Sustainable Scottish Collections Network
Feasibility Study

Dr. Beth Christie & Ann Gunn
June 2007
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Executive Summary

1.1 This study was undertaken by the Museums, Galleries and Collections Institute, University of St Andrews, to consider the feasibility of a sustainable research network bringing together those working on Scottish collections from universities, museums and galleries and other heritage agencies. The study took place between January and June 2007 and was conducted using a triangulation of research techniques: informal interviews, online questionnaire and a series of focus groups across Scotland.

1.2 The initial reaction to the proposed network was positive and supportive. All of the interviewees felt that the study was timely, reflecting current strategic change within the sector. They felt that it would provide them with access to the resources and information needed to address and cope with these demands.

1.3 The questionnaire demonstrated that some collaborative research partnerships exist between universities and the museum sector. However, of the 73% of respondents that are using collections for research, only 18% were aware of any networks that provided a service similar to that proposed in this study. Therefore, although some partnership work is happening, a large proportion is not supported by any underpinning structure or network. When asked whether they would be interested in the development of this centralised research network almost three-quarters (72%) were either very or quite interested.

1.4 The issue was taken forward, and further explored during the focus groups in relation to the practical development and the logistics surrounding the development and maintenance of such a network. Overall there was strong support for the development of some form of brokering service to develop collections-based research further. This need was particularly acute amongst the museum sector as they felt that they did not know how to initiate partnerships with the higher education community. Similarly universities need to address the decline in use of material culture within their degree programmes and re-engage with the museum sector.

1.5 It is understood that there will be a strong advocacy role throughout the developmental stage of the network, which will address the majority of the threats and weaknesses discussed, for example perceptions, sustainability, maintenance, and inclusivity.

1.6 A sustainable Scottish research network is feasible and would fill a perceived gap. It is recommended that an information exchange network should be developed that would promote and encourage the use of collections for practical research. It is suggested that it is called **Scottish Heritage and Arts Research Exchange (SHARE)**.

1.7 SHARE will provide a dual role as a broker for potential partnerships and as a searchable database for information, support, and advice, regarding various aspects of collections based research. As a centralised hub it will facilitate further partnerships across different departments and with different collections.

1.8 It is recommended that SHARE is both a virtual and real resource with many tangible outputs such as bi-annual newsletters, workshops and conferences. In response to the consultation comments, it is imperative that SHARE is realistic and does not expand beyond its need; therefore it will begin as a Scottish-wide network. However the website would be built to allow for possible expansion at a later date.
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### Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>ACE</td>
<td>Arts, Culture and Environment</td>
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<td>AHRC</td>
<td>Arts and Humanities Research Council</td>
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<td>BNE</td>
<td>Built Natural Environment</td>
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<td>CVCS</td>
<td>Centre for Cultural and Visual Studies</td>
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<td>ECA</td>
<td>Edinburgh College of Art</td>
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<td>GCU</td>
<td>Glasgow Caledonian University</td>
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<td>GSA</td>
<td>Glasgow School of Art</td>
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<td>HEI</td>
<td>Higher Education Institution</td>
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<td>HS</td>
<td>Historic Scotland</td>
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<td>MA</td>
<td>Museums Association</td>
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<td>MGCI</td>
<td>Museums, Galleries and Collections Institute</td>
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<td>MLA</td>
<td>Museums, Libraries and Archives Council</td>
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<td>National Museum of Scotland</td>
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<td>NTS</td>
<td>National Trust for Scotland</td>
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<td>QMU</td>
<td>Queen Margaret University</td>
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<td>RCAHMS</td>
<td>Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland</td>
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<tr>
<td>RGU</td>
<td>Robert Gordon University</td>
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<tr>
<td>RSAMD</td>
<td>Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama</td>
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<td>SFC</td>
<td>Scottish Funding Council</td>
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<td>Scottish Museums Council</td>
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<td>Scottish Railway Preservation Society</td>
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<td>SSN</td>
<td>Subject Specialist Network</td>
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<td>UHI</td>
<td>University of the Highlands and Islands</td>
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<td>UMIS</td>
<td>University Museums in Scotland</td>
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<td>VARIE</td>
<td>Visual Arts Research Institute, Edinburgh</td>
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Acknowledgments

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- The Scottish Funding Council for funding the feasibility study
- Our partner organisations (Visual Arts Research Institute Edinburgh (VARIE), National Museums Scotland (NMS), and Institute of Art History, University of Glasgow) and their representatives, Dr. Stacy Boldrick, Jane Carmichael and Prof. Nick Pearce
- The members of the MGCI Advisory Board
- Rachel Hunter, museum consultant
- Andy Rice, ...notjustdesign website architect and designer
- Dr. Richard Parsons at Dundee University for permission to use their online questionnaire technology
- All participants and contributors to the interviews, questionnaire and focus groups
- Helen Wilkinson at the Museums Association (MA), Stephanie Lewis at Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) and Gillian Findlay at Scottish Museums Council (SMC)
- All Human Resources Departments that administered the questionnaire on our behalf.
1 Introduction

1.1 Aim

The overall aim was to consider the feasibility of a sustainable research network bringing together researchers working on Scottish collections from universities, museums and galleries, and other heritage agencies.

The initial proposal (See Appendix A) identified the specific objectives as being:

- To examine the feasibility of using the Museums, Galleries, and Collections Institute (MGCI) at the University of St Andrews to set up sustainable collections research networks for Scotland, bringing together museums, galleries, heritage agencies such as the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) and Historic Scotland (HS), expert amateurs and the higher education community.
- To examine possible models and structures for the network, including virtual networks through the internet.

The study was coordinated by the Museums, Galleries, and Collections Institute (MGCI), which was launched in September 2005. MGCI is founded upon the expertise built up over many years of running the postgraduate Museums and Gallery Studies course, which has helped to establish St Andrews as Scotland’s leading centre for training and research in the heritage sector.

