Collections Link Development Plan 2011-12

Produced by the Collections Trust

Contents

Executive Summary

This Development Plan for Collections Link should be read in conjunction with *Unlocking the Potential*, the Collections Trust's Strategic Plan 2011-14.

Mission

The Collections Trust helps museums and galleries unlock the potential in their Collections, people and networks.

We do this by:

- Providing know-how
- Developing and promoting excellence
- Challenging existing practices
- Pioneering new ideas
- Bringing experts together

Collections Link is the online community which enables us to deliver these aims.

Programmes

The Collections Trust's work is organised under 5 strategic programmes:

- OpenCulture
- Collections Link
- Culture Grid
- Excellence in Collections
- International

All of our Programmes are interrelated, and the aims of the other Programmes are delivered through Collections Link.

Finance

Collections Link is funded through a combination of grant-in-aid and commissioned projects. It also provides a platform for ecommerce which enables the Collections Trust to generate income to sustain our activities.

Strategic Aims

Our aim is to make Collections Link the go-to platform for networking, collaboration and professional development in Collections Management for museums, archives, libraries, galleries, private collectors and related institutions.

To do this, we will proactively develop the service in the following areas:

- Content
- Community
- Communication

An additional key aim for 2011-12 is to ensure that Collections Link is the central platform for the rollout and support of the revised Museum Accreditation Scheme, to be launched in October.

These elements form the basis of our Strategic Plan for the development of Collections Link.

Content

Our primary aim is to extend the depth and breadth of Collections Link to make it the primary source of information on the professional practices associated with Collections Management.

Scope

The scope of Collections Link is defined by the joint Collections Trust/BSI *Code of Practice for Collections Management*, which includes the following 6 key elements:

- The use of Collections to deliver services to users
- Strategic Collections Management as part of Governance
- The care and preservation of Collections
- Strategic Collections Development, including acquisitions and disposals
- The creation and management of knowledge about Collections
- Ongoing improvement in standards of Collections Management

The Collections Trust will therefore seek to bring together resources which provide professional development in these areas.

Content Policy

Collections Link will present 3 different 'facets', under which resources will be clustered:

- Subject/Collection Type
- Professional Practice
- Specific Programmes or Standards

The service will aggregate or link to the following types of resource:

- Editorial articles
- Published guidelines or factsheets
- Published Standards
- Case Studies
- Learning resources
- Video and audiovisual material
- Interactives

Individual Contributions

The ability for users to contribute their own knowledge, expertise and resources is core to the functionality of Collections Link. All Collections Link users will be encouraged to become active participants and contributors, with published resources being associated with their user profile and activity stream within the website.

Content Partnerships

Wherever possible, the Collections Trust will seek to establish Content Partnerships with key organisations and agencies.

Content Partners will be invited to:

- Submit resources directly to the site
- Enhance existing resources through keywording
- Review existing resources for relevance
- 'Curate' sections of the site
- Create and lead online groups

Content Partners will include:

- National and International agencies
- National Museums, Archives and Libraries
- Commercial organisations
- HE/FE Providers

Events Content

Collections Link hosts listings about sector events including:

- Conferences
- Seminars
- Training events
- Webinars and other online events
- Hack days

Events Content is sourced from automated feeds wherever possible. This feature will also be promoted to event organisers and partner organisations.

Standards Content

Collections Link aims to be the primary source of information about key sector standards including:

- Museum Accreditation
- Designation
- SPECTRUM 4.0
- Benchmarks in Collections Care 2.0
- BSI PAS 197 *Code of Practice for Collections Management*
- BSI PAS 198 *Environmental Management*

For each of these standards, we will publish a series of resources including:

- Entry-level information summarising the scope and purpose of the content
- Simple guidance (where available)
- Case Studies highlighting key points
- Documents for download/use
- Links to additional information and resources

During 2011-12 and in subsequent years, we will aim to make Collections Link a central repository for information about standards (for example, standards in Digitisation and in the management of Natural History collections).

Alongside the content in the core site itself, the Collections Trust will also publish and maintain the *Collections Link Standards Wiki* at http://standards.collectionslink.org.uk. This wiki will provide a platform which enables the sector to collaborate to develop future iterations of sector standards.

Collections Search

Collections Link will enable registered users to search for Collections by keyword, using a search interface powered by the *Culture Grid* (http://www.culturegrid.org.uk). As well as finding Collections, users can make contact with the host institutions of Collections, thereby offering the potential for loans and other content-based collaborations.

