

# *Links between Libraries and Museums: Investigating Museum-Library Collaboration in England and the USA*

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Various government bodies have promoted library-museum collaboration in recent years but research is lacking about common practices and experiences, and, in particular, what has worked and what hasn't. The research presented in this paper addresses this gap. The first part outlines opinion and theory regarding library-museum collaboration as given in

the professional literature. The second part describes practical findings from case-study investigations into public library-museum collaboration in England and the USA. This analysis takes a close look at the benefits of such collaborations. The paper concludes with guidelines on how library-museum collaboration can occur successfully.

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## *Introduction*

In 2003, library-museum collaboration was described by Diamant-Cohen and Sherman as the "wave of the future." Has this really happened in practice? Is library-museum collaboration now commonplace and are there benefits or drawbacks from this type of collaboration? What types of collaboration are occurring and how are projects funded? Can the UK and other countries learn from experiences in the US where library-museum collaboration is more prevalent?

The research described in this paper addresses these questions and provides insight into the background and current position with respect to public library-museum collaboration in the US and England. A brief summary of the context and legislation relating to library-museum collaboration, together with an outline of some of theory and opinion surrounding collaboration, precedes

the research analysis. The paper concludes with some guidelines on how library museum collaboration can occur successfully.

## *Library-museum collaboration: context and theory*

'Library-museum collaboration' can be defined as the cooperation between a library and a museum, possibly involving other partners. These partners may collaborate in one-off projects or a continuous programme of events and they may be co-located or they may be located away from each other. It does not include libraries whose clientele are exclusively the museum's staff and researchers. The term collaboration refers to a more involved cooperation where there is a more in-depth sharing and pooling of resources (Diamant-Cohen and Sherman 2003).

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Figure 1: The IMLS website: <http://www.imls.gov> [May 2007]



### *Legislation and support*

In the USA collaboration has been encouraged by legislation. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) (see Figure 1), a federal grant-making agency that supports non-federal, not-for-profit museums, libraries and archives nationwide was created by the Federal Museums and Library Services Act of 1996 and has consolidated programmes for libraries and museums (Ray and Choudhury 2002). It aims to fulfil the “public’s increased demand for lifelong learning opportunities, resolve the blurred boundaries between libraries and museums in the digital world and meet the growing interest in cultural heritage education and preservation post 9/11” (Bell 2003, 63), whilst “encouraging best practice” (Martin 2002).

The IMLS is a driving force for change as it promotes a new culture of library-museum col-

laboration through policy and National Leadership Grants (NLG) (Allen and Bishoff 2002, 56). It particularly encourages collaboration for innovative projects with a national impact and which provide models of how museums and libraries in partnership can expand their services to the public. Emphasis is placed on how the community is served, how technology is used or how education is enhanced (Bell 2003, 61). According to Dr. Robert Martin, former Director of IMLS, “Collaboration is emerging as the strategy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is aligned with how we are thinking about our communities as “holistic” environments, as social ecosystems in which we are part of an integrated whole” (2002). The Museum and Library Services Act of 2003 re-authorised the IMLS through to 2009 and stated that activities should be “stimulating greater collaboration among museums, libraries, schools and other community organiza-

Figure 2: The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council website: <http://www.mla.gov.uk> [May 2007]

tions in order to share resources and strengthen communities” (Congress 2005).

The American Association of Museums (AAM) also supports collaboration and at its 2005 Annual Meeting, together with the IMLS, hosted a ‘Museum and Library Day’ to inform institutions of best practice and spur innovation (IMLS 2005).

In the UK, the legislation and funding has been less progressive with the result that library-museum collaboration appears, in the professional literature, not to have been developed to the same extent as in the USA. According to Owen and Johnson (1999, 10) “The ‘Public Libraries and Museums Act of 1964’ placed a duty on local authorities to be responsible for cultural institutions. Some form of collaboration was envisioned but cooperation specifically between libraries and museums was not spelt out in the Act.” The Act made the libraries a statutory requirement, while the

museums and galleries were merely an enabling power and this resulted in separation of the two institutions. By 1999, although many libraries and museums enjoyed close links because local authorities had combined the functions of arts, archives, museums and libraries under the remit of a single chief officer, collaboration still tended to be on paper (i.e. grouping institutions into sectors) and not in practice. In May 2005, however, David Lammy became the first MP of the Government Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to have all three sectors (museums, libraries and archives) within his jurisdiction (Lammy 2005), a significant step toward greater cross-sectoral collaboration.