1.2 Approach

The initial proposal clearly outlined that the research should include:

- a needs assessment for collections research networks, identifying specific subject areas and thematic areas which might benefit from the pooling and sharing of expertise, knowledge, and information.
- investigation of the Scottish research base, including museum and gallery research; research in universities which does or could contribute to collections research; research in universities which might benefit from being involved in collections research, or from the results of collections research.
- consultation with partners and stakeholders, including university and museum staff and volunteers; academics; representatives from University Museums in Scotland (UMIS), Scottish Museums Council (SMC), Museums Association (MA), Museums and Libraries Association (MLA); existing Subject Specialist Networks (SSN) and other networks.
- identification of ways to involve business, the voluntary and public sectors and other organisations with an interest in the area, (e.g. Scottish Executive, local authorities, tourist boards and heritage-sector bodies such as the National Trust for Scotland, Historic Scotland (NTS), the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS)
- investigation into research-funding bodies and their funding criteria, including research councils, charitable foundations, and museum organisations, to identify possible funding streams for the recommended structure.
• preparation of a report detailing options for MGCI to act as a broker or facilitator for collections-research networks, and host for a network website, including organizational structure, staffing, and resource implications
• appointment of a Web Architect to investigate a web portal and produce a report on set-up costs, equipment needed, and ongoing costs for sustainability and maintenance.

1.3 Partners and Consultants

Four organisations were invited to become partners in the study; three accepted: Visual Arts Research Institute, Edinburgh (VARIE), National Museums Scotland (NMS), and Institute of Art History, University of Glasgow. One partnership meeting was held in January 2007 at the University of Edinburgh. During the course of the research, the partners were updated via email.

Two consultants, Andy Rice (Not Just Design) and Rachel Hunter (Hunter Consultancy) were employed to produce a web report and to moderate the focus groups, respectively.

The partners and consultants have provided practical advice and support as well as expertise and knowledge. We are grateful to them for their valuable input to the project.

1.3.1 Visual Arts Research Institute, Edinburgh (VARIE)
The Visual Arts Research Institute, Edinburgh, was established in 1999 to instigate, support and disseminate research initiatives undertaken by its Partner Institutions: the University of Edinburgh, the National Galleries of Scotland, National Museums of Scotland, and Edinburgh College of Art. The University of St Andrews and the University of Glasgow are Associate Members.

1.3.2 National Museum of Scotland (NMS)
Consultation has already taken place on ways of working collaboratively with MGCI, and the benefits of research networks emerged from those meetings. NMS is committed to partnership working and the wider museum and academic communities, as evidenced by the appointment of the National Partnerships Manager.

1.3.3 Institute of Art History, University of Glasgow
The Institute was formed in 1998 to provide a framework for promoting research projects between the Department of History of Art, Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery and Glasgow School of Art. It is currently a partner, with Birkbeck College London and the National Gallery London, in the National Inventory of European Paintings Project, which aims to assist over 130 of the UK’s museums research and catalogue data on a publicly accessible website. The project is in receipt of AHRC, Getty and Kress Foundation grants.

1.3.4 Not Just Design, Andy Rice
…it’s a way of being
The tag line emphasises our human centred approach to the business of design and how we work with people throughout the process, rather than emphasising the products that we can design and the range of design services we offer. On the one hand, it signifies the shift in the discipline of design that occurred during the 1990’s, and on the other, it focuses on the experience of design, which is the prevailing theme within this, our first decade of the 21st Century. Most importantly, however, our tag line signifies that we strive towards providing a design product, process, and
experience that will positively contribute to the well being of your organisation by nurturing communication, co-operation and collaboration. Ultimately, giving your business competitive advantage.

Recent examples of Web Developments clients include:

- www.eca.ac.uk
- www.dundee.ac.uk/design/
- www.capitalisingoncreativity.ac.uk/index.html
- www.newcraftfuturevoices.com/
- www.thehaar.org.uk

Examples of current projects include:

- Richard Demarco Foundation – AHRC funded 15,000 image database site
- School of Fine Art Web Site – Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design
- University of Dundee – Duncan of Jordanstone Website
- Canadian Northwest Territories – 1st Nation Community Website Development

1.3.5 Rachel Hunter Consultancy, Rachel Hunter, MA, MusDip
I worked for six years as a curator in a Scottish local authority museum service before going in to spend eight years with Scottish Museums Council as Museum Development Manager: bringing new museums into SMC membership, assessing museums for the Registration (now Accreditation) Scheme, advising museums on project development and organisational development, developing new resources to support museum development and contributing to internal SMC policy.

Since the end of 2003 I have been working as a museum consultant, offering a range of services: project planning, management and evaluation; expert advice to the Heritage Lottery Fund; funding advice; research; teaching (University of St Andrews, Museums & Galleries Studies diploma course) and training (museum management).

Recent projects include: assessment of applications to the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council’s Accreditation scheme; research, for the Scottish Museums Council, into the level of collections-based knowledge generated, held and in use within Scottish museums; project monitor for Heritage Lottery Fund for a number of ongoing projects; and development and provision of training for the Regional Museums Training Project, funded by the Scottish Executive’s Regional Development Challenge Fund.

1.4 Rationale

In 1999 a report commissioned by the Museums and Galleries Commission examined the state of research and scholarship in museums and galleries in the United Kingdom. This report entitled Lifting the Veil: Research and Scholarship in United Kingdom Museums and Galleries is relevant to this study as its findings are still indicative of the current debate surrounding collections-based research. Gunn and Prescott (1999:9) found that research in museums had ‘come under new pressures and closer scrutiny’ as a result of ‘shifts in funding and in the aims and objectives of museums’. It was evident that these shifts had occurred ‘in response to
changing attitudes to the provision of customer services’. Their research suggests that this period of change had ’an adverse effect upon the traditional activities associated with research and scholarship in museums’ as research no longer occupied the ‘pivotal position’ that it once did.

Despite this, the importance of research activity and output is still frequently stressed. For example, Barbara Woroncow described scholarship as ‘the bedrock of our profession’ during her presidential address at the MA conference in 1998, emphasizing that ‘without it [research] we cannot hope to deliver any of our predetermined objectives, whether at a national or local level’.

More recently the need for this kind of research was highlighted at the UMIS (University Museums in Scotland) conference, Research: Collections, Museums and Research, held in St Andrews in November 2002¹. The conference focused on the nature of research and its role within University Museums. Papers by Silber, Laurenco, (2002) and others all consider the potential role of research within museums; each presenting their own interpretation of the challenges facing the future of collections-based research.

The value of museum collections for research has also been acknowledged by the AHRC in a consultation paper on the funding of museum research projects.

