The Digital Library Futures Project: How does e-Legal Deposit Shape Our “Digital Universe”

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Talk Overview

- Project introduction.
- What is Legal Deposit? And how did it develop?
- E-Legal Deposit: key questions and challenges.
- Conclusion – on working with libraries.
The Big Question: what will our “digital universe” look like in the future?
“Digital Library Futures”

- Two year AHRC-funded project to investigate the impact of e-Legal Deposit on UK Academic Deposit libraries:
  - Case study partners: Bodleian Libraries & Cambridge University Library.

- Focus on academic deposit libraries:
  - Shift focus away from national libraries and towards the specific problems faced within academic libraries.

- First ever public user-centric study of the impact of e-legal deposit.
  - Normally focused on technical, preservation, and long-term aspects of these collections, not contemporary usage.

- Aim to address several challenges created by tension between user and publisher rights.
What is Legal Deposit?

- Legal requirement that a person or group submit copies of their publications to a trusted repository:
- Commonly applies to:
  - Books;
  - Periodicals;
  - Pamphlets;
  - Music;
  - Maps.
- Ensures the systematic preservation of a nation’s published output.
- Deposit libraries receive copies of all printed publications, and preserve them for posterity.
The Origins of UK Legal Deposit

- 1610: Informal agreement between Sir Thomas Bodley (founder of the Bodleian Library) and the Stationer’s Company:
  - Bodleian could claim a copy of everything printed under Royal License.
- 1662: First legal framework for legal deposit in the UK – extended Royal License to Cambridge University Library.
- 1709/1710: Copyright Act under Queen Anne.
- 1753: Establishment of British Museum;
  - Until this date the Bodleian Cambridge University Libraries were the de facto national libraries of the United Kingdom.
- 1753-1911: Various minor changes, but...
Legal Deposit

• The only relevant act in the whole Twentieth Century: Copyright Act of 1911 confirmed the UK Legal Deposit Libraries:
  • British Museum Library (British Library from 1973);
  • National Library of Scotland;
  • National Library of Wales;
  • Bodleian Library;
  • Cambridge University Library;
  • Trinity College Dublin.
The introduction of e-Legal Deposit

- “Legal Deposit Libraries (Non-Print) Regulations 2013”:
  - Bring electronic publications into line with printed materials, and cover:
    - Websites;
    - e-Journals;
    - e-Books;
    - Digital Newspapers;
    - Digital Maps.

- Users can access electronic materials within the six legal deposit libraries.

- But what does this mean for us? We are attempting to investigate the following key research problems:
1.) Impact of e-legal deposit on UK academic deposit libraries.

- National and Academic Deposit libraries both share an interest in the long-term viability of legal deposit, BUT:

- Academic libraries have a primary strategic motivator:
  - To make their collections available AND useful to their current readers.

- Users are becoming accustomed to online remote access to library resources.

- Threat to publisher revenues if materials are too widely available.
2.) Usage of e-legal deposit collections within UK academic deposit libraries.

- Focus of research is on technical and preservation aspects, not users.

- Non-textual materials are totally excluded from the regulations:
  - Risk replicating loss of early cinematic movies.
  - Implied hierarchy within digital media – long term implications for how our digital collections are used.

- Differing models of providing access at different institutions.

- Balance between Intellectual Property rights and user needs – where is the sweet spot?
3.) Data-driven innovations in academic research and government policy.

- Emerging forms of digital research are enabled by access to library and archival digital resources:
  - e.g. large-scale text analysis.

- Regulatory shifts elsewhere:
  - 2014: Copyright exemption introduced to allow non-commercial text and data mining of copyrighted materials.

- Libraries changing the way they support users:
  - Digital scholarship support and outreach: e.g. BL LABS!
  - More remote support for users.

- Push-pull between site access to e-legal deposit materials, and common view of data-driven methods...
4.) Barriers to digital inclusion.

- Digital domain viewed widely as positive democratising force.
- Bodleian and Cambridge University Libraries both embed widening participation at the heart of what they do.
- But decades of work show that social inequalities can persist online.
- Legal Deposit has a number of implicit challenges to digital as inherently democratising:
  - On-site access eliminates benefits of digital in providing remote global access.
  - Access to legal deposit materials is under stricter terms than provided for in law.
Quick Reflection: The Value of LIS DREaM

• Methodology is central to this study: it’s a complex question, with national, regional and institutional contexts, and varied data sources.

• Exposure to variety of methodological approaches allows us to be more open to introducing new methods to our work.

• Benefits of professional network: I haven’t been active within LIS DREaM, but building professional networks as a PhD student helped me to develop research programmes with broader relevance.
That’s all folks...

• Thank you for listening!
• Any questions?
• Contact: p.gooding@uea.ac.uk; @pmgooding.