In the UK the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA or MLAC) (see Figure 2), officially launched in April 2000, is the principal strategic agency working with the sectors and advising the

DCMS on policy and priorities. MLA provides leadership, promotes standards, and currently aims to tap the overall potential for collaboration (MLA 2005). According to Underwood (2003), until 2003 MLAC's main focus was on international collaboration between MLA organisations leaving regional collaboration to regional MLAs such as the North East Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (NEMLAC).

There has been some discussion regarding the relevance of collaboration and whether it should be organised on a local, regional or national basis. The role of the MLA in this regard has also been questioned by some parties. In response the MLA commissioned two reports *Localism, Governance and the Public Realm* (Harris 2006) and *Public libraries and Community Cohesion* (Harris and Dudley 2005) to look at culture in the context of civil renewal, community cohesion and localism and governance. The MLA has also established a stronger partnership with the regions, as promoted in the guide *The Power of Ten* (MLA 2006).

Policies outlined by MLAC are endorsed by the Library and Information Cooperation Council (LINC) whose prime purpose is to foster cross-sectoral collaboration. In a document entitled *Sharing the Cross-sectoral Agenda*, LINC stressed that MLAC should advise the Government on policy development before decisions had been taken and offered to assist in the coordination of advice on cross-sectoral collaboration. LINC welcomed MLAC's intention to secure ample resources for itself from the Government but stated that "severely restricted and often reduced resources in these sectors could affect their capacity to deliver 'quantifiable outputs' to meet new Government targets" (LINC 2000, 8–9).

The Museums Association (UK), encouraged by MLA's Renaissance programme, has put considerable effort into analysing the best-practice strategy for national/regional museum partnerships, but cross-sectoral collaboration has not featured in their discussions to the same extent.

### *Organisational culture and roles*

According to Bell (2003), strong historical and philosophical connections used to exist between libraries and museums because they shared common goals of public education and community development. Today, according to Martin (Storey

2003) "differences among libraries and museums can be profound." The assets, personnel, professional training, and the terminology used can be dramatically different, partly due to the different materials handled by each (Lester 2001). While a 'knowledge artefact' can speak for itself, a 'cultural artefact' requires interpretation. This has led to museums and libraries developing distinct techniques of describing and organising their collections (Ray and Choudhury 2002).

The differences between the two types of institutions can be outlined by comparing their different practices: libraries tend to be open-access and support freedom of information. They have even-handed collection policies on all subjects and perspectives. They list and advertise all items of the collection through a catalogue. The library users interpret information with little intervention by the librarian and there is compatibility between catalogues of different library lending systems. Museums, in contrast, have developed different cultures in several major areas. There is an emphasis on the protection of the intellectual property rights of objects and the protection of confidentiality. Ninety percent of the collection is in secured storage and is not accessible. Museums collect unique, monetarily or intellectually valuable objects that require significant attention to issues of security and preservation. The searching systems are designed for the staff and not the public (Allen and Bischoff 2002, 66). Museums have seen their role as providing context through 'interpretation' (Lester 2001, 187). Small museums are often not computerised and rarely adhere to standards. Finally, museums have a generally stronger tradition of liaison with the educational community (Allen and Bischoff 2002, 66).

Despite these differences there are some similarities. Both libraries and museums have an educational and recreational role and both provide resources and services to the local community. Both have a role in cultural transmission and preservation. Recently there has been greater emphasis on the heritage and leisure function of museums and libraries (Marsden 2001, 20) with recognition of a shared common purpose as "cultural heritage institutions working for the public good" (Allen and Bischoff 2002, 43). LINC, for example, supported the MLAC approach to revolutionising access to this cultural heritage through an ambitious digital content and networking strategy, involving the

co-ordination of sectoral ICT initiatives such as *New Library, Netful of Jewels* and *Archives On-Line* (2000, 8–9).

### *Policies in common*

The common aims and objectives of libraries and museums are reflected in their mission statements and policy documentation.

In the USA, the IMLS believes that common policies between libraries and museums include their support of public education, being cornerstones in their communities and being trustworthy information providers. In England, according to Owen and Johnson (1999, 11) the DCMS recorded common policies between libraries and museums as being their “involvement with the general public and other users, their educational role, their relationship with local authorities, and (in some cases) their collection bases.” Owen and Johnson also noted that MLAC saw a policy overlap in the “development and preservation of collections, content creation, the promotion of scholarship and supporting the collective memory, cultural identity and economic prosperity of the community.”