[Museums] ...act as the laboratory for a great deal of research in the arts and humanities, holding the key research materials and resources from which new knowledge and understanding can be generated. They are also major users of arts and humanities research, which enables them to conserve, organise and explain their holdings, and they act as key intermediaries between the research base and a wider public... The effective delivery of the research strategy will be dependent upon successful partnerships between specialists and/or researchers in museums and galleries and their colleagues in universities. (AHRC:2007)

The AHRC has recently directed a variety of funding streams at museum research, including the Museums and Galleries Research Programme, Research Workshops, and a Collaborative Research Training Scheme, while eight museum organizations have been given academic analogue status and can apply for funds directly.

In a recent issue of Interpret Scotland Bellamy (2006) stresses that without research ‘museum collections will become forgotten and meaningless’. He advocates the need to take an interdisciplinary approach to research; to look beyond the immediate intrinsic worth of the object, towards more general themes that illuminate the story surrounding the specific object, and the broader collection.

¹ Please see website for full conference proceedings
http://www.dundee.ac.uk/umis/conference2002/programme.htm
Essentially we are trying to unlock the hidden stories within objects. To do this we need to take a more multidisciplinary approach to our collections. We can then expand the number of objects available for research from the narrow bounds of individual collections into the whole museum collection, Objects which have been neglected in terms of their artistic merit can suddenly find that they are incredibly valuable in terms of geology or technological history. (Bellamy, 2006)

This type of enthusiasm, and desire, to promote research activity needs to be maintained, and channelled into a broader network. Strategic thinking at this level will engender interdisciplinary collaborations.

In 2002 the MLA, following up recommendations from the Renaissance in the Regions Report (2002) regarding collaborations and networks, set aside funding to help develop existing and new subject specialist networks (SSNs):

[SSNs] were a key element of the original Renaissance in the Regions report. They are a way for the sector to share knowledge, expertise and collections, with the aim of improving visitors’ experience. They bring together the wider museums community, with expertise and experience from archive and library professionals. They strengthen the sector’s capacity to understand existing holdings and they extend the benefits to related collections outside the networks themselves. (MLA: 2007)

To date over £500,000 of Renaissance funding has been invested in SSNs and networks have benefited from two rounds of exploratory and implementation grants. These subject-specialist networks bring together groups of museums with common collection types to share information and expertise, develop joint projects and help museums with significant collections but no specialist curators.

SSNs are ongoing and they are becoming an invaluable resource. In 2005 the MA launched Collections for the Future, a report investigating how museum and gallery collections can best serve the needs of museum users, which endorsed the creation of SSNs. They wrote:

It is not desirable - let alone practical - for a museum to have all the expertise it requires in house. Individual museums can work together to share expertise across the sector. It will be equally if not more important to build closer links with external sources of knowledge and expertise. Links between museums and higher education are far less well developed than they might be. (MA: 2005)

SSNs are effective but there is a need to ensure that links are made to the higher education sector and that opportunities are made for interdisciplinary collaborations, between and across specialisms. Reference is also made to the value of brokers, whose role it is to build relationships and encourage joint working.

Without this kind of dedicated staff time and energy, many potential partnerships never get off the ground. With one individual being able to act as a catalyst, it becomes possible to bring in external funding and achieve results far in excess of what the partners might achieve individually. Investing in such brokers may offer a way of encouraging partnerships for areas where the subject network-based approach might not be appropriate. (MA: 2005:29)
The MA also acknowledges and refers to the value of brokering when developing partnerships between two agencies. The MA response to the AHRC consultation specifically points out that ‘many museums are missing out on the benefits collaboration has to offer because they simply do not know how to go about developing links’. They quite clearly state that ‘there is a need for one or more organisations to act as a broker, bringing together potential partners’ (MA: 2005).

These points directly support the aim of this study, as one of the proposed roles for the network is that of facilitator or broker. To this end the role of this proposed network is to underpin and add value to existing networks and SSNs, by creating directories of expertise, collections and potential research projects, thus providing a resource base from which to offer a specialist brokering service to facilitate partnerships and encourage inter-disciplinary collaborations between academic departments, museums and other heritage agencies.

1.4.1 Scottish Perspective
These issues have also been highlighted within the Scottish museums community. Partnerships and collaborations are high on the agenda of the Scottish Executive.

_The Executive believes there may be a place for a forum that brings together the collections bodies and other leading keepers of the nation’s cultural treasures, including built heritage interests. The forum would share good practice and consider joint working._ (Scottish Executive: 2006)

The Scottish Museums Council (SMC), in its response to the Museums Association’s _Collections for the Future_ commented that ‘many [networks] are long-established and can draw from amongst their members a wealth of knowledge in the form of local authority curators, academics and volunteers’. The report highlighted that the ‘lack of formal recognition and under-resourcing’ meant that such ‘networks are currently stretched beyond their limits and cannot provide the levels of support now required’.

_The opportunities for joint collaboration between national and non-national museums and galleries in subject specialist areas must be taken and enhanced, though clarity of roles and responsibilities and parity of esteem within a national or operational framework are critical if partnerships are to be meaningful. This is true not only for national advice and support programmes but in the wider context it is essential for the long-term sustainability and development of the sector._ (SMC: 2004)

The SMC has also conducted its own research relating to collections development. Following a series of consultations with museum staff throughout Scotland in early 2006, a report was published which highlighted the problems of collections research and listed some specific needs, with several relevant to this study.

- The role of SSNs was felt to be important
- Stronger links with universities and higher education bodies would be helpful
- An audit of research would identify gaps in knowledge

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o Collections web portals and e-forums would be useful, managed by one for all users

One outcome of this report was the commissioning of further research, Collections-based knowledge creation in museums by Rachel Hunter. (See section 1.5 below for further discussion of this research). Another initiative is the Collections Level Descriptions (CLD) Project, the aim of which is to deliver a sustainable and updatable online database of Scottish CLDs.

There is a wealth of knowledge and expertise throughout Scotland’s universities, which could benefit collections research if museums had a systematic way of identifying relevant experts and tapping into the knowledge base. Collaborations could also significantly enhance and extend the research capability of HEIs in Scotland. The establishment of collections-research networks has the potential to involve university researchers in a variety of new research areas and to engage them in productive relationships with the stewards of the material culture of Scotland, providing access to evidence which is often forgotten or overlooked by academic scholars. For example, there is considerable potential in the use of natural history and anthropological collections for scientific research.

