 62 said that they had difficulty identifying what courses would be beneficial to their job. However, Employee 6 said that **‘recently produced coordination of training within S&C is a boon.’** They felt that once the new Directorate-wide training programme is implemented, staff would have a far more satisfying and synchronised experience. As the feelings of training being left unused is focused in the Arts and Humanities department, the new training programme should pay special attention to these staff members.

## 6.4.3. Research opportunities

This section will cover the topic of opportunities for staff research within the Directorate. It will address the strategy implemented by the Directorate for enabling staff research, the ways that staff members feel their ability to conduct research has been limited, and what motivates staff to participate in the research community. It will also cover how different ethnographic groups within S&C experience research, and whether this has any impact on their perception of their own intellectual assets.

### 6.4.3.1. Research strategy

The Content, Strategy, Research and Operations department have been working on establishing a research strategy for the whole Directorate. When asked what focus research in the department should take, all participants stated that it should focus on the Library’s collections rather than personal interests. Employee 46 said that they **‘would be less enthused about individual research into a particular topic that might happen to be of personal interest to so-and-so, where there’s no sort of immediate… benefit for the library’**, and added that the library should sponsor and encourage research into Library-related issues. Employee 65 suggested research into the current trends in the Library such as digital curation, and Employee 49 said that researchers **‘don’t just focus on individual examples of something but… try to capture somehow the overall picture for the future.’** Another thing the research strategy aims to achieve is developing a clear guide to research breaks. Employees 10 and 47 said that they didn’t know if they still had research breaks, whereas Employee 57 stated that they had two weeks for conducting research. Similarly, while Employee felt that there were **‘always opportunities’** for writing papers and attending conferences, whereas Employee 60 said they were **‘less clear about the opportunities that exist.’** There were also members of the Collection Care team felt that it would be unfair to evaluate the intellectual assets of a department based on the number of papers/articles they publish. Employee 48 said that many conservators are trained in practical skills and do not necessarily have the impetus to conduct research, adding that **‘conservators… have a different way of publishing their work and getting recognition from their colleagues, and that's not part of the general library, understanding what we do there intellectually.’** Collection Care works together as a department to identify relevant conferences and then share knowledge afterwards, which they have found to be a successful approach. Statistically, Arts and Humanities produce the highest number of publications while Collection Care and Content, Strategy, Research and Operations produce the least. While this is not surprising given that Arts and Humanities is the largest department and has the highest number of curators and both Collection Care and CSR&O are comprised largely of staff who do not have backgrounds in scholarly writing, it does indicate that the number of publications produced is not in itself an indicator of intellectual assets. The expertise contained within a particular ethnographic group is not necessarily suited to being made explicit via publications, and to consider this kind of scholarly output as the sole indicator of IAs would be to over-quantify these assets.

### 6.4.3.2. Research constraints

Employees also discussed the restrictions they have experienced in relation to conducting research. Once again, the main constraint that employees talked about was having too little time. Employee 47 discussed wanting to contribute to writing about a recent exhibition they had been closely involved with: **‘I would have loved to have done more in different journals... there are audiences who might not be aware of it who I think would want to be, so yes, that is frustrating occasionally.’** They continued that the main publications on this exhibition were not written by BL staff, despite curators having contributed the majority of the research, because they couldn’t dedicate enough time to producing papers on top of the other jobs they had to do. Employee 61 also found that they had too little time to dedicate to research, saying that **‘it’s always the thing that gets squeezed out, because one takes on these projects and you’ve got particular deadlines to meet… any project-based work has to be put first.’** Employee 55 stated that there was less time for staff to invest in research than there used to be, but saw this in a positive light. They felt that their first duty was to enable access to the collections and be outward-facing, and that it would be unfair to use taxpayers’ money to fund curators to spend all their time writing. Employee 56 discussed the dilemma time restrictions have caused in relation to the research strategy encouraging curators to focus on the Library’s collections:

**‘In practical terms, you don’t have time for research in your staff time. So you either carry on and do it in your own time, and if you do it in your own time, that’s where the confusion comes in too. Do I really have to do something that has to be library-based, or I do something that I’m simply interested in?’**

Budget restraints have also had an impact, with five employees talking about how they did not have the funds to attend as many conferences as they would like. However, despite these frustrations, the majority of participants felt that the Library was pro-research. Employee 56 said that although research breaks and conference funding were less available, there is **‘an acknowledgement that there are things in the intellectual sphere that curators can do, and which they need time to do.’** Again, the comments about having too little time to conduct research came from across the Directorate and from all levels of seniority. This is not surprising considering the data discussed in section 7.2 concerning the negative impact of time restrictions on IAs in Scholarship and Collections, but further indicates the problems of using the scale of research output as an indicator of intellectual assets. Any evaluation of research as an IA must take into account the tangibles which impact on staff’s ability to conduct research.

### 6.4.3.3. Motivation

Six employees, four of whom were from Social Sciences, talked about what motivated them to conduct research and how they felt it contributed to the Library. Employee 47 felt that it was integral to bringing attention to the Library from the academic sphere; they believed that contributing to articles, papers and monographs was what really caught the attention of academics within higher education. Employee 48, who had previously worked in HE, said **‘unlike… universities, where you're encouraged to publish so many articles a year, we don't do that here, which is strange, because we don't make best benefit of this knowledge, we're not putting it out to the big wide world.’** Employee 68 stated that conducting research on the collections made curators better at their jobs and Employee 49 was involved in conducting surveys in the reading rooms to discover current research trends which staff could use. Employee 2 felt that the Library could do more to actively encourage research by making research and publication part of curatorial and conservation job profiles and providing junior and/or unpublished staff with mentors and guidance to build their confidence. Employee 8 suggested that the profile of staff research could be raised by making their publications in the BL and online shop. The implications are that research, and the ability of staff to conduct it, acts as an intellectual asset in that it promotes the Library and its employees, and maintains the BL’s position as an international seat of learning. While time restrictions and increased commitments play inevitable parts in limiting output, the role of research as a promotional tool should not be underestimated.

## 6.4.4. Managing Projects

This section will cover how employees feel that projects are dealt with in the Directorate, including how members of staff determine whether a project is worth doing, and how projects can be used to raise the profile of the Library. It will also consider how different areas of the Directorate engage with project work and what impact staff members’ levels of seniority has on their approach to project management.

### 6.4.4.1. Valuing projects

Five employees talked about how important it was to determine what a project would contribute to the Library before initiating it. Employee 49 listed the questions they asked before taking something new on: **‘why are we going to do that? How much would it cost? What’s the point of doing it? What’s, you know, the objective of doing it, what’s the vision about doing it, how much will it cost, who’s it for?’** Employee 54 took a similar approach, saying that they thought it was important to think about whether a potential project would add value to the Library rather than just being interesting. They added that **‘if you can really understand the value, if you can really communicate the value of doing it, then great, fantastic, of course it can and should happen, but don't do it just for the sake of doing it.’** Employee 56 stated that they thought the Directorate would benefit from clearer guidelines concerning what makes a project valuable, and how small projects can be chartered. All of these employees were at Grade A or above which is unsurprising given that these are the staff members who take the lead in determining what projects S&C should be involved with, but it would have been valuable to have perspectives from staff further down the hierarchy on whether they felt the Directorate was determining the value of projects accurately.

### 6.4.4.2. Raising profile

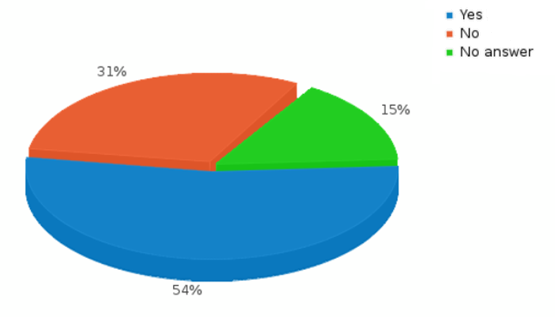
Three staff members, two from Collection Care and one from Arts and Humanities, discussed how projects can raise the profile of the Library, especially when involving external stakeholders. Employee 50 said that external parties approached the parties frequently with potential projects and it was important to consider carefully how the project would benefit the Library before taking it on. Employee 67 discussed how rewarding it was when a project drew in people from other parts of the Library as well as external partners, which is **‘sometimes the only times that people work so constructively together, is in that context.’** Employee 54 said that when evaluating the impact of projects, it was often only the big accomplishments that were taken into consideration, whereas the accumulative impact of smaller projects should be taken into account as well. It is significant that these comments came largely from Collection Care staff, as this is a department which has been impacted severely by cuts and has struggled to find representation in annual reports (see Section 12.2 for further discussion). Collection Care staff have been working to produce their own set of performance indicators and have been paying special attention to everything that they are producing that is of value to the Library. Care should therefore be taken when considering an IA evaluation to not just consider high-profile projects but also the impact that smaller, long-term projects have on the BL.

## 6.4.5. Dissemination of Expertise

This section focuses on how S&C employees share their expertise. It will cover the various ways staff document their knowledge and share it with others, and will then discuss the Directorate’s methods for succession planning. It will also discuss whether different ethnographic groups within the Directorate have different approaches to knowledge dissemination, and if this has any impact on their perception of expertise as an intellectual asset.

### 6.4.5.1. Documenting knowledge

The expertise that staff members bring to the Library is crucial to the organisation’s intellectual assets, and as such all participants in this research were asked about whether, to what extent and how they preserve their knowledge for posterity. Figure 8.2 indicates the percentage of participants in the online survey who make an active effort to make records of the expertise they have. Of those who answered, over half said that they do, in spite of time restrictions.



###### Figure 6.4.2: Percentage of staff who actively make records of their expertise

Over half of those who answered felt it was important to record what they knew about the collections, their contacts and the way they do their job, demonstrating that despite time and budget restrictions there is a general recognition within the Directorate that this information is important and needs to be shared. Employee 53 stated that **‘there’s huge areas of my collection... that I know in my head’** and that this kind of knowledge, not of subject matter but of the collections themselves, is what is really valuable. They said that it was difficult to document all of this information, but that they found it invaluable when it came to connecting people to the collections. Employees 7, 63 and 55 agreed that this is the knowledge that is what they draw on the most, but it is also the hardest to formally document. Nevertheless, it is something that employees discussed as something the Directorate needs to work on, with Employee 63 stating that **‘there’s the general collection knowledge which absolutely does need to be passed on.’** Employee 55 concurred, stating that the in-depth knowledge of the collections often requires a lot of research and that this should be documented in some way. The following sub-sections will detail the ways S&C employees have dealt with this issue.

### Preferred methods of keeping records

Eighteen employees talked about the methods they were using to document their collection knowledge. Employees 41, 8, 10, 29 and 30 took basic measures such as making sure that papers and notes are archived, and saving important information on a shared drive within the Library’s intranet. Employees 21 and 33 chose to make thorough collections and archives of all correspondence files, inventories, press cuttings, documentation and personal research notes even though they found that this could be time consuming. Employee 25 had plans to create a spreadsheet for the collections they were responsible for **‘with fields to include brief description of content, provenance and due diligence details, conservation work undertaken, location, etc.’** and Employee 36 had made an **‘enquiries guide which includes information about collections and records to consult.’** Employees 32 and 37 kept written records of their work in the Library, and Employee 15 said that all work in the Collection Care department concerning conservation was recorded as a matter of course. All of these employees worked in Arts and Humanities, Collection Care or Social Sciences, and these departments tended to be the most proactive about recording and documenting their expertise. Employee 59 felt that the most important information to record is the knowledge of what users are doing, how they conduct research and what their requirements are, because that would enable the ongoing process of, for example, designing, improving and managing databases. They added that their section of the Directorate made records of useful contacts, and had produced guides to the collections which were available to readers as well as on the staff intranet. Employee 2 agreed that these records are an important way for the Directorate to learn and grow, and felt that not enough was being done to ensure the preservation of knowledge. They gave an example of courses that were run by curators which had not been recorded officially. Employee 70 also felt that the Directorate should have a strategy in place for preserving staff knowledge, and talked about how there were often information gaps when a member of staff leaves which had not been fully anticipated. Employee 61 confessed to feeling a lot of pressure to preserve this collections knowledge, saying, **‘I’m obsessive about making sure things get finished, so that all that work that’s gone before, all that knowledge that’s been accumulated doesn’t just disappear.’** Employee 61 continued that it was important not to just make records of this knowledge but to make sure that those records are accessible and usable:

**‘It’s not just capturing the knowledge, it’s making sure people remember that it’s there and actually use it... if somebody could find a way of making it so that people had one place to go to, if say that had been scanned in and you could link from those responses, link to those from the index or any other handy hints we had or something like that, then people might use it if it was just one sort of like, if it was India Office Records electronic crib list, they could go to, but because we’ve got things in lots of different places, people have got to remember in the first place that there’s something useful on such-and-such a shelf or whatever, and I think we’re all getting a bit lazy about getting up from our desks.’**

At present, there are no Directorate-wide guidelines for staff to document their expertise, and while each ethnographic group has different priorities and different amounts of time available to dedicate to knowledge preservation, more support in this area would encourage the making of these records and would help the Library to learn and develop.

#### 6.4.5.2.1. Restrictions

Inevitably, the main restriction employees cited as preventing them from recording their knowledge was time. Employee 7 discussed being unable to document what they knew because of tight deadlines for the projects they were currently working on. Employee 47 had similar problems despite being aware that **‘there are collections here that... I am one of a few people in the world that know a great deal about.’** They wanted to record what they know and felt frustrated that more pressing work demands did not enable them to do so. Employees 42 and 63 discussed how difficult it was to record their knowledge of the collections due to the fact that many Library items are not yet catalogued, leaving them largely undiscoverable. Other employees had been adversely effected by lowered morale: Employee 45 believed that **‘there appears to be no interest in preserving my collection knowledge.’** Employee 53 discussed the problem of tacit knowledge that they had not realised at the time would be useful, saying **‘I’m not always that good at meticulously documenting every phone call, every piece of paper that comes in and so forth.’** Significantly, Arts and Humanities had the highest number of staff members who discussed the barriers to recording their expertise, followed by Digital Scholarship. This is supported by the fact that Arts and Humanities had the highest number of staff who felt that they were prevented from doing all that they wanted to because of time restrictions. They are also both departments that had varying levels of morale, which may have left some staff members feeling undervalued and therefore unwilling to make records of their knowledge.

#### 6.4.5.2.2. To what extent is it useful? And who is it useful for?

Employee 50 also discussed the nature of tacit knowledge, saying that it was difficult to record all knowledge of the collections because it was only gained through sustained contact with the collections over long periods of time. They said that **‘you gain that experience by working with the collections’** and it is not necessarily something that can be recorded and learned from documents. Employee 70 had a balanced approach to the loss of these kinds of intellectual assets:

**‘The Library has a digital assets register, that's quite helpful. It doesn't necessarily hold the kind of information you might have in a curator's head. I guess the thing about curators is their expertise, and they are huge intellectual assets. There's human capital there that is fairly catastrophic if you lose it. Having said that, it's always good to get new blood in and new ideas as well, and particularly in S&C where it's quite an aging workforce.’**

They felt that there was a natural course of events for when a workforce changes and evolves, which has to include a certain amount of asset loss, but also the acquisition of new intellectual assets which can be built on over time. All staff members who voiced these opinions were from the Social Sciences and CSR&O departments. Many of these staff members have backgrounds in business and management, and are therefore more likely to have training in the ways that organisations work. It might be valuable to have staff members with this kind of training conduct sessions on recording personal expertise, focusing on how best to go about it and how to determine what should be recorded and where making records is not a priority. However, consideration should be made for the fact that different ethnographic groups have different priorities and in some cases the decision to record or not record certain types of expertise can only be made internally within departments.

### 6.4.5.3. Sharing Knowledge

Another topic addressed by participants was that of sharing information with one another inside the Library. Employee 59 said that people generally wanted to share their expertise with others but they often struggled to find effective ways of doing so and struggled to find the time. Employee 47 talked about the extraordinary knowledge of S&C staff, but that it was sometimes only by accident that an individual’s expertise was discovered:

**‘It's just chance conversations, or you ask a curator to provide something that shows a particular aspect of the evolution of the English language, they share something during the course of that conversation, they kind of realise what you're after and then list a whole host of things that they know in the collections that they hadn't thought you might be interested in, but you are, and then suddenly these things come to light.’**

The following sub-sections cover the ways in which employees have been sharing their knowledge with one another, the restrictions they have encountered, and how useful they have found the process of sharing expertise. They will also question whether ethnographic groups have any bearing on how information is shared, and how employees view sharing information as an intellectual asset.

#### 6.4.5.3.1. Preferred methods

Many employees used similar methods for sharing information as they used for preserving knowledge. Employees 2, 5, 12, 19, 15, 27, 31, 38 and 42, the majority of whom were part on the Arts and Humanities or Digital Scholarship departments, mentioned that they use shared files, reports and publications to allow other BL employees to access their expertise. Other employees talked about sharing expertise with their immediate colleagues through getting them directly involved. Employee 2 said they made sure that at least one other staff member took part in every product, partnership or activity they dealt with. Employee 9 said they had regular informal meetings with their staff to discuss what they were working on, and Employee 14 had regular catch-ups with their team to discuss progress. Employee 61 spoke about how valuable it was to actively involve colleagues in their work, saying that **‘the important thing is to make sure that not only one person has that experience, and involve other people as well so that you’ve always got people who are building up the same level of skills and experience.’** Participants found sharing their expertise outside of their immediate circle of colleagues more challenging. Employees 20 and 23 used blogging and keeping documentation of their progress on shared files to advertise what they were doing. However, they both said that they were unsure of how much outreach this actually achieved. While each group appears to have formulated their own methods for sharing information with their colleagues, the Directorate might benefit from all employees sharing these methods. This might help determine a process of best practice and also might offer the opportunity for staff to talk about what information they would like to receive from S&C employees outside their immediate circle of colleagues.

#### 6.4.5.3.2. Restrictions

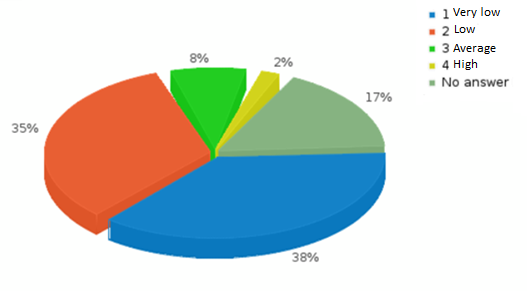
Although 72% of participants said that they were happy to share their expertise and actively attempted to do so, others were more reticent. This was found throughout the Directorate but was concentrated in Arts and Humanities. Morale was a hindrance when it came to sharing expertise in some cases. Employee 13 felt that **‘the information will not be passed on or used effectively’**, and Employee 1 felt undervalued by the Library, saying that **‘the more in-depth knowledge I acquire in my own time I am not happy to share.’** Employee 63 felt that a sense of protectiveness over intellectual property might prevent colleagues from being more open about their expertise, as they might define themselves by the personal research they have done and feel that it would be devalued by sharing it. Employee 61 thought that in order to encourage staff to be willing to talk about their expertise the Library needs to actively encourage openness: **‘people don’t like sharing things when they’re still in a very imperfect form, so I think that in a supportive environment and where there’s trust people are much more likely to share things where they’re imperfect, and that means that then you’re not going to lose things that are works in progress.’** This relates to the themes discussed in section 7.3, and could be resolved by making efforts to ensure that staff feel that they are valued and that they are fully informed on how their work contributes to the Library’s objectives.

Again, time played a factor in many employees’ reasons for not widely sharing their expertise. Employee 47 said that because they were so busy, fully documented knowledge was not possible, and they therefore relied on verbal communication. Employee 53 added, **‘I can go about my work and go to different meetings around the building and go to these conferences and whatever, and get- you know, absorb this knowledge. It can then be very time consuming to sit down and sort of cascade it or regurgitate it so that somebody else can learn from it.’** The difficulties of cascading were also discussed. Employee 50 observed that cascading information means that some information will get lost because it is impossible to reproduce verbatim what was said at a conference, for example, or at a meeting with external stakeholders. Employee 53 agreed with this, saying that **‘I don’t think you’ll ever pass all of it on, no matter how hard you try, because it’s... as you say, it’s intangible, sometimes you don’t even know you know the knowledge until you need it, so it is difficult to pass it on.’** Employees 50 and 53 felt that knowledge and expertise could only really be gained through direct engagement with the collections, and senior staff being strategic about the tasks they give to their employees. Employee 57 was sceptical about the value of having records on shared files on the intranet, because **‘unless you know where that information is, it probably isn't that good to you.’** This suggests that dilution of information is inevitable due to time restrictions imposed on everyone involved and the impossibility of perfect recall. Therefore, strategies should be employed to ensure that none of the important information gets lost in the communication process.

Some staff felt that it was a waste of resources to be too concerned with the cascading of expertise. Employee 54 felt that **‘sometimes it's quite helpful to refresh that, to get new ideas and new fresh approaches, different ways of using the collections’** and that while long-term knowledge is useful and shouldn’t be undermined, having new people coming in with new ways of learning is often beneficial. They added that sharing information with someone is not the same as them having experienced it themselves. Employee 61 agreed with this, saying that there are **‘all sorts of things that you can only really gain from first-hand experience rather than just pass on.’** This view was voiced by staff members from across the Directorate, and indicates that while S&C might benefit from pooling their knowledge on methods of disseminating expertise, it should not be a priority to make the dissemination too intensive.

### 6.4.5.4. Succession planning

The lack of strategy for documenting expertise, as well as the recent review and voluntary vacancies, have meant that succession planning in the Directorate has not been as thorough as staff would like. Employees 14 and 28 mentioned that the Library used to have a policy where staff would be shadowed by their successors for a period of time before they left a position in order to pass on as much expertise and familiarity with the job as possible, but reduced funds has meant that this is no longer possible. Employee 49 said that succession planning is inconsistent within the Directorate, and Employee 47 said that **‘in an ideal world that knowledge would be passed on from post holder to post holder’**, and that the Library should work on a new strategy for succession planning that allowed for the reduction in tangible assets. Figure 8.3 indicates staff satisfaction with succession planning within the Directorate. Participants in the online survey were asked to rate their satisfaction from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). Of those who responded, 73% were dissatisfied with the Directorate’s succession planning, and no participants rated their satisfaction as very high.



###### Figure 6.4.3: Satisfaction with succession planning within S&C

This suggests that, despite the inevitable impact on succession planning that tangible asset losses have entailed, the Directorate needs to develop a unified strategy for dealing with this issue.

#### 6.4.5.4.1. Policies

There are definite attempts within the Directorate to implement such a strategy. Employee 59 said that **‘the library tries very hard with succession planning’**, and several members of staff talked about how they had been working to improve the situation in their own department. Employee 4 said that they were working on a succession planning programme for their immediate colleagues, and Employee 35 had created handover notes whenever they moved between posts in the Library. Employee 51 said **‘I think it’s making sure that people are involved in as many different aspects without overwhelming them’**, and that staff have generally been very good at taking initiative and making their own strategies for succession planning. While it is important that each ethnographic group develops a strategy to suit them, S&C might benefit from collaboration on this issue in order to share methods of best practice.

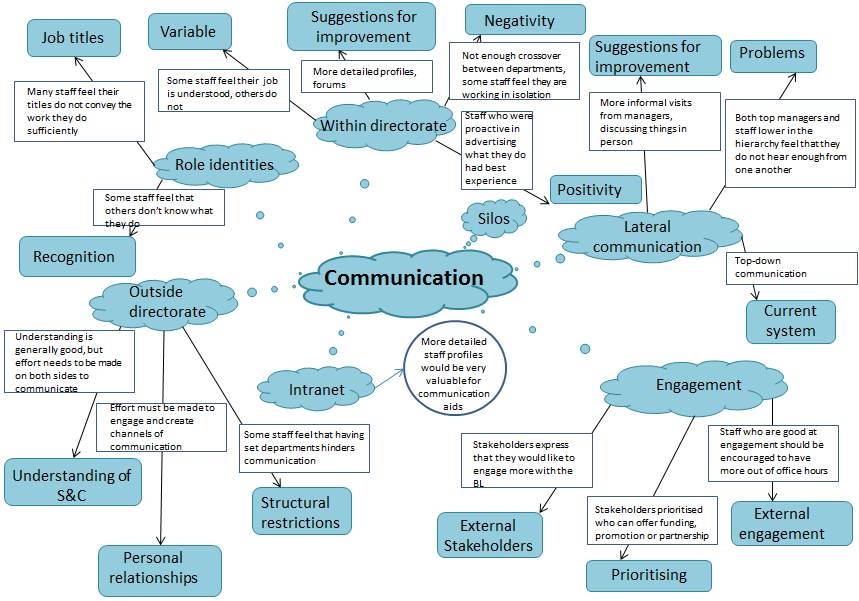
#### 6.4.5.4.2. Difficulties

Eight employees discussed the difficulties they faced when attempting to implement succession planning. Employee 22 said that they made handover notes, but that **‘my knowledge is a practical skill that can really only be passed on as taught to another person.’** Employee 63 felt that **‘because of the years it takes to build up that expertise, you can’t just pass it on’**, and that they wished the Library could facilitate more shadowing where they could at least give their successors guidelines on how they could build their own familiarity with the role. The changing roles implemented by the 2010 review and the voluntary redundancies within the Directorate have also had a negative impact on some staff members’ ability to facilitate succession planning. Employee 48 spoke about the staff loss within the Collection Care department, saying that **‘we can't replace those skills, and the whole process happened so quickly, there was no way to pass any of those knowledge and skills on to colleagues’**, and Employee 63 commented that in the current situation there are staff leaving with no one to replacement, and that if the Library is again in a position to fill the positions again, which may be months or years in the future, all the knowledge of the original person will have disappeared. Another problem mentioned by two employees was that there are several staff members in the Directorate who are on short-term contracts. Employee 63 discussed the issue of having someone who had worked hard on a project for two years and built up expertise but then had to leave, and there was no strategy for retaining that knowledge for the future, and Employee 60 said that **‘good handovers are important, but we need someone to hand over to.’** Three staff members talked about the insecurity caused by role changes after the review, an Employee 48 said that **‘when you change the emphasis of things, how do you do succession planning?’** Employees 53 and 64 stated that succession planning within the Directorate had never been easy even when long-term shadowing was possible, because it was hard to find projects that would serve the purpose of passing information on effectively. Nevertheless, while staff felt a certain amount of frustration at having no set strategy for succession planning, most were willing to be proactive about it and willing to participate in any succession schemes they thought would be helpful. Again, this highlights the importance of considering the diversity of the Directorate. Not all succession planning strategies will work across all the departments: Collection Care focuses on practical techniques whereas departments based on curation would focus more on knowledge of the collections and valuable contacts. Therefore while a best-practice plan for succession planning in the Directorate would be of great use, it must allow for the fact that different ethnographic groups have different priorities.

#### 6.4.5.4.3. To what extent is it important?

Three staff members suggested that while succession planning is a good thing and that a certain amount of strategy should be put in place, it is not something that the Library should panic about. Employee 49 said that staff can show successors how to go about the job, but that the real collection expertise cannot be handed over and the successor has to build it themselves, stating that there is no instant transfer. They added that **‘you might lose the reservoir of knowledge, but you’d get a different reservoir of knowledge.’** Employee 51 added that the process of succession is an organic process, and that every employee has a learning curve when taking on a job at the Library. Employee 70 mentioned that staff turnover at the British Library was very low in comparison to the public sector and many other private sector organisations (around 7-10% in Scholarship and Collections) because staff tend to stay at the Library until the end of their career, and so developing a strategy for succession planning is not a great priority. Two of these three employees were members of the CSR&O team. The focus of this particular department is management, planning and strategy, and they are not directly responsible for any collections. Therefore, staff in this area might have a more subjective view of succession planning which could benefit in any attempts to develop a practical, achievable strategy. However, it would also entail liaison with other departments in order to understand the nuances of what every ethnographic group is working with and what their needs are concerning succession planning.

# Communication



###### Figure 6.5: Concept map detailing key themes in data relating to communication

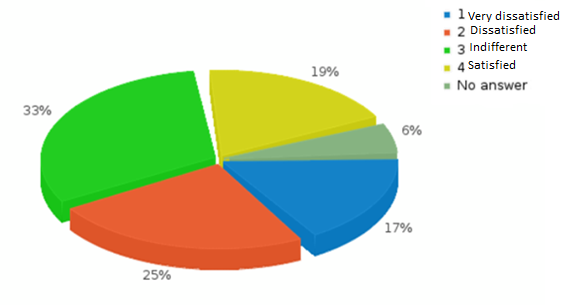
This section concerns communication within S&C. It will deal with the ways that staff approach communicating within the Directorate and the rest of the Library, how effective they feel the Directorate is at allowing lateral communication, how well they thought their personal roles were communicated to other staff, and the ability of the Directorate to engage externally. It will also comment on how the staff members of the various departments approach the issue of communication, and whether a participant’s placement on the hierarchy has any impact on this.