There are, nevertheless, some words of caution: “While the goals and missions of libraries and museums are similar in many areas, collaborations require awareness of differences in organisational structures and internal procedures in the two institutions” (Brown and Pollack 2002, 212). Schrage’s view, noted by Allen and Bischoff (2002, 55) was that collaborative success required “a shared and understood goal” while Jones emphasised that a successful collaboration could only be determined by the initial purpose of the collaboration, for example, whether costs had been reduced or services improved (Marsden 2001, 20).

To summarise, the aims and objectives of libraries and museums do fit well together especially those concerned with diversity, equality of access, lifelong learning, intellectual freedom and literacy (Whitwell 1997, 36), although collaboration should be looked at on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the institutions involved have a common and realistic goal.

### *Types of collaboration*

Diamant-Cohen and Sherman (2003, 102) stated that collaborations could range from “small one

time programmes to large long term projects” and could occur “virtually, physically, through programmes, through kiosks and through printed materials” (2003, 105).

Brown and Pollack (2000, 212–213) provide a list of possible collaborative projects: “Library activities and programmes developed that relate to local museum exhibits, travelling museum exhibits hosted in libraries, links established between Web-based resources on library and museum web sites, a library programme that provides library users with the opportunity to check out passes to visit local museums, collaborative digitisation projects that enhance access to resources in both museums and libraries, historical walking tours co-sponsored by a historical association, local museums, and the public library, collaborative initiatives between libraries and museums to bring in authors as speakers, museum and library partnerships with cultural and educational organisations for public programmes.”

Collaborative digitisation projects which capitalise on the electronic opportunity to regroup dispersed collections have been encouraged in both the USA and the UK. Although there remain many issues to be resolved, such as metadata standards and interoperability, there are exciting opportunities for development in this area.

### *Location of collaboration*

According to Diamant-Cohen and Sherman (2003, 103) the location of the collaboration is an important consideration, dependent on the type of collaboration taking place. Schrage’s view (quoted by Allen and Bischoff 2002, 55) was that co-location of the museum and library might make collaboration more likely to occur and easier when it happened. Schrage also supported the “creation and manipulation of shared space” although a “physical presence is not necessary” because communication could take place using a wide range of different technologies.

### *Problems in collaboration*

A major threat to successful collaboration is domination by the larger partner (Brown and Pollack 2000, 102). Difficulties can also arise because of pressures in one institution such as unsuitable working conditions or poor IT provision (Marsden

2001, 20). Problems occasionally occur with differences in procedure (Lester 2001, 188–9) or because of contrasting museum and library funding sources. Some museums are privately funded, charge admission fees and rely on ownership and royalties of their collections to generate income (Whitwell 1997, 35). In contrast, libraries are often publicly funded and publicly managed institutions.

### *Benefits of collaboration*

There are significant benefits in library-museum collaboration, not least for the library and museum users who have increased access to information and enhanced educational opportunities. Benefits for the collaborating institutions are variously listed by Allen and Bishoff (2002, 60, 79), Diamant-Cohen and Sherman (2003, 102); Lester (2001, 183), Brown and Pollack (2000, 212) and Yakel (2005, 13). These benefits include opportunities for:

- Attracting new audiences and expanding the reach of the library and museum;
- Improving public perceptions of museums and libraries as traditional staid institutions;
- Finding new ways to encourage cultural heritage and preservation;
- Fostering of best practice from both institutions;
- Sharing physical resources such as space and materials;
- Sharing policies for preservation and conservation of collections;
- Sharing financial resources for cleaning, utility bills, security, building and content insurance, staffing costs, ICT facilities and joint licence purchasing; avoiding competitive bidding for the same funding;
- Experiencing collaborative working;
- Sharing expertise;
- Sharing staff training costs.

### *Library–museum collaboration: practice*

In 2005 a research project was initiated at Loughborough University to investigate the links between libraries and museums in the USA and to see how Marsden’s “wave of the future” was being implemented in England.

Specific objectives were:

- To investigate case studies to discover what library-museum collaboration was taking place in England and the USA.
- To investigate case studies to discover how collaboration was being managed and achieved in England and the USA.
- To investigate whether such collaborations were deemed to be successful.
- To establish guidelines on how to achieve a successful library-museum collaboration.