This could help to address the decline in object-based research within academic institutions, as highlighted by Laurencos (2002).

Univere professors do train their students in the use of libraries and archives but seldom prepare them to use museums or collections as a source for research. And yet, the skills and competence required in object study are very different from the ones necessary for document study...Clearly, different objectives justify choices in the use of documents or of objects in research. Laurencos (2002: 7)

The proposed network then has a dual role as an advocate for increased use of collections-based research within academic institutions, and as a facilitator enabling collaborative projects to happen. Others have recognized the role of advocacy:

...advocacy is needed both at senior levels of universities at Dean and individual departmental head level to underline the value of resources, sound out the best ways of maintaining communications in person and through effective systems, and to urge the continuing value of collections-based research and teaching. Also advocacy with other funders... to explore how our all too easily marginalized area of the museum sector or research and curatorial expertise is not a dirty word. (Silber: 2003)

It is our belief that this research meets a strategic need and opportunity in Scotland. The MGCI is well placed to act as a broker for collections research networks. Its position within a university with strong links with other universities would help it to add value to the role above and beyond that played by MLA in England. Links to scholars in a wide variety of subjects and disciplines will enable us to bring an academic dimension to the networks, facilitating the matching up of interests and expertise. Such brokering will also introduce university researchers to new areas, materials and resources for research.

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3 For further information regarding CLD - http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/metadata/rslp/
1.4.2 Existing UK-wide Networks

A wide variety of museum and heritage-based networks already exist. There are well-established subject specialist networks, such as Social History Curators Group, and Geology Curators Group; thematic groupings such as Rural Museums Network, or the Sports Heritage Network. Other networks have been set up for specific projects, bringing together experts from different sectors.

Two Scottish examples, both set up with grants administered by the SMC, will serve to illustrate this. The Scotland and Medicine: Collections and Connections project, a Regional Development Challenge Fund project, brought together 13 partners representing universities, museums, libraries, tourist boards, the NHS and local authorities. The Distributed National Burns Collection was a 16-month Strategic Change Fund project, which brought together museums, libraries, archives, universities and private clubs and individuals.

These very successful collaborations have produced research outcomes which could not have been achieved by individual institutions, and have resulted in a wide variety of deliverables: databases, websites, publications and exhibitions, which could open up new areas of research. The Scotland and Medicine project was long-listed for the £100,000 Gulbenkian Prize for Museums and Galleries. But these initiatives, and others, are time-limited. While their research potential has not been fully tapped, their sustainability beyond the initial funding period is not certain.

The AHRC has offered grants under the Museum and Galleries research workshop scheme to enable collaboration to take place. One example of these workshops is the Researching History and Culture in Liverpool project, bringing together researchers from the University of Liverpool and National Museums Liverpool to identify areas for collaboration. These are for short-term projects and there is no guarantee of sustainability apart from the energy and enthusiasm of participants.

1.5 Study Overview and Methodology

This report details the findings from the feasibility study and concludes with a proposed model for a Sustainable Scottish Collections Research Network. The study was conducted using a triangulation of research techniques; informal interviews, online questionnaire and a series of focus groups. Each approach is considered and summarised in a separate section.

A proposed research network is then presented and supported by an independent Web Design Report, produced by Not Just Design. This is followed by full estimated costings, which include staffing and resource implications and ongoing expenses for sustainability and maintenance over a three and five year period. The report concludes with a summary of relevant research-funding bodies and their funding criteria, including research councils, charitable foundations and museum organizations, to identify possible funding streams for the recommended structure.

4 www.scotlandandmedicine.com
5 http://www.nationalburnscollection.com/
6 http://www.liv.ac.uk/researching_together/index.htm
The report does not include direct consultation with museum staff, beyond those representatives met through interviews, and focus groups. This was a strategic decision based upon research work that SMC began to undertake during the first month of this study. Their research considered ‘collections-based knowledge development in museums’ and involved administering questionnaires amongst the membership base of SMC. There was concern that there would be significant overlap between the two studies which would result in saturation amongst the research population i.e. the museum sector. It was decided following consultation with SMC and the consultant conducting their research, Rachel Hunter, that both studies would support and inform one another. To this end Hunter and Christie co-moderated the focus groups, presenting summaries of their respective research and providing current knowledge of the state of collections-based research in Scotland. In light of current research then, this study primarily focuses upon the use of museum collections within the Higher Education sector. (see Appendix B for a summary of Hunter’s Report for SMC)

Similarly, consultation with the voluntary sector was not sought. Research underway at Glasgow Caledonian University with local history groups and research emerging from a West of Scotland cross-sector project allowed us to concentrate on the higher education constituency7.

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7 http://www.glasgowmuseums.com/showProject.cfm?venueid=0&itemid=43
2 Informal Interviews

To understand fully the context within which this study took place we undertook a period of consultation with partners and stakeholders including university and museum staff, academics and representatives from UMIS, MA, MLA and SMC.

2.1 Format

Each interview was informal in nature, with the joint aims of gathering information about the individual or organisation, and gaining an insight into their needs and values.

The interviews were neither recorded nor formally transcribed, although notes were taken, and kept as a record of the meeting. This process helped to form a comprehensive understanding of the current climate of the museum sector in relation to the research proposal and the aims of the project.

This period of consultation ran throughout February and early March 2007.

2.2 Population

Each interviewee was contacted in the first instance and sent a copy of the research proposal so that they could familiarise themselves with the project. A date was set and a meeting was scheduled at their location. A set interview schedule was prepared; however it was not adhered to rigidly, and served to act as a prompt if required. (See appendix C for Interview schedule)

Table 2.1 Informal Interview Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freelance Consultant</td>
<td>Rachel Hunter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Scotland</td>
<td>Richard Welander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Scotland</td>
<td>Hugh Morrison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museums Association</td>
<td>Helen Wilkinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museums, Libraries and Archives Council</td>
<td>Stephanie Lewis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Inventory Research Project</td>
<td>Andrew Greg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Museums Scotland</td>
<td>Jane Carmichael, David Clark, Jilly Burns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Museums Training Development Project</td>
<td>Mary Lewis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland and Medicine</td>
<td>Dawn Kemp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Museums Council</td>
<td>Gillian Findlay, Fiona Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Museums In Scotland</td>
<td>Matthew Jarron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Glasgow</td>
<td>Nick Pearce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of St Andrews</td>
<td>Ian Carradice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Research Institute, Edinburgh</td>
<td>Stacy Boldrick</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 Notes

There are a variety of initiatives underway which demonstrate what can be achieved by partnerships and collaborations and which can be used as models. For example, the University of Dundee has held interdepartmental thematic forums e.g. looking at colour.
Currently, National Museums Scotland is working with a number of partners nationally and internationally. In support of this commitment they have recently appointed a National Partnerships Manager whose remit is to initiate and maintain collaborative ventures.