As with morale, expressions of poor communication are ubiquitous in any organisation. However, it is still worth considering seriously as communication barriers, even if they are only perceived, can act as an intellectual liability to an organisation. In addition to this, expressions of poor communication should be expected at this time in the Directorate’s development, given the recent restructure which is discussed in detail in Chapter 6. With many employees growing accustomed to their new roles, teams and areas of responsibility, old channels of communication are lost and new ones need to be formed. Brophy (2006) states that ‘libraries rely heavily on their infrastructure for the delivery of services’ (Brophy, 2006: 129), and the British Library is no exception. Given the context, expressions of unease and stress concerning channels of communication are inevitable but worth monitoring lest they become a significant intellectual liability.

## 6.5.1. Lateral communication

This section addresses how effectively S&C communicates laterally, from senior management to staff working in the reading rooms, and whether there are methods in place for information to be passed up again. It will also address the differences of perspectives on this issue between staff above and below Grade A.

Figure 9.1 indicates staff satisfaction with communication between themselves and top management, taken from the online survey, with 5 being very satisfied and 1 being very dissatisfied.



###### Figure 6.5.1: Satisfaction with communication levels with top management

Again, none of the participants rated their satisfaction at a 5. Staff from below Grade A made up the highest proportion of low satisfaction results, although several SB4 and SB3 employees also expressed dissatisfaction. The following subsections will address staff opinions of the current situation concerning lateral communication, the problems they have experienced, and suggestions that were made to improve the situation.

### 6.5.1.1. Current system

42% of staff rated the ability of the Directorate to communicate up as well as down as being low or very low. Employee 49 felt that some areas of the Directorate were still very hierarchical and that junior staff members did not know how to get their voice heard by senior staff, and Employee 1 said that current strategies were not very effective for two-way communication. Employee 53 concurred, and added that cascaded information is not fully effective: **‘it doesn’t ever get really more exciting than a bunch of people listening to somebody else tell you what they’ve been doing, and then it’s partial information because it’s abbreviated and it’s... only partially helpful.’** However, several staff members stated that this was not the fault of senior management. Employee 6 felt that managers made a concerted effort to encourage two-way communication but that this was not helped by unclear Library strategy concerning strategy and operation, and Employee 1 said that **‘management… do conduct a number of open houses and meetings to attend and for this reason I do believe they are trying their best.’** Employee 9 felt that increased workloads made it somewhat inevitable that top management visits to sections was seen as being exceptional rather than business as usual, and that this tended to discourage more junior staff to communicate openly. Communicating in this way is important especially at times when morale is low due to extenuating circumstances such as decreased funding and redundancies. It enables management to understand the difficulties their staff are facing and also allows them to make managerial decisions clear. The general consensus according to the data is that the current methods of lateral communication are not enough.

### 6.5.1.2. Problems experienced

Six employees, at least one from each department of the Directorate, talked about the factors that had a negative impact on lateral communication. Employee 4 felt that while senior staff made an effort to encourage interactions, **‘the low morale in the Directorate is making people deaf or at least cynical to management communications.’** This was clearly felt by Employee 28 who stated that **‘I… get the distinct impression the management no longer care, or have the resources to care about such things’**, and Employee 31 who stated that **‘local management give no support in dealings with or demands of senior management’**, and that senior staff were often unaware of what employees further down the hierarchy do. Employee 13 felt that **‘management need to listen and engage with what staff tell them… constructive discussion is very badly needed’**, but frustration was also felt by senior management. One staff member said that **‘as part of a senior management team, we probably receive less than in the past, and therefore have less to cascade on’**, and that while they encouraged upward communication, this was often not as effective as they would like. Five employees stated that the Directorate was too hierarchical. Employee 11 felt that expertise at low end did not get passed upwards, and Employee 69 said **‘they call it cascading information, but information always goes down, never goes up, so there is that kind of breakage between the people who do the work and the people who go to the meetings and make the decisions.’** Employee 69 agreed that the Directorate could be very hierarchical, and Employee 68 felt that despite efforts to encourage more matrix working, the recent restructure had not made a difference as power was still concentrated at the head of department level. Employee 49 agreed with this, and stated that the review had not gone far enough down the structures and ensured that there were enough channels in place for information to feed back upwards. Two of these employees were at level SB4 and above which suggests that it is a problem the whole Directorate is aware of and wants to resolve.

### 6.5.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

Fourteen employees suggested ways in which two-way communication could be improved. Employee 2 felt that the Directorate would benefit from fewer meetings, and that management should ensure that at least one staff member from SB4 and A and B levels attended. They felt that the reduction in meetings would allow management more time to listen to and meet staff and have open door sessions. However, Employees 14 and 37 wanted more regular meetings for updates involving management. Seven staff members did not think the Directorate necessarily needed more official meetings, but an increased senior management presence would help. Employee 2 felt that all management should be based in the department they are responsible for, and Employees 25 and 28 thought management should make frequent informal visits to departments so that staff felt more comfortable talking to them about the challenges they were facing, rather than relying on emails and reports to find out if the department is on target. Employees 22 and 23 both wanted management to come and talk to staff in person, and Employee 30 suggested **‘greater visibility of management, walkabouts, presence at departmental meetings, role-swap days, mentoring of junior staff by senior staff.’** Four staff members felt that there was not enough communication going down concerning why and how certain decisions were made. Employee 45 said that **‘more communication at a basic level would be welcome, as opposed to just presenting us with grandiose schemes’**, and Employee 8 stated that there was not enough communication regarding how the Directorate was structured and why certain jobs were being kept vacant. Employee 16 felt that morale could be boosted through management offering regular feedback and encouragement in order to make employees feel valued. Again, the issue of low morale was linked to poor communication, and therefore management needs to make a special effort to involve themselves with what is going on in their departments, especially in areas where morale is noted to be especially low.

## 6.5.2. Intra-directorial communication

When asked about how staff communication within S&C was handled, the general consensus was that it was reasonably effective, but could be improved, with Employee 40 stating that **‘knowledge is shared to an extent within the section’**, but there were some gaps. This section will cover both positive and negative staff experiences with inter-directorial communication, and employee suggestions for how things could be improved.

### 6.5.2.1. Variable communication levels

Six employees talked about how the communication within the Directorate was very variable. When asked if they felt colleagues understood what they do, Employees 43, 44 and 21 said that immediate colleagues understood but they were unsure about others, with Employee 44 stating that **‘some parts of the Directorate do [understand what I do], but comments published in various internal reviews suggest even some senior colleagues do not!’** Employees 49 and 68 said that they relied on informal networking to communicate their role, and that these need to be nurtured over time, and Employee 50 added that **‘there are some people who come to us quite frequently, you know, and obviously they do understand what we do and can do, and there are other people who never talk to us.’** Employee 48 said that they weren’t sure how to communicate their role to people outside of their immediate circle of colleagues, or even if it would be wanted or encouraged. Most of these staff members were from Arts and Humanities and Collection Care. Again, this can be related to the disruption these two ethnographic groups have faced recently. Many A&H staff have had a change in their job role or the collections they are responsible for meaning that they are no longer familiar to other staff, and Collection Care has been reduced in size leading some of its staff to feel that the jobs they do are not valued or understood.

### 6.5.2.2. Positive experiences

Eight employees talked about positive experiences they had had with intra-directorial communications. Employee 18 stated that they were regularly called upon by other departments needing to utilise their expertise, and Employee 47 said **‘I'd like to think people know what I do, and pass things onto me if needs be, and likewise vice versa.’** Employee 46 felt that the Directorate had a far more collaborative approach that did not necessarily involve top management, and Employee 53 thought that this was due to the forums that had been set up for staff to communicate about certain issues. Employee 70 said that they actively encouraged group collaboration within the department, and Employee 68 stated that effective communication can only happen if staff use their initiative to seek out colleagues who could be useful to them: **‘I think it's the people who have got to do the work who have got the real motivation to learn.’** A member of the newly formed Content, Strategy, Research and Operations department felt they had benefitted from the review in terms of communication, saying that they were **‘much more able to talk to the curators, they’re much more interested in what I can help them with and what I can provide.’** All except two of the employees who discussed positive experiences were either from Social Sciences or CSR&O, the two departments with the overall highest score in morale. There are clear parallels between these two factors, and the fact that the review left Social Sciences practically unchanged and formed CSR&O to allow the staff in that department to do their job with greater ease. Forums or Directorate-wide informal meetings might enable these staff to share their methods of communication with employees from different groups, and encourage more open communication.

### 6.5.2.3. Negative experiences

Several employees were less satisfied with the Directorate’s channels of communication. Employee 12 felt that there was a silo culture within S&C, largely due to reduced numbers, stating that **‘my own department doesn’t share information well… the staff tend to work in isolation.’** Employee 68 felt that they did not have enough time to communicate with other parts of the Directorate. Four employees felt that the restructuring of S&C had hindered staff communication. Employee 57 said that **‘many areas of S&C don't know what other areas of S&C do’**, and Employee 59 talked about how they were no longer sure who was responsible for what, which had prevented them from seeking colleagues out, whereas before they had a more holistic role. Employee 64 stated that there had been a degree of fragmentation after the review, and that a lot more effort had to be put in to ensure communication. Employee 52 felt that dividing the Directorate into different departments sometimes hindered holistic working because **‘there's not enough crossover between collection areas’**, and Employee 68 felt that having forums did not really help with this situation, as often staff are too busy to participate. Employee 48, a Collection Care staff member, stated that communication of roles was not helped by current policies and procedures in their case because what their department achieves is not properly recognised in the Library’s annual report. Unsurprisingly, given the connection made in the previous subsection between satisfaction with communication and morale, most of the negative experiences were concentrated in the Collection Care and Arts & Humanities departments. Again, informal meetings with other departments may help this issue, although allowances have to be made for time constraints.

### 6.5.2.4. Suggestions for improvement

Seven staff members from across the Directorate posited their own ideas of ways in which communication could be improved. Three suggested that a definite strategy should be implemented for the Directorate on how to communicate roles and responsibilities. Employee 61 said:

**‘I think it would be really useful to find a way of making sure that we all know what’s possible, rather than have everyone have to go and read up about it separately it would be really useful to have that sort of information synthesised for us and passed on by someone who’s probably more technically able than I am.’**

Employee 60 agreed that staff should find a way to work together to develop a system for internal communication, and Employee 24 wanted more regular question and answer sessions. A Directorate-wide forum was suggested by Employee 12, who said that **‘we tend to hear that things could be going to happen on an ad hoc basis through the grapevine… it would be nice to be able to suggest possible improvements anonymously.’** Employee 24 also suggested an anonymous forum for employees to talk more freely about what they were doing and share ideas. Employee 52 felt that Digital Scholarship employees should be integrated with the rest of the Directorate to encourage staff to think of digital curation as a part of what they do rather than an add-on. Employee 60 admitted that communication within S&C left something to be desired, but it was the responsibility of staff to change this: **‘I don't know that it is really being handled, but I think that's up to us.’** The idea of an anonymous forum would help staff to communicate more freely without the fear of personal repercussions. However, the fact that the Directorate contains so many different ethnographic groups becomes problematic here because, if as Employee 52 stated, it is up to each department to develop their own methods, the aim of achieving communication with the rest of S&C might get lost.

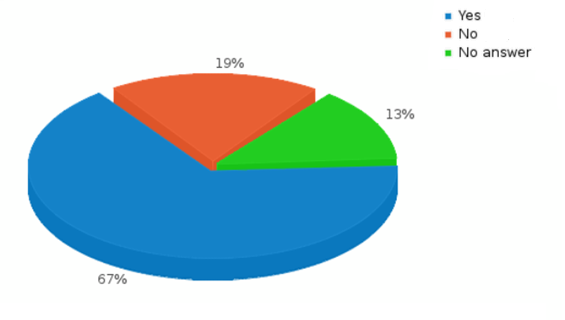
## 6.5.3. Role identities

Several staff members discussed issues concerning role identities, and how this helped and hindered effective communication of what their job involves. This section deals with the efficacy of job titles, and whether participants felt that the work they did was recognised. It will also question how this changes between departments and whether staff members in a higher position of authority have a clearer idea of their roles than those who are lower.

### 6.5.3.1. Job titles

Thirteen employees (from across the Directorate, although five were located in Digital Scholarship) discussed how they felt job titles did not help to communicate what roles actually entailed. Employee 4 stated that **‘anyone’s job description is “woolly around the edges”’** and Employees 6 and 56 did not feel that their job title adequately described what they did, meaning that people did not always know to get in touch with them. Employee 67 said that **‘it's really quite useless having these titles, because a lot of them are totally opaque now, and opaque from outside of S&C or the department, or whatever it is, so you do need a bit more of a lead.’** They and Employees 16 and 49 said that it would be helpful to have a short description in their job profiles to outline the various roles that they have, with Employee 62 adding that **‘people have moved to different areas and they have different areas of responsibility, and it's about making those clear in a way doesn't require the passive to make the enquiry.’** Some staff felt that job titles had become more confusing after the restructure, because S&C were used to job titles that were format- rather than subject-focussed. Employees 53 and 61 said that they had experienced some confusion from colleagues and stakeholders over what they were responsible for now, and Employee 59 said **‘what I’ve been struggling with is knowing exactly what people’s roles are, knowing exactly what my role is, within the structure.’** Employee 16 felt that it had become impossible to find out who does what in the new structure, and Employee 49 stated that **‘it’s not quite clear who’s doing things, and I suspect there are some things that have got a bit lost.’** Employee 62 said that it was even harder to understand who is responsible for what collections, especially the changes in management, and Employee 59 agreed, adding that because the Library had not been able to fill all the posts in the Directorate, there were some areas of the collections which do not currently have a curator in place and this is not always made clear. Employee 65 stated that this was not helped by the fact that curators who had been responsible for a particular format under the previous structure were now often spread across the Directorate and involved in several areas of the collections, and this had not only caused the staff in question to feel like they had no defined role but also meant that it was not always obvious from outside who was doing what from their job titles. They suggested that the Directorate needed **‘something that's very clear, either maybe it's a flow chart, maybe it's just a structure chart, or maybe it's just a little booklet or something, that I think would be very helpful, that people can leave on their desks.’** This indicates the need for a Directorate-wide approach so that staff can understand exactly what colleagues outside of their immediate group do.

Figure 9.2 shows staff confidence in their job titles. Of those who answered in the online survey, the majority felt that their job title was clear and up-to-date.



###### Figure 6.5.2: Confidence in having a clear and up-to-date job description

However, at least 19% may start to feel alienated even if they do not already, if they believe that what they are doing is not clearly understood. The graph also does not show how clear other staff find particular job titles, only the opinion of the post-holders themselves. A simple, staff-created source of information about the various roles in S&C would be valuable in order to help resolve this issue.

### 6.5.3.2. Recognition of work

Five employees talked about feeling lost within the structure of S&C. Employee 28 said that they felt **‘most [other employees] don’t know I exist, and even those technically in charge of the area I am in take little interest in it’**, and Employee 59 did not feel that they knew how to communicate their role to the rest of the Directorate, and that they felt that their professional identity had been lost. Employee 60 stated that they did not think that employees needed to be individually visible, but Employees 14 and 59 said that it would be useful just for the sake of enabling other colleagues to understand what they do. This is an important issue to resolve for the sake of morale and for encouraging open communication.

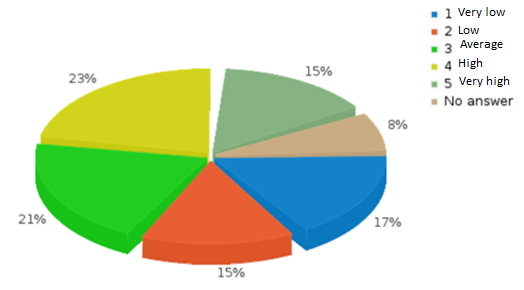
## 6.5.4. Silos of knowledge

Some participants talked about how this lack of awareness of what other S&C staff do has led to a silo culture within the Directorate. This indicates the negative side of having so many different ethnographic groups within the Directorate. Having a small group of employees who share a common culture means that this group may become insular, especially at times when extenuating circumstances lower morale. Employee 68 said that **‘there's a huge waste of knowledge and expertise amongst long-serving staff who are just either not consulted or not listened to’**, Employee 70 said that some staff did not feel empowered to approach colleagues, and Employee 68 said that a tremendous amount of knowledge within the Directorate is not being shared and is therefore rendered practically useless. Three employees felt that this problem had only been exacerbated by the restructure. Employee 5 said that **‘[the restructure] moved people into new “silos” and set up competing units which should really be working together’** and Employee 48 felt that while the new structure had been implemented to get away from knowledge silos, it had mostly just created new ones. They continued that the main way of getting out of this mentality is to have more collaboration within S&C, and Employee 60 added:

**‘the information does seem to be contained within people and you knock into it by accident in many cases, but again I think there are avenues if one wants to do any of the open houses or the bite-size lunchtime talks, there are all these things in place. I think the problem probably at the moment is individuals' capacity to do those things’**

This suggests that staff have a personal responsibility for their intellectual assets and it is therefore up to the individual to both share their knowledge but also actively seek information from others.

Figure 9.3 shows statistics gathered from the online survey, where staff were asked to rate their satisfaction with communication outside of their immediate colleagues from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).

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###### Figure 6.5.3: Satisfaction with communication beyond immediate colleagues

What is significant here is that the percentage of participants who are very satisfied with this communication is almost equal to the percentage of staff members who are very unsatisfied. This would suggest a disparity between ethnographic groups, some of whom have no negative experiences with silo cultures within the Directorate and some of whom feel that it is a problem which has had a negative impact. This in itself is telling, as the fact that some staff perceive a serious communication problem while others perceive no problem is in itself an indicator that there has been a communication breakdown within the Directorate.

## 6.5.5. Intranet

Staff members were asked about digital methods of communication, and in particular how the BL intranet is used to communicate within the Library, and all felt that it could be improved. Employee 62 said that it was difficult to navigate the intranet and that finding the Directorate’s structure should be easier to find. Five employees suggested that staff should have personal pages on the network detailing their responsibilities and areas of expertise. However, Employee 67 said that they had tried to implement this, but had met with reluctance from their team. Two participants in this study did not think online staff profiles were a good idea when asked, but the rest were keen to have them. One problem with this idea is one that is out of the hands of S&C staff. Employee 60 said that **‘we know what we want to do [regarding online profiles], it's just getting the pages up and getting the old information down’** and Employee 13 said that getting things changed on the online system was often very slow. This frustration was felt across the Directorate and at varying levels of seniority, but as the intranet system is not the responsibility of Scholarship and Collections there is little that staff can do about it except resolve on a united strategy plan for how they want their profiles to be presented.

## 6.5.6. Communication with other Directorates

This section is concerned with how S&C communicate what they do with the rest of the British Library. Five British Library staff from outside Scholarship and Collections were also interviewed for this aspect of the study, and were taken from two Directorates which work closely alongside S&C: Marketing and Operations & Services. Employee 2 felt that **‘[the rest of the library] ‘do not understand the complexity and extent of the collections and so underestimate the work involved.’** The following sub-sections cover how well other Directorates understand S&C, including perspectives from S&C and from other Directorates, how staff go about forging relationships with staff outside the Directorate, and how the structure of the Library has impacted on their ability to do this. It will also demonstrate how the larger ethnographic group of the British Library as an organisation works in relation to Scholarship and Collections.

### 6.5.6.1. Other Directorates’ understanding of S&C

Figure 9.4 shows S&C staff’s satisfaction concerning their communication with other Directorates at the British Library. They were asked to rate their satisfaction from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).

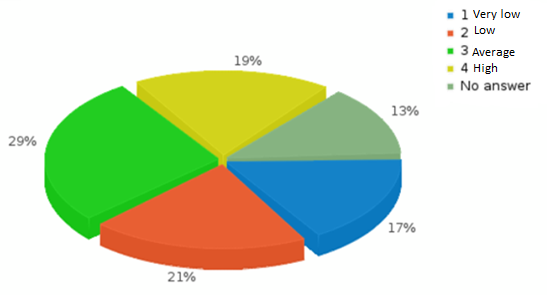


Figure 6.5.4: Satisfaction with S&C’s communication with other BL Directorates

None of the participants rated their satisfaction very highly, although the majority of those who answered felt that it was average to good.

Thirteen staff members discussed how it was difficult to communicate exactly how S&C functions to people outside the Directorate. Employee 13, 19, 42 and 5 said that there was a lack of understanding about the work S&C does, with Employee 13 adding that **‘I think the other areas of the library don’t want to know.’** This feeling seemed especially prevalent in Arts & Humanities. Employee 38 talked about how the review was supposed to solve this problem but in many ways has made the situation worse, and that they felt many of their colleagues were unaware of the subject and collection expertise within S&C. Employee 19 stated that there were many misconceptions about the Directorate, and Employee 65 felt that this had a lot to do with unclear job descriptions. Employee 3 stated that **‘very few people outside my specialist area know the huge range of duties we undertake and the skills we have to deploy on top of our specialised academic and professional knowledge’** and that they felt that some of this misunderstanding was wilful. Employee 67 agreed that other Directorates did not make any effort to understand what S&C were doing.

When talking to staff outside the Directorate, however, they were having similar problems, as many of them were in Directorates which had also been restructured and did not see evidence of many S&C staff making an effort to learn what they were doing. One employee said that given the upheaval and how busy all BL staff are, **‘it's a mistake to assume that other people are up to date with those changes.’** Employee 66 agreed that there was some confusion over the new S&C structure and they would like to be more informed. This demonstrates the importance of considering individual and group perceptions when evaluating intellectual assets. Staff from both inside and outside S&C felt that there were breakdowns in understanding, but also felt that the ambivalence concerning communication came from the other party. Channels of communication need to be opened to allow for understanding and unity between the different ethnographic groups within the Library.

However, several S&C members said that it was their responsibility to communicate what they were doing to the rest of the Library. Employee 61 stated **‘I think we need to be always working really hard on being approachable and making sure that other parts of the library feel that we value their expertise as much as we would like them to value ours.’** Employee 36 believed that the channels of communication should be more informal and that using fewer abbreviations and jargon in reports would be helpful. Employee 63 conceded that **‘we need to be better about telling the rest of the library about what we’ve done, but the rest of the library also needs to pay attention, and I think there’s probably work on both sides to be done there.’**

### 6.5.6.2. Forging personal relationships

Staff also discussed their attempts to make contacts and develop relationships with one another. Employee 47 said that staff members were being encouraged to work collaboratively between Directorates, especially when engaging with external stakeholders. Employee 67 said that **‘you've got to be much more willing to get out there and influence people across the organisation at the right level’**, but Employee 65 pointed out that **‘there's definitely some members of S&C who are more confident than others.’** The data indicates that these individuals are located throughout the Directorate and that this confidence depends more on personal backgrounds and interests than on ethnographic backgrounds.

Some employees were keen to be actively involved in networking and publicising what they were doing: Employee 49 said **‘we actually have to put quite a lot of effort into the relationships to get stuff out’**, and Employee 53 enjoyed the experience and liked being brought into contact with colleagues from whom they could learn new things. In particular, staff members in Collection Care were keen to make it clear what they were doing and how it could benefit colleagues. However, two S&C employees admitted that often channels of communication were based on individuals who had worked together for a long time and had good personal networks through that, and it was difficult for new people to get involved. Another said that there were people in their team who were very much focused on the collections and did not feel confident talking about what they do and have to offer. Employee 58 said that **‘when some of the core curatorial roles aren't well understood then that makes for some quite awkward relationships’**, and for this reason more people should be encouraged to speak up. Participants from outside S&C expressed a strong desire for more communication from the Directorate as it would help with publicising what the Library has to offer. One employee said:

**‘If we're trying to tell the story of the collections, the expertise, and also how those collections are being made accessible to people, either through new research or through digitisation or through acquisition, then it helps us if we know about it because we can then help propagate that information externally.’**

Another said that while S&C employees felt frustration over colleagues misunderstanding their functions, they were also unaware of other things going on in the Library such as acquisition, procurement and metadata, so there was work to be done on both sides. From a phenomenographical point of view, this indicates the fact that all staff members work within their own groups and their perception of both the function of the Library and its intellectual assets is influenced by the culture within their group. Better communication could be achieved by ensuring that staff members are aware of these different groups, how they function, and what information would be useful to what group.

### 6.5.6.3. Structural restrictions

Three employees did not think that the Directorate’s infrastructure was beneficial to communication. Employee 60 said that staff suffered from their inability to communicate across the Library, and that it would help raise the BL’s profile if a system could be implemented for all employees to share information with one another. Employee 51 felt that **‘I don’t necessarily think there should be every single person tied to a single purpose’** and Employee 60 discussed new projects within the Library to introduce a more matrix structure, but that in the meantime **‘there's nothing to stop any of us picking up the phone.’** Employee 40 felt that the decision to rename S&C simply ‘Collections’ would improve understanding of the Directorate and the function it plays, and this might encourage the Library to feel more confident working together.

## 6.5.7. External engagement

This section will focus on external engagement and the ways S&C staff members perceive engagement. Employee 50 talked about the importance of being able to engage with people outside of the BL, saying that **‘you can't put a cash value on it, which is presumably what the government wants. We tried to do that, and we put a value on the spin-offs from the Business Centre and so on, but it's very difficult to do.’** Employee 52 also discussed how vital external engagement is to the Library, and admitted that they still have work to do before they have achieved their targets as far as engagement goes: **‘it's not right to say that we're doing enough until it's second nature, so we can fully understand the research process and have ideas on it.’** This section will cover how the Directorate interacts with contacts outside the Library, starting with how successful external stakeholders themselves feel current communications are. It will then cover the varying levels of comfort staff have when engaging externally, how the Directorate prioritises its stakeholders, how networks are built, and how they are being used to engage BL users. Again, from a phenomenographical perspective, this brings in more ethnographic groups from outside the BL this time, who have their own set of perceptions on what the function of S&C is and should be.

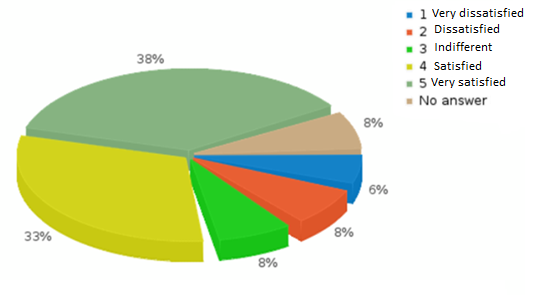
### 6.5.7.1. External stakeholder perceptions of S&C

The general consensus on how outside stakeholders viewed communications with the Directorate was generally good. However, participants felt that it could be improved. Employee 1 felt that external stakeholders had an outdated view of what the Directorate was doing, although Employee 25 said that **‘the principal message about how we “collect, preserve and make available” is getting across.’** Employee 49, meanwhile, agreed that there could be more flexibility around trying to educate people on what is available to them at the BL. This subsection will directly address the data collected from three external stakeholders and compare them to how S&C staff members perceive external engagement.

External Stakeholder 1 said that the Directorate could do more to interact with higher education, and External Stakeholder 3 said they had good contacts at the Library but would like to hear more about what was being done there.

When asked if the recent restructuring had impacted on engagement, responses were varied. Employee 46 said that awareness of S&C outside the Library had improved, whereas Employee 59 had encountered confusion from some external stakeholders over what people’s new roles were, but that this only related to certain areas of the Directorate. External Stakeholder 1 found the restructure confusing, whereas External stakeholder 2 wasn’t sure of specific roles within the Directorate but found the subject-based structure easier to understand. External Stakeholder 1 pointed out that **‘if you look at the structures, there are very few posts that work across Directorates’** and this discourages staff from going beyond their immediate environment. This tallies with the opinion posited by some S&C staff that the infrastructure did not make communication easy.

As stated previously in this chapter, the focus of the Library has become much more outward-facing, and several S&C employees discussed how they felt this was beneficial and the obstacles they are working to overcome. Figure 9.5 is taken from the online questionnaire and indicates how satisfied S&C staff are with their ability to promote the collections from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). The majority expressed satisfaction and only 6% felt very dissatisfied.