### *Methodology*

To meet the aims and objectives an e-mail survey was carried out which targeted members of staff involved in collaborative partnerships dispersed geographically across England and the USA. Since a sampling frame detailing all library-museum collaborations does not exist, a non-probability sampling technique had to be used, in this case ‘snowball sampling’ (a type of convenience sampling, where selection of units from the population are based on easy availability and/or accessibility) (Atkinson and Flint, 2001).

The UK sample was based on geographic dispersion of regional Metropolitan Library Authorities (MLAs) and relied on regional MLA officers to identify suitable case studies in their area. In the USA, potential case studies were gathered during the literature review, especially from the paper *Hand in hand* (Diamant-Cohen and Sherman 2003). Additionally some came as recommendations from contacts.

### *Results*

There was a 50% return on the survey, with eleven questionnaires being returned from England and twelve from the USA.

### *Types of collaboration*

Table 1 summarises the broad types of library-museum collaboration taking place. In England it appeared that the co-location of a museum and library might facilitate collaboration, whereas in the USA the distance factor was not so significant. With regard to one-off projects or continuous collaboration various patterns emerged. Some institutions were involved with a series of projects with the same or different partners. For example,

Table 1: Location and type of collaboration

Location and Type of Collaboration	England	USA
Co-located and continuous collaboration	5	4
Co-located and one-off projects	3	
Away from museum and one-off projects	2	4
Away from the museum and continuous	1	3

in the USA the Enoch Pratt Free Library was involved with Port Discovery Children's Museum, the Exploration Center, Walters Art Museum and Baltimore Museum of Art.

### *Types of project*

Titles of collaborative projects over the last five years showed some variety. When analysed into broad types, they demonstrated the various functions of museums and libraries as proponents of heritage and culture, and the common philosophical connections of both. In England the most common type of project was history-based; for example, titles included "Ancient Egyptians", "Their Past and Yours", "Picture Stockton" (digitalising photographic collections), "People's War", "Revolutionary Players" (in the field of industrial development and innovation), and "Trading Places" (which examined historic and modern day trade links). This suggests that the main role of these institutions was their heritage function and often it was the libraries' Local History Library that formed the partnership. Three of these aimed to digitise materials and make them accessible via the Internet.

The American projects mainly focused on art and literature, with a cultural and educational function. The titles included "Art-making Experiences for Children", "Visual Literacy thorough Mother Goose on the Loose" (for children from birth to age 3), "The Art of Eric Carle", "Words and Images", "Gizmos Gadgets and Flying Frogs", "Children's Book of Magic", "The Art of the Heart Man", and "Worlds of Wonder" (this involves children in looking at and responding to poster reproductions of works of art and related books). This strong focus on education certainly reflects Martin's views and may be the influence of the IMLS. Unlike the English sample there were few historic projects in the USA. Two of the projects had libraries within the museum and per-

mitted users to borrow books and return them to any library within the state. Another focused on developing a collaborative website using objects and books from the participating organisations.

### *Aims and objectives of the projects*

The examples from the USA demonstrated that in every case the collaborating library and museum shared common objectives for the joint venture. In England the same applied in the majority of cases, but not exclusively so. In England the shared aims and objectives either had an educational focus or were broader such as to encourage cross-over visits between institutions, promote resources to various target groups, improve co-ordination between institutions, demonstrate joint working and training, or to provide models of working practice. Typical of the educationally focused aims were "to be educational, encourage learning about past civilisations in a fun environment to encourage families to learn together" and "to engage adult learners with art and the gallery's collections."

In the USA, most of the stated aims and objectives of the shared projects were user-centred and focused on learning. A few were bordering on the ideological, for example, "to create a brand new model for learning in an information-rich environment by taking the best aspects of two informal learning environments and blending them to create a seamless integration of resources." Several respondents stated that they were trying to create engaging, pleasant and memorable experiences and that they were trying to enthuse and enrich people in their search for knowledge.

Examples of the shared customer base and shared educational role of museums and libraries (Owen and Johnson 1999, 11) include the Resolution Resource Room, a Captain Cook collection based at Captain Cook Birthplace Museum Middlesbrough (Teesside) and by the Port Discovery Exploration Center, Baltimore, Maryland.