Across the UK, the National Inventory Research Project, is sending researchers into museums to catalogue European paintings. Thus brokering partnerships and also giving invaluable experience to the young art historians undertaking the research.

One issue, which re-surfaced during the focus groups, was that of verification or accreditation of experts on the proposed directory of expertise. The Scottish Conservation Bureau (Historic Scotland) was cited as an example of accreditation and possibly a model of good practice should the network be developed.

There was some concern noted regarding the parity of esteem and the potential perceptions and barriers that may arise if the network were seen as too elitist. This could be addressed through advocacy, whereby the benefit of the network could be highlighted and demonstrated to each potential member organization, thus helping to reduce any barriers.

The issue of sustainability was raised in relation to partnership development, as there was some concern over the network’s role in terms of leading the organization through the collaborative process. It was stressed that this could prove to be time consuming and that it may be more constructive to provide support in the first instance until the partnership was established, before encouraging the projects to become self-sufficient. This reinforces the need to highlight and stress the network’s brokering role.

There was some concern that any increase in profile may increase the need for access to collections, which would increase museum staff workload. This issue is addressed in the Focus Group section.

Monitoring of hits on the website might provide useful statistics for MLA Accreditation applications.

2.4 Summary

The initial reaction to the proposed network was positive and supportive. All of the interviewees felt that the study was very timely as it reflected current strategic change within the sector and provided the resources and information needed to address that.

As the interviews provided an insight into the initial reaction to the network, they informed the structure and detail of the questionnaire. This was a useful exercise as it helped to refine the questionnaire and ensure that we were asking relevant questions.

Any concerns raised during the interviews were also discussed during the focus groups and so have been incorporated into the proposed research network.
3 Questionnaire

An online questionnaire was the most suitable method for data collection given the potential size of the population i.e. the academic community in Scotland. As it was available online it was easy to administer and simple to complete and return. This was beneficial given the short time frame.

In 2007 the Learning Enhancement Unit at the University of Dundee developed a programme that creates and hosts an online questionnaire. We adapted this programme, with permission, to suit our needs and so developed a short online questionnaire that could be accessed via a link within an email.

3.1 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire design was informal and the overall length was short, taking approximately five minutes to complete. The main aim was to determine whether museum collections were being used within Scottish Universities, and if so, for what purpose. We were also keen to know whether there was an interest in the potential development of a research network that would support links between academic- and collections-based knowledge transfer. See Appendix E for a copy of the questionnaire.

3.2 Pilot

The questionnaire was developed within MGCI and piloted within the Schools of Art History, History, Classics, and Biology at the University of St Andrews. It was sent to approximately 20 academics and nine responded, giving an acceptable response rate of 45%. All of the respondents were able to access and complete the questionnaire successfully. The results from the pilot study demonstrated that the questionnaire was a sound and consistent instrument; therefore, no further modifications were made.

As no changes were made to the questionnaire following the pilot study, we were able to incorporate those responses into the final data set.

3.3 Population

The questionnaire was aimed both at those people who currently use museum collections for research, and those departments that may never have considered using them. To this end, the questionnaire was sent to departments where there was no immediately obvious connection to collections-based knowledge. This ensured that a variety of academics in Scottish Universities were given the opportunity to participate in the study and prevented the sole inclusion of those departments that had prior links to the museum sector. It was hoped that the questionnaire might produce some interesting results by highlighting links between the museum and academic community that had been overlooked.

We also wanted to use the questionnaire as an awareness-raising tool by highlighting the use of collections-based knowledge and promoting its potential as an untapped research resource.

3.4 Response Rates

The questionnaire was sent out to a select sample of departments within each of the universities in Scotland. The departments were selected using a strategic sampling technique, whereby we
purposively selected departments to ensure that a variety was targeted at each of the universities, without repetition and with a good geographical distribution. The subject areas were selected to ensure inclusivity, however the host university was selected at random from those offering that specialism. In total 47 departments, schools or colleges were targeted at 18 institutions (See Fig 3.1 for Sampling Frame).

The response rate was 10% (53 respondents). This was lower than we had hoped to attain, however it was sufficient to provide an insight into the ways in which collections were, or were not, being used for research. The quality of the responses and the mixture of types, for example lecturers from fashion and textiles, physics, and geography, provided some useful information for the focus groups. No statistical analysis was carried out as the response rates were too low. (See Fig 3.2 for Respondents)

There was an element of self selection amongst the respondents, as there was a tendency for those who already had an interest in the research topic to complete the questionnaire. This issue was foreseen, and partially accounted for in the design; all potential respondents were invited to complete the questionnaire whether they used collections or not. However, this bias produced slightly inflated results and so it has to be acknowledged. This issue was considered at the MGCI board meeting in April, where it was concluded that this was not necessarily indicative of the current situation in all Scottish universities at that time. The Board’s collective expertise and knowledge of the field led them to a similar conclusion; the figure was slightly inflated and it was a direct reflection of the selective bias of the respondents.