###### Figure 6.5.5: Satisfaction with ability to promote collections

Employee 52 thought that there should be more out-of-office days for curators where they had to be out engaging with stakeholders, both within HE and in non-traditional stakeholder groups. Employee 59 agreed that the focus of engagement had so far been on higher education groups and that the Library should make more of an effort to accommodate with researchers from other groups. When asked how effective they felt S&C were at communicating externally, participants felt that results were mixed. One external stakeholder said **‘there are a lot of people in the Library who would be really good at some of the outwardly-facing stuff, and they don't get the chance to, and they don't get enough training to do it.’** They continued that the Library could increase the influence it has by encouraging these people to become ambassadors for the BL. Employee 51 felt that the main thing that staff needed training on was how to communicate what S&C does and what the collections are about to people who are not specialists or academics, and that time and effort should be put into this to ensure the Library a wider audience. External Stakeholder 2 thought that more strategies should be put in place where the Library negotiates with groups of stakeholders to find out what their needs are and then work to accommodate them. Participants talked about how the Directorate was working to get more recognition for both the collections and the intellectual assets in the Directorate, but that this had not been fully realised yet. Employee 61 said **‘we are going to try and find different ways of making people aware that there are people behind the scenes who can help them’**, and External Stakeholder 1 said they were aware of some of the things that the Directorate could offer them but they would like to hear more. Employees 20 and 49 discussed how assets needed better marketing to the public, and Employee 49 continued that **‘the thing about getting them better utilised… is actually getting them better known.’** Employee 50 said that the Directorate was trying to publicise what they were doing, and Employee 51 said:

**‘I would want to see us continue to deliver what we want to be delivering in a way that’s engaging so that the public are interested in what we’re doing, that the government continue to be interested, that we’re also seen to be relevant to the world, and students who are coming in.’**

There has been a push for employees to use public media to promote what they are doing, and although most are happy to do this, Employee 53 felt that the Library should do more questioning of how effective social media is in comparison to how time consuming it is, and exactly how it benefits the Library in terms of drawing people in. Still, employees were aware that they needed to spend time and effort on engagement. Employee 61 said that **‘we do actually have to make quite an effort to go out and find them and let them know what we’re doing’**, and Employee 53 said that ‘**it’s up to each individual to make use of [social media] systems, both by posting and by reading, and that’s time consuming, so it’s a balance.’** There was an overall sense that it was up to individual departments to engage with stakeholders, and employees were generally happy to do this, some suggested that a clearer engagement strategy should be put in place. Employee 61 said that engagement was **‘a little bit too ad hoc at present’**, and while Employee 64 believed that while the engagement the Directorate does is sensibly focused, **‘it is nowhere articulated why and how.’** Again, the Directorate would benefit from a unified strategy which is clearly communicated across all departments in order to encourage staff and promote engagement.

### 6.5.7.2. Prioritising external stakeholders

When asked who their most valuable external stakeholders were, all participants said something different, but when asked how they went about prioritising stakeholders, employees were mostly motivated by the same three things: financial support, potential partnership and promotion of collections. This indicates that while S&C is composed of several ethnographic groups who all have their own agendas, it is possible for them to form a larger group as a Directorate with their commonality being having the same larger aims. Employee 53 stated that it was important for the Library to think carefully before engaging with an external partner in terms of what they can offer the Library and how this will benefit the research community, and Employee 59 described outreach as **‘a bottomless pit’** because the Library has to constantly assess what a partner could do for the Library and vice-versa, and what partners merited the most time and dedication. One external stakeholder suggested that the Library seek out institutions that also hold significant collections and collaborate with them to enable access, possibly through adding links to those collections to the BL website. Two employees mentioned that they saw the Library in a supportive role for other organisations, and that as a national library they had an obligation to support and guide other research institutions in the UK.

Employee 46 said that the digital revolution had made a significant impact on the Library’s collaboration policies, especially with the other UK legal deposit libraries, because it is far easier and cheaper for them to work together, so more time and energy has been put into those relationships. Employee 49 stated that **‘relationships with other institutions, relevant institutions, are very important’** especially in terms of collaborating on projects. Employee 51 talked about research projects currently in progress with HE institutions which would result in a collaborative project and hopefully raise the profile of the Library. As the Library has no digitisation budget, one of the main reasons for seeking out partners to collaborate with is to enable funding for digitisation. Employee 63 commented that:

**‘We have to be aware that we can’t carry on doing what we’re doing unless someone’s funding it... And some people find that kind of a cheapening of our work maybe, but we have to go out and support development, and if we’re going to try and get people to give us money, they need to get a sense of what we do, and they get the best sense of what we do through talking to curators.’**

They continued that the Library still has to exercise judgement and be discerning when approaching partners for funding: **‘we just have to be really careful that their agenda’s don’t... we don’t get swept away with their agendas and digitise things just because some third party wants it digitised,’** and that any relationship is mutually beneficial. Employee 64 also discussed the pitfalls of teaming up with an outside partner whose priorities were very different from the Library’s, and making sure that employees keep the BL’s goals clearly in mind. Employee 70 felt that a similar strategic approach should be used when looking for stakeholders who could promote the Library, stating that **‘I think it's much more about getting our knowledge out there, and then using external experts and our users to have information about the collections that we can then use, in some kind of virtuous circle.’**

Employee 63 discussed strategy for identifying and approaching stakeholders who could provide financial assets, and said that a lot of time and effort had to be put in to not only find the potential donor but also consider the competition and ensure that the British Library is the most attractive candidate. Employee 62 agreed that **‘you have to have a unique selling point, you have to have a market that's carved out and you need to eat into the competition as well, so we're aware of that.’**

Again, while the Directorate has the same priorities when identifying stakeholders, there is no official strategy for engagement. Employee 59 said that their department had identified the main institutions they wanted to work with over the next few years, but that they were unaware of how other departments were strategizing. Employee 61 felt that staff would benefit from having a more opaque engagement strategy for the whole Directorate because they were aware that many of their contacts were made through personal relationships and it would be valuable to have staff members from other parts of the Directorate help them identify other partners who might be useful to them. This indicates the need for a Directorate-wide strategy which would allow all departments to collaborate and share engagement techniques as well as find common ground through having the same larger objectives for engagement.

### 6.5.7.3. Building networks

Staff members are developing strategies for forming contacts through networking. Employee 2 said it was important to **‘encourage staff to join bodies outside BL to build network of contacts and expertise.’** Similarly, Employee 48 talked about enabling outside contacts to come in to the Library and make contacts they feel would be valuable. A member of the Collection Care team discussed how they felt their department played an important role in enabling contacts to be made:

**‘People want to know about conservation and preservation of the collections, and we're not using conservators in that way, as an introduction into other areas, because we're non-threatening, we're there to support and help, and it's generally... well-received when we go to these places.’**

However, they felt that this was not acknowledged by the Library. Employee 51 stated that some employees are more confident with networking than others, and that it is **‘something that you learn… some people are very natural at it, but the majority of us have to learn it, and that’s no bad thing.’** They encouraged the Library to support staff to build their networking confidence and find their own style of communication.

Employee 56 discussed how networking had been beneficial for staff research as most research projects are a collaborative effort with external stakeholders, and that staff should be encouraged to go out and team up with universities more: **‘just doing stuff in the library isn't enough. We should be making a notable partnership with another organisation.’** Employee 7 felt that when it came to research, staff should team up with external bodies who are strong in places where the Library has gaps in order to develop new knowledge, and Employee 52 agreed that the Library needs research partners who can complement the Library in this way, and that it would be a good idea to use personal contacts to form a global network to map out possible partners who could fill gaps in the Library’s expertise. Most of the participants who expressed this opinion were from Arts & Humanities, indicating this department’s particular interest in academic research and scholarly output.

Five staff members pointed out flaws in the way the Directorate approaches networking. Employee 53 said that most contacts were within the higher education sphere, and the Library was not as good at reaching out to people outside of that group. Employee 6 mentioned this as well, but confessed that **‘the problem is knowing what brings people in.’** Employee 56 stated that the Library was becoming more open and proactive about approaching unconventional contacts, rather than reacting to approaches from external contacts who engage with the BL. Another detriment to engagement was the loss of funding the Library has suffered from. Employee 62 said **‘when I was able to engage more in international conferences, my knowledge base was broader and my contact list was way broader’**, and Employee 12 said that they also regretted not being able to make and maintain contacts through attending conferences. A reduction in tangible assets makes this somewhat inevitable, although staff could be encouraged to participate in e-conferences and academic forums in order to find new contacts.

### 6.5.7.4. Engaging users

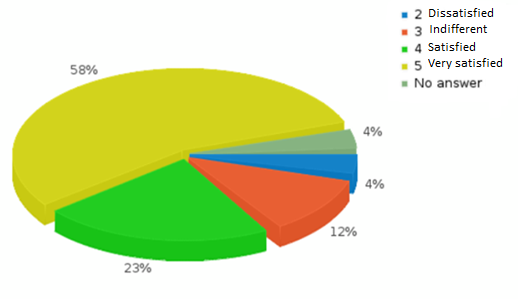
64% of participants identified BL users as the most important external stakeholders, and nine discussed the ways the Directorate attempted to engage with this group. Employee 53 said that due to the dramatic rise in digital services, curators are **‘much further removed from the users now, we very seldom get called to the reading rooms to discuss a project.’** They continued that technology has entailed an inevitable distance between curators and users, and that this means that they have to make even more of an effort to do much more to find out who they are, what they want and how the Library can deliver it. Employee 59 agreed that **‘what I’ve left behind over the years is the speaking to individual readers’**, and many online enquiries don’t get directed to them, preventing them from engaging with what today’s researchers need. They added that **‘without knowing what researchers are doing, without talking to them all the time, we’re losing touch.’** Employee 61 was also frustrated by the online enquiry system because it anonymised the asker and they did not know whether they were interacting with a professor or an undergraduate, which would determine how they would engage with the question. Employee 53 felt that data collected from online access statistics was also only useful to an extent, saying that **‘we know how many hits there might be, but we don’t know who they are or why they’re accessing, what they’re doing with the material, so you know a number but you don’t learn from it really.’** Social Sciences were the most satisfied overall with their ability to engage with Library users, and they have regular events and publicity functions to enable this engagement. Collection Care also felt positively about their contact level with BL users as they are able to hold regular tours of the department which allows staff to meet interested parties. Arts and Humanities had the highest overall level of dissatisfaction, feeling that their removal from the Library floor where they were able to deal with inquiries from researchers face-to-face has alienated them, and that communicating digitally is not always effective.

However, other employees discussed the positive side of the digital revolution when engaging with users. Employee 63 talked about using social media and blogging to bring in an audience of interested non-users, who had never used the Library’s services but cared about the collections and the sense of national heritage they inspired. They added that:

**‘You can comment on the amount of time someone comments on a Facebook story, you can see the amount of time someone re-tweets something, but it’s still slightly impressionistic. But it’s something you probably shouldn’t neglect, that it is the national library, the whole country, and people use us in different ways.’**

Nevertheless, while employees were largely willing to participate in digital communication, there was a general feeling that the only way to really understand research needs is to actively participate and have a hands-on approach with researchers.

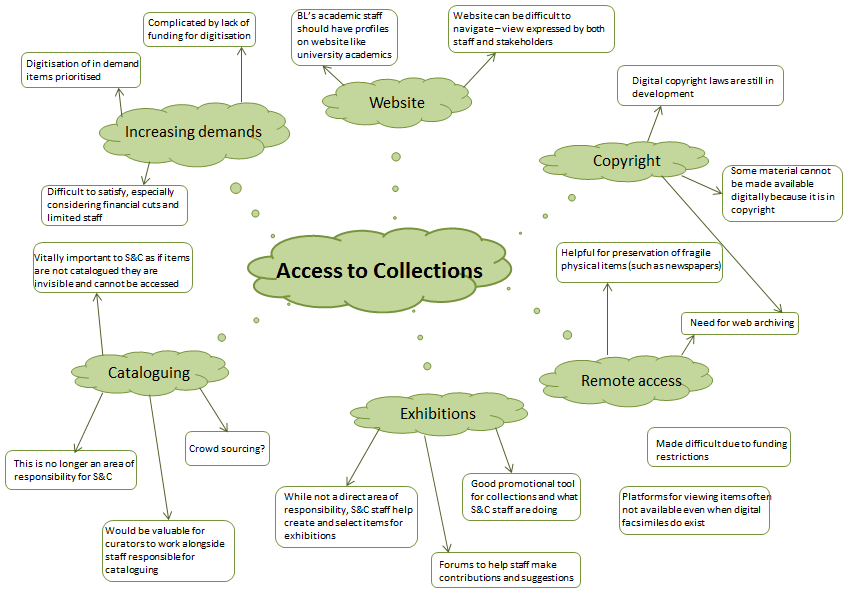
Employee 53 discussed the ways the Library has been working to encourage users from school ages up to use the library in order to encourage research from a young age and present the Library as an approachable place, saying that they **‘stand to gain a huge amount from learning about these traditions.’** Employee 63 said that while outreach in terms of bringing these groups into the Library is not part of the jurisdiction of S&C, the Directorate has realised that they need to be more involved in this and are making efforts to collaborate more with the learning department. Figure 9.6 shows how satisfied staff members who participated in the online survey were with advocacy, from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied).



###### Figure 6.5.6: Satisfaction with advocacy

Overall, the results are very positive with over half of the participants rating advocacy within the Directorate highly, and no one rating it very poorly. This suggests that advocacy is an intellectual asset the Library excels at, and efforts should be made to maintain this.

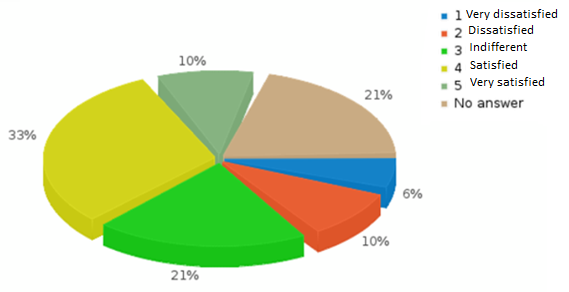
# Making collections accessible



###### Figure 6.6: Concept map detailing key themes in data relating to access to the collections

This section is concerned with how the collections are utilised and made accessible, and the challenges the Library has trying to facilitate this. Areas covered will be how the Directorate deals with increased demands for access, how staff are attempting to reduce the cataloguing backlog, copyright issues, the functionality of the BL website, exhibitions, and the provision of remote access to collections. It also covers how the different departments in the Directorate are dealing with this demand, and how the issue of access is viewed by staff throughout the hierarchy.

The main aim of the British Library is to provide access to its collections which is as wide as possible. There was a sense amongst employees that as the nation’s library, the BL had a responsibility to ensure the public was able to see the items their tax money had gone towards. Employee 45 said that **‘the main thing we want to try and do is to make as much of our content accessible as possible’**, and it was something all S&C staff were working on. Employee 46 said that in terms of reading room access the Library was very good, but Employee 65 discussed the Library’s goal of widening access beyond traditional audiences of scholars, and Employee 70 said there has been a definite focus on making existing collections widely accessible. Employees 1 and 53 spoke about liaising with other departments to make access a collaborative effort, and incorporating collections into projects that fed back to the Library. Employee 67 discussed constructing user surveys to gain an idea of what is relevant to them to give the Library some focus on what they should prioritise in terms of access, and how that access should be provided. They continued that there was a strategic discussion within the Directorate on how far the Library is responsible for creating research tools for users or whether they should just deliver material in a different way to users which would enable them to create the tools themselves. Employee 52 said that this kind of strategic thinking was important because the Directorate aims to provide users with efficient access and also enable collections to be used in other ways, such as connecting people and enabling scholars to get in touch with experts, and all the different sub-cultures within the Directorate are united by this common aim. Figure 10.1 is taken from the online survey. Participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with the accessibility to the collections from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied).



###### Figure 6.6.1: Satisfaction with levels of access to the collections

Of those who answered, the overall feeling is positive, with only 16% feeling that access is inadequate. The following subsections will explore this further by analysing the ways in which the Directorate is working towards adding value to the Library through access to the collections and the difficulties they have had to contend with in order to do so.

## 6.6.1. Increasing demands

The Directorate has been struggling to keep up with the significant increase in demands for access over the past few years, and this has affected all departments in different ways. Employee 46 said that **‘there’s a huge demand which will be incredibly difficult for us to satisfy’**, and Employees 7, 53 and 48 discussed having to choose between providing good quality access, which would take time and money, and making collections accessible as quickly as possible. This is of particular concern to staff in Collection Care and in Digital Scholarship, who are both responsible for creating digital facsimiles of items in the physical collections. Employee 53 suggested that there were opportunities for including volunteers amongst users in ongoing access-related projects in order to keep up with demands, and Employee 64 said that because the task was so big, the Directorate would need to prioritise: **‘it is essential that we make those things which are the unique selling points of the British Library migrate into the changing access demand into which we’ll move.’** Employee 59 said that the Directorate needed to establish a strategy for access rather than allowing the increased demands to rush them, and Employee 53 agreed, saying that **‘we can’t just say, we’ve got these materials here, use them, because we haven’t had the resource put into it at that back end, and I think we’re missing a trick there.’** Staff from all departments and throughout the hierarchy were concerned with meeting this increase in demand although each department has to contend with it in a different way. These differences concerning a common aim should be taken into consideration when attempting an IA evaluation.

## 6.6.2. Cataloguing

One of the main obstacles the Library faces in providing access is the significant cataloguing backlog which has left parts of the collections largely undiscoverable. Seventeen employees, the majority of whom work in Arts & Humanities, said that cataloguing should be one of the Library’s main priorities. Employee 63 felt that cataloguing was slightly overlooked in the review, because **‘if it’s not catalogued then it’s not visible, whether it’s digitally or you’re on site’**, and it should have been one of the key features. Employee 9 agreed that cataloguing was a core part of a curator’s role and more time should be made available for it. Employee 12 wanted to main catalogue to become the repository of all information about the Library’s collection items, but Employee 5 stated that it would be a long time before the catalogue could progress beyond a rudimentary stage because the priority was to get all items listed on it. Employee 65 felt that it might be possible to update the catalogues in terms of both quality and quantity. They said that the normalisation of quality assurance is at a much higher level from users, who now want more value added information rather than simple catalogue card descriptions. Employee 55 posited similar views, stating that **‘with a lot of our collections you’ve got a lot of material that until you’ve done research it doesn’t mean anything, you can’t say what it is, so I’ve always thought of our catalogues as being a research tool for actually incorporating that research into making it available.’** Employee 65 suggested crowd sourcing as a potential way of getting more quality material up quickly: **‘there’s definitely areas we could look at for that kind of activity as well as to compliment what you might think of as a spine of controlled elements and fields within the metadata.’** Employee 31 agreed that there should be greater collaboration in working on the catalogue, both from within and without the Library, and Employee 9 suggested making links within the catalogue to open hubs like Europeana to provide users with a greater quality of information. Employee 50 stated that making cataloguing a collaborative process for the whole Library is especially important now that many of the responsibilities are no longer with the Directorate, having been reallocated to Operations and Services. Employee 53 stated that the backlog should not be seen as an excuse to skimp on quality of information, and that in fact, the increase in demand **‘makes it so much more important that we use our specialist knowledge in the catalogues and in the online materials that we present.’** Here again, the losses the Directorate has experienced in its tangible assets should be taken into account as it has entailed that staff are not able to do all they would like to.

## 6.6.3. Copyright issues

Another inevitable hindrance to the Library’s mission to provide complete access is the issue of copyright and intellectual property. Six employees discussed the confusion surrounding copyright, especially in terms of digital material. Employee 3 saw dealing with this as a priority, stating that **‘we need to get more gung-ho over the current apparent impasse on the copyright issue as it applies to literary material’**, and that the issue of “orphan works” with no known authorship was especially problematic as there was no way of knowing if making the item open to access was permissible or not. Employee 40 wanted the Library to have a dedicated rights clearance department to help avoid these pitfalls, and Employee 70 agreed, stating that in many cases **‘because the rights and contractual information hasn’t been recorded centrally or held in one place, it’s maybe got lost in the mists of time’**, and it would be good to have staff whose job it was to resolve the issues surrounding these items. Employee 58 concurred that the Library needed a clearer guideline for rights and licensing conditions so that staff know what they can and cannot do.

## 6.6.4. Website

73% of staff said that they were not satisfied with the Library’s website. Employee 49 said that **‘the website’s very clunky, which means it’s very difficult to get material on the web to describe the content we’ve got here, let alone... trying to get stuff from, that’s you know, accessible remotely.’** Employee 48 discussed how the website was difficult to navigate and that it was hard for users to find specific information, or who they might be able to contact to get the information, and Employee 17 said that the website compared poorly to the sites of similar institutions. An external stakeholder said that the Library should do more to capitalise on the team of experts employed there, and they should be using the website to do this. Employee 37 discussed how academics at the Library had no web page dedicated to what their expertise and research interests are as there would be if they worked at a university, and this would really help to raise the profile of staff. However, Employee 65 discussed their experiences of trying to set up staff profile pages:

**‘We wanted to update it to make sure that we had everyone's details correct on that website, and I still don't think that it's been updated, because there's still things where we're unsure as to who does what.’**

As Employee 5 observed, the design of the website is not within S&C’s remit and so there is not much they are able to do in terms of making changes there. Employee 2 said that this is an issue which should be resolved, and Employee 38 agreed that the Library should make it easier for staff to get information onto the BL website. Employee 5 commented that **‘it’s… daft that many points at which users interface with the collections are not staffed by S&C… there ought to be a way for S&C to provide input into these services’** While S&C have no control over the website it would be useful to have a strategy in place for them to contribute to it. The website is the best way for staff to market both the collections and what is being done with them and their own expertise, and having the ability to add to the site in this way would be a huge intellectual asset.

## 6.6.5. Exhibitions

While organising exhibitions is not within the remit of Scholarship and Collections, many S&C staff members are actively part of the planning, research and preparation involved in them. Curators spoke about the work they had done to provide contextual information for previous exhibitions, and members of the Collection Care team said that they were responsible for ensuring items were ready to exhibit and presented properly, and providing information on the physical objects. Employee 62 observed that:

**‘What's important to our shows is that we have to add to that context, we have to draw from the book other things of value, what the meaning of the book was, what the purpose was, how it fitted with other things the writer might have been connected with in terms of inspiration, or in the path in the development of his work or whatever.’**

An external stakeholder described exhibitions as **‘the strength of the BL’**, responsible for bringing in a large proportion of revenue and on-site users, and employees were keen to capitalise on this. Employee 17 suggested more comprehensive online exhibitions of material, and Employee 26 thought there should be small exhibitions in the reading rooms to showcase new acquisitions. Employee 43 suggested using forums to enable all BL employees to make suggestions for exhibitions and offer one another advice. This would contribute to the Directorate’s intellectual assets by enabling staff to further promote what they are doing and draw more external interest, and allow different sub-cultures within S&C to share ideas and expertise.

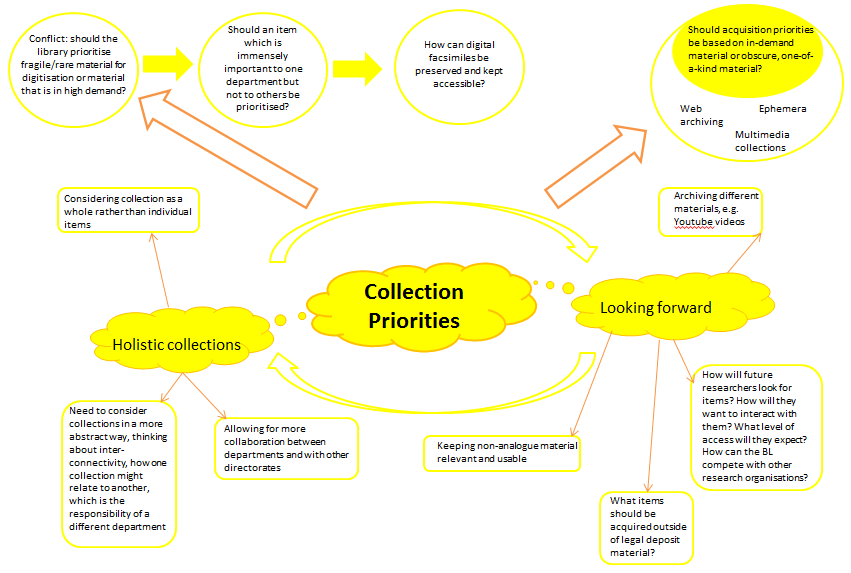
## 6.6.6. Remote access

Part of the Library’s mission to provide widespread access to the collections is to enable remote access to the collections so they could be used by readers who are not able to get to the reading rooms. Twelve employees said that this was one of their main priorities, but once again they had to work within the boundaries of limited funds and time resources. Employee 47 said that their team was **‘trying to prioritise making things remotely available where possible, where funds exist’**, but Employees 64, 58, 61 and 63 said that even when items had been digitised, there was a discrepancy between what the Library had and what they were able to get online, and Employee 54 said that **‘there still isn't a reliable interface for people to actually view items that have been digitised, I worry that a lot of effort is being put in, but nobody's actually capable of getting anything from the output, because you can't actually view these items.’** Employee 63 said that while on-site access at the Library was very good, staff felt under pressure to deliver online services which they were not equipped to respond to, adding that while some collections, such as newspapers, where completely accessible, others were not and there was no easy way of resolving this problem.

Employee 55 said that being able to access images online would cater to the needs of most of their user-base and would help with the preservation of collection items, and Employee 53 discussed the large collections of photographs and manuscripts which should be capitalised on but were just sitting in the archives because there were no resources to utilise them. They added that their ambition was to have a fully interactive archive where visual and audio archives could be presented together to give users a more interesting research experience and increase activity within the collections. Employee 68 agreed that the Library should make efforts to present the collections online in a more holistic way, and an external stakeholder suggested that **‘the library could do more in terms of doing its web archiving projects, that would be a way of linking itself to research institutes, institutional repositories, ways of making that journey for someone who's interested in an idea or a project or an exhibition.’** Employee 58 agreed that as digital resources were made available, employees should use the opportunity to make connections between parts of the collections which are scattered across the Library physically

Employee 65 stated that in their opinion digitising books and manuscripts should not be a priority in the Library, even though these are what the majority of BL users come to see. They said that digitising these items is very expensive and not cost-effective currently because the things that have been digitised are often not easy to find online, and most people use other services such as Google Books. They felt that there was other material that had been digitised, such as items in the sound and image archives, which the Library could promote more and might draw in more interested parties. Employee 55 said that **‘it would be sad if people became so satisfied with digital images that no one looked at the originals’**, but that they had not yet seen any evidence of digital facsimiles reducing interest in physical collections to any great extent.

# Collection Priorities



###### Figure 6.7: Concept map detailing key themes in data relating to collection priorities

All participants were asked what they thought the priorities should be in terms of collection development and utilisation. This section details what employees saw as their personal priorities as well as what the priorities of the whole Directorate and Library were, and how closely these all aligned. It will also discuss the conflicts between the priorities of different ethnographic groups within S&C and the priorities of the Directorate as a whole. Next it will address the types of collection the Library should be focusing on in terms of acquisition. It will then detail the Directorate’s efforts to make the collections more holistic, and what employees felt the collections should look like in the future.

Employee 47 discussed the dilemma they faced because they wanted to digitise a part of their collection but were hesitant to make a bid because **‘they are not necessarily priorities for the library in the sense that they are currently endangered, or that they are… of huge value. But they are of enormous potential for the researchers I address.’** Employee 3 had similar problems, but stated that the priority must always be to make available items which will be relevant to a wider field of researchers. They said that important collections in a specialised field can be catered for as well, but that it may entail effort from specific curators to seek out willing sponsors in their field.