### *Target audiences*

Library-museum collaboration on both sides of the Atlantic targeted a variety of audiences, from library and museum users in general to more specific groups such as children or teenagers, or minority groups such as Spanish-speakers. The sample from England also included adult/life-long

learners, non-users, and people with a specific interest in local history and photography. From the USA the sample included teachers and students and families with children aged 3 and under. The encouragement of community development through social inclusion was an important motivating force in a number of collaborative projects.

### *Project duration*

Marsden's statement that collaboration was not a new phenomenon (2001, 22) was proved by the *Brooklyn Expedition* which ran for five years between 1997 and 2002. The Parenting Resource Library, a collaborative project between Houston Public Library and the Children's Museum of Houston, was, in 2005, in its sixth year.

In England, the projects were rather more recent, indicating a slower advance in collaborative initiatives, and ranged from one week to two years.

### *Mission*

Institutions involved in continuous collaboration rarely seemed to have a joint mission statement, with only one example of this found in the USA. A joint mission statement appeared not to be necessary for a successful collaborative partnership provided agreed aims and objectives were in place.

### *Evaluation*

Most of the completed projects in the USA sample had been evaluated, whereas in the English sample the reverse was the case. Methods used to evaluate library-museum collaborations included reports (formal and informal), statistics (number of visits to the site, number of comments made), review meetings, analysis of visitors' and planners' comments, full visitor survey, feedback given through the website/email address, and an extension of a programme on demand.

All of the projects evaluated were deemed to be a success. The organisers of a Manchester Central Library and Art Gallery joint project proposed to repeat the experience; the Brooklyn Expedition project (Brooklyn Public Library and Brooklyn Children's Museum, New York) led to the development of another larger collaborative project

*Heart of Brooklyn* and the Marathon County Public Library (Wausau) responded:

The biannual collaboration [with Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum] has become 'routine' for the community and the collaborators. Routine in the sense that teachers, art educators, librarians and book lovers now expect to find excellent programming and truly inspiring art to spark interest in literacy, both literal and visual. Little did the planning team realize what a pivotal experience this opportunity would prove to be for our organizations and our local community.

### *Governing bodies*

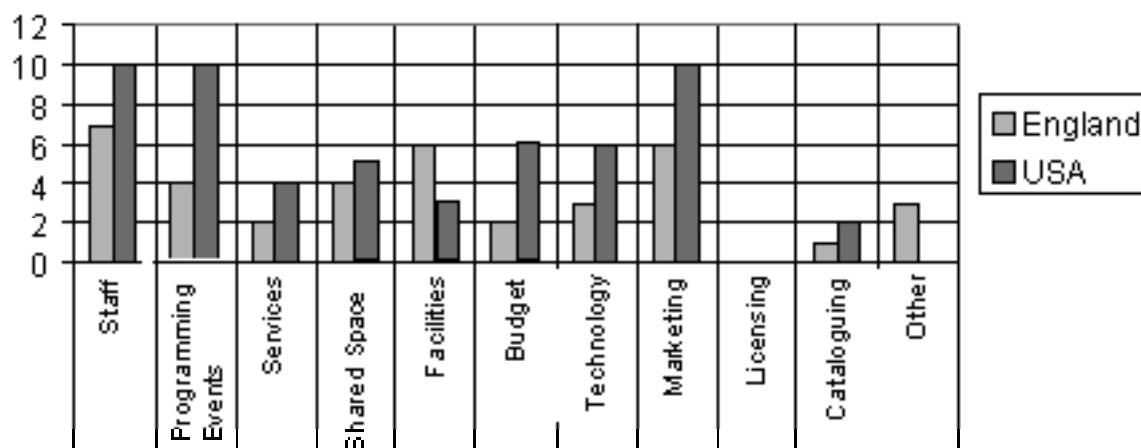
In England public libraries are governed by unitary authorities, county or borough councils, and museums by the above or by private bodies. In this survey sample, the same authority governed eight out of eleven institutions in the case studies from England and it would seem that it is local government that has the greater impact on whether a museum and library are able to collaborate. Some of the collaborations such as those in Kettering and Leamington in the UK demonstrated not only collaboration between library and museum, but also between District and Borough Councils. It was not possible to estimate, however, how far governance by different bodies discourages collaboration.

The USA presented a contrasting scenario. In all of the American collaborations the museum and library were governed by a different organisation, with a private board of directors governing many of the museums. This situation allowed more freedom for an institution to participate in collaborative projects because the board of directors had more influence over the management and budget.