3.5 Distribution

A phone call was made to each of the Human Resources Departments in each of the institutions, and their advice was sought regarding distribution. Most departments administered the questionnaire, via email, on our behalf. We created a standard email and Human Resource departments at each university forwarded this on. This helped to standardise the distribution process. (See Appendix D for the Email Questionnaire Proforma)

The data was collated and analysed immediately after the final return date for the questionnaire. The questionnaire website remained open after the final date to accommodate any late returns, of which there were none.
### Fig 3.1 Sampling Frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Department/ School College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen</td>
<td>Biology, Medicine, Geosciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abertay</td>
<td>Social and Health Sciences, Division of Sport and Leisure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundee</td>
<td>Architecture, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Humanities, Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>Music, History of Art, Chemistry, Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh College of Art</td>
<td>Centre for Visual and Cultural Studies, Fine Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>Dentistry, Classics, Archaeology, Art History, History, Sociology, Anthropology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow Caledonian</td>
<td>Built and Natural Environment, Engineering Science &amp; Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow School of Art</td>
<td>Fine Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heriot Watt</td>
<td>Textile Design, Mathematical and Computer Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Napier</td>
<td>Music, Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paisley</td>
<td>Media, Language, Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen Margaret</td>
<td>Business and Enterprise, Drama and Creative Industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Gordon</td>
<td>Gray’s School of Art, Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSAMD</td>
<td>Music, Drama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Andrews</td>
<td>Physics and Astronomy, Divinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stirling</td>
<td>Social Science, Biology and Environmental Sciences, Environmental History and Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathclyde</td>
<td>Physics, Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UHI</td>
<td>Gaelic, Cultural Studies, Land and Sea-based industries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.6 Findings

The first question asked referred to the current research themes within their departments, and the respondent’s knowledge of any collections that may be relevant to them.

Table 3.1 Question 1 Are you aware of any museum collections that may be relevant to your research?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 (78%)</td>
<td>7 (14%)</td>
<td>4 (8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 51
Fig 3.3 Question 1. Are you aware of any museum collections that may be relevant to your research?

![Pie chart showing awareness of museum collections](image)

The response to this question indicates that over three-quarters of respondents were aware of museums collections that were relevant to their research themes, though this is probably due to the self-selection bias mentioned above.

Table 3.2 Question 2. Currently are museum collections used within research in your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34 (68%)</td>
<td>5 (10%)</td>
<td>11 (22%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 50
Currently are museum collections used within research in your school?

Over two-thirds of the respondents currently used collections for research. This shows that not only are the respondents aware of the links that could be made between museum collections and research, they are actively pursuing collaborations.

The questionnaire asked those respondents who had answered ‘yes’ to question two, to qualify their answer by describing the types of collection they were researching. There was a variety of collections being used, for example: zoology, textiles, geology, archaeology, photography, musical instruments, skeletal material and costume collections. (See Appendix F for a full list)

Table 3.3 Question 3. If you currently make use of any museum collections for research, who made the approach?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>You to the museum</th>
<th>Museum to you</th>
<th>Joint development</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17 (39%)</td>
<td>0 (14%)</td>
<td>6 (14%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>20 (45%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 44
To understand the way in which the research collaborations were initiated and developed we asked those respondents who currently used museum collections for research to consider who made the approach.

The majority of respondents (45%) felt that the question did not apply to them, however 39% approached the museum, and only 14% of the research undertaken had arisen through joint development. No respondents felt that museums had approached them concerning collaborative research. This may reflect the fact that universities generally have stronger links and more access to funding for research and therefore are continually looking to develop research projects for students and/or staff, but it seems museums do not approach universities for collaborative projects.

The next question explored this issue further by defining the purpose of the collaboration: ‘For what purpose was the collaboration developed?’ There was a variety of answers, (see Appendix G for responses) most of which centred on developing research collaborations for a set task, for example:

_We’ve collaborated on conferences and held seminars both at postdoctoral level and for teaching undergrads, particularly about paintings in NGS. In collaboration with colleagues in English and History, we’re organising a series of seminars based on internationally important Renaissance/ Early Modern Collections in Edinburgh, starting with jointly organised seminars at NMS (majolica) and NLS (Early modern literary texts). Many of our undergraduate and postgraduate students do research on aspects of the collections and use files at museums plus expertise of staff. I’ve used drawings in articles and am presently writing a book on Renaissance nudes which uses NGS collections, though not exclusively._
Clearly the need for a collaborative approach to research is evident here on a variety of levels; from an individual academic perspective, from a teaching perspective and from an interdisciplinary perspective.

Having established that collections-based research was happening within universities we wanted to know more about the level of the research being undertaken. So we asked the respondents to classify their research. They were able to select more than one option and therefore the sum is greater than 100%.

Table 3.4 Question 5. What level of research is being undertaken?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U. grad.</th>
<th>P. grad.</th>
<th>PhD</th>
<th>Post-Doc</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 (34%)</td>
<td>16 (36%)</td>
<td>17 (39%)</td>
<td>23 (52%)</td>
<td>11 (25%)</td>
<td>10 (23%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 44

Figure 3.6 Question 5. What level of research is being undertaken?

Research is being undertaken at all levels. Those answering ‘other’ described their research, for example: ‘lecturing to the general public’, ‘non–funded voluntary research’, ‘Leverhulme Artist residency at NMS’ or ‘to further personal enquiry into processes of taxidermy’.
Table 3.5  Question 6. What are, or were, the research outcomes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dissertation</th>
<th>Thesis</th>
<th>Research Paper</th>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Book</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14 (41%)</td>
<td>10 (30%)</td>
<td>21 (62%)</td>
<td>15 (44%)</td>
<td>14 (41%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Catalogue</th>
<th>Exhibition</th>
<th>Conference Paper</th>
<th>Increased Knowledge of Collections</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 (15%)</td>
<td>11 (32%)</td>
<td>18 (53%)</td>
<td>15 (44%)</td>
<td>6 (18%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 34

Fig 3.7  Question 6. What are, or were, the research outcomes?

Again those answering ‘other’ were asked to provide details. Respondents were able to select more than one option therefore the sum is greater than 100%.
The responses were fairly evenly distributed and most of the outcomes centred on conferences, articles, books, dissertations, and knowledge creation. Examples of ‘other’ outcomes were: ‘book chapter’, ‘Historical reports’, ‘design collection of either fashion or textiles’, ‘creation of new university museum’.

Table 3.6  Question 7. Would you consider using museum collections for research in the future?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41 (87%)</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
<td>4 (9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 47

Fig. 3.8  Question 7. Would you consider using museum collections for research in the future?

Over three quarters (87 % of the respondents) stated that they would which is an increase on the numbers who currently use collections; this increase could be attributable to the questionnaire working effectively as an advocate for collections-based research.
Table 3.7 Question 8. How interested would you be in the development of a Scottish Collections Research Network?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest Level</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very interested</td>
<td>16 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite interested</td>
<td>19 (39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither interested nor uninterested</td>
<td>8 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very interested</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all interested</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>4 (8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 49

Fig. 3.9 Question 8. How interested would you be in the development of a Scottish Collections Research Network?