Employee 47 talked about being strategic when it came to acquisition, because in their area of the Directorate only items that could be made accessible quickly and easily were being accepted, and in this way they were both being more discerning about what would be most valuable to the users and helping the Library meet its goal of providing maximum access. However, Employee 65 felt that acquisition was just as important as ever, **‘because in order for us to maintain our role as a trusted organisation globally and in the UK, then we need to continue to acquire material that supports our position as a preeminent library, as one of the great libraries of the world.’** The questions the majority of participants were asking, however, was how to utilise acquisition in a way that would make the collections most relevant to users and would bring in things that people would really want to see and, as Employee 53 said, **‘are we going to try to be that... national library of published product, whereas people can actually get hold of those things incredibly easily, or are we going to focus on things that are more unique and not so easy to obtain?’** Employee 56 said that the Library should focus on collecting rare items which are not necessarily of great monetary value but are very difficult to find, as this will give the BL a unique selling point. Employee 59 discussed their interest in collecting ephemera:

**‘Things that record what’s happening in popular culture, so fanzines and little things like pamphlets handed out outside mosques, these sorts of things. We’re going out and actively collecting, and it has to be a priority again, because we’re the UK national library, and I think there’s a lot of people perhaps outside the library who assume that legal deposit brings in everything, but it doesn’t.’**

Employee 63 agreed that the Library should be more proactive about developing its non-traditional collections, and Employee 5 talked about wanting to collect obscure items which many people would not consider worth keeping, as they would be of great sociological value in the future, and Employee 53 stated that **‘it’s not going to be, especially today in today’s world, it’s not going to be around even in two years’ time these things will no longer be available.’** However, other employees argued that while it is good to focus on unconventional collections, the Library should not neglect the traditional collections. Employee 59 said that as the UK’s national library, the BL had an obligation to collect everything published in Britain to create a national public archive.

Employee 58 talked about the added complication of voluntary deposit collections, where material is donated to the Library, as these collections sometimes come in a variety of formats which are occasionally obsolete. Curators then have to spend time working on these collections to make them usable:

**‘Archives will include books, but also their email and their hard drives and their computers, floppy discs, USB sticks. We take a big range of stuff. And we have to stabilise that and then archive it, and then provide some sort of access.’**

They said that this makes the curatorial role more complicated, and while these donations are greatly appreciated and encouraged, staff should not discount the added work they will entail to provide access to them.

Employee 58 stated that in spite of the challenges the Directorate faces, **‘the positive is we're still the greatest collection of historic manuscripts in the world.’** Overall, 81% of employees stated that they were satisfied or very happy with the way collections were prioritised in the Library, and none gave collection priorities as a cause of discontent in their professional life.

## 6.7.1. Holistic Collections

Six employees spoke about trying to make the collections more holistic rather than keeping them in set categories. Employee 46 stated **‘we need to focus perhaps a little bit less sometimes on the individual work and actually what the collection whole means’**, Employee 1 felt that more project-based work should encourage this, and Employee 59 said that staff need to think more deeply about the collections and the work that they do on them. Employee 59 suggested that curators should become aware of connections within the Library and how collections relate to each other, as this would help them to give assistance to researchers and show them aspects of the collections they may not have considered. Employee 65 said that this was something staff were keen to be involved with, stating that **‘we’re all beginning to have to work at a higher degree of abstraction, but also of interaction with things because there’s so much stuff to be dealt with’**, but that this had added another level of interest to their job. These opinions were voiced by members of staff from across the Directorate, and indicate that while the differences in culture between different S&C groups should not be ignored, staff should not become insular and lose focus of what the Directorate as a whole is working to achieve.

## 6.7.2. Looking Forward

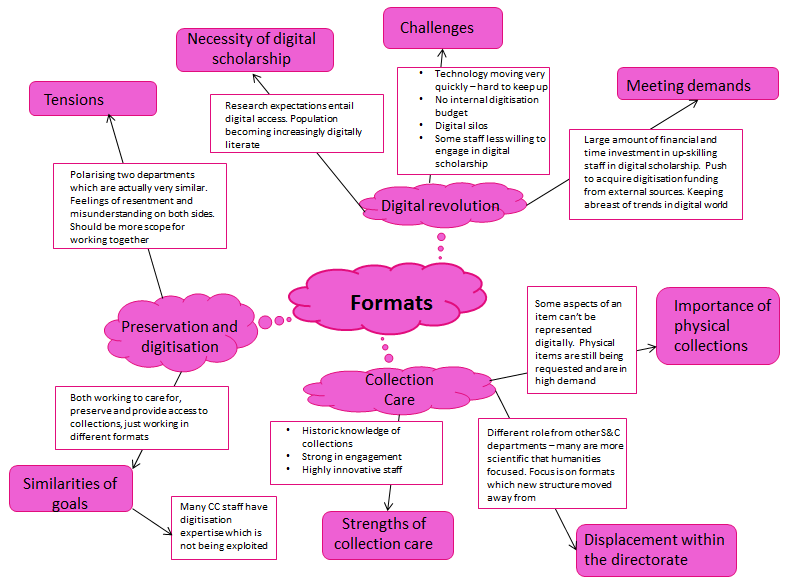
Participants were also aware of the need to consider what researchers in the future might want from the collections. Employee 46 stated that **‘we’re not just a research library trying to fulfil an immediate need, we have to kind of develop the collections for the future.’** They felt that not only physical ephemera will be valued in the future, but also digital resources like blogs, which may be of great interest in the future. Employee 65 mentioned plans in the Directorate to implement non-print legal deposit regulations to enable the Library to ingest electronically published material. Employee 49 said that trying to anticipate what users want is one of the Library’s biggest challenges, as well as identifying things that the Library does not get through legal deposit which might be of intellectual interest. While Employee 15 felt that this was something the Directorate should put more effort into, Employee 51 stated **‘I think it’s something we’ve been pretty strong at, seeing what’s on the horizon and anticipating it.’** One external stakeholder agreed, saying that while outreach is extremely important for the Library, they should not neglect acquisition lest in the future they find gaps in the collections which can no longer be filled. They continued that it would be worthwhile to archive things like YouTube videos of notable events to prevent them from becoming lost to time. Employee 61 agreed with this sentiment and added that the Library should also not neglect things like preservation and storage environments for the collections in favour of access in case they ended up with nothing to show all the people they had attracted.

Employee 53 discussed how this issue was complicated again by collections being in formats that might quickly become outdated and unusable, once more demonstrating the perceived conflict between format and subject following the review:

**‘It’s not just that the file you make today may not have the software to run tomorrow or in five years’ time or whatever, it’s also that the audio tape made in the 1950’s, the machines no longer exist to play that tape, so you have to have the analogue machinery in working order to be able to play the analogue materials It’s not like paper, where you can always get the paper as long as a mouse hasn’t eaten it or something, you can get it out and you’ll always be able to see the paper.’**

Employees 59 and 53 felt that the Library should also be making an effort to preserve the research that staff have been doing and making records of what is being learned about the collections from projects. Employee 64 said that **‘I think that level of flexibility in accepting what the future information environment will be is important’**, and that the Directorate should not worry about establishing set plans for the future, but rather continue to trust their initiative and listen to the research community. Once more, this expresses that the Directorate uses different methods to work towards the same aims.

# Formats



###### Figure 6.8: Concept map detailing key themes in data relating to collection formats

This section deals with the formats of the Library’s collections, and more specifically the opinions held by S&C staff on both physical and digital material. The digital revolution will be addressed, including how it has impacted on the Library in terms of increased necessity for digital scholarship and the increased user demands for digital services. It will also cover the role of preservation and conservation in the Library and the continued importance of the physical collections, as well as the feelings of displacement from some staff working in Collection Care. Finally, the similarities between digital and physical collections will be discussed, along with employees’ suggestions of how the two should be working together.

## 6.8.1. Digital Revolution

Several members of staff discussed the pressures felt within the Directorate to keep up with demands in the digital world, even after the creation of the Digital Scholarship department. Employee 16 said that **‘the collections need to be better catalogued... more collection items have to be digitised… digital images must be made available… we could do more online exhibitions’**, and Employees 20 and 59 said how they would want to digitise the whole collection and put it online, but that they were frustrated because they knew that time and budget restraints were too great. Employee 58 mentioned that there was a value-added element to digital scholarship because there are **‘a bunch of things you can do digitally that you can't do with a paper archive’,** and that digital scholarship allows both staff and library users to use the collections in new ways. Overall, staff from SB4 and above tended to be more positive about the move towards digital, although this was by no means an attitude limited to managerial staff.

### 6.8.1.1. Necessity for digital scholarship

Employee 70 said that the Directorate needed to use digital scholarship to move away from the outdated view of curators as only being interested in collecting for the future and thinking that it is enough to provide reading room access: **‘we live in the digital age now, and if we're going to justify being funded to the tune of 100 million pounds of public money every year, then we have to try and distribute that access as widely as possible.’** Employee 51 stated that as technology evolves, the way that researchers work is constantly changing as well and the Library has to accommodate this or risk becoming redundant. Employee 65 agreed that **‘people’s expectations are going up all the** **time’** and Employee 8 said that not only does digitisation need to be increased dramatically but that S&C needs to become more comfortable working with digital formats in order to provide good service to the modern researcher. Most participants were keen to engage with digital scholarship in order to improve access to the collections. Employee 12 gave the example of the Library’s collections of images, including prints, photographs, drawings and illustrations, which are currently underused because they are not fully described in the catalogues and cannot be viewed online. They were keen to set up individual online records for these items with links back to the books of collections they are part of and with digital images which can be viewed remotely. Employee 13 mentioned plans for more online exhibitions, and Employee 34 discussed ideas for projects involving library users to create metadata. However, Employee 1 observed that there are members of S&C who are not yet comfortable with the concept of digital scholarship, and that the Directorate needed to implement **‘a more flexible and efficient digitisation strategy which engages and empowers curatorial staff’** because while all participants in this research agreed that digital scholarship was necessary, there were many who confessed to having a degree of discomfort with the concept. The following sub-section will address the challenges the Directorate has faced concerning digital scholarship.

### 6.8.1.2. Challenges

Seven employees professed concern that the Library would not be able to keep up with how fast technology was changing in terms of getting all staff members familiarised with each new innovation in time for it to be useful. Employee 54 said of technology that **‘it's all moving so quickly, I think we can easily get out of touch’**, and Employee 56 felt that staff needed to manage users’ expectations of what the Library would be able to provide. Employee 65 stated that in some cases the BL had to accept that it did not have the resources to keep up with certain advances in technology: **‘because of the expectation for more material to be covered, such as e-books, such as talking books, in addition to the depth of coverage that’s going on, we simply can’t compete in that area.’**

Employee 62 expressed concern over the lack of budget for digitising analogue material:

**‘What we found that fundamentally was missing was the critical mass of original material that had been digitised, because the tools are there, and there is a smattering of digitised collections, but really until there's a critical mass, enough to make it a valid piece of research, then it's not available.’**

Employee 47 agreed that there was a danger of digitised material being patchy due to the need for relying on external funding, and Employee 14 stated that the Library was cautious of developing patchy digitised collections. Employee 64 talked about there being a **‘risk of creating digital silos where one type of material is digitally accessible here, another type of digital material is accessible here, and moving from one to another is much more difficult than it was with ordering up a manuscript and a printed book in the reading room.’** This suggests that when engaging with digitisation, the Directorate should take the same care to communicate and collaborate in order to avoid silos in the digital world as well as between the different ethnographic groups.

Something that concerned many of the participants in this study was the gaps in understanding amongst S&C staff as to what digital scholarship actually means. Employee 67 talked about how some colleagues’ lack of experience with digital formats had made them unwilling to engage, stating that **‘there was huge divergence and there still is diversity in practice and willingness and engagement with digital across the curatorial teams.’** Employee 70 added that not all staff know how to engage with digital scholarship or feel comfortable with it, and Employee 53 said that many people think that digital scholarship simply means presenting material online, whereas in reality it is a far more multifaceted concept which includes engagement with and preservation of audio and video material, and how to communicate with and serve today’s researcher. Employee 55 stated that **‘I think we’re really quite ignorant in terms of knowing what it means, and even defining it to ourselves.’** Employee 54 discussed the push to train staff in the digital world, and how there was a realisation that staff needed to be more informed on the processes of the digital agenda, and how digital scholarship applies to all members of the Directorate in one way or another, not just those who are actively involved with digitisation. Employee 51 discussed the challenges of this, especially of defining how to train staff in a way that would not waste people’s time. They added that they were also working on how to engage staff with the digital agenda, stating that **‘one of the things we’ve really had to say is that even if it’s not something that you do now, it’s not something that’s specifically written in your job description, these three areas that have been identified are important for libraries to move forward.’** Employee 54 was concerned that the lack of digital expertise across the Directorate meant that there was a backlog in the knowledge needed to understand how people are searching and requiring information in the modern research community, and Employee 62 added that **‘the tools are becoming available but we're not that knowledgeable yet how best to apply them’**, and this might lead to the BL getting out of touch.

### 6.8.1.3. Meeting demands

To counteract this, the Directorate has been putting a lot of effort into meeting the increased demands for digital engagement from users. Employee 47 said **‘I think the library's putting a lot of work in terms of trying to meet that demand that we all have when we are researchers ourselves, you know, I want it now and I want it on my laptop.’** Employee 58 said that the Digital Scholarship team were aiming to empower all S&C staff to be able to engage digitally, and that although the Digital Scholarship team would take the overall lead, other departments would be managing digital activity in their own area. Employee 52 reiterated this, and observed that having digital expertise would not only help curators to understand users’ needs, but would also enable them to interact confidently with web archives and other electronic resources in their own research. They added that the Library had realised that it **‘had to spend more time on making digital contacts, building skills and stuff like that, or getting [staff] digitally active.’** Employee 44 said that being digitally active would help staff to engage with users through social media and communicate what the Library was doing. However, Employee 55 stated that management were having to think very carefully about how they would implement this up-skilling because unless they produced programmes that really satisfied internal requirements, staff were not going to support it. Employee 67 said that there was a healthy scepticism within the Directorate about whether digital scholarship is going to solve all the Library’s problems, but Employee 58 stated that the idea was to integrate it into what was already being done and stop people from thinking about it as completely different from traditional curatorial and conservational roles, to **‘make it not a side-line or a technical show, but something that's really business as usual, core part of what we do.’** This signifies that the Directorate needs to harness digital scholarship as an intellectual asset by thinking strategically about how it should be engaged with in a way that will actually benefit promotion and usability of the collections.

Staff members were also thinking about ways to counteract the digitisation and cataloguing backlog. Employee 17 thought that the Library could increase digitisation from core funding, although admitted that it may not be possible to do this in the current financial climate. Employee 53 talked about how curators were starting to think more creatively about ways around the lack of funding for digitisation, including using existing platforms to get material online, and Employee 6 agreed that the Library could do more to get digital material in cyberspace with links back to the BL. Employee 12 said that the Library could also be using crowdsourcing for some digitisation and cataloguing. Employee 58 mentioned the importance of web archiving and ensuring that digital items were integrated into collections from the stage of acquisition and selection.

## 6.8.2. The role of Collection Care

As previously discussed, the Collection Care department had lost a number of their staff and suffered a significant blow to their morale. Collection care staff who took part in this study discussed having similar problems to the Digital Scholarship team: one employee said **‘I think we have a lot of work to do in terms of perception of what Conservation and Collection Care do, and how we communicate that through the library.’** In this instance however, the department feels that where they were once understood and valued by the Library, the understanding of what they do and how important it is has been lost. This section will discuss the continued importance of physical collections, the innovative ways that Collection Care employees have been meeting the needs of the Library and its users, and how members of staff have felt displaced within the Library.

### 6.8.2.1. Importance of physical collections

Employee 16 pointed out that while the responsibilities of the Library have changed, there a still a significant number of researchers who use the Library in the traditional sense of going to the reading rooms and looking at original items, and S&C still has a responsibility to provide this kind of service. Employee 48 said that Collection Care is integral to this because they ensure that analogue material is kept in good condition and accessible to readers: **‘we're core to the collections. If your objects aren't there for people to consult and look at, to read, then you're failing on your core... delivery as a library, a research institution.’** Employee 32 observed that researchers can still gain knowledge from an original document that cannot be gained from a digital facsimile, and Employee 69 said that the BL has a responsibility to preserve the nation’s cultural heritage, and that **‘the books, especially historical bindings and such, they kind of gain archaeological meaning in a way.’** Employee 40 feared that the Directorate would focus too completely on getting up-to-date with digital scholarship that they would neglect the continued importance of the physical collections. This suggests that there is a danger of neglecting the ways in which the physical collections can be used to enhance and promote the Library’s IA, and also suggests that there is a risk of alienation between Collection Care and Digital Scholarship which would be detrimental to the Directorate’s intellectual assets.

### 6.8.2.2. Strengths of Collection Care

Eight staff members discussed their concern that the Library had not considered the valuable expertise it had lost through the cuts within the Collection Care department. Employee 48 said **‘we have great knowledge of the objects we work on, not just the physical, but we have research about the actual historic knowledge, how they're put together, how they're made, the materials’**, and that many people in the Library were not aware of this. New discoveries made by the Collection Care team were discussed: one staff member talked about designing book trolleys and library stands which prevented items from receiving unnecessary damage, and three talked about a recent project involving the Lindisfarne Gospel, Employee 48 stating that:

**‘We discovered something entirely new about the manuscript that nobody had recognised over the last eight or nine hundred years, and what we discovered actually showed that previous research was wrong, and they wouldn't have been able to do that without conservation's input, and our links with research universities.’**

Employee 7 felt that conservators had not been recognised for the importance of their work to the research community as much as they should. Employee 54 believed that as with ‘digital scholarship’ there was a lack of understanding about exactly what ‘collection care’ means, as it is not just the conservation of items but also deals with advocacy, environment and understanding the science of the materials used, and so therefore has a much broader remit. Employee 7 talked about the frequent tours of the Collection Care department which are very popular, drawing in several hundred visitors annually, and Employee 54 spoke of the satisfaction they felt from enabling outreach to people who would not be able to get into conservation studios normally. Employee 67 said that many Collection Care staff have a scientific background, and therefore innovative new methods of preservation, such as a recently developed method of systematically checking the conditions of manuscripts have been devised. They felt that this was not always recognised by the Library. Employee 45 added that **‘it's not just a case of we repair tears, we have a much deeper connection with collection items that even the curators don't have because they don't understand the materials in quite the depth that we do.’** They continued that the impact of this is not widely understood, but that to the Collection Care team it is very rewarding to know that they have identified a problem and gone some way to providing a solution, and this has made an impact on the whole conservation profession. For example, one employee discussed how he had invented a new model of trolleys for moving fragile material with greater care.

### 6.8.2.3. Displacement within the Directorate

The displacement felt by the Collection Care team was touched on briefly in the earlier section on morale. Six employees discussed how they felt this was partly caused by the role Collection Care plays being very different from the rest of Scholarship and Collections. Employee 50 said that the department works differently from curators because they are less concerned with content and more with the format, and Employee 54 said:

**‘We're very hard to place, because we're a little bit operational but we're quite intellectual, so we're not really Ops and Services, but we're not quite curatorial, we're somewhere in the middle, and I think as a result of that we sort of bridge lots of different areas. ‘**

Employee 60 agreed that the department has always been partly peripheral and as a result they find it difficult to contribute to the Library’s performance measures. Part of this, they felt, is because many current performance measures are based on users, as defined by direct users of the collections rather than visitors to exhibitions, tours or programmes that Collection Care is responsible for. The department is therefore in the process of developing their own performance measures which can be fed back to top management as evidence of the value of Collection Care. Employee 69 felt that the Library did not fully understand how much Collection Care contributed to work within different areas of the Library: **‘they don't realise all the work that is behind all this… we are quite overstretched because we need to perform for exhibitions, we need to perform for loans, for digitisation projects.’** They continued that losing team members had meant that the department was not able to perform these functions as effectively. Employee 48 felt that the rest of the Library **‘don't see our role beyond looking after the objects’** and that the extensive intellectual ability of Conservation Care staff was not being utilised or promoted as well as it should be. Employee 54 agreed, stating that **‘we actually have a huge impact within the library, and it's trying to communicate that as much as possible, and it's a very hard steer because what we do is slow and expensive by comparison with say digital preservation.’** Employee 57 said that to amend this, Collection Care needs to put extra effort into communicating what they do to the rest of the Library, and push themselves forward: **‘we need to ensure that where there's conservation involved that we are there, we're part of it, and we're named within it and not just in the background somewhere or a pair of hands.’** Employee 57 agreed that it was now Collection Care’s responsibility to push themselves forward and be recognised. They said that they did not think the rest of the Directorate full understood the extent of what Collection Care did, but that was partly the fault of the department for not going out and promoting their hard work. Collection Care, as previously discussed, is a very different ethnographic group to the rest of S&C, and it is unsurprising that the way they work is not fully understood by all other employees. Therefore, these staff members will have to work hard to ensure that their intellectual assets are acknowledged and understood.

## 6.8.3. Digitisation and Preservation

It became evident from the data that many S&C employees thought of Collection Care and Digital Scholarship as having very little in common. Employee 4 discussed the ‘either/or’ mentality within the Directorate concerning the two departments. This appears to have led to some defensiveness from both sides. One Collection Care employee said **‘digitisation is now taking some of our role away’**, and another argued that **‘a pattern of coloured dots on a screen isn't a manuscript.’** Conversely, a member of the Digital Scholarship team said that there was **‘wilful misunderstanding’** about what their department was doing, and that physical collections were not the priority of today’s researcher, while another felt that there were some staff members who were opposed to digital scholarship because they wanted to have autonomy over their collections and who had access to them. Employee 54 stated that **‘at the moment we're polarising the physical against the digital’**, and the Directorate needed to lose this mentality in order to capitalise on all of its assets. Employee 50 agreed, adding that the Library had much to gain from both physical and digital material and the two should be seen as equally valuable. Employee 60 said that this was a big problem for the Directorate, especially when budget cuts restrict what they are able to do. They said that sometimes they had to make difficult choices over whether to invest in developing skills in traditional conservation techniques which take a long time to develop and are not used particularly frequently but are highly valuable when they are needed, or whether to invest in equipping the Library to meet the digital agenda.

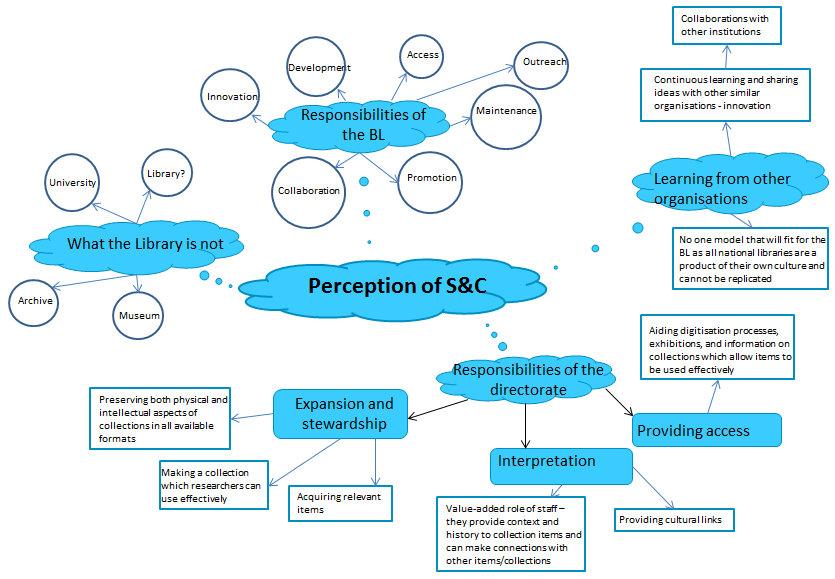
Perhaps inevitably due to the redundancies in that area, the majority of the negative feelings came from the Collection Care department. Employee 48 worried that the Library would damage itself in the long-term by putting too much emphasis on digital assets. They argued that making an item available digitally does not mean that researchers will no longer want to consult the original, and that in some cases having a digital facsimile has actually fired interest in the physical copy. Employee 52 said that there was no statistical evidence to support the theory that digitisation increased demands to view original items, but that they would be interested in setting up a project to track how often a digitised item was called up for viewing in comparison to how often it had been called up before. Employee 67, a curator, said that in fact the results were variable. In the case of the digitisation of the Beowulf manuscript, they said there had been a huge increase in demand to see the original: **‘that manuscript had never been so much asked for and studied, so it definitely has an impact.’** However, they said that in other cases, such as with the digitisation of newspapers, the majority of researchers were satisfied by the digital copy, and this had been beneficial in terms of preserving the fragile originals. They stated that:

**‘If you have the surrogate, that's a very good way of controlling that demand. Our problem in the past is that if you have a lot of demand for a particular item and you have no surrogate, you have very little way of controlling usage of it, other than just saying no repeatedly, and that is not politically a very sensible position to get into, to be constantly saying no, you can't have this, you have very good research reasons to see this, but no.’**

Employee 64 discussed how this was something the Library had to avoid, especially as the modern researcher is used to immediate access and does not understand the processes of calling up physical items, and for this reason having a digital copy of a fragile item was extremely valuable. Employees 60 and 69 also said that digitisation was a valuable preservation tool, and Employee 40 said that several members of the Collection Care team had a lot of experience with digitisation and advising other organisations on the processes involved with various types of digital imaging. Similarly, Employee 14 pointed out that there were many elements of conservation and preservation in the work that the Digital Scholarship team did, especially when caring for born-digital material. Employees 50 and 69 spoke about how important it was for the Library to recognise this overlap. Employee 50 said that the minimal involvement Collection Care staff often had in the digitisation was more rudimentary than they were capable of, and Employee 69 talked about receiving items back from the digitisation process which had been damaged. Employee 54 said that **‘we're not viewing our books as the historic objects that they are’**, and they worried that digitisation was seen as a replacement which would render the physical copy redundant, whereas things can be learned from a physical copy that cannot from a facsimile. Employee 48 added that the digitisation process should be seen as collaboration between two departments to enrich the collections, but **‘usually the conservator's there to look at damaged turned pages and repair things if necessary, handle things. Not to advise on the digitisation process, just take care of the objects’**, whereas they were capable of much more involvement. There is a clear breakdown in communication between the two groups which should be resolved in order for staff members to learn from one another.

When asked, every member of staff from Collection Care and Digital Scholarship said that there should be more integration and collaboration between the two departments. Employee 54 argued that if the Library wanted to stay as relevant and interesting to researchers as possible, both digital accessibility and the fact that the BL has a huge world-class collection need to be considered equally important. Employee 14 felt that the focus of the Library was too much on digital media, and that they needed to find a middle ground. Employee 54 said that **‘at the moment we're seeing digital media, every talk you go to is about digital, and I want to see people talking about the collection in whatever format.’** Employee 64 agreed that both formats were equally important and that **'communicating the importance of the physicality, and in the digital world the importance of the instance, is I think a key point for us to work towards.’** Employee 34 said that the collection is equally valuable in any format, and Employee 54 argued that **‘there's a lot more scope for fluidity between the two and understanding between [Collection Care and Digital Scholarship].’** One curator stated that they saw the physical and digital items as equally inspiring and exciting. They discussed the Library’s plans to use smart labels, i-pads, local networks and the Internet to connect people to the collections and make exhibitions a research experience. They enthused about using technology to both share information with, and draw information from, researchers. However, they said that it was important to not see this as a reason to discount the value today’s researcher places on physical collections, because **‘there's nothing better than standing in front of a hand-written manuscript or a diary or an image that was connected with Shakespeare or Dickens’**, and exciting new discoveries are being made based on researching physical collection items. Employee 54 felt that the perceived division between the two departments was in part due to the structure of the Directorate: **‘for organisational reasons things have been grouped, and as soon as you put an invisible barrier, it's very hard to break that down unfortunately.’** Nevertheless, Employees 60, 64, 14 and 69 said that effort needed to be made on both sides to work together and understand each other’s roles. Employee 64 reiterated that the Library should not think of digital collections as a separate thing from the physical any more than a 12th Century manuscript is different from an early printed book: they are in different formats and have different requirements in terms of care and access, but all are equally valuable. This suggests the nuances of the Directorate’s intellectual assets, and the variety of expertise involved in making the collections come to life. It also indicates that despite the variety in expertise and requirements, the objective is always to make the collections appealing and accessible no matter what format they are in.

# Perceived role of S&C



###### Figure 6.9: Concept map detailing key themes in data relating to the perception of S&C

All participants in this research were asked how they perceived the role of the British Library, and what they thought the Scholarship and Collections Directorate’s priorities should be. While some where certain in their answers, like Employee 9 who said **‘to care for the collections and to make them available for present and future generations’**, others seemed less certain. Employee 11 was disconcerted by the fact that S&C is now simply ‘Collections’, as they felt the focus had shifted onto just exploiting the collections rather than preserving, expanding or aiding research into them. Other employees stated that the Directorate needed to have a firm idea of what it was and communicate this to the rest of the Library. Employee 63 said that while S&C used to be synonymous with the Library and considered to be the core of everything the Library did. They said that **‘it’s slipped through various reasons, partly our fault, partly other people misrepresenting us, and so it was almost seen as the problem of the library, which is crazy because if you take away S&C you’re taking away the collections, the expertise, et cetera.’** They hoped that this situation was starting to resolve itself and S&C place is better acknowledged, but that rather than being competing Directorates, the whole Library would be more productive if it worked together to achieve its roles. Employee 67 also commented on S&C’s role being diminished within the Library, believing that **‘it's become diminished over time, to the point where it's... almost a bit of an add-on.’** This section will deal with the concepts participants have of the Directorate, starting with what they think S&C’s various responsibilities are within the Library. It will then discuss what employees feel they have learned from other similar organisations, what the responsibilities of the British Library as a whole are, and finally, what staff feel that the Library is not.