### *Partners in collaboration*

It appeared that it was quite common for other partners to be involved with museum and library collaboration, although the English case studies cited a wider list of partners than the American studies. The involvement of other partners was sometimes due to the participation of funding organisations, or the need for specialist advice, for example, from the arts or educational sectors. In England the partners included councils, MLAs, local studies, arts and heritage services, record

Figure 3: Shared Resources



office/archives, adult education services, local education authority, Friends of [the museum or library], English Nature, Victoria & Albert Museum, National Gallery, other museums, libraries, and galleries, National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), industry specialists and ICT specialists. In the USA, the partners were art museums, art colleges, BLAP (Baltimore Leadership in Action) and private organisations.

### Funding

Apart from museums and libraries themselves, the Heritage Lottery Fund was a significant contributor to collaborative projects in England. Other sources of funding included the Arts Council, New Opportunities Fund (NOF), various trusts, commercial companies, private individuals, and a Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. Funding from the national MLAC and the regional MLAs did not feature to any great extent in the sample projects. This may be a result of the severely restricted and often reduced resources that the sector faces, or possibly due to the sample size of this survey.

In the USA the IMLS played a larger role in funding collaborative projects. Many of the library and museums were privately owned and collaborative projects were also privately funded through individuals, private foundations, friends' organisations and corporations. Some received local, regional or state grants.

One respondent believed that collaboration was beneficial in securing financial aid as funding agencies liked to see non-profit organisations working together to share resources.

### Management of collaborative projects

The most common form of management was a steering committee or management team headed by a project co-ordinator. This accords with Schrage's opinion, quoted by Allen and Bischoff (2002, 55) which emphasised the need for clear lines of responsibility and the facilitation of communication between the collaborating organisations. At the *Brooklyn Expedition* there was a full-time project manager and a steering committee made up of senior staff from each partner. External consultants were occasionally used. At the Exploration Center project managers from both the library and museum helped with the start of the project. When it opened to the public the head librarian managed most of the project and the Assistant Director of the library managed the close of the project. Some projects without a project coordinator encountered difficulties in communication. In one case it was noted that "prior to the appointment of a Project Manager it was very difficult to agree roles and complete the paperwork."

### Resources

Types of resources shared during museum library collaboration are shown in Figure 3. 'Other resources' included artefacts and photographic collections, training, and in one case a collection management policy.

LINC believed there was a "need to consider how the fundamental differences in the resourcing of regional museum and library bodies can be resolved" (2000, p.8), and these results showed

that organisations were sharing a number of resources successfully. It is still possible, however, that LINC was right in that improved resources to support cooperation were required in the UK.

It appeared that collaborative programming of activities (Diamant-Cohen and Sherman 2003, 102) enhanced the experience for users by combining museum and library services and staff expertise and became a benefit to both institutions.

One USA respondent found collaboration to be a “terrific way to broaden the scope of library services, to seek out new customers for reading and literacy programs and provided powerful marketing with both organizations working together.”

### *Training*

In the majority of case studies there had been no training for collaboration, although in some instances in England institutions looked to other successful collaborations in their area for direction, and in one instance in-house training events had been shared. In the USA the IMLS makes a point of funding model projects that can be transferred and used as guidelines by other institutions. In England, however, although MLACs advise on partnership both within and outside the sector, LINC’s view that there needs to be more support of collaborative projects may be justified.

It was certainly the view of Brown and Pollack (2000, 211–215) that as the number of collaborative partnerships increased staff training would be required, including planning and implementation of successful partnerships, project and time management, communication and assessing organisational capacity and commitment. A project might also require a needs assessment to identify if collaboration would be beneficial to both institutions and whether the parties could work together successfully.

### *Networking*

Although there was mention of the large organisations that support collaboration, such as MLAC and IMLS, these were not as influential as the literature review suggested, and in practice localised networks were more frequently used. In England these included various MLA regional networks and local universities, friends’ organisations and

historical research groups. In the USA some networking took place at conferences, some through museum/library email groups and local advocacy groups, and some through local education offices or arts and theatre groups.