How interested would you be in the development of a Scottish Collections Research Network?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of interest</th>
<th>% Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very interested</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite interested</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither interested nor uninterested</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very interested</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all interested</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- Very interested
- Quite interested
- Neither interested nor uninterested
- Not very interested
- Not at all interested
- Don’t know
Question eight asked whether respondents would be interested in the development of a Scottish Collections Research Network, as described at the start of the questionnaire. The majority were either very interested or quite interested. Only 4% were not at all interested, and 8% did not know.

Table 3.8  Question 9. Are you aware of any networks that already provide this service?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n (%)</td>
<td>7 (14%)</td>
<td>35 (72%)</td>
<td>7 (14%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost three quarters (72%) were not aware of any similar network, however 14% were aware of, for example:

- Natural Sciences Collections Association (NatSCA)
- University Museums in Scotland (UMIS)
- UK Maritime Curators Group
- Musical Instrument Subject Specialist Network (MISSN).
Table 3.9 Question 10: Would you be willing to provide specialist expertise to networks?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(62%)</td>
<td>(12%)</td>
<td>(26%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 50

Fig. 3.11 Question 10: Would you be willing to provide specialist expertise to networks?

The final three questions referred to the respondents’ willingness to become more involved with the feasibility study. We began by asking if they would be willing to provide specialist expertise to museums. Over two-thirds (62%) were willing, 12% refused and a quarter (26%) did not know.

Table 3.10 Question 11. Would you be willing to contribute to informal follow-up discussions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(64%)</td>
<td>(18%)</td>
<td>(18%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 50
Fig. 3.12 Question 11. Would you be willing to contribute to informal follow-up discussions?

Question 11 asked whether they would be willing to contribute to informal follow-up discussions regarding this research. Again over two-thirds (64%) were willing to contribute, however 18% refused and 18% did not know whether they would or not.

Table 3.11 Question 12. Would you be interested in attending formal workshops?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(40%)</td>
<td>(30%)</td>
<td>(30%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 50
Fig 3.13  Question 12. Would you be interested in attending formal workshops?

Would you be interested in attending formal workshops?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was an option to leave contact details and to add any other comments, suggestions, or questions. Those who did were later contacted about the focus groups.

3.7  Summary

The questionnaire results provide an interesting insight into the way in which collections are being, or not being, used within the universities across Scotland.

Despite the inflated results, the questionnaire clearly demonstrates that collections are being used for research in some departments across Scotland. In some instances specialist networks, such as Natsca, UMIS, UK Maritime Curators group, inform this. However, of the 73% of respondents that currently use collections for research, only 18% were aware of any networks that provide a service similar to that proposed in this study. Despite the existence of some networks, 72% of respondents were still either very, or quite, interested in the development of a Scottish Collections Research Network, thus reinforcing the need for a network or structure to underpin and support current, and future, collaborative projects.

It is proposed then that a network would help to generate further partnerships across different departments, and with different collections, as well as acting as a hub, helping to bring all of the existing collaborations together into one central point. The proposed network could provide a dual role as a broker for potential partnerships and as a searchable database for information, support, and advice regarding various aspects of collections-based research.

The low response rate demonstrates that there is a real need for advocacy to initiate interest and support for the network. This point is further reinforced in the summary of the following section on focus groups.
4 Focus Groups

Focus groups were used to bring a greater understanding to the results produced by the questionnaire. Where the questionnaire was able to provide a general overview, the focus groups were able to bring individual representation and perspective to that data. As Morgan, (1997) states ‘the hallmark of focus groups is their explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group’.

4.1 Logistics

Focus groups were undertaken in three locations across Scotland: the Museum of Religious Life and Art, Glasgow; University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, and the University of St Andrews, St Andrews. These events ran throughout May with the aim of discussing and exploring the need for a research network and, if it were deemed to be necessary, the form that it would take. Originally we had intended to run a focus group in Inverness; however due to limited responses, we invited those people who had expressed an interest to attend one of the other sessions.

Invitations were sent out to regional and national museums, representatives from heritage agencies, academics, curators and volunteers that had been identified and approached through the questionnaire. We were keen to ensure that there was equal representation from all potential sectors, as we wanted the discussion to be balanced and comprehensive. Each focus group ran with an average of seven participants, and 22 people attended in total. Please see the table of participants below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>No.</th>
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<td>Queen Margaret College</td>
<td>Theatre Design</td>
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<td>National Galleries</td>
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<td>Glasgow Museums</td>
<td>Resource Centre</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunterian</td>
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4.2 Format

Christie and Hunter moderated each session. Christie focused on data collection whilst Hunter facilitated. All of the events followed a similar format to ensure a rigorous and standardised approach to the data collection. (see Appendix H for Focus Group Agenda). Christie began with an introduction and short presentation on her research; this was followed by a short presentation by Hunter outlining the results from her research with SMC. This led into an open discussion regarding the initial reaction to the research and the concept of the network. In groups of three, the participants worked with the SWOT analysis as a framework for refining and categorising the points raised in the open discussion. To finish, each breakout group fed the results of their SWOT analysis back to the larger group.

The participants were invited to comment on their own and each other’s SWOT analysis until they felt that each of their views had been represented accurately. The process of self-reflection acted as a form of inter rater reliability as it allowed the data to be interpreted by all of the participants. This gave the data transparency and increased reliability. As the focus groups were introduced to understand further the participant’s subjective viewpoint, it was important to encourage comment immediately after the session.

The notes from each session were processed and emailed back to the participants as a formal recognition of their input to the research. This process of phenomenological validity gave the respondents the opportunity to reconsider the findings from the day and to comment upon those findings with hindsight. No amendments were made following this process.

The proposed model of the network was introduced to focus the discussion and SWOT-analysis sessions. This model provided a platform for discussion surrounding the practicalities and logistics of its development. The model assumes that the network would be represented by some form of website. This website would be hosted by the Museums, Galleries and Collections Institute (MGCI), which is part of the School of Art History, which in turn forms part of the larger University of St Andrews website. The top strand of the model, coming out of the central proposed network section, illustrates this.
The website (as represented by the central proposed network section) would contain:

- **A directory of research projects**: for example, collections looking for research, projects looking for information, projects looking for partners.
- **A directory of expertise**: for example, postgraduate students looking for research experience, expert amateurs, listing of existing expertise.
- **A directory of networks**: for example, links available to SSNs and other networks.
- **A discussion list / forum**: where members can post questions or ask for advice, post information about networks under development.