## 6.9.1. Responsibilities of the Directorate

Participants in this study were, in general, very happy to be a part of the Directorate and proud of the role it plays in the Library. Employee 16 said that **‘Scholarship and Collections is the core of the British Library – without the collections we care for, the rest of the Library would not exist’**, Employee 25 described it as the most critically important Directorate for the future of the Library, and Employee 47 thought that it underpins everything that the Library does because everyone who comes into contact with the BL relies on the expertise of the staff in S&C to locate information. Employee 63 stated that within the Directorate it is not just the collections themselves that are important but also the exciting new ways in which the collections are being used. However, Employee 1 pointed out that in spite of this, because the Directorate covers such a wide range of responsibilities and commitments, there is room for improvement. The three sub-sections below will detail the main responsibilities of S&C participants identified, as well as where they feel the Directorate could improve upon them, as well as the ways that differences in ethnographic groups influenced the ways that staff perceived the role of the Library.

### 6.9.1.1. Expansion and stewardship

Four employees discussed the importance of expansion and stewardship in the Directorate. Employee 3 stated that:

**‘I believe [the role of S&C is] to preserve and to make better both our historical collections and to expand our collections of modern material in both conventional and digital forms so that the current generation of scholars (using that word in its broadest possible sense) can use the material in the most useful and timely manner’**

Employee 6 agreed that the Directorate had a duty to preserve both the physical and the intellectual aspects of the collections, and Employee 8 stated that they needed to maintain standards in acquisition to ensure there were no gaps in the collection in the future. They added that staff need to be stewards of the collections and maintain them as well as allowing access to them. Employee 14 reiterated the importance of S&C’s role in caring for the collections, and ensuring that the right material is being collected.

### 6.9.1.2. Interpretation

Five employees said that the Directorate’s most important duty was to interpret the collections for users. Employee 1 said that they were responsible for providing information, advice and support to anyone wishing to use the Library as well as promoting it as a resource. Employee 8 discussed S&C’s responsibilities for the **‘education of the public about collections and related cultures’**, and ensuring that anyone wishing to use the Library, regardless of age or cultural background, got as rewarding an experience as possible. Employee 5 reiterated that the Directorate needs to make sure that users of all kinds can relate to the collections, and that S&C staff can talk to a variety of stakeholders about the Library material.

### 6.9.1.3. Providing Access

Five employees stated that the Directorate’s most important role was to provide access to the collections. Employee 57 said of S&C that:

**‘It allows everyone to get access to knowledge. We're there behind the scenes to allow the readers to come in and access the books, for... for digitisation to go ahead, we're there in all facets of the library without everyone necessarily knowing about it, but it allows access for all, and that's S&C's big role in the library.’**

Employee 8 called the Library **‘one of the world’s greatest research resource[s]’** which S&C staff have a responsibility to make available, and Employee 4 said that ideally the Directorate would provide universal access to Library material. Employee 6 said that the Directorate had a responsibility to always look for new ways to exploit the collections.

## 6.9.2. Learning from other institutions

When asked if they had learned anything valuable from similar institutions, e.g. other national libraries, large research centres, museums etc. opinions were divided. Employee 62 said they were **‘always learning from progressive design ideas from other institutions’**, and Employee 14 said that they enjoyed attending conferences in order to see what other people were doing and how they might be applied to the British Library. However, Employees 16 and 28 said that while good ideas can be inspired by what is being done elsewhere, it would be counterproductive for the Library to try and imitate another organisation. Employee 70 agreed, saying that **‘there isn't one national library where we would say 'that's the model for us' because they all exist in quite different circumstances, they have specialisms in different areas.’** One external stakeholder agreed that there was no model that the Library should imitate, but said that there were other institutions, in particular large museums and galleries, which were better at making links to other research institutes, research councils and universities, and that the British Library could do more to put itself out in the international arena and really show off what it has in terms of collections and expertise.

## 6.9.3. Responsibilities of the British Library

When asked what they thought was the main responsibilities of the British Library are, opinions were more divided than they were when defining S&C’s main role. While Employee 2 said that the Library had a responsibility to **‘care for, develop, make accessible and promote the BL collections worldwide’**, many employees brought up the conflicting priorities relating to who the Library’s target audience is. Employee 7 emphasised that the Library should provide access to the collections to everyone who wants to use them. However, limited resources have prevented the Library from doing all the things employees would like to do for providing access to all sectors. Employee 68 stated that **‘the people whose needs we're not meeting are the practitioners… the researchers who are outside of academia.’** They continued that library provision in other private sector organisations such as charities has been drastically reduced in recent years, and the British Library has a responsibility to cater to them. Employee 63, however, observed that the BL’s primary audience is made up of academics in the higher education sector, and while access for all is the ideal, the Library has to keep in mind what it is funded to do: **‘we can’t become an elitist institution, but we also have to do... we shouldn’t try to do what we’re not set up to do particularly well.’** Employee 62 also discussed this dilemma, saying that the problem is that the institution is catering for two different audiences, and they have to think carefully about how they are going to resource both and manage the crossovers. External Stakeholder 3 felt that the Library needed to become more unified and develop a clearer idea of how it would provide service and where its priorities lay, stating that **‘they've got lots of individuals involved in all sorts of wonderful things, but it doesn't tell that story, it doesn't have a very cohesive view of what it's doing.’** This is an opinion that was expressed by staff across the Directorate indicating that there is a need to formulate clear plan that the whole of S&C can follow which will enable them to work collaboratively.

## 6.9.4. What the Library is not

The lack of a unified concept of what the British Library is was readily apparent, as the majority of participants answered the question by stating what they thought the Library was *not*. Five employees stated emphatically that the Library should not be thought of as a museum. Employee 50 said **‘the library's not a museum, and that should be made very clear’** and Employee 14 felt that aligning the Library with a museum would be retroactive in terms of encouraging people to use the collections. However, Employee 54 said **‘we need to start relating ourselves to a museum, because say the V&A, it holds historic stuff, and nobody says because it's not modern and digital it's not relevant’**, and External Stakeholder 2 said that the Library **‘has a fantastic role as a museum and as an exhibitions place.’** Employee 65 avoided using the word ‘museum’ but said that the Library has an important role to play in terms of stewardship and acquiring and preserving the nation’s memory. There was also some debate over whether the BL had a role to play as a centre for learning. External Stakeholder 1 said **‘the library does have a really legitimate role as a research institute. It has its own ability to attract research funding, its own ability to attract research programmes and projects that are quite often about digitisation but they're not all about heritage either.’** Employee 50 defined the BL as a research library, and Employee 62 said that the Library had an important role as a research institute and an area were collections can be exposed in an interpreted way and an engaging way to a broader audience including the general public. Employee 67, however, was wary of becoming too affiliated with universities and learning centres, saying that **‘I do wonder if that's straying more into... basically, it would be the equivalent of us deciding that we were now a research institution.’** External Stakeholder 1 felt that the Library should be exploiting the expertise of the academics who work there like a university would, but Employee 68 pointed out that the BL does not have a defined readership like a university and should take pains not to alienate its non-academic users. Employee 41 even brought into question calling the BL a library, because the word could be misleading to potential users who think of a library in the more traditional sense as somewhere where books can be taken out on loan. Employee 54 warned against trying to play multiple roles, saying that **‘I think we're diluting ourselves by trying to be all things to all people.’** However, Employee 62 said that they did not see why the BL could not cater to both people who wanted to use the Library as a research centre and those who just want to attend the exhibitions: **‘I don't understand why a single institution can't do both, and I think there's a greying of the two audience bases anyway.’** They felt that it would be counter-productive to try to define the Library as one thing or another.

# 6.10. Summary

The previous 11 chapters cover the data gathered from the staff and stakeholders of the Scholarship and Collections Directorate at the British Library. The tangible factors which have impinged on the Directorate’s intellectual assets were discussed first in order to put the following data in context with the limited funding, staff and time available to the Directorate. The next section covered the issues the Directorate has with lowered morale, largely due to the loss of tangible assets, but also through the directorial review and feelings of being undervalued, but concluded by discussing the passion and dedication the staff have for what they do. The extensive expertise of staff was detailed next, including the benefits and drawbacks of having such a diverse Directorate, how S&C has managed training, research and projects, and how effectively they disseminate their knowledge. Then the efficacy of communication was covered, both inside the Directorate and with the rest of the Library and external stakeholders, and how employees felt their own roles were communicated to others. The structure of the Directorate was discussed, in particular how staff felt the new structure enabled them to do their work, how useful they felt having a defined S&C structure was to the overall running of the Library, and how they felt the Directorate’s policies and procedures impacted on their jobs. The issue of access was covered in the next section, which detailed the pressures staff were under to meet increasing demands for immediate access to the collections and how this was often hindered by copyright issues, uncatalogued collections, and the difficulties involved in funding and facilitating digital access to Library material. The following section discussed what the staff felt were the main goals the Directorate had in terms of providing holistic can accessible collections, and how they felt they were prepared to meet future research demands. A detailed account was presented next of the dual roles of Collection Care and Digital Scholarship, including the how the two departments had been divided and how staff perceived that they could be working in collaboration. Finally, the chapter covered how the participants saw the roles of Scholarship and Collections as well as the British Library as a whole, what they felt their main responsibilities should be, and how the Directorate could evolve to capitalise further on its extensive intellectual assets.

The phenomenographic approach was used throughout this chapter to analyse and interpret the data. The experiences and interactions of participants with intellectual assets was drawn out and the ways that these experiences might have been affected by the individual’s placement within the Directorate were discussed. The quantitative data from the questionnaires was presented alongside the qualitative findings as a means of supporting the statements offered by the individual participants and placing their experiences within the context of the feedback from the Directorate as a whole.

# 7. Discussion: Recommendations for the Directorate

# 7.1. Introduction

This chapter will serve as a continuation of the findings section by presenting further analysis of the data and what it indicates about the utilisation of intellectual assets in S&C. It will also posit some recommendations for how the Directorate could improve its use of IAs by focusing on areas which the data identified as being weaker than others. There will be no mention here of the categories of intellectual assets which had been used to design the interviews and questionnaire. As Steenkamp and Kashyap (2010) observed, these categories are only really useful in the data collection period when researchers are trying to identify intellectual assets. By attempting to place findings produced by the data into these categories, there is a risk of being reductive as some IAs span more than one category. Instead, areas of discussion will be presented based on the trends which emerged from the findings.

The first and arguably most significant of these areas of discussion is the effect that tangible asset losses in the Directorate, and the Library in general, has had on the morale of the employees. It will demonstrate how low morale has proved to be the main intellectual liability in Scholarship and Collections, and will suggest methods for the Directorate to use which may enable them to counter the impact of the financial restraints and gain back morale for the staff.

The next focus area emphasises the untapped intellectual resources within the Directorate. S&C contains diverse and high levels of expertise which is not always fully utilised due to there being no formal way for staff to communicate what they know, or find someone else who might have certain knowledge. The current performance measures used by the Directorate are also insufficient to document everything that staff members accomplish for the Library.

The difficulties of establishing a matrix culture in the Directorate are discussed next. Due to the size and diversity of functions performed by S&C, the findings demonstrated that it is sometimes difficult for staff to communicate with others who are outside their immediate area. Methods for improving these channels of communication, including the use of forums, improving the understanding of the purpose of both digital scholarship and physical preservation, enabling better lateral communication and suggestions for communicating the value of S&C to those outside the Directorate.

The next section will discuss the innovative ways that the Directorate has been utilising the collections in order to provide maximum access and optimum services for users. It will also cover how the Directorate has had to prioritise in recent years and cut down on the services it is able to do.

Finally, there will be a discussion of the perceptions within S&C of what the Library’s main purpose is. This will cover the trend amongst participants in this research to define the British Library by what it is not, and suggest ways that staff could develop a more inclusive definition.

# 7.2. Tangible asset loss and its impact on morale

The previous chapter discussed the impact that recent tangible asset losses due to the financial crisis have had on the British Library. All participants mentioned this as something they had to contend with in order to continue to provide excellent service. While some saw it as an opportunity to develop creative new ways of doing their jobs for less, many felt that it had had a negative impact on staff morale. The findings of this research indicate that the recent cuts have had the biggest negative impact on morale in the Directorate. Through this we see evidence of tangibles having a direct impact on IAs. There is evidence from information management literature to support this: Mearns (1979) observes that having to limit services can be frustrating but that ‘no national library can be greater or perform better services than its financial support allows’ (Mearns, 1979:13) The object of this project was to make an evaluation purely of intellectual assets, but these findings clearly indicate the impossibility of completely separating IAs from the tangible assets that impact an organisation. The evaluation model produced by this study must therefore be used alongside traditional asset evaluation tools which take into account things like budget, staff numbers and other tangible resources. This will ensure that drops in IAs are considered fairly in the context of the limits the organisation has. For example, a drop in morale during an economic crisis is to an extent beyond the Library’s control, as the limited funds cannot be prevented. A drop in morale during a time of affluence, however, would indicate that the organisation needs to re-evaluate the way it functions, as the drop is more likely to be caused by preventable factors.

The following sections extrapolate on the findings, first detailing the ways in which poor morale is the biggest intellectual liability within S&C and the impact this has on intellectual assets, then offering suggestions on how the Directorate could counter the unpreventable reduction in funding and boost morale amongst its staff.

## 7.2.1. Morale as the predominant intellectual liability

Poor morale counts towards what Caddy (2000) refers to as an intellectual liability, an intangible which acts as a detriment to an organisation. Results from this investigation showed that 50% of S&C employees felt that morale in the Directorate was either low or very low (see fig. 7.1), indicating that this is an issue that has to be at least partly resolved before S&C can fully benefit from its intellectual assets. Much of this is related to the budgetary constraints, and there is evidence in LIS literature to support the theory that reduced finances are the primary cause of most problems with low morale. Smallwood and Burkey Wade write that ‘in times of change, a workplace is particularly susceptible widespread and negative rumours, breeding stress and anxiety in its workers’ (Smallwood and Burkey Wade, 2013:137), and that attempting to maintain services with drastically reduced funding is the most potentially damaging change an organisation can face.

The British Library’s model of engagement identifies three key engagement outcomes:

* Discretionary Effort: the extent to which people are motivated to deliver positive outcomes for the organisation and its customers.
* Loyalty and Inspiration.
* Band Pride: the extent to which people are advocates for the organisation

(Scholarship and Collections Staff Survey, 2011:9).

These are all factors which can be impacted negatively by low morale, as it can inhibit an employee’s enthusiasm for their job and their willingness to go out of their way for the organisation. Low morale is identified by Scholarship and Collections staff as a problem area, with over half of the participants in this study expressing that they felt morale was below average in the Directorate (see Figure 7.1). While this may seem disheartening, especially considering that most of the causes for the drop in morale are beyond the Directorate’s control, but the data also presented ways in which the Directorate could be countering this.

## 7.2.2. Countering the financial cuts

The findings have suggested ways that the negative impact that tangible asset losses have had on morale could be lessened. These can be identified by considering the issues concerning morale which are separate from the financial cuts, as detailed in 7.1. The most significant of these are feelings of lack of recognition and feelings of alienation from what the Library’s aims are. The issues of stress and career stagnation are more directly linked to reduced finances and staff cuts. It is therefore suggested that special care should be taken by Library management to appear visible to all staff members and offer explicit praise and encouragement on a regular basis. While it is not possible to provide long-term job security or financial rewards, regular positive feedback would provide employees with a source of motivation and boost overall morale. There is evidence to support this in ILS literature. Smallwood and Burkey Wade (2013) stress that ‘it is vital for administrators, librarians and staff to optimise their resources in order to work successfully within their budgetary constraints, while mitigating the inevitable stress that comes with fiscal uncertainty’ (Smallwood & Burkey Wade, 2013:134). They state that the best ways of going about this are to communicate with staff openly, maintaining transparency about how funds are allocated and giving regular encouragement so that employees do not become disheartened. Handy (1993) adds that motivation is the key to a happy and successful organisation, and that in the absence of tangible incentives managerial staff should provide employees with a sense of satisfaction with the work they are doing by giving them positive affirmations. Hinterhuber and Stadler agree that communication is integral to ensuring that an organisation copes with times of financial difficulties. They add that this communication is the responsibility of the managers, and they should ensure that employees feel informed and valued, adding that ‘firms with charismatic leaders; effective strategies and efficient execution outperform comparable firms more during difficult economic conditions than during strong economic years’ (Hinterhuber & Stadler, 2006:237). In section 7.5, Scholarship and Collections staff talked about the creative ways that members of the Directorate have been attempting to boost morale and continue to provide excellent service despite the cutbacks, and indicated that the enthusiasm that staff have for the collections held at the Library has helped to maintain their dedication and loyalty to the organisation. Section 7.5 also explains how staff members are determined to overcome the frustrations caused by tangible cutbacks.

One issue which occurred several times within the data was that of unsatisfactory channels of communication within the Directorate. Smallwood and Burkey Wade (2013) emphasise the importance of top-down communication during times of financial difficulties in order to mitigate stress, and there was uncertainty voiced by several British Library employees over why certain decisions had been made in terms of cuts and allocation of resources. Handy (1993: 280) stipulated that ‘a denial of participation to an individual, in decisions that he perceives as affecting him, can carry its costs. However, this does not imply that the opposite is always true.’ In other words, while a degree of transparency and consultation is necessary to building trust and commitment to the organisation, it would be counter-productive to involve all staff members in every decision about budgetary decisions. To this end, the managerial staff at the British Library would benefit from publicising with greater clarity why certain budgetary decisions were made and allowing staff to provide some feedback to this. However, caution needs to be taken to prevent stalemates in progress. At times of financial difficulty, it is inevitable that some resources will be lost. It should be made clear to all staff that the decisions to make certain cuts were not taken lightly. Smallwood and Burkey Wade (2013) state that administrators need to focus on optimising their resources during times of financial constraint and maintain a level of transparency with their employees as to how and why resources are allocated. They continue that creativity and flexibility should be encouraged at these times to mitigate the stress caused by the reduced tangible resources, and so allowing S&C staff to have an input into decisions that are made and providing clear communication as to why certain managerial decisions are made would be of great use for countering the financial cuts the Directorate has faced.

Handy (1993) cautions that it would be impossible to develop any strategy for coping with change which can provide all employees with everything that they want, and attempting this would be futile. A degree of morale loss in the Directorate is therefore inevitable. However, by finding a balance between keeping employees informed and allowing them creativity while at the same time displaying conviction in their decisions, managers can aid the Directorate in presenting a united front. Ultimately, the Directorate should keep Mearns’ (1979) statement that ‘no national library can be greater or perform better services than its financial support allows’ (Mearns, 1979: 13) in mind. There will be cuts and losses, many of which are beyond the control of the Library, but by nurturing an environment of creative freedom, empathy and freedom of communication, the Directorate can prevent these inevitable losses from impacting with too much negativity on its intellectual assets.

# 7.3. Untapped resources

This section will address the areas of expertise within the Directorate which have been largely overlooked, due to staff having knowledge outside of their job description, staff being unable or unwilling to promote their personal expertise, or the intangible nature of some of the knowledge staff possess. It will then discuss the current performance reviews which do not always allow for the diversity of the work done in S&C, and how staff can work to counter this. Finally, it will cover the misunderstanding amongst some staff members of certain key concepts, such as digital scholarship, and how this has prevented the Directorate from capitalising on certain areas of expertise.

## 7.3.1. Pockets of expertise

Section 8.1 concerned the complexity of expertise within Scholarship and Collections. The departments of Scholarship and Collections all have different functions and require different skills sets from their employees. The employees themselves are not only experts in their fields, but as discussed in Section 8.1.1., often have areas of interest outside of that specified by their job descriptions. Employee 5 discussed the problem of staff members whose knowledge is not fully exploited because it falls into someone else’s area. For example, one Collection Care employee talked about their advanced training in digitisation which they had not been able to make full use of as they had only been required to prepare items for digitisation rather than be involved in the process itself.

Sections 9.3 and 9.5 concerned how successfully Scholarship and Collections employees felt that their roles within the Library were communicated. Staff members felt that their job descriptions did not fully convey the scope of their expertise, and that there are no comprehensive methods for finding staff with particular areas of knowledge if they are not in their immediate departmental area. Many discussed finding useful contacts within the Library through word-or-mouth or chance encounters, and that it would be useful to establish a more reliable way of making useful contacts. Several employees suggested that improvements could be made to the Library’s Intranet system. At present staff profiles only contain their name, job title and extension number. It was suggested that the search engine could be updated so that staff members could search for people based on keywords and subject specialisms. It was also suggested that staff members could be involved in developing their own profiles on the Intranet in order to fully convey their expertise. This compliments Handy’s (1993) statement that mobility within an organisation in terms of communication and creating contacts is essential for development and creativity. It is therefore suggested that Scholarship and Collections employees are directly involved in creating their own profiles for the Intranet in order to make themselves more visible to others. One potential hindrance to this is the fact that the creation and management of the website and staff Intranet are out of the jurisdiction of the S&C Directorate. This, however, would be an excellent opportunity to form stronger links with BL employees outside of Scholarship and Collections in order to create the project. Another possible hindrance arises from the fact that a couple of interviewees expressed reluctance to promote themselves in this way. While this reticence is understandable, it is something that should be overcome. This is supported in LIS literature by Smallwood and Burkey Wade (2013: 139), who state that ‘while it may be tempting in times of budgetary stress to keep a low profile and cling to routine, this approach leads to stagnation at a point when it is essential to be proactive.’ Therefore, while employees may hesitate to promote themselves in this way because of the job insecurity at the British Library and because they may feel that they are responsible for promoting the collections and not themselves, it is important that they realise that they and their expertise are vital assets to the British Library, as important as the collections themselves. It is therefore suggested that S&C members should be actively involved in creating their own staff profiles. This would enable them to include as much information as they are comfortable with. They could add their own job descriptions as well as areas of interest and expertise, to enable other British Library employees to identify them as useful contacts. It would also offer an opportunity for staff members to mention any special areas of interest which fall outside of their job description which might be of benefit to the Library. This would limit the number of knowledge silos within the Directorate and enable the Directorate to transcend the organisational structure to form more of a matrix culture.

It would also be of great value to enable those staff members who wish it to have profiles on the BL website. There are many world-class experts employed by the Library, but it is very difficult at present for users of the website to identify these individuals. Academics within Higher Education institutions have personal profiles attached to their university’s website, and it would be logical for the academics at the Library to have the same. These profiles could include their areas of expertise as well as any papers they may have published. This will allow for the Library to promote its staff and their expertise to external audiences, as well as emphasise the wealth of its resources which go far beyond the collections. Smallwood and Burkey Wade (2013) argue that while staff might be tempted to keep a low profile during times of stress, this should be avoided. Proactivity is essential for overcoming morale loss and asset cutback. Therefore, staff members should not hesitate to promote the skills they possess to as wide an audience as possible. They are as great an asset to the British Library as the collections themselves, and are of great value in terms of attracting interested parties.

While the diversity of Scholarship and Collections and the extensive nature of the expertise of its staff is intimidating and might make silo cultures inevitable to some extent, the Library should see it as an overall advantage. In addition to the opportunities mentioned above for staff to form new connections and benefit from one another’s expertise, the differences between the various S&C departments should be celebrated. As Handy (1993) observed, while homogenous organisations tend to display less conflict and are less prone to knowledge silos, heterogeneous organisations benefit from greater creativity, productivity and progressiveness.

## 7.3.2. Current performance reviews not adequate

Chapter 8 also covered the feeling shared by many Scholarship and Collections staff members that the current performance measures at the British Library do not adequately cover all of the assets that are on offer. As of the 2014 Annual Report, no discussions of intellectual assets were made. While KPIs indicating the numbers of visitors to the reading rooms, the number of visitors to the website and the frequency with which certain collections are accessed, this does not indicate the full value of what S&C staff have been achieving. For example, while the reports convey merited pride in the acquisitions and exhibitions of the Library, this does not cover things like the work being done in the Collection Care department. While a small section of the report was provided for intangible assets (Annual Report, 2014: 77) the only information provided related to the money invested in intangibles and their estimated net value. As this project has proven, this is not adequate to convey the importance of intangibles and how vital they are to the British Library. This is supported by the research of Sveiby (1997), Edvinsson and Malone and Allee who write that traditional balance sheets are no longer adequate for presenting the value of organisations which are increasingly reliant on intangibles such as expertise and quality of relationships. The statistics presented in the report are important for conveying the progress made by the Library. However, the full prestige and value of the organisation can only be fully conveyed through an explicit portrayal of its intellectual assets. This is something that this project aims to rectify: by using the data collected through the use of the IA evaluation tool which has been designed for the British Library, it is expected that staff will be able to present what the Library has to offer in a way that gives full justice to the intellectual assets it possesses.

Bearing this in mind, it is also important to consider Handy’s (1993) caution that it is impossible to satisfy all members of an organisation, and that in an organisation such as the British Library, ‘the role, or job description, is often more important than the individual who fills it’ (Handy, 1993: 185). When implementing change one has to consider what would benefit the organisation as a whole, even if it does not benefit all of its employees. While a comprehensive presentation of the Library’s intellectual assets would indubitably be of benefit and would offer a more complete presentation of what the BL staff members are capable of, it would be unrealistic to expect all that the Library is capable of to be presented in this way.

## 7.3.3. Miscommunicating key concepts

Chapter 12 was concerned with the seemingly polarised responsibilities of the Scholarship and Collections Directorate when it comes to digital scholarship, and restoration and preservation. While many employees saw that there was a divide between the two departments of Digital Scholarship and Collection Care, the majority of participants stated that the roles are actually very similar and that the Directorate as a whole would benefit from greater collaboration and understanding between the departments.

Section 12.1.2 discussed how there were varying degrees of understanding concerning digital scholarship, and that some employees had been wary of engaging with it. This is something that the Digital Scholarship department has been working to rectify, in addition to training programmes specifically geared towards increasing digital knowledge. It was felt that some employees who were used to working with collections in traditional formats believed that their roles were becoming redundant and were sceptical about how useful digital knowledge would really be. Similarly, there was evidence that members of the Collection Care department felt that the work they were involved in was not fully understood by other members of the Directorate and that they were becoming displaced within Scholarship and Collections (see Section 12.2.3). It is therefore vital for both the formation of a matrix culture and the increase in morale amongst employees that effective communication takes place. A Digital Scholarship employee stated that digital items should be seen as just another part of the collection, but in a different format. They deal with items that are presented in digits rather than print. This employee believed that if the Directorate as a whole thought of the collections in terms of formats there would be less wariness about digital items. Members of the Collection Care department posited similar views in that they felt that their responsibilities were perceived in a reductive way, and that they believed other members of the Directorate thought that their work was becoming outdated in a world that was moving so quickly towards the digital. There was evidence of resentment on both sides due to feelings of being misunderstood, sometimes purposely, in the jobs they were doing. This is reminiscent of Handy’s (1993) writing on role ambiguity within organisations which can be caused by uncertainty of how others perceive one’s role, and how that role is being evaluated. Tellingly, participants from both departments and from other areas of the Directorate felt that many aspects of the work being done by Collection Care and Digital Scholarship as being very similar and there was far more scope for them to work together than is currently being taken advantage of. Both are working to ensure that the nation’s cultural heritage is preserved for future researchers. It is vitally important that digital scholarship is fully embraced, not just because researchers are becoming increasingly dependent on technology, but also to accommodate the new legal deposit regulations which came into force in April 2013. These enabled e-books and e-journals to become available to the Library though legal deposit, and made it possible for the Library to archive web pages (British Library Annual Report, 2014). A new wealth of material is now available to the BL in digital format and its staff members need to be confident when engaging with it. This is supported in LIS literature. For example, Bradshaw and Wagner (2000) and Gundersheimer emphasise the importance of digital scholarship in both preserving potentially fragile physical items and meeting the needs of the modern researcher. Taking this into consideration, it is also extremely important that the Library continues to maintain its physical collections and that the experts within Collection Care are able to research and develop the tools necessary to care for analogue material. Interest in physical collections is still very high, and one of the responsibilities of any national library is to preserve items of cultural significance for future generations. Brophy (2007) wrote that:

‘The question of preservation and conservation looms large on the national library agenda since a core responsibility is to ensure that the national bibliography is preserved for future generations. Clearly it will continue to be essential to conserve and preserve valuable objects from the past. The relationship of this national library function to those of other heritage institutions such as museums has been stressed in the strategic planning of IFLA’s National Libraries Section.’ (Brophy, 2007: 25)

Both departments would benefit from more cross-over between their roles. Section 12.3 detailed the opinions of several participants in this project who felt that there are opportunities for collaboration between Digital Scholarship and Collection Care which are not currently being taken advantage. One Collection Care employee stated that they had training in the digitisation process and that they would like to be involved in digitising the Library’s collections to a greater extent. The purpose of both departments are essentially the same: they are both working to ensure that the Library’s collections are accessible to as wide an audience as possible and that they will be available to future researchers. Greater communication and understanding between the two departments needs to take place. Once this has happened, and once the roles performed by both Digital Scholarship and Collection Care are made clear to the whole Directorate, a more holistic approach can be adopted by both departments where the work they do is perceived not as being in opposition but as achieving the British Library’s goals through different formats.