### *Responsibility*

The contributions that the libraries and museums made to the collaboration varied. Examples of contributions that were not specific to either libraries or museums included project management, applying for grants, writing reports, planning schedules, giving staff time, acquiring funding, providing space and facilities, providing equipment, marketing, producing photographic collections and offering craft programmes. Library specific contributions mainly focused on book management, the purchase of other materials, the giving of storytime sessions and providing the research necessary for the project. Libraries were also much more likely to have the responsibility of the hardware and software maintenance and the digitisation of catalogues. The museums often provided exhibition and workshop space and the relevant artefacts. In general, the museums often co-ordinated the project, developed activity guides, designed exhibits and hosted opening receptions.

The case studies appeared to follow Schrage’s suggestion (Allen and Bishoff 2002, 56) of needing clear lines of responsibility for specific tasks. One respondent stated that the main difficulty with the division of responsibility was

If a light bulb in the library needed to be changed or an exhibit needed to be refurbished, the light bulb would be on the bottom of the list since it was not a museum need.

### *Benefits*

Many benefits from collaborative initiatives were recorded by the libraries and museums. All participating libraries and museums on both sides of the Atlantic had gained some new facilities, such as a new building, extra space for education programmes, or access to environmentally controlled areas. Improved access to collections (including through digitisation) was also widespread. Collaboration also made it possible to set up programmes, for example in literacy and parenting, which would have been impossible without the

partnership. In some cases funding for extra staff had been made available, and through shared staff expertise, guidelines and models of good practice had been established and education and outreach policies had been updated. Closer links had also been established with other institutions such as galleries and adult learning establishments.

Publicity for the collaborating services had a high impact, which led to the libraries and museums improving their public profiles. There was a greater awareness of services, for example, in an inner city neighbourhood that was previously underserved, and a better service to the whole community in general. New and updated displays and exhibitions, using more professional display techniques, attracted greater numbers of visitors and new groups of users, on first and repeat visits. The educational and heritage roles of participating libraries and museums were highlighted and the public response was enthusiastic. One museum in England also gained an important new collection.

### *Difficulties*

In England the difficulties experienced centred on management, staffing and organisational issues. As one respondent said, "prior to the appointment of a Project Manager it was very difficult to agree roles and complete the paperwork" while another said that they had difficulty "agreeing staff priorities." Experiences elsewhere showed that while the staff was willing to be flexible and to change roles, they were apprehensive about not having time for their regular duties. "Learning to share a large and highly technical building" was found to be problematic in one case. Another said that difficulties arose because "library and museum staff had a different understanding of the work and roles involved in re-display projects." It seems the library staff were willing to leave the design to external consultants or architects whereas museum staff wanted to be much more hands on and creative.

The USA projects reported difficulties with limited space and with not knowing ahead of time how many would turn up to an activity; with communication, managing budgets and co-ordination across multiple institutions; with marketing and making sure that all partners are recognised; and with different opening hours. One respondent said "the library closed at 5:30 although the muse-

um remained open until 7 pm. When the museum tried to staff the library with volunteers, books were missing, computers broken, and the area was in disarray. Training museum staff to run the circulation desk ran into difficulties regarding privacy in circulation records." Even small issues such as library staff not getting free parking, as happened at one venture, can cause ill feelings and difficulties.

### *Conclusions*

The research results show that museum library collaboration is happening successfully, with some significant similarities and differences between England and the USA. The following conclusions may be drawn:

- co-location of a museum and library may facilitate collaboration but successful collaborations can occur with non co-located partners;
- additional partners in collaboration can provide added value through expertise and funding;
- researching potential partners for a project, such as local education authorities for educational initiatives, is important;
- collaboration can be a useful tool for libraries and museums to realise their missions, meet targets and fulfil their responsibility to the community;
- joint mission statements are not necessary for a successful collaborative partnership provided that there are agreed aims and objectives;
- more potential groups of users can be accessed through collaboration, and combined resources targeted to produce better services;
- project evaluation usually leads to further collaboration;
- both short and long-term collaborative projects can be beneficial;
- defining the roles of both organisations in the partnership, appointing a project co-ordinator, and specifying clear lines of responsibility for other tasks is important;
- assessing the potential resources of both institutions is central to collaborative programming, but ideas need to be closely monitored to avoid overreaching the capabilities of resources available.

The case studies clearly demonstrate that there are considerable benefits from embarking on library-museum collaboration. Hard evidence from practice in both England and the USA validates the theory and supports the initiatives taken by of-

ficial bodies. The 'wave of the future' has become a reality, with a considerable amount of embedded potential.

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