MDA Codes

MDA Codes are used widely in UK museums as the basis of unique object numbering systems. Museums regularly need to refer to their codes (for example when allocating accession numbers or merging data). Collections Link provides a fully searchable database of MDA Codes which enables museums instant access to this information.

IPR and Licensing

The Collections Trust is committed to ensuring that the resources made available through Collections Link are reusable in as wide a range of contexts as possible. We will therefore seek to apply the CC0 (Creative Commons Zero) license to all submitted content and to publish all resources as Open Educational Resources (OER).

Where this is not possible, we will agree specific licensing terms with content providers.

Audiovisual Content

The professional community has started to make active use of video and audio streaming to support their professional development. Our aim is to make Collections Link as engaging as possible by integrating audiovisual content alongside our other professional development resources.

Longer-term (beyond the scope of this Development Plan), we aim to launch collectionslink.tv as a media-rich professional development channel for cultural and creative organisations.

Community

Collections Link is, first and foremost, a community. It connects practitioners, supports and facilitates collaboration and encourages the formation of new connections and partnerships. Our aim is to ensure that everyone who is involved in managing Collections is a member of the Collections Link community.

Membership/Registration

Collections Link is free to use and the majority of the content will be available without Registration. All users will, however, be encouraged to register and to become active participants in the Collections Link community.

In addition to basic site registration information, we will also encourage people to share the following:

- Contact information
- Information about specific skills or specialisms
- Interests

Registration on Collections Link will be integrated with other social media platforms (specifically, LinkedIn, Facebook and twitter) to enable users to promote the site in their social streams.

We will make personal profiles searchable (see Privacy below) so that Collections Link is able to act as a skills bank for its participants.

Privacy

The Collections Trust is a Data Controller registered with the Information Commissioner. We are committed to preserving the privacy and confidentiality of our users. All Collections Link users will be provided with configurable options allowing them to define the amount of their information that is disclosed both to non-registered users and to other members of the community.

Groups

'Networks' from version 2.0 of Collections Link have now become Collections Link Groups.

Groups are more flexible and feature-rich, offering the following functionality:

- Create or join groups online
- Advertise a group to registered users
- Upload photos and video
- Share files and documents
- Create and manage group events
- Hold online discussions
- Host online surveys/questionnaires
- Publish group bulletins
- Support group email distribution

In addition to the 40+ existing Groups, the Collections Trust will work with the following to develop new groups and support services:

- Subject Specialist Networks
- Museum Development Officers
- Local/regional Special-interest Groups
- Sector Professional Groups
- Other affiliated groups (eg. in HE/FE)

Groups lie at the heart of Collections Link. We will proactively promote group membership to registered users.

Learner Development Platform

In collaboration with Blackboard (through their *Coursesites* application), the Collections Trust will be delivering a learner development platform at the URL http://learn.collectionslink.org.uk.

Learn.collectionslink.org.uk will provide online access (registered users only) to:

- Collections Management curriculum and support materials
- Digitisation curriculum and support materials
- Learning/teaching materials in Digital Heritage Research (sponsored by the AHRC)

Users will be able to 'enrol' and participate in self-directed online courses, annotate course materials and track their progress through the online system.

We aim to make this platform a key element in our future ambitions to support consistent professional development in Collections Management.

SPECTRUM Partners & Collections Trust Partners

SPECTRUM Partners are companies who provide Collections Management Systems to museums, archives and libraries.

The *SPECTRUM Partners Scheme* is a commercial Membership Scheme under which the Collections Trust will validate software platforms for compliance with the SPECTRUM standard.

The *Collections Trust Partners Scheme* is a commercial Membership Scheme under which suppliers of Collections Management products and services can advertise through Collections Link.
The Collections Trust will integrate information about the *SPECTRUM Partners Scheme* and the *Collections Trust Partners Scheme* into Collections Link, and will provide a Suppliers Database offering contact details and customer testimonials.

LinkedIn Collections Management Group

The Collections Trust is responsible for the LinkedIn Collections Management Group which includes members from the international community.

The LinkedIn Group provides an important extension to the functionality of Collections Link. We will ensure that the two platforms are appropriately integrated, so that discussions and activity on the LinkedIn group can be accessed through Collections Link.

Communication

Effective communication and marketing is essential to ensure that the Collections Management community are aware of and make active use of Collections Link.