However, while the similarities between the two departments should be embraced and opportunities for collaboration taken, it does not follow that the differences should be denied. As Handy (1993) observed, ‘differences are essential to change; if there were no urge to compete and no need to disagree the organisation would be either in a state of apathy or of complacency’ (Handy, 1993: 313). He continues that an environment of fruitful competition can be cultivated as long as an environment is established where all employees feel that they are working towards a common goal, there is good mutual communication and understanding, and employees are encouraged to take risks without the fear of punishment if they fail.

# 7.4. Matrix working

The British Library has put emphasis in recent years on the importance of developing strong channels of communication throughout the organisation, both across Directorates and laterally. This section covers the various methods used by Scholarship and Collections to improve communication and how successful this has been. It will also discuss how the Directorate is working to understand the roles of their colleagues, and how this can be improved upon. It will then focus on the efficacy of job titles and descriptions for allowing understanding of staff roles, and suggest ways in which these can be made clearer.

The importance of promoting matrix cultures within organisations occurs frequently in LIS literature. Pors *et al* (2004) emphasise the importance of developing a strong organisational culture and enabling staff to communicate effectively. This was something that participants in this study identified as problematic, and something that the Library was making efforts to improving. Chapter 9 addressed this in detail, and concluded that while Scholarship and Collections staff members were enthusiastic about forging new channels of communication and working with employees across the Library, the sense of community was low and they were unsure of how to initiate this kind of communication. For example, Employee 12 felt that the Library was prone to silo cultures and that many staff members and teams tended to work in isolation. Employee 52 agreed that there are not enough opportunities to engage with other parts of the Directorate and that employees were unsure of how to initiate this kind of interaction. This is a problem that the British Library is aware of and is seeking to rectify. The 2011 staff report for Scholarship and Collections emphasised the importance of communication, both laterally and across the Directorate, and how it improves morale and acceptance of change. This is supported by Hinterhuber and Stadler’s (2006) argument that organisations remain healthy and weather problems effectively through encouraging a feeling of unity and mutual understanding amongst employees.

This sub-section will outline suggestions for how a matrix culture can be nurtured in S&C which have emerged from the findings. These include making effective use of forums to share ideas and create contacts, improvements to methods of lateral communication, and uniting to communicate the great value of Scholarship and Collections to staff members and stakeholders outside the Directorate.

## 7.4.1. The value of forums

While two participants from the Directorate discussed their fears that the Library was becoming reliant on developing forums for different groups rather than actually addressing problems that might arise in a more proactive way, online communities may be the easiest way for employees to share information and contribute suggestions, especially considering the scope of Scholarship and Collections and how little time staff have for more formal meetings.

It is suggested that the S&C Directorate creates a simple forum using existing software where staff members could appear anonymously, as posited by Employee 12 in Section 9.1.3. This anonymity would encourage freedom of speech at a time of job uncertainty. It would also ensure that contributors would be more likely to bring attention to problems they might be experiencing with the way that the Library functions, or suggestions for how things could be improved. It would also enable the creation of discussion threads were staff could share ideas and expertise. By doing this, they would be expanding their skill base without the need for formal meetings or training sessions, and would allow them to make contacts with staff members they may not otherwise engage with. Bornemann (2006) writes that one of the main challenges faced by large organisations ‘is to integrate highly autonomous teams with very specific knowledge bases and little common ground into new innovative groups which share specific models, but frequently lack a uniting mental model which could offer orientation for the decision-making process’ (Bornemann, 2006: 262). Having a Directorate-wide forum would aid this process by encouraging Scholarship and Collections staff members to share information and ideas and develop an understanding of how other departments work.

This type of forum would also help the Directorate to optimise its intellectual assets and promote matrix working. Management staff members could observe the forums for recurring problems which might suggest the need for change, and capitalise on ideas suggested by other staff which might be of great value to the Library. It would also encourage staff members to feel empowered and able to make a contribution to the success of the Directorate, something that was emphasised by Hinterhuber and Stadler (2006) as being a key feature to organisational health. Management staff and CSR&O staff responsible for training could also use these forums to identify gaps in expertise. It may also help to resolve the problem addressed in Section 8.2.4 of the findings chapter where staff had undergone training which had then not been fully utilised. As Handy (1993) states, ‘to set objectives and then forget about them is only going to produce frustration.’ Handy, 1993: 44). If management teams were able to use forum threads to monitor what training had been undertaken by whom it would help prevent skills acquired being wasted.

## 7.4.2. Lateral communication

The 2010 directorial review was intended in part to aid communication and matrix culture within the Directorate, but the findings have indicated that this has not been hugely successful. While there was strong indication that in general, relationships between line managers and the teams they are responsible for are very good, there was evidence of a disconnect between top management and staff at grade B and below. The main complaint cited by staff at grade B or C was that top management were not visible enough and did not understand what their jobs involved. They did not feel that they could approach managerial staff because they did not believe that they would be interested. In contrast, the top management staff who participated in this study indicated that they were keen to hear more from junior staff members and were open to better communication. They added that as they were receiving less information than they had in the past, there was less to cascade on. This fits with the findings of the 2011 staff survey which stated that there were hierarchical divisions in understanding within the Directorate and that communication could be improved upon. While the findings indicate that communication is good between line managers and the staff they are responsible for, and that individual departments have a positive dynamic, there is evidence to suggest that some employees feel that their departments exist in a state of isolation where they are disconnected from top management. The importance of line managers was emphasised in the 2011 staff report, which stated that ‘an employee’s perception of an organisation are shaped – to a very great extent – by their relationship with their line manager and how effectively their manager is communicating with them… a balance between “owning” some of the rougher corporate messages as well as being supportive during the difficult times’ (British Library, 2011: 15). However, Figure 9.1 demonstrates that many Scholarship and Collections staff members feel a disconnect with senior management.

It is suggested therefore that greater efforts are made on both sides to increase the quality of communication within the Directorate. The 2013/14 Annual Report stated that efforts to communicate with all employees are made through the use of newsletters, team briefings and the staff intranet. However, an increase in face-to-face communication would be of great value. Employee 30 suggested that senior staff make more time for walkabouts, and that a mentoring scheme could be established. An increase in the number of formal meetings was not considered necessary, as all staff members are conscious of the time this would take up. However, an increase in the visibility of senior management staff was deemed necessary to encourage the belief that they are approachable and open to receiving communication. This would help with the organisational difficulty mentioned by Handy (1993), that employees are less inclined to accept direction from managers who are distant and impersonal, and are more likely to adapt to change and new projects if they feel that there is a sense of genuine engagement between them and the management team, and that their input is valued. Employee 69 observed that cascading information implicitly suggests that communication can only travel down the hierarchy, whereas an environment should be cultivated where the more junior staff members feel that they can speak freely to senior staff about any concerns and ideas they might have, and senior staff feel that they are being kept informed. This will reduce the danger of negative rumours within the Directorate which Smallwood and Burkey Wade (2013) state that organisations are particularly susceptible to in times of change. It will also help managerial staff to understand how the separate departments work and can then tailor their communications to suit them and their needs, which the 2011 staff survey indicated was particularly important for maintaining morale and enthusiasm during times of change.

## 7.4.3. Communicating the value of S&C

One issue that staff within the Directorate felt very strongly about was how to communicate the value of Scholarship and Collections and the role it plays in the Library to both other BL staff and to external stakeholders. Chapter 11 indicates the passion and dedication that S&C staff members have for the Library and its collections. Employees feel that the Directorate is responsible for caring for the collections, interpreting them for scholars, and making them available for anyone who wishes to access them. Employee 16 called Scholarship and Collections ‘the heart of the British Library’, the cornerstone upon which the Library rests. However, many employees also stated that they feel Scholarship and Collections is not fully understood by the rest of the Library or by many external stakeholders, and is seen as more of an extension rather than an integral part of the Library. It should be taken into consideration, however, that this concern may stem from low morale and is not an accurate representation of how the Directorate is seen from the outside. A more balanced perspective could only be achieved through a comprehensive study of external stakeholders which this project did not allow for. Nevertheless, it is especially important that Scholarship and Collections accurately portrays its importance to the Library given the BL’s focus on providing access and encouraging new users. Waters (2009) cautioned that there is a danger of special collections becoming elitist and only accessible to the academic community. It is therefore more important than ever before for S&C to emphasise its role in interpreting the collections and making them accessible. It is these intellectual assets, the expertise and enthusiasm of the employees, which need promotion, arguably more so than the collections themselves. This is in accordance with the arguments made by Traitser (2003), who championed the importance of librarians being proactive about promoting not only the collections in their care but the services they can offer. It is suggested that the Directorate selects spokespeople to promote and educate users, stakeholders and other British Library employees about the roles performed by Scholarship and Collections. The Library already has training programmes in place for developing the communication skills of employees which will hopefully result in an increase of ambassadors for the Directorate, individuals who feel confident to promote what S&C has to offer. In the meantime, however, those who already feel confident doing this and have a natural ability to engage and promote should be utilised for the advantage of the Directorate. Other employees would be able to communicate with them in order to publicise any skills or projects they are responsible for, and the ambassadors could then publicise this more widely.

# 7.5. Utilising collections and services

This section covers the innovative ways in which S&C staff members have been ensuring that the collections they are responsible for are made accessible and interpretable to Library users, as well as the problems they have had to face to do so. It will discuss the attempts to provide access as widely as possible to library material, and how the Directorate prioritises both user groups and the collections.

## 7.5.1. Providing access

Providing access to the collections is integral to the British Library’s strategy. The 2013/14 Annual Report emphasises the steps the Library has been taking in recent years to extend access, both physically and remotely, to all users who wish to engage with them. These included updated reading rooms, increased digitisation of the collections and improvements to the Library’s website (British Library, 2014: 12). The importance of this kind of access is emphasised in LIS literature, with practitioners such as Huttner (1999) and Byrd (2001) arguing that increased access will reduce the marginalisation of library collections and increase traffic. However, this push for access inevitably raises problems for the Directorate, not least ensuring the preservation of Library material in the eventuality of increased use and the concerns over how to create high quality and durable digital surrogates quickly enough to satisfy the demands of the contemporary scholar. Section 10.1 of the findings chapter discussed the work being done within the Directorate to meet these demands. Employee 46 discussed how the Library was struggling to keep up with the surge in demand for access, particularly digital access, and that the reduction in funds was a significant hindrance to this. The cost of large-scale digitisation is significant, and the British Library does not have public funding to support this, having to rely instead on sponsorship from other organisations. There is little that the Directorate can do to rectify this other than continue to prioritise how and where digitisation should take place.

The Library also has to consider the possibility that increased remote access will increase demands to see the physical collections. While no statistical evidence exists in the Library as to whether increased access to digital facsimiles has increased Library traffic to the physical collections, some staff members felt that there was a direct correlation, and this would accord with Cloonan and Berger’s (2003) findings that digitisation of collections increases interest in the originals. Therefore, it is increasingly important for the Digital Scholarship department to work closely with the Collection Care department. Traitser (2000) writes of the conflict between the increase in user demands for access and the necessity of preserving material for future generations, and that this cannot be easily resolved. Scholarship and Collections will be able to face this challenge most effectively if all departments work together with mutual appreciation of each other’s importance and the understanding that they are all working towards a common goal.

## 7.5.2. Prioritising

Chapter 11 dealt with how the Directorate is prioritising the tasks they need to perform under a restricted budget and limited staff numbers. Bornemann (2006) discussed the importance of developing a good prioritisation strategy in terms of capitalising on intellectual assets:

‘One of the major problems of the [intellectual capital] management perspective relates to the alignment of resources and their strategic use: there is a lot of knowledge and [intellectual capital] available but it is not yet effectively allocated to the most urgent tasks, where its marginal contribution is the highest.’ (Bornemann, 2006: 255)

The findings at the British Library indicated that staff members were prioritising in two ways: deciding which parts of the collections to make widely accessible according to user demand, and by considering what would be of the greatest use to future researchers when considering projects. Both of these factors were being considered by the Digital Scholarship team when undertaking the digitisation of collections. As Bradshaw and Wagner (2000) observe, it is inadvisable to rush digitisation before determining that the digital facsimile is of a high quality and is also sustainable. Scholarship and Collections staff were faced with the dilemma of wanting to meet the demand for access but also wanting to be cost-effective and create digital items that were high quality and durable. Cataloguing, while not a direct responsibility of Scholarship and Collections, was another area of concern amongst participants in terms of providing access to library material. Forde (2005) discusses the importance of creating a comprehensive and user-friendly catalogue in both providing access and preserving library collections, and Scholarship and Collections curators would benefit from more input into the creation of the catalogue. Access is the key priority at the British Library, and all participants in this research discussed its importance in the work they do, whether it be selecting items for digitisation, creating interactive web pages for users to view collection items, or restoring physical collections so that they can be handled in the reading rooms. This push for access is supported by Albanese (2005) who discusses the challenge of maintaining usable collections and Pritchard (2009) who cautions that libraries housing special collections will become redundant if users cannot access the material.

Several curators discussed their conflicting interests when prioritising which areas of the collection they are responsible for should be digitised, or where new acquisitions should be made. For example, Employee 47 stated that they have collection items which would be of great value to their user group but might not have wider appeal. This type of conflict is also mentioned by Brophy (2007) who discusses the dilemma of whether special collections libraries should acquire new material based on what will generate the most usage or what will be unique and exclusive. There are no clear answers for the Library when it comes to the prioritisation of the work it performs. However, this research found that employees are committed to the collections and the Library’s objectives to care for and promote the nation’s cultural heritage. Strategies are in place for meeting demands, and if a working environment which nurtures collaboration and communication across the Directorate can be formed, it is hoped that these strategies will develop further.

# 7.6. Defining the British Library

Chapter 13 covered the inconsistency in opinion amongst many participants in this study over what the role of Scholarship and Collections, and the British Library as a whole, is. This section will expand on this, and suggest ways in which the Library could develop a more cohesive and holistic sense of what the organisation is purposed for.

## 7.6.1. Defined by what it is not

Section 13.4 detailed how the participants in this project tended to discuss the purpose and identity of the British Library by stating what they felt it was not. Staff members stated that the Library was not a museum, not a university, not a research institute, and one participant even stated that it was not a library. This is true in the traditional sense of the word: a library would suggest a place where items could be borrowed and taken away, which the BL does not offer.

In fact, the British Library is none of these things. It is also all of them. It takes elements from all of the aforementioned organisations to provide something completely unique. All national libraries are unique, both within the nation they belong to and amongst one another, as several BL employees observed when asked if there was anything that the BL could learn from other national libraries. The British Library cannot be likened to any other institution. It has elements of a museum, responsible for safeguarding the nation’s cultural heritage. It should also be taken into consideration that the Library’s exhibitions of its treasures bring in large numbers of people and greatly contribute to the BL’s revenue. It also has elements of a university, promoting research and employing world-class scholars. This denying of certain roles performed by the British Library stems from the desire to promote access and reduce the general perception of elitism that the Library is keen to escape. Denying the museum role promotes the importance of people being able to come in and use the collections for their own research, which a typical museum would not offer. Likening the Library to a university would have similar consequences in that it would promote the idea that the BL is only for academics, whereas great efforts have been made in recent years to communicate that the Library provides services for all those who wish to access them. Nevertheless, denying aspects of the British Library’s role can only lead to further alienation. It could also contribute to misunderstandings within the Directorate itself if some employees see others as fulfilling a function which they do not believe is important to the Library’s role.

## 7.6.2. Synergising the concept of the BL

It is suggested that, rather than having a cultural mind-set of identifying itself by process of elimination which leads to reductive perspectives on what the BL can offer, the Library should instead take a more holistic approach to how it views itself. Employee 62 observed that denying aspects of what the British Library has to offer prevents full capitalisation of intellectual assets, and that there is no reason that they cannot cater to both users who just want to come in and see the exhibitions and those who want to use it for research purposes. This all-encompassing attitude compliments Handy’s (1993) statement that ‘more trust and less control, more diversity and less uniformity, more differentiation and less systemisation might be the ways that organisations should move’ (Handy, 1993: 289). British Library employees should embrace all aspects of what they can offer and promote the Library accordingly. The cultural perception needs to be changed from within if the full scope of the BL’s intellectual assets can be realised. The 2011 staff survey reported the most positive feedback in relation to employees’ feelings of pride in the Library. The response from staff members indicated that they were proud to be working for the Library and were satisfied with its reputation as a centre for learning and cultural heritage. Embracing the holistic nature of the Library can only improve this sense of pride, increase morale, and encourage employees to promote all aspects of the assets it has to offer.

# 7.7. Overview of suggestions

It is useful at this point to summarise the suggestions made for the enhancement of intellectual asset utilisation within the Directorate.

* **Being mindful not to separate intangible assets from the socioeconomic background the Library is working in.** This study found that while assessments which focus specifically on intellectual assets are vitally important for organisational success, *it is impossible to completely separate IAs from tangible assets.* What Scholarship and Collections employees are able to do relies heavily on the practical means by which they can achieve their objectives. If there is insufficient funding or a shortage of staff, it is inevitable that some projects will have to be postponed or even abandoned completely. This is not something that BL staff members have control over, and should therefore not be seen as evidence of a deficit in intellectual assets. By comparing IA data with budgetary reports, a clearer impression can be gained of what IA areas might be impacted by insufficient funds, if there is anything that can be done to remedy this or if it is something that must be considered an unfortunate necessity until the financial climate improves.
* **Using the British Library intranet for staff profiles.** By enabling staff to create their own profiles on the Intranet, they can enable other BL employees to find them. This is especially important now that many roles have changed within the Library and the focus of certain jobs has shifted. These profiles would include a full job description, and staff could also add a list of their areas of expertise or areas of special interest which might not be included in their job description. This would help to counter the phenomenon of unidentified pockets of expertise within the Directorate, and mean that relevant individuals could be identified when necessary without having to rely solely on word of mouth communication. It would also help to promote a matrix culture within the Directorate as staff would be better able to interact with other employees outside of their own area of S&C.
* **Using the British Library website to promote staff.** Many Scholarship and Collections employees have strong academic backgrounds, having several publications to their names and being considered international experts in their chosen areas. However, unlike academic staff, they do not have profiles on the British Library website. This would be a valuable asset for external engagement and promoting staff expertise.
* **Employing forums to enable better communication.** While some employees expressed weariness and frustration with the number of forums available to them, it would be useful to have a forum for the whole Directorate where employees could contribute anonymously in order to make suggestions and comments without feeling that it would implement them personally. The forum should also facilitate the creation of conversation threads for staff seeking specific information or the promotion of a particular project.
* **Embracing the various roles of the Library to form a more inclusive, matrix organisation.** While most staff were clear on what their role was and the role of their department, there were conflicting opinions when they were asked to define the role of the Library, many being quite adamant about what the BL was *not.* The Library would benefit from a more inclusive identity which fully embraces all of its roles, as a preserver of cultural heritage, an academic research centre, an open access resource, and any other function it fulfils. The British Library is unique and cannot be compared to any other institution, and should therefore embrace its multifaceted nature.

# 8. Discussion: Developing an evaluation tool

This chapter will turn to the formulation of an intellectual asset evaluation tool for Scholarship and Collections, detailing the rationale behind its development. This includes the impossibility of separating tangible and intangible assets, the necessity of focusing on qualitative data when evaluating intellectual assets, and the usefulness of the Balanced Scorecard as a basis for the evaluation tool. References will be made to key literature throughout. The final model will then be presented along with a detailed description of how it can be employed by the Library in order to identify its IAs and determine areas for development.

This section introduces the model that has been developed to evaluate the intellectual assets in the Scholarship and Collections Directorate at the British Library. The rationale behind the evolution of this tool will be discussed, along with what has been learned from existing IA evaluation tools. The difficulties faced in the model’s development will be detailed, as well as how the researcher has attempted to overcome these obstructions. The final model will then be presented and discussed.

## 8.1. Rationale

This initial section concentrates largely on identifying how the evaluation tool was developed, and justifying the reasons behind the decisions that were made. For this, the researcher will refer back to the gaps in current research identified in the Literature Review chapter, as well as the cultural background of the British Library which emerged through the data analysis process. The researcher will also focus on the intellectual asset evaluation needs of the Scholarship and Collections Directorate, and how these needs should be addressed in the tool which has been developed.

### 8.1.1. Impossibility of separating tangible and intangible assets

This chapter has already detailed the reasons why it is not possible to completely keep intellectual assets separate from tangible assets. As such, it was decided that the model being developed could not work alone as an evaluation tool, but must be considered alongside traditional tangible asset assessments. This will enable the British Library to take into account the financial context in which the intellectual assets exist. It is only to be expected that there will be a decline in the IAs available to the Library during times of fiscal difficulties, and by considering this the Library can differentiate between inevitable asset loss and that which is avoidable. Kostagiolas and Asonitis (2009) also argue that having an evaluation tool for intellectual assets which is completely separate from their tangible context is of limited use because they cannot exist outside of their context. Therefore, the evaluation tool developed for this project has been designed to provide assessments in compliment to the existing asset measurement tools at the Library. Oppenheim *et al* (2004) similarly found that they could not consider IAs apart from the tangible environment they exist in, stating that ‘Measuring information independently was not a viable option’ (Oppenheim *et al,* 2004: 5). The British Library already uses Key Performance Indicators to evaluate tangible assets and present them in the annual reports. The intellectual asset evaluation tool provided by this project also employs KPIs to make it easier for the evaluations to take place alongside each other and present the IA data in a way in which employees are familiar with.

### 8.1.2. The necessity of qualitative evaluation

Existing intellectual asset evaluators are only partly successful in their aims, and the main reason for this is that they are over-reliant on quantitative data. Asset evaluation traditionally focuses on measures for tangible assets which can be quantified, such as annual profit or the number of customers attached to an organisation. Intellectual assets cannot be quantified in this way, and it is especially difficult to evaluate non-profit organisations in the public sector, such as the British Library, using these tools. Bornemann (2006) stated that no existing intellectual asset assessment tools are completely successful, and this project indicates that this is because previous studies have relied too much on quantitative methods of evaluation. Intellectual assets rely heavily on human knowledge, the quality of communication, the strength of interpersonal relationships, none of which can have a quantitative measurement attributed to them. This is supported by the conclusions of Chaharbaghi and Cripps (2006), Bontis (1998), Mourtisen *et al* (2001) and Kannan and Aulbur (2004) who all state that more qualitative methods are required in order to properly evaluate intellectual assets. They feel that using quantitative variables to assess the quality of intellectual assets does not take the tacitness of IAs into account and must inevitably provide incomplete results.

This project has used largely qualitative methods to collect data, relying primarily on interviews with participants, and only using the quantitative data gathered in the online survey to support the existing qualitative data. Efforts were made to ensure that even this quantitative data was gathered in a way that participants were able to convey their impressions and beliefs rather than simply providing statistics, through the use of Likert scales to assess participants’ impressions of the quality of intellectual assets within Scholarship and Collections and the British Library at large. This was largely inspired by Corrall and Sriborisutsakul’s suggestion that using mixed methodology would provide the best results when evaluating IAs in libraries. It was determined at an early stage that the evaluation tool would employ similar techniques in order to convey the intellectual assets of the Directorate. KPIs, selected by the Scholarship and Collections departments, will give staff members the opportunity to convey their perceptions of the quality of IAs in the Directorate, relying purely on their own experiences. Likert scales could be used again to enable employees to rate their opinions of each KPI in a qualitative way. Bornemann (2006) stated that ‘evaluation of IC relative to the strategic priorities could provide an answer that is sufficiently simple while still focusing on the overall big picture’ (Bornemann, 2006: 261). The use of KPIs would allow for this, providing all employees the opportunity to express their opinions on specific intellectual assets belonging to the Directorate which can then provide a mean result for that KPI and feed back into the overall strategy of the British Library. This method is made more effective still through the modification of Kaplan and Norton’s (1992) Balanced Scorecard.

### 8.1.3. Using the Balanced Scorecard as a starting point

Corrall and Sriborisutsakul (2010) suggested using a revised version of Kaplan and Norton’s (1992) Balanced Scorecard to measure IAs in libraries. The Balanced Scorecard is presented again in Figure 15.1. The four perspectives (financial perspective, internal business perspective, learning and growth perspective, and customer perspective) are given a maximum of eight KPIs determined by the organisation which serve to provide a value on the perceived quality of performance. These values then feed back into the vision and strategy of the organisation to determine how effectively requirements are being met and where the organisation is falling short. The scorecard allows for examination into specific KPIs within an organisation while at the same time keeping these KPIs in the perspective of the larger organisational aims and objectives. It also allows the organisation to see how each perspective is related to the others, and where and how the KPIs impact upon each other.



###### Figure 8.1. Adapted from The Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan and Norton, 1992)

The literature review chapter concluded that the Balanced Scorecard was the most popular methods used by practitioners for evaluating intellectual assets, due to how easy it is to use and follow. It was therefore determined that the scorecard would be adapted for the intellectual asset evaluation tool in this project.

The greatest advantage of the scorecard is that it allows an organisation to give equal attention to the various components that benefit it. Brophy (2008) stated that intellectual asset management in libraries should focus on the organisation’s aims, environment and services, and should focus the IAs on these. Here the BSC would be valuable in that all of the KPIs could be adapted for the British Library’s strategic objectives. Another reason for using the scorecard is that the four areas of intellectual assets in libraries as defined by Corrall and Sriborisutsakul (2010) – human, structural, relational, and customer and services – can be easily superimposed onto the four perspectives outlined by the Balanced Scorecard. This would allow each aspect of IAs to be seen in conjunction with one another and be given equal importance and attention. Practitioners such as White (2006) and Kostagiolas and Asonitis (2009) debated which element of intellectual assets was the most important to libraries, but by using the scorecard there would be no need for prioritisation. All IAs would be treated equally. The use of the scorecard would also help to promote proactivity concerning IAs. Bornemann wrote that one of the main benefits of the BSC ‘is to enforce a strategy top-down by communicating very clear targets which are imperative and frequently linked to incentives’ (Bornemann, 2006: 256). The scorecard will focus concentration on intellectual assets and offer targets by displaying areas where improvements are needed.

The final rationale for using the Balanced Scorecard as a basis for the evaluation tool is that the staff members at the British Library are familiar with it. Staff reports have used the BSC to provide feedback, and most employees are aware of how it functions. It was decided that presenting the Library with a tool which they could easily recognise would be more useful than designing an entirely original structure for the model which they would have to take time to familiarise themselves with.

## 8.2. The Intellectual Asset Evaluation Tool for the British Library

The Scholarship and Collections Directorate is divided into five departments, as can be seen in Figure 15.2 below.



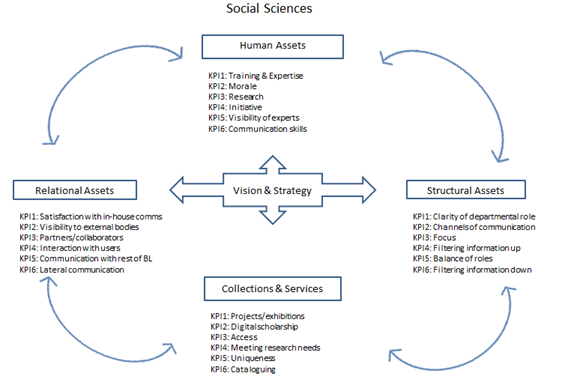
###### Figure 8.2: Basic structure of Scholarship and Collections

The findings chapter concluded that the Directorate is very diverse; each department within Scholarship and Collections plays an important role in the running of the Library, but while providing the best possible service to BL users is a ubiquitous goal, the departments each have their own priorities and ways of working which do not necessarily correspond with the others. The main objective of this research was to create an evaluation tool for evaluating IAs in the Directorate, but given this diversity it would be reductive to create a model for the whole Directorate without considering the separate departments first, as this would necessarily entail neglecting important IAs which might be essential for one department but not the others.

It was therefore determined that a modified Balanced Scorecard would be created for each of the five S&C departments. These would feature key performance indicators which were deemed to be the most important for that department, according to the data gathered. These KPIs can of course be changed by staff to adapt the model to their preferred priorities. The four areas of the scorecard would correspond to the four areas of IAs in libraries which were identified in the literature review: human assets, relational assets, structural assets and collections and services assets, linked to one another by the Library’s vision and strategy priorities.

These five models can then feed into a larger model for the whole of the Directorate. Again, the four areas of the scorecard will signify the four areas of IAs, but the KPIs listed below will indicate the overall scores for each department regarding that area of intellectual assets. A detailed description of the evaluation tool is provided below.

Figure 15.3 below shows the scorecard developed for the Social Sciences department.



###### Figure 8.3: IA evaluation tool for Social Sciences

There were 8 participants in this research who positively identified themselves as being employed in the Social Sciences department, and from the data they provided, a set of six key performance indicators were produced. Kaplan and Norton (1992) suggested that when using the Balanced Scorecard, the KPIs for each category should be kept to a manageable number, ideally between four and six. This would prevent the scorecard from becoming overly complex and would also force the organisation using it to prioritise which assets are the most important to their success. The six KPIs identified as the most important for the department’s human assets are:

1. **Training and Expertise**. This relates not only to subject knowledge but also to how well employees feel that they are able to meet the Library’s expectations of their role. It covers their satisfaction with the training programmes available to them and how confident they feel in their job.
2. **Morale**. This covers how happy employees feel in their working environment, how satisfied they are with their work and their confidence in the Directorate and the Library as a whole.
3. **Research**. This relates to the satisfaction employees feel in regards to their ability to publish as well as their ability to attend conferences.
4. **Initiative**. This covers how satisfied employees are with their department’s capacity for inventiveness and creativity when meeting goals. It also relates to how free they feel to take risks and suggest new methods of going about their jobs.
5. **Visibility of Experts**. This relates to how satisfied employees feel with their visibility, both within and without the Library. It includes how findable they feel they are by those wishing to utilise their expertise, and to what extent they feel others are aware of all they have to offer.
6. **Communication Skills**. This relates to how confident the employees feel when communicating their expertise to others. It also relates to how happy they are with their ability to ‘sell themselves’ and the Library as valuable resources.

The six KPIs identified as the department’s most important intellectual assets relating to structural assets are:

1. **Clarity of departmental role**. This refers to how satisfied the employees feel with Social Science’s role in the Library, and how clear this role is to others.
2. **Channels of communication**. This relates to how successful employees feel the current structure is for allowing communication within the department.
3. **Focus**. This is in regards to how the infrastructure of the department allows employees to perform their roles in a way that meets the directorial goals.
4. **Filtering information upwards**. This is in relation to how satisfied employees are with how the current structure enables lateral communication, particularly when feeding relevant information up to top management, and whether they think any concerns they have are being taken into account.
5. **Balance of roles**. This refers to the fact that S&C employees’ roles are multifaceted, and to what extent they feel that they are able to balance all of the demands of their jobs.
6. **Filtering information downwards**. Again, this relates to lateral communication, and how easy is within the current structure to feed important information down from top management to employees further down in the hierarchy.

The six KPIs identified as being most important for the department’s collections and services assets are:

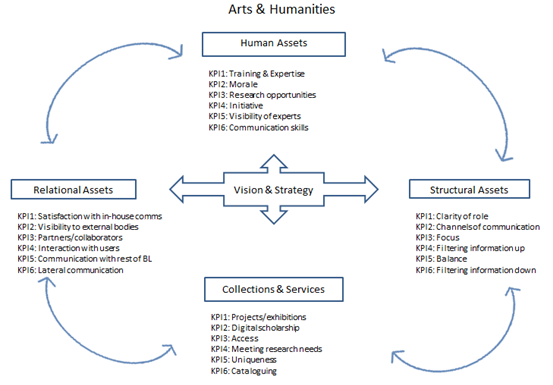
1. **Projects/Exhibitions**. This is in relation to the satisfaction employees feel with their involvement in projects and exhibitions which are relevant to them.
2. **Digital scholarship**. This regards employees’ satisfaction with their ability to participate in digital scholarship, their understanding of the concept, and how successful they feel that their area of the Directorate is at working with digital material.
3. **Access**. This relates to how effectively the department feel they are at providing access to the collections and facilities they are responsible for.
4. **Meeting research needs**. This is in regards to the satisfaction the employees feel with their research output and the value it adds to their department.
5. **Uniqueness**. This refers to how unique employees feel the services offered by Social Sciences are, and the value this adds to the Library as a centre for culture and learning.
6. **Cataloguing**. This relates to the satisfaction of employees when it comes to the extent of their collections which are on the catalogue and Library database. It also relates to how satisfied they are with the ease of finding catalogued items when they are needed.

The six KPIs identified as being most important to the department concerning to relational assets are:

1. **Satisfaction with in-house communications**. This relates to how happy employees are with the channels of communication between themselves and other Social Sciences staff.
2. **Visibility to external bodies**. This refers to how satisfied employees are with external bodies’ understanding of the role they play, and how easy it is for those external bodies to find and contact them.
3. **Partners/Collaborators**. This relates to the satisfaction of employees with the collaborations they have with external stakeholders. This can refer to research collaborations or collaborations on projects.
4. **Interaction with users**. This relates to how satisfied employees are with their communication with British Library users.
5. **Communication with the rest of the British Library**. This refers to the satisfaction of Social Sciences employees with their communication with the BL outside of Scholarship and Collections, including how well they think the rest of the Library understands what Social Sciences does as a department.
6. **Lateral communication**. This relates to how satisfied employees are with lateral communication within the Directorate. This is different from the KPIs concerning lateral communication in the structural assets section because it focuses on satisfaction with the quality of the communication taking place rather than satisfaction of how the structure of the Directorate enables communication.

It is suggested that the Directorate develops surveys for each department regarding each of these KPIs which should be distributed to all staff members in that department. In order to create quantitative results from qualitative data, a Likert Scale should be used for the questions. For example, employees could be asked to rate their satisfaction with their ability to conduct research on a scale of one to five. Once all the results are in the mean, or average, result can be calculated from the total responses. The resulting figure would then be attributed to that particular KPI. For example, if the results of a Likert scale asking for staff satisfaction with staff development programmes in the Directorate indicated that three were very dissatisfied, five were dissatisfied, fourteen were neutral, sixteen were satisfied and four were very satisfied, the resulting mean score would be 3.3. This is achieved by adding up all the numbers then dividing them by the number of responses. The KPI for this asset would therefore be given a value of 3.3 out of a possible total of 5. Opportunity should also be made available for staff to comment on the questions if they wish to in order to make their opinions clear and avoid unnecessary misunderstandings.

Figure 15.4 below details the same model which has been adapted for the Arts and Humanities department, based on the data provided by the 25 participants in this research who identified themselves as being employed in that department. Explanations of the KPIs will be provided again, except when those KPIs are the same as for the Social Sciences department and have already been explained.



###### Figure 8.4: IA evaluation tool for Arts and Humanities

The KPIs identified as being the most relevant to the Arts and Humanities department concerning human assets are:

1. **Training and Expertise**
2. **Morale**
3. **Research opportunities**
4. **Initiative**
5. **Visibility of experts**
6. **Communication skills**

The KPIs identified as being most relevant to structural assets within Arts and Humanities are:

1. **Clarity of roles**
2. **Channels of communication**
3. **Focus**
4. **Ability to filter information up**
5. **Balance of role**
6. **Ability to filter information down**

The KPIs identified as being the most important for Arts and Humanities in regards to collections and services assets are:

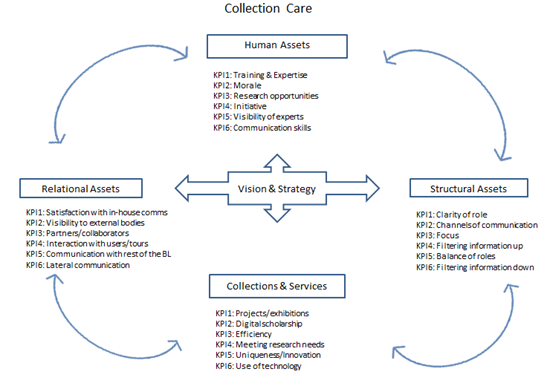
1. **Projects/Exhibitions**
2. **Digital scholarship**
3. **Access**
4. **Meeting research needs**
5. **Uniqueness**
6. **Cataloguing**

The KPIs identified as being the most important for Arts and Humanities in regards to relational assets are:

1. **Satisfaction with in-house communications**
2. **Visibility to external bodies**
3. **Partners/Collaborators**
4. **Interaction with users**
5. **Communication with the rest of the BL**
6. **Lateral communication**

The KPIs are the same for both Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities. They are based on the data collected from these two departments. It is possible that these similarities in identified priorities are because the two departments are the most similar to one another of all areas in S&C. Both departments work directly with specific collections and both represent particular research groups.

The identified priorities for the other departments differ slightly. Figure 15.5 portrays the model adapted for the Collection Care department, based on the data gathered from the 10 participants in this research who identified themselves as employees of this department.



###### Figure 8.5: IA evaluation tool for Collection Care

Lists of the most significant intellectual assets were generated based on the frequency that they were mentioned by staff participants from the Collection Care Directorate. The most important KPIs for Collection Care regarding human assets are:

1. **Training**
2. **Morale**
3. **Research opportunities**
4. **Initiative**
5. **Visibility of experts**
6. **Communication skills**

The most important KPIs for Collection Care regarding structural assets are:

1. **Clarity of roles**
2. **Channels of communication**
3. **Focus**
4. **Ability to pass information up**
5. **Balancing roles**
6. **Ability to pass information down**

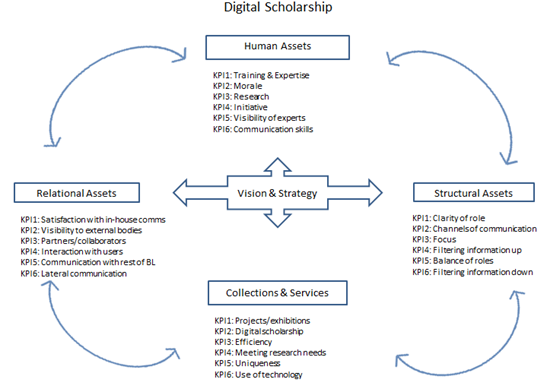
The most important KPIs for Collection Care regarding collections and services assets are:

1. **Projects/Exhibitions**
2. **Digital scholarship**
3. **Efficiency**. This relates to the unique role of Collection Care in the conservation and preservation of physical library material. Employees need to perform these tasks to a high quality but also as quickly as possible so that the item can become accessible to users again. This KPI measures employees’ satisfaction with their ability to do this.
4. **Meeting research needs**
5. **Uniqueness/Innovation**.
6. **Use of technology**. Many of the Collection Care employees discussed their participation in the digitisation of library items and their technological knowledge relating to preservation ad access. This KPI relates to how satisfied they are with their ability to utilise this technological expertise in their work.

The KPIs identified as being the most important to Collection Care regarding relational assets are:

1. **Satisfaction with in-house communications**
2. **Visibility to external bodies**
3. **Partners/Collaborators**
4. **Interaction with users**
5. **Communication with the rest of the BL**
6. **Lateral communication**

Figure 15.6 portrays the model adapted for the Digital Scholarship department, based on the data gathered from the nine participants in this study who identified themselves as employees of this department.



###### Figure 8.6: IA evaluation tool for Digital Scholarship

The six KPIs identified as being most important for Digital Scholarship in relation to human assets are:

1. **Training**
2. **Morale**
3. **Research opportunities**
4. **Initiative**
5. **Visibility of experts**
6. **Communication skills**

The KPIs identified as being most important for Digital Scholarship in relation to structural assets are:

1. **Clarity of roles**
2. **Channels of communication**
3. **Focus**
4. **Ability to pass information up**
5. **Balancing roles**
6. **Ability to pass information down**

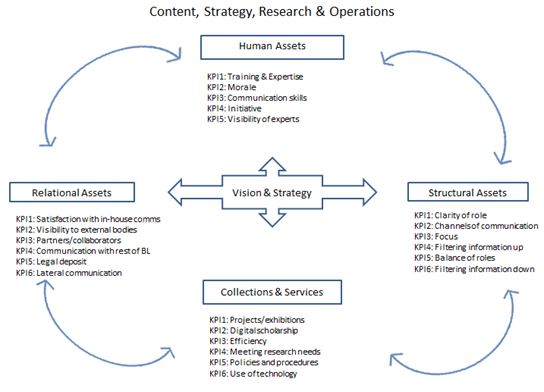
The KPIs identified as being the most important for Digital Scholarship in regards to collections and services assets are:

1. **Projects/Exhibitions**
2. **Digital Scholarship**. Here, the KPI takes on a slightly different meaning as it is assumed that employees of this department understand and interact with digital scholarship. Instead, this refers to how satisfied they are with their ability to perform their jobs within the Directorate, including how receptive other staff are and whether they have the resources to make the digital scholarship initiative work as they would wish.
3. **Efficiency**. Like with Collection Care, this refers to how easy it is the staff in Digital Scholarship to perform their tasks (digitisation, up-skilling etc.) quickly and with minimum difficulties.
4. **Meeting research needs**
5. **Uniqueness**
6. **Use of technology.** This refers specifically to whether staff in this department feel that technology is being used in Scholarship and Collections in the best possible way, or if they feel that digital technology could be used differently to enhance what the Directorate has to offer.

The most important KPIs identified for Digital Scholarship in regards to relational assets are:

1. **Satisfaction with in-house communications**
2. **Visibility to external bodies**
3. **Partners/Collaborators**
4. **Interaction with users**
5. **Communication with the rest of the BL**
6. **Lateral communication**

Figure 15.7 shows the model adapted for the Content, Strategy, Research and Operations department, taken from the data from the seven participants in this research who positively identified themselves as employees of this department.



###### Figure 8.7: IA evaluation tool for Content, Strategy, Research and Operations

The most important KPIs identified for Content, Strategy, Research and Operations regarding human assets are:

1. **Training and Expertise**
2. **Morale**
3. **Communication skills**
4. **Initiative**
5. **Visibility of experts**

A sixth KPI is not included here. For the other four departments, this section also featured a key performance indicator for research opportunities. However, this was not identified as something that staff in Content, Strategy, Research and Operations deemed important to their success. This is largely because this department takes on a far more managerial role, concerned with tasks such as developing training programmes, enabling legal deposit or managing communications within the Directorate rather than conducting their own research.

The KPIs identified as the most important for Content, Strategy, Research and Operations relating to structural assets are:

1. **Clarity of roles**
2. **Channels of communication**
3. **Focus**
4. **Ability to pass information up**
5. **Balancing roles**
6. **Ability to pass information down**

The KPIs identified as the most important for Content, Strategy, Research and Operations relating to collections and services assets are:

1. **Projects/Exhibitions**
2. **Digital Scholarship**. Again, this relates to how comfortable staff are with the concepts behind digital scholarship, and how successful they feel the push for digital scholarship has been in the Directorate. This also includes their satisfaction with the staff training programmes relating to digital issues.
3. **Efficiency**. This relates to how satisfied CSR&O employees are with their ability to navigate bureaucracy in order to perform necessary tasks effectively and expediently.
4. **Meeting research needs**. Due to the nature of their jobs, it is unlikely that employees of this department will be actively involved in the scholarly research community. However, they are responsible for developing research strategies. Therefore, this KPI refers to how successful CSR&O employees feel that these strategies are.
5. **Policies and Procedures**. As this part of the Directorate is actively involved in creating the policies and procedures for the Directorate, the participants from this department all mentioned them as something that was important to their jobs. Here, the KPI refers to how successful the department considers these policies to be and how easy they are to implement.
6. **Use of technology**. This relates to how confident staff feel about the Directorate’s ability to use technology and contemporary media in their jobs, and how effective Scholarship and Collections are overall when using this technology to provide access to their users.

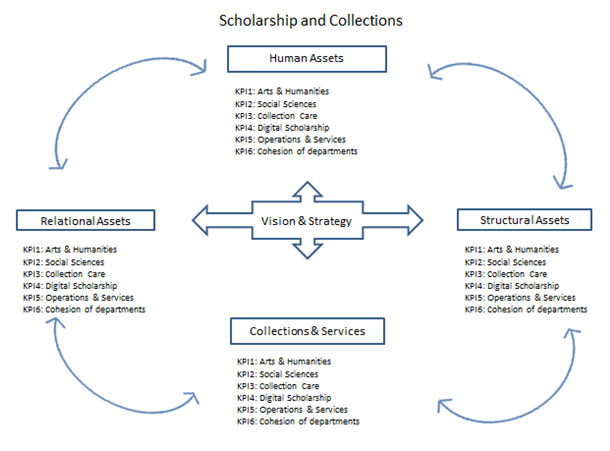
These KPIs which have been indicated by the researcher in the above models can be adapted or changed. It is openly acknowledged that as there were different numbers of responders from the various S&C departments, the data used to generate the KPIs is variable. There was not a 100% response rate which means that there are data gaps which might affect the KPIs. Finally, the researcher is not an employee of Scholarship and Collections. These key performance indicators were generated by using the collected data and are believed to be as accurate as possible according to what each department’s identified priorities are. However, as an outsider to the environment, it is inevitable that the researcher’s understanding of the concerns of Scholarship and Collections will be limited. Therefore, it is made clear that if a department does not agree with one of the KPIs outlined in their model, they are free to change it to something more suitable. This is something that can also happen if the model continues to be used over time, as the Library’s priorities and focus changes.

Figure 15.8 below is a simple diagram demonstrating how the departmental models feed into the intellectual asset evaluation model for the whole of Scholarship and Collections.



###### Figure 8.8: Departmental models feeding into directorial model

Here we can see the IA tool acting in reverse of the general structure of the Directorate which can be seen in Figure 15.2. Information is gathered from within the departments and then feeds back to top management, who can then evaluate the findings and see how the departments are working individually and as a whole. Figure 15.9 below gives a clearer impression of this.



###### Figure 8.9: Overall model for Scholarship and Collections

Just as the feedback from the individual surveys can be used to create a mean figure for the KPIs in the departmental models, a similar tactic can be used here. For example, the figures generated for the six KPIs in Arts and Humanities which relate to relational assets can be added together and used to generate an overall mean value for relational assets in Arts and Humanities. This would then be the figure presented for the KPI of Arts and Humanities under the relational assets section in the model for Scholarship and Collections as a whole, presented in Figure 5.9. This would be done for all the departmental models. The sixth KPI featured under each of the four IA sections is ‘Cohesion of departments’. This KPI would indicate how cohesive top management felt that the five departments were in regards to that particular area of intellectual assets. For example, if all departments rate highly overall for human assets, they would be given a high KPI for cohesiveness. However, if there were significant variants between the departmental results for human assets, the cohesiveness KPI would be low, meaning that the Directorate was not working as effectively in that area. Management could then refer back to the individual departmental models to identify where the issues were, and create a plan of action for resolving the issues.

These models allow the departments, and the Directorate as a whole, to view all aspects of intellectual assets alongside one another. They can see how one IA might impact on another, which areas are successful and which areas need more attention.

Once again, it is important to note that this model should be used alongside the British Library’s traditional tangible asset measures. This will help to indicate to what extent results can be attributed to tangible causes. For example, it can be assumed that the results for morale KPIs will be lower in times of economic difficulties that at times when the Library is solvent. It is also important that the Library makes frequent reviews of the key performance indicators used in the scorecards. Poll (2008) discussed the importance of frequent updates when using the BSC so that it can reflect the changing priorities of the organisation. It is therefore suggested that the KPIs for this evaluation tool are updated at least annually so that the Library can keep pace with the rapidly changing environment it exists in.

## 8.3. Summary

This chapter has provided further discussion and analysis of the findings presented in this research. These findings were compared to relevant literature, both in the areas of intellectual asset management and of general organisational management. This aided the formulation of a series of suggestions for the British Library which would help them to capitalise on their intellectual assets. The evaluation tool for IAs in the Scholarship and Collections Directorate is based on Kaplan and Norton’s (1992) Balanced Scorecard. It allows for each of the four areas of intellectual assets in libraries to be assessed alongside one another, and attributes a set of key performance indicators to each area. This allows for the Library to evaluate its intellectual assets in a qualitative way, but also provides means of quantifying them to an extent which will display the success of the Library’s most important IAs. The model is designed specifically for use within the information sector. Its purpose is to focus on the intellectual assets which are of most value to libraries and evaluate them side by side. The scorecard design allows for the assets to be seen in conjunction with one another and makes it possible to witness where and how one IA might impact upon another. It also ensures that the focus of the intellectual assets remains on the Library’s key aims and objectives by placing them centrally.

# 9. Conclusion

This concluding chapter provides an overview of the project. It will call back to the purposes of this investigation and how these were fulfilled. It will go on to discuss the contributions this research has made to intellectual asset theory, including the development of an intellectual asset evaluation tool designed specifically for use in the public sector, and which covers all aspects of intellectual assets as identified by previous practitioners. It has also presented an evaluation tool which can be adapted by other practitioners and is therefore not limited in use to this particular case study. The chapter will next discuss the wider benefits of this project, including the development of a benchmarking tool for libraries to evaluate their IAs over time, which it is anticipated can also be used to prove the value of libraries in an increasingly challenging climate. The reliability and validity of the findings will be discussed, followed by a mention of the gaps in this research and suggestions for future projects based on the findings.

# 9.1. Project review

The purpose of this project was to consider the subject of intellectual assets, an increasingly important area of research in a world in which the value of organisations is increasingly reliant on intangibles. This is especially true for libraries which depend entirely on the exchange of knowledge for their success. An analysis of existing IA research demonstrated that the models which have been developed are only partially successful, largely because practitioners still rely heavily on quantitative methods whereas the nature of intellectual assets call for a more qualitative approach. The Scholarship and Collections Directorate at the British Library was used as a case study. The Directorate had recently undergone a review and was adapting to this as well as managing their responsibilities at a time of financial difficulties. The Directorate possessed a wealth of intellectual assets but had no way of fully identifying and evaluating them.

A phenomenographic approach was used to collect and analyse the data. In-depth interviews were conducted with Scholarship and Collections staff members and select stakeholders. This was supported by data from an online survey which was distributed to all S&C employees. Phenomenography relies on the analysis of an individual’s experiences and perceptions of a particular phenomenon. This allowed for a qualitative study of the ways in which S&C employees interact with intellectual assets and how they feel they could be best employed to be of most value to the British Library. This approach was largely successful in that it allowed for a more interactive interpretation of intellectual assets. They are intangible and rely very much on human perception to determine their worth, and so focusing on the opinions and experiences of the individuals who interact with IAs in Scholarship and Collections allowed for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

The collected data demonstrated the vast extent of IAs available to the Directorate, but indicated that it was not always being employed in the most effective way due to breakdowns in communication and drops in morale. Suggestions were formed based on this data which would allow the Directorate to develop more of a matrix culture which would nurture better mutual understanding and allow for ideas and suggestions to be exchanged.

The following suggestions have been made for the better utilisation of intellectual assets in the case study of the Scholarship and Collections Directorate:

1. Any issues to do with morale, communication and productivity should not be taken at face value but must be considered alongside the context of any losses in tangible assets that the Library has undergone.
2. Efforts should be made to identify untapped areas of expertise. Many staff members discussed having areas of interest which were not being exploited and would be valuable to the Library. Others discussed how their roles within the Directorate were not being represented in reports. Efforts could be made, possibly through the use of forums and more detailed staff profiles on the Intranet/Website, to identify and exploit these assets.
3. While the size and scope of the Directorate prohibits this to some extent, Scholarship and Collections should attempt to nurture a more matrix working environment. Using forums (possibly allowing for anonymous contributions for staff) would aid channels of communication and allow ideas to be shared, undermining the potential for information silos. Informal meetings could be arranged by departmental heads to communicate more casually with staff. This would help to keep people informed at all levels in the hierarchy, and the demonstration of interest would give validation to staff at a time when financial rewards are not a possibility. The Directorate should also continue its outreach campaign, utilising staff members who are confident with liaison and promotion to publicise the work being done by S&C and encourage greater collaboration with other parts of the Library and external stakeholders alike.
4. A more holistic approach to defining the British Library should be adopted, embracing all the various cultural roles that it plays such an important part in.

Following this, an intellectual asset evaluation tool was developed for the Directorate. The tool was based on Kaplan and Norton’s (1992) Balanced Scorecard, with the four areas of intellectual assets in libraries being attributed a set of key performance indicators. A separate model was developed for each of the five departments within the Directorate. This allows for the diversity of the roles that Scholarship and Collections performs, and prevents generalisation in the IA evaluation process. These models feed into another scorecard designed for the Directorate as a whole. This allows for a comprehensive evaluation of the Directorate’s intellectual assets while at the same time always keeping the focus on the directorial aims and objectives. The model has been designed so that it can be updated by the Directorate as and when it is needed, so that focus can be trained on current organisational goals and progress can be tracked over time. The model is distinctive in that it allows for a complete evaluation of all categories of IAs in libraries, as identified by Corrall and Sriborisutsakul (2010), and focuses them on the organisation’s main objectives. It also allows staff members to develop their own KPIs to meet their current needs, and the model can be expanded or contracted in order to allow each department to have their own customised evaluation tool which can then feed into the general model for the Directorate as a whole.

# 9.2. Contributions to intellectual asset research

The following sections will provide a statement for how this research has contributed to the field of knowledge concerning intellectual assets. This will include the advancements it has made in developing an intellectual asset evaluation tool specifically for public sector organisations, as well as one which incorporates all the areas of intellectual assets within libraries (as identified by Corrall and Sriborisutsakul, 2010). Finally, the ways in which this tool can be adapted to suit a variety of organisations will be explained.

## 9.2.1. IA Evaluation tool designed for Public Sector organisations

The Literature Review discussed the paucity of studies on intellectual assets in the public sector. It was suggested that there was more urgency and incentive for private businesses to evaluate their IAs until recently, when cuts in public funding have made it far more necessary for non-profit organisations to prove their value. By focusing on a large, internationally recognised and culturally important public institution in the British Library, this research has proven the necessity of IAs for the successful running of such an organisation. It also demonstrates that while the Library possesses excellent and valuable intellectual assets, a structured method for their evaluation and designation would be highly beneficial for continuing to provide a high standard of service as efficiently as possible. By concentrating entirely on the IAs which had been identified by the BL’s staff and stakeholders as important, it was possible to create a tool which caters specifically to its needs.

There is an apparent contradiction here, in that the model as presented in this paper has been designed specifically for the Scholarship and Collections Directorate and the suggestion is that the model can be used widely by other public sector organisations. This is an important issue to consider, especially given the argument brought forward by Broady-Preston and Swain (2011) that ‘value’ is entirely dependent on context. Thomas (2011) warns against using the findings of case study research to generalise assumptions about all ethnographic groups similar to the case study, but the design of the model itself prevents that from happening. The use of KPIs, as previously stated, means that the organisation can add and remove performance indicators with every use of the model to suit its changing needs. This can work for other organisations as well. For example, an art gallery might have very different KPIs relating to the services it provides that the ones suggested here for Scholarship and Collections, and they can therefore adapt the performance indicators to suit their own needs. Additionally, the scale of the model can be altered. The case study is a large and extremely complex Directorate within an internationally important institution and, as discussed previously, this is the reason that the five separate models for each department were formulated which could then feed into the general S&C model. Other organisations may not work to this scale. They may only have two departments in need of individual models to feed into the overall model. They may need only one general model, like the one seen in Figure 15.9 for the whole organisation. The tool can withstand the addition and removal of components to suit the needs of different organisations, and it is expected that it will not lose any of its integrity through this process. In other words, the model produced by this research can be *applied* to the case study, but can also be adapted and applied to other case studies.