Target Audiences

We have identified the following priority market segments for Collections Link:

Segment	Type of organisation	Target group
Collecting organisations	- Museums - Library special collections - Archives - Historic houses	- Collections Managers - Curators - Conservators - Archivists - Librarians - Custodians - Property Managers
Regional and specialist partners	- Local and regional bodies - SSNs - HE / FE - Trainers - consultants	- Hub Managers - MDOs - County Museum Officers - Curatorial Advisers - Museums Studies lecturers - Collections Trust trainers - Independent trainers
Non-institutional individuals	- Local History Groups - Preservation Societies - Private Collectors	- Secretaries / Hon Secretaries of Local History Groups - Secretaries / Hon Secretaries of preservation societies - Private collectors

Relationship Development

Our primary aim is to drive members of target audiences to build a *relationship* with Collections Link. We will therefore approach marketing across three 'stages':

- Pre-registration marketing, focussed on getting people to visit and make use of the site and to register as a user;

- Post-registration marketing, focussed on driving repeat use and encouraging users to contribute resources;

- Long-term engagement, focussed on encouraging contributors to become advocates for Collections Link in their own communities.

Communications Channels

The Collections Trust has developed a range of communications channels which can support the active promotion of Collections Link. These are listed below:

Channel	Description	Reach
Salesforce™ (direct marketing)	Collections Trust uses the Salesforce™ Customer Relationship Management tool to maintain contact information, implement and monitor campaigns.	c. 13,000 named contacts
Collections Link eNewsletter	A fortnightly newsletter issued to registered recipients containing news and links to further information. Issued and monitored using Vertical Response, integrated into Salesforce™	c. 950 named contacts (click rate up to 75%) in UK museums, archives, libraries
LinkedIn Collections Management Group	A LinkedIn group for people working in Collections Management	c. 1400 named contacts in the UK, US and Europe
OpenCulture 2011 & 2012	An annual Collections Management conference and trade fair	c. 300 'alumni' (delegates)

Channel	Description	Reach
Sector e-lists	Email lists for sector groups and networks such as the Museums Computer Group	c. 5,000 recipients
SPECTRUM/CT Partners	Mailings and other marketing collateral issued by members of the SPECTRUM and Collections Trust Partners schemes	A potential reach of up to 40,000 named individuals (true reach approx 10-20%)
European networks	Mailings and other marketing collateral issued to participants in the Collections Trust's European networks and projects	c. 3,000 non-UK recipients
twitter	twitter accounts for Collections Link and Collections Trust	c. 3,000 recipients (true reach)
OpenCulture blog	Blog edited by Collections Trust CEO	c.20,000 unique hits per month (dependent on content)

Accreditation Support

Collections Link is designed to support the Collections-related elements of the Museum Accreditation Scheme. With the announcement of the revised Accreditation Standard in October 2011, we aim to provide comprehensive and up-to-date support to UK museums.

Core Accreditation Standard

We anticipate that the core standard and related resources will be hosted on the Arts Council website. We will link directly to the core standard and the guidance material.

Supporting Guidance

We will create and host additional guidance materials on Collections Link in a specific 'Accreditation' section. This content will include information relating to BSI PAS 197 and SPECTRUM 4.0. Material relating to Accreditation will also be flagged in other sections of the site.

Groups

In addition to the existing thematic Groups on Collections Link, we will provide groups and networking for Accreditation Advisers, Museum Mentors, Museum Development Officers and related stakeholders.

Communications

We will support the ongoing communication and dissemination of the updated Accreditation Standard and related developments through Collections Link and our other communications channels.

Business Development

The Collections Trust aims to make Collections Link self-sustaining by the end of 2013. In order to achieve this, we will be pursuing the development of existing revenue streams.

Collections Link Shop

The Collections Link shop is an extension of the Collections Trust's existing publishing and retail activity.

During 2011-12, we will explore the potential for retail partnerships with other publishers and retailers to offer:

- Collections Management products
- Consultancy services
- Tickets and subscriptions
- 3rd party publications

Alongside this, we will maintain and link to the existing Collections Trust Amazon bookshop.

Advertising

Advertising and listings on Collections Link already form part of the packages of benefits for SPECTRUM and Collections Trust Partners. In the coming year, we will explore the possibility of extending this to include the ability to purchase and upload banner and skyscraper advertising (from Collections Management suppliers) online.

Events Management

The new Collections Link platform provides the ability to manage large-scale events, including bookings, registrations and pre- and post-conference support. It will therefore be used as the primary channel for the annual OpenCulture conference.

Appendix: CT Online Services

International.collectionstrustblogs.org.uk

Openculture.collectionstrustblogs.org.uk

CT Corporate blog

Collections Trust Corporate

standards.collectionslink.org.uk

learn.collectionslink.org.uk

Collections Link Shop

MDA Codes Database

Collections Link Suppliers Database

Collections Link

Culture Grid

Cultural Property Advice