## 9.2.2. IA evaluation tool which considers all aspects of intellectual assets

The Literature Review chapter discussed the shortcomings in existing intellectual asset research, one of which was that there are no existing models which take into account all aspects of IAs as they exist in libraries and similar public sector organisations. Studies existed which focused on one aspect of intellectual assets in libraries, such as the quality of service provision or intra-organisational communication, but there was nothing which observed all aspects of IAs within a library and how they exist alongside one another. Many IAs are inter-dependent and cannot be easily categorised into one of the four components discussed by Corrall and Sriborisutsakul (2010). Therefore, relying too heavily on these components after the initial data collection process is limiting and reduces the full impact of intellectual assets. This project has incorporated all aspects of intellectual assets and has analysed them alongside one another in order to create a series of suggestions for improvements that can be made at the British Library. This has provided a more holistic analysis of intellectual assets and allows the Library to assess all IAs to be observed together and observe how they relate to and impact upon one another. This has not been attempted before when evaluating intellectual assets in libraries.

## Adaptable IA evaluation tool

The tool has been formulated in such a way that it can be adapted over time as the Library’s priorities change. The Key Performance Indicators were suggested by the data gathered in the research period, but the focus of the Directorate will inevitably evolve over time. When this occurs, the Directorate can review the model and suggest new KPIs to meet new strategies. Through regular use, the model can be used to track the progress of Scholarship and Collections over time, detect patterns within the data and observe how intellectual assets impact on the success of the Library.

# Wider benefits

The evaluation tool has wider benefits for intellectual asset research outside of its immediate application at the British Library, which will be discussed in the following sub-sections. These include its use as a benchmarking tool for tracking organisational health over time, as well as the ways in which it can be used to prove the value of libraries in times of financial unrest. This research has also provided a potential solution to the problem of under-utilised intellectual assets.

## Benchmarking tool

To use the model developed in this study as a method of benchmarking different national libraries would be of very limited value. National libraries are specific to the country they belong to, and therefore have different priorities, different budgets and different user groups. An important intellectual asset for the BL might be of far less value to the National Library of Australia, for example. It would also be unfair to compare the BL’s IAs to those of the Bibliothéque Nationale de France which has government funding for digitisation. Green (1979) observed that ‘to draw up a model constitution for a national library is an exercise of limited practical value’ (Green, 1979: 196), and the individuality of national libraries needs to be respected. However, the tool can be used as a way of benchmarking within the BL itself. By tracking progress over time, the Library can observe where its strengths lie and identify areas which are in need of improvement. It can use the tool to determine what factors made particular IAs especially effective at certain times and use this to recreate that environment. Through this, the BL can generate an environment of continuous self-improvement through the awareness of its intellectual assets and how they are best used to benefit the Library’s strategic objectives.

## Demonstrating the value of libraries

The financial downturn has resulted in extensive cuts in public funding to libraries, resulting in the closure of many and reductions in resources and services available. The British Library has not been exempt from this and will benefit from being able to provide evidence of its great value as an information resource through the use of the model developed in this project. However, it is expected that this will be applied more widely amongst other libraries. By demonstrating the extent and value of their intellectual assets in a way which can be understood as easily as material profit presented on a balance sheet is, the value of libraries can no longer be ignored.

The model itself is for internal use only. By using the scorecard system to hone in on its IAs, attention might be drawn to an area which had not previously been considered, and that area can subsequently be promoted as a strength of the organisation. For example, the Human Assets belonging to S&C in terms of staff expertise are an undeniable asset. By ensuring that greater attention is paid to the assets through the model’s evaluation process, something like an inventory of the assets can be formulated. The same can be done for the services provided by the Directorate. Seen in conjunction with data gathered from external stakeholders, including BL users, a holistic impression of the IAs can be formed. Conducting a thorough evaluation in this manner will make it easier to demonstrate these assets to stakeholders in a way that can be understood by them, and this will encourage support and (it is hoped) an increase in tangible assets being made available to the Library. In other words, if the organisation has a clearer idea of what its intellectual assets are, where their strengths lie and where they can be improved, they will be better equipped to discuss and promote those assets to stakeholders outside the organisation. Somers (2005) argues that the Balanced Scorecard can be used effectively by organisations to not only improve internally but also demonstrate their social value to stakeholders, and it is anticipated that the model generated by this project will be used to similar ends.

## 9.3.3. Ensuring intellectual assets are utilised effectively

One of the main concerns raised by the staff at the British Library was that the extensive intellectual assets in their possession were not being properly utilised in a way that would benefit the Library. Many assets were not being recognised or were not being focused in the most productive way. This is a problem which will inevitably affect other similar organisations as well. Through the use of the evaluation tool developed here, organisations can identify what intellectual assets they are in possession of and determine how they should be utilised. By keeping the focus of the evaluation tool on the organisational strategy, it will be possible to assess the value of intellectual assets. An organisation can determine which IAs are of the greatest value, how they can be utilised or improved to benefit organisational aims and objectives, and identify areas of IA which are of less value and are not a priority. By doing this, organisations can achieve optimum effectiveness from their intellectual assets and ensure that they do not waste their resources.

# 9.4. Reliability and Validity

This project relied heavily on qualitative data, which meant that participants’ experiences and opinions were brought to the forefront, and their personal interactions with intellectual assets could be observed. It was determined that qualitative methods were the most valuable for analysing IAs due to their intangible nature. However, qualitative data is more unstable and subject to change. While this data was supported by some quantitative material provided by the online survey, it is not to be expected that the information gathered at the time of data collection has remained unaltered. However, as an analysis of the Scholarship and Collections Directorate at as specific point in time, this project has great validity. All data was presented accurately and any discrepancies were addressed and analysed. The researcher maintained contact with the British Library after the data collection period had ended, and consulted many of the participants while developing the evaluation tool. This was to enable staff members to make any suggestions they deemed necessary and keep the researcher updated on events at the British Library. While the timescale did not allow for the tool to be tested by the Directorate, staff members were able to comment on its usability and functionality, and whether they felt that the suggested KPIs were accurate for their needs. The suggestions provided in the discussion chapter were developed using the British Library’s annual reports and staff surveys to support the findings from the data, thereby grounding it with official documentation. Finally, the evaluation tool was developed through extensive research into the practice of intellectual asset management. Previous research was consulted and used to inform the development of the model so that it would be of optimum value in the process of identifying the value of intellectual assets and proving their importance in an increasingly knowledge-reliant environment.

At the time of publication, the findings and the blueprint of the IA Evaluation Tool have been communicated to the British Library, and it is anticipated that a pilot test of the model, with any necessary changes to the KPIs, will take place soon. The model could be further validated through its reuse after the space of a year, as this will enable the Directorate to track changes and help develop a method of benchmarking the value of its IAs over time. The model could then be adapted by other non-profit organisations, as described in Section 16.2.1, which would help to suggest whether the tool can in fact be used beyond the confines of the British Library, as is anticipated.

# Gaps in the research

While this study has addressed many of the gaps which existed in pre-existing intellectual asset research in the LIS environment, there are inevitably some areas which could not be explored thoroughly due to the limits in scope of the project and the limited availability of participants.

Perhaps the most obvious drawback is that not all of the Scholarship and Collections staff members were able to participate in this research. Time limitations only allowed for a select number of face-to-face interviews. It was hoped that this could be rectified to some extent by the distribution of the survey to all S&C employees. However, not all staff members were able to take part in this either, due to not having the time, being on leave or overlooking the communications about the project. With this in mind, gaps in the data are inevitable. Another shortcoming is that the researcher was not able to interact with as many external stakeholders as was hoped. Again, this was due to time constraints and the availability of participants. A more extensive account of stakeholder perspectives would have been of great value, especially if some of those stakeholders could have been from outside of the higher education world. The last shortcoming was the lack of user perspectives. In the initial stages of the project, it was hoped that British Library users could be involved in the data collection process through the distribution of surveys in the reading rooms and on the British Library website. However, this was not possible due to constraints in time and resources. The user perspective would have been greatly valuable when considering the collections and services assets of the Library, and the lack of this has been a decided shortcoming.

# 9.6. Future research suggestions

While this project has provided a comprehensive and valuable insight into the evaluation and utilisation of intellectual assets in a large international library, it has highlighted areas of related research which would be of great interest as topics for future study.

At the beginning of this project, the researcher had aimed to include the perspectives of several of the BL’s external stakeholders. However, due to time constraints and the limited availability of potential contacts, only three of these stakeholders were available for interview. It would therefore be of great value to produce a study as an accompaniment to this thesis which would focus exclusively on the Library’s external stakeholders in order to gain further insight into whether their perception of Scholarship and Collections differs from the perspective of its employees. This would also allow interested parties to observe the differences between different types of external stakeholders. For example, it would be possible to tell how the needs of a stakeholder who is involved in higher education differ from a stakeholder who works for a charity organisation, and how successfully these different stakeholder groups feel that their needs are being met by the Library.

Similarly, the researcher had considered including a survey in this investigation which would target the Library users who accessed the BL either through the reading rooms or via its online services. A link to the survey would ideally have been placed on the Library’s website. However, it was later determined that this would make the scope of data far too large for this project. An investigation of this nature would be very valuable as a stand-alone project which could then be seen in conjunction to this research in order to identify previously unidentified IA needs.

One suggestion for future research depends entirely upon a space of a few years passing after the completion of this project. Assuming that the British Library decides to implement the evaluation tool proposed as a result of this investigation, it would be of great interest to use it as a benchmarking tool for the Library’s progress over time. This would enable future researchers to track changes in the Library’s priorities over time, as well as assess how effective the tool is and whether any amendments could be made to improve its function. At this stage it is impossible to state whether the model is a success beyond pure speculation and theory, and therefore noting the progress of the model in action over time would benefit future intellectual asset practitioners to further understand how they can be utilised effectively in the public sector, and whether anything could be done to remedy anything which may have been overlooked in this project.

A final suggestion, which is also limited by the fact that the evaluation tool developed here has not been put into practice yet, is an investigation into how effectively the model can be applied to organisations which are similar to the British Library, e.g. another large scale cultural resource such as a museum or gallery, or a smaller library in a higher education institution or a public library. It has already been stated that while the model developed here has been tailored specifically for the Scholarship and Collections Directorate at the BL, it was suggested that it could be modified by employees of other institutions who could scale the model up or down, and add their own KPIs in place of the ones suggested here. It would be valuable to study how effectively these changes to the model are for these institutions. It would enable intellectual asset practitioners to determine whether the model can in fact be used to evaluate intangibles in all public sector cultural organisations or if it is only suitable for libraries.

# Summary

It would not be an overstatement that intellectual assets are vital to the success of the twenty-first century organisation. In an environment that is increasingly dependent on knowledge exchange, quality of service and the strength of relationships, it is vital that organisations find ways of evaluating and utilising their intellectual assets in the same way that they have always evaluated their tangible assets. This becomes especially important for public sector organisations such as libraries, where all value lies in intangibles. Research in this area has been limited and slow to progress. This project has developed existing theories in intellectual asset management and provided a tool for evaluating all aspects of IAs within a national library setting. This tool has enabled a set of initial suggestions, and means for the British Library to continue to evaluate its intellectual assets in a way which will promote them and ensure that they are being used effectively. It is hoped that this tool will provide a means for the British Library to prove its full worth to the information world and that it can be adapted by other libraries and similar institutions in order to make it into an universal intellectual asset evaluation tool.

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## Appendix A: Ethics information sheet

Information Sheet

**1. Research Project Title:**

Evaluating the intellectual assets of the Scholarship and Collections Directorate at the British Library

**2. Invitation paragraph**

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

**3. What is the project’s purpose?**

The aim is to evaluate the intellectual assets within the Scholarship and Collections Directorate at the British Library. Intellectual Assets (IAs) are assets which strongly benefit the organisation but are not easily quantified, such as staff expertise, relationships with stakeholders, and the technology used. The researcher hopes that through this evaluation a method can be developed for accurately measuring the assets. If this is the case, the measurement system can be used by the BL to enhance their use of intellectual assets, and may even be used as a blueprint for other libraries.

**4. Why have I been chosen?**

You have been selected as a staff member, user, or other stakeholder of the British Library with a working knowledge of the Scholarship and Collections Directorate.

**5. Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and will be asked to confirm your consent by signing a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time without it affecting any benefits that you are entitled to in any way. You do not have to give a reason.

**6. What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire regarding your experiences of intellectual assets within S&C. This should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete. You may also be asked to take part in an interview lasting approximately one hour, which will allow you to expand on your opinions of the strengths of the Directorate’s intellectual assets, and highlight any areas which could be improved.

**7. What do I have to do?**

The interview will be concerned with your experiences of the intellectual assets within the Directorate. You will be asked for your professional opinion on where IAs have benefitted the department, as well as any weaknesses you have identified. You will be asked for any suggestions you might have for how the Directorate can strengthen its IAs.

**8.What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

You will have to give up a small amount of time if you agree to participate but, as previously stated, the time demands are not high.

**9. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will contribute to better understanding of practices and opinions in the Directorate, and appreciation of its value to the Library and the wider community. Participants will be offered the chance to view the findings of the collected data once the project has been completed. The project will hopefully benefit the Scholarship and Collections Directorate as a whole by improving the overall understanding of IAs and enabling them to be used with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

**10. Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?**

The researcher will record interviews, which will then be transcribed. The audio recordings and questionnaire data of your activities made during this research will be used only for analysis and the researcher may quote from anonymous interview transcripts to illustrate points in conference presentations and lectures. All project data and records will be stored securely with password-controlled access and shared only with the supervisory team. The BL’s sound archive has expressed interest in retaining the audio recordings of the interviews as part of the library’s cultural heritage. These recordings will be subject to the library’s copyright regulations, and participants are free to opt out of having the recordings of their interviews retained in this way. If participants agree to donate the audio recordings of their interviews to the BL’s sound archive, these data will be kept securely and confidentially.

**11. What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?**

The reason(s) will be explained to you, and the analysis will be based on a smaller data set.

**12. What if something goes wrong?**

If you have any concerns about the project, you should contact Oliver Urquhart Irvine, Head of Asian and African Studies at the BL, or Professor Sheila Corrall at the University of Sheffield’s Information School. If you feel your comment or complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction (e.g. by the Supervisory Team) you can contact the University’s Registrar and Secretary.

**13. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?**

All names will be removed in the write-up so that individual participants cannot be identified in reports of the project. Alpha-numeric codes will be used (Participant A1, etc.) to signify the respondents for purposes of analysis and reporting. All data will be stored on a password-protected computer and will be destroyed when no longer needed. When conducting interviews, the researcher will ask permission to record them. Participation in the sound archive project is entirely optional, and any data used by the BL will be secure and confidential.

**14. What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project’s objectives?**

The researcher feels that the best way of obtaining accurate information about the concerns addressed in the research project is by discussing the matter with people who have experience working in this field. Levels of qualification and experience will be recorded, as well as how long participants have been working in the field. This is purely for statistical information, and will not be used in any way that might identify the participant. Participants will also be asked for their personal opinions concerning matters impacting on the IAs within the Directorate in order to collect qualitative data for the investigation.

**15. What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The results of the research are expected to be published in a PhD thesis that will be accessible via the website of the University of Sheffield Information School by early 2014 and may also be summarised for publication in an academic or professional journal, but you will not be identified in any report or publication.

The data collected during the course of the project might also be used for additional or subsequent research following the same procedures to protect the identity of participants.

**16. Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research is being conducted as part of a research project based at the University of Sheffield and the British Library, with funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Library.

**17. Who has ethically reviewed the project?**

The project has been ethically reviewed by the Information School’s Ethics Review Procedure in accordance with the University of Sheffield’s Ethics Review Procedure.

**18. Contact for further information**

Project Researcher

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You will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep.

Thank you for taking part in this project.

## Appendix B: Prompt interview questions

* Briefly introduce project and purpose of the interview.
* Ask if participants are happy to be quoted anonymously. Explain what the data will be used for.
* Can you tell me about your role at the British Library?
* How well do you feel that the Directorate has coped with the recent restructuring?
* Is there anything that you feel could have been done better?
* Is there a cohesive sense of the Library’s strategy?
* How have you coped with managing the budget cuts while also providing the same quality of service?
* To what extent do you feel that other staff members understand the role you play in the Library?
* Do you think that there’s any way of preserving valuable knowledge and expertise for the Library?
* How is knowledge and information shared in the Directorate?
* Succession planning?
* Are you satisfied with communication within the Directorate?
* Can you tell me about any training programmes you have attended recently that you found particularly valuable?
* How effective do you feel staff training is at the Library?
* How satisfied are you with opportunities for career development?
* How satisfied are you with the opportunities for staff research?
* What do you feel the Library’s priorities should be when developing collections?
* Are there any projects you have been involved in recently that you are particularly proud of?
* How are you working towards meeting developing research needs?
* Could the Directorate do more to make the collections accessible?
* What do you think the Library’s priorities should be in terms of digital scholarship?
* What factors do you consider when identifying possible external stakeholders?
* How effective do you feel the Directorate is at advocacy?
* Do directorial policies and procedures allow people to do their jobs effectively?
* What do you feel are the strengths of Scholarship and Collections?
* What do you feel are the weaknesses of Scholarship and Collections?
* Are there any similar institutions that you think the British Library could learn from?
* What would you say was the purpose of Scholarship and Collections?
* What would you say is the purpose of the British Library?
* Is there anything else you would like to comment on in relation to this project?

## Appendix C: Cover letter for survey

**Briefing Paper for Intellectual Assets Evaluation in the Scholarship and Collections Directorate at the BL**

Name of Researcher: Alice Schofield, University of Sheffield

lip10ams@shef.ac.uk

Outline

Intellectual assets (IAs) are assets which belong to, and benefit, an organisation, but are intangible and have no direct financial value. They can be roughly divided into the following sections:

* Human Assets. This would include the staff of the organisation and their expertise, as well as any research they produce and the training they receive.
* Structural Assets. This includes the infrastructure of the organisation, and the use of technology and copyrighted material.
* Relational Assets. These are the relationships the organisation has with stakeholders, both internal and external.

For the British Library, and libraries in general, a fourth asset category has been added by the researcher.

* Collection assets. These are the ways in which the collections are used, and the services the library provides to its users.

This study focuses on the Scholarship and Collections Directorate. A research project of this nature is very important at this moment in time. The recent restructuring of the Directorate has caused some inevitable disruption, and a review of the strengths of the Directorate’s intellectual assets would therefore be valuable, as well as an indication of any weaknesses which may need extra attention. It would also be valuable because the Directorate is evidently very rich in IAs, and a review of them will enable S&C to prove its strengths to the rest of the library and beyond with greater ease. It is now more important than ever for libraries to prove their worth at this time of financial cutbacks, and demonstrate the value they provide to research and learning communities.

Aims of the Research

The research student aims to distribute this survey to all S&C staff in order determine what the Directorate’s IA strengths and weaknesses are, and support the data collected in interviews during the past two years. The data will be used to produce set of measures which will indicate where the Directorate’s strengths and weaknesses lie. These measures will be designed in a way that would enable S&C to continue to use and update them as an IA evaluation tool after the research project has ended.

Conclusions

This project would benefit greatly from the participation of S&C staff, in order to get a fully rounded impression of the value of the Directorate’s intellectual assets. The researcher would be happy to answer any questions members of staff may have about the project, and would greatly appreciate your input.

Thank you for your interest.

## Appendix D: Revised questionnaire

**Intellectual Assets in the S&C Directorate**

An evaluation of the intellectual assets in the Scholarship and Collections Directorate at the British Library

I am a PhD student at the University of Sheffield working on a collaborative project with the British Library. My project consists of an evaluation of the intellectual assets in the Scholarship and Collections Directorate at the British Library. Intellectual assets (IAs) are assets which belong to an organization but have no tangible value, such as staff expertise, relationships with stakeholders, or the ways in which the library utilizes its collections. The objective is to produce an evaluation tool which will allow the library to evaluate its IAs, tracking strengths and areas which need development, and can be modified over time to cater to the Directorate's evolving priorities. It is hoped that this will enable the Directorate to utilise their IAs more effectively, and provide further means of demonstrating the library's worth in an increasingly challenging economic climate.

You are being asked to participate because as a staff member in S&C you have unique insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the Directorate's IAs, and can identify assets that might otherwise be overlooked.

Thank you very much for taking part in this study.

There are 39 questions in this survey

**Human Assets**

This section seeks to identify how human assets are managed. Human assets are all intellectual assets that relate to the skills and expertise of staff.

**1 [1a] How many staff development programmes have you attended in the past 12 months at the BL?**

Please write your answer here:

**2 [1b] How would you rate the overall quality of the development programmes at the BL?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

1

2

3

4

5

(1 = Poor 5 = Excellent)

**3 [1c] Are there any comments you would like to make on the staff development programmes at the library?**

Please write your answer here:

**4 [2a] Do you feel that there are gaps in expertise in your area of the Directorate due to staff reductions?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes

No

**5 [2b] If yes, how effectively do you feel the Directorate is bridging these gaps?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

1

2

3

4

5

(1 = Poorly 5 = Excellently)

**6 [3a] How many conferences have you attended in the past 12 months?**

Please write your answer here:

**7 [3b] How many articles and/or academic papers have you contributed to over the past 12 months?**

Please write your answer here:

**8 [3c] How satisfied are you with the opportunities you're given to share your professional expertise?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

1

2

3

4

5

(1 = Not satisfied at all 5 = Very satisfied)

**9 [4a] How effectively do you feel the Directorate is managing succession planning?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

1

2

3

4

5

(1 = Not effectively at all 5 = Very effectively)

**10 [4b] Have you made/Do you intend to make records of your knowledge of the collections which can be used by future employees?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes

No

**11 [4c] If yes, what steps will you take?**

Please write your answer here:

**12 [4d] If no, why not?**

Please write your answer here:

**13 [5a] Do you have a clear and up-to-date job description?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes

No

**14 [5b]Do you feel that other BL employees understand what you do?**

Please write your answer here:

**15 [5c] Do you feel that stakeholders outside the library (e.g. partners, academics, potential/existing donors) understand what you do?**

Please write your answer here:

**Structural Assets**

The following questions relate to intellectual assets connected to the way the organisation is structured.

**16 [6a] How many current vacancies are there in the area of the Directorate you work in?**

Please write your answer here:

**17 [6b] How effectively do you feel the Directorate is coping with the reduction of staff members?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

1

2

3

4

5

(1 = Not effectively at all 5 = Very effectively)

**18 [7a] How effective do you feel management are in communicating with staff?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

1

2

3

4

5

(1 = Not effectively at all 5 = Very effectively)

**19 [7b] Can you think of any way communication between management and the rest of the Directorate could be improved?**

Please write your answer here:

**20 [8a] What kind of impact has the restructuring of the Directorate had on your job role?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

1

2

3

4

5

(1 = Negative impact 3 = No impact 5 = Positive impact)

**21 [8b] How would you rate the morale in your part of the Directorate?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

1

2

3

4

5

(1 = Very low 5 = Very high)

**22 [8c] If the morale is low, what do you consider to be the main cause?**

Please write your answer here:

**Relational Assets**

The following questions relate to the relationship the Directorate has with internal and external stakeholders.

**23 [9a] How confident are you when it comes to promoting the collections you're responsible for, and any ongoing projects you're involved in?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

1

2

3

4

5

(1 = Not confident at all 5 = Very confident)

**24 [9b] How confident are you when it comes to sharing your professional expertise with non-experts?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

1

2

3

4

5

(1 = Not comfortable at all 5 = Very comfortable)

**25 [9c] How would you rate the advocacy being conducted by your part of S&C?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

1

2

3

4

5

(1 = Not highly at all 5 = Very highly)

**26 [10a] What are your priorities when identifying potential external stakeholders?**

**Click on an item in the list on the left, starting with your highest ranking item, moving through to your lowest ranking item.**

Please number each box in order of preference from 1 to 6

* Opportunities for financial sponsorship
* Opportunities for material donations (manuscripts, audio recordings, etc.)
* Opportunities to promote BL collections
* Opportunities to promote an exhibition or project
* Opportunities for collaboration
* Other (please specify)

**27 [11a] How good are channels of communication your part of the Directorate has with other Directorates at the BL?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

1

2

3

4

5

(1 = Very poor 5 = Excellent)

**28 [11b] How would you define the role of Scholarship and Collections?**

Please write your answer here:

**29 [11c] Do you think the rest of the library understands what Scholarship and Collections do?**

Please write your answer here:

**Collections and Services Assets**

The following questions relate to the ways in which the collections are used and the value added by the services the Directorate provides

**30 [12a] Around what % of the collections you work with are available in digital format?**

Please write your answer here:

**31 [12b] Around what % of the collections you work with are on the BL's online catalogue?**

Please write your answer here:

**32 [13a] How many research projects have you been involved in over the past 12 months?**

Please write your answer here:

**33 [13b] How many exhibitions have you been involved with over the past 12 months?**

Please write your answer here:

**34 [14a] Are there any ways you think the Directorate could make the collections more accessible and usable?**

Please write your answer here:

**35 [14b] If you have any further thoughts on the utilisation of intellectual assets within S&C, please state them below.**

Please write your answer here:

**Personal Data**

This section is for the use of the researcher only and **will not appear in the report**. If you are uncomfortable with providing this information, please feel free to skip this section. It is intended only to provide the researcher with an idea of the scope of the data within S&C.

**36 [i] Job title**

Please write your answer here:

**37 [ii] Area of Directorate**

Please choose **all** that apply:

Digital Scholarship

Arts and Humanities

Social Sciences

Collection Care

Content, Strategy, Research & Operations

**38 [iii] Length of employment at the BL**

Please write your answer here:

**39 [iv] Level of seniority**

Please write your answer here:

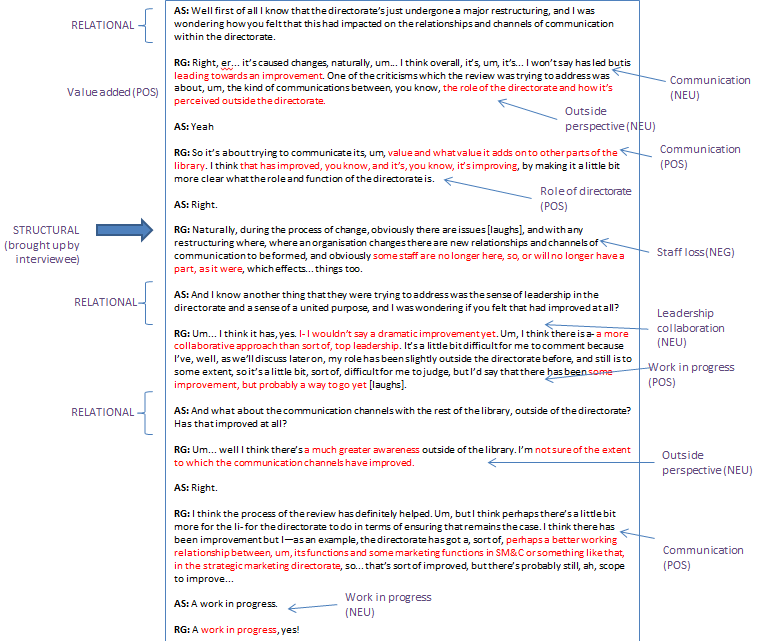
Thank you for taking part in this study.

## Appendix E: Hierarchy of Scholarship and Collections



The above model represents the structure of Scholarship and Collections at the time the data collection took place. All the boxes below the SB3 heads of department ones represent general areas of speciality rather than individual roles. Managers from each of these areas would be at Grade SB4.

## Appendix F: Sample of coded transcript



The above image represents an extract from one of the interview transcripts after coding. The text highlighted in red represents what were considered to be key points in the interviews, and possible quotations to use as evidence in the findings. Notes in purple to the left of the transcript represent the area of IA that the segment of the interview is applicable to. This was purely for the purpose of initial coding and grouping of themes, and occasionally these areas overlapped. For example, an interviewee could discuss something which could pertain to both Human and Relational assets. The notes in purple to the right of the transcript represent themes that were brought up. Some occurred more than once, and the number of occurrences of each theme was noted at the end of each transcript. Each of these themes is noted as Positive (POS), Negative (NEG) or neutral, depending on the quality attributed to the theme by the interviewee.

1. Thirty five participants in the online questionnaire did not identify which area of Scholarship and Collections they worked in. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Forty one participants in the online questionnaire did not identify where in the structural hierarchy they were. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)