It must be reiterated that at this stage the model was open to interpretation and modification, and was only introduced to aid discussion. It was not presented as a definitive recommendation.
4.3 Findings

Following the process of iterative analysis the findings from each of the individual focus
groups have been considered and presented in this section comprehensively under the
headings of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

These four main categories are further broken down into sub-categories or themes. These
themes were not predetermined; they represent the way the data emerged during the analysis
phase. Under each theme, examples of the comments, as written on the SWOT analysis,
demonstrate the notes that were recorded by the participants. This helps to illuminate the
research process and to clarify the analysis. Some of the findings fall into one or more of the
four main categories as well as the sub-categories; to represent the overlap cross-posted data
has been highlighted.

4.3.1 Strengths

Fig 4.2 Summary of Strengths

- Role of the network
- Advocacy
- Inclusivity
- Interdisciplinarity
- Research Culture

**Role of the network**
- Market place for research
- Provide an intermediary between museum, research and community
- Strength in the directories
- Centralised information service
- Ability to communicate distributed resources

The strength of the proposed network lies in its main role as a market place for research. In
very simplistic terms, it will provide a comprehensive centralised information service that
will help to facilitate and broker collaborative partnerships between those with collections to
research, and those willing to undertake the research. It serves to fill a gap in the sector by
pooling existing and specifically compiled information together in one comprehensive and
accessible location. Therefore it will not replace nor overlap with current knowledge; instead
it seeks to add value to it by broadening and promoting its accessibility.

**Advocacy**
- Makes collections research highly visible.
- Might provide rationale for funding
- Justify resource use
- Raise issue of research with funders and politicians
- Opportunities for outcomes
• Expansion of collection-based research
• Raise status of research in museums and museums in research

There was a definite sense that the network should have a strategic role in terms of promoting collections research and maintaining its visibility to funding bodies and other political agencies. It was suggested that if the website could monitor and/or evaluate its usage in a way that produced tangible statistical data then this evidence could be used to demonstrate the value of collections research and so provide a rationale to generate funding and support for the future.

There was a general feeling that current degree courses, such as art history or archaeology, with more theoretical approaches and methods in teaching, did not engage with collections in the way that they used to. Museums need scientists trained in systematics and taxonomy rather than molecular biology, and historians concerned with local and social history. As a result there is a gap in knowledge and expertise between new graduates and the traditional curatorial role. This was not researched as part of this study and so it is difficult to comment on the extent and validity of this claim. However, if this is the case then the network’s strength lies in its ability to advocate the role of collections-based research within Higher Education in Scotland. Therefore, the network would be regarded as an advocate for investment in and commitment to collections-based research.

Inclusivity
• Inclusive
• Universally accessible
• Facilitating access to all collections, including little-known and under-researched collections
• A REAL network with partners of equal weight

The inclusive and accessible nature of the network was highlighted as a major strength. The network plans to incorporate a diverse range of organisations and institutions such as large, national museums, small, local museums, academic institutions and local-interest groups. Subsequently, its strength and ultimate success will lie, in part, in its ability to be comprehensive and non-discriminatory.

Interdisciplinary
• Multidisciplinary
• Potential for interdisciplinary approach
• Links to websites for international university networks
• Engaging with experts and enthusiasts
• Potential for skills learning

The potential for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary collaborations to be ‘brokered’ through the proposed network was assumed as a definite strength. The proposed network will have the capacity to host a directory of experts, for example a database of existing knowledge, either through links to established SSNs, publications lists or biographies of ‘experts’. This function would allow those people who are considering conducting research in a given area to know who is currently researching that field, who has knowledge or expertise in that area, and whether there are relevant collections needing to be researched.
This may then lead to potential collaboration between two or more very different subject areas.

**Research culture**
- *Weak research culture in museums*
- *Universities have vested interest (marginalized in museums)*

It was stressed that currently there is a weak research culture within the majority of museums. This stems from the fact that they are often under resourced and without the time or staff required to undertake extensive or prolonged research on their collections. The same cannot be said of universities, as research is regarded as integral to academic life and there is a long and established culture to support this type of activity. Therefore, there is strength to be found in the symbiotic relationship that could develop between the two research cultures as they could help to support one another. For example, the museum sector could benefit from the strong research culture of the university and enjoy access to funding streams and academic support, and the university could benefit from the access to research material and the knowledge and expertise of curatorial staff. Thus, a beneficial partnership could develop that helps to widen each partner’s research culture and portfolio.

4.3.3 Weaknesses

**Fig 4.3 Summary of Weaknesses**

- **Sustainability**
- **Originality**
- **Ownership/ Identity**
- **Inclusivity**
- **Overload**
- **Elements missing from Model**

**Sustainability**
- *Sustainability – keeping information current*
- *Maintenance*
- *Needs updating regularly*
- *Evaluation / monitoring*

The majority of the concerns raised focused on the concept of sustainability, both in terms of the issue of maintenance and the issue of funding. This is a real concern as the network will have to develop a strategy that will ensure its long-term self-sustainability. This issue has been addressed in the Web Design section of this report, where full estimated costings are given which outline the financial and practical commitment required to maintain the website aspect of the network beyond the initial developmental phase. The funding section of this report considers the various financial options that are available to help with the developmental phase, however thought needs to be given to the long-term implications and commitments that are required to maintain this website and any other proposed outcomes, for
example conferences, seminars or newsletters. These issues are explored and addressed in the recommendations section.

**Originality**

- Difficulty finding usefully effective niche
- Duplication with other groups
- Number of existing networks

This is an important point and one of the reasons why we carried out an extensive consultation process to ensure that we were providing an original service that meets a need within the sector. Currently there are a number of established SSNs and other specialist networks that are already providing advice, support, and expertise. It is not our intention to duplicate or undermine their efforts; in fact we are proposing to underpin their work by adding value and increased profile to their service. We are aiming to offer a centralised service which will host links to all of the existing networks.

**Ownership / Identity**

- Must have comprehensive support of museums
- Not just museum centred or university centred but a Scottish Network

It was felt that the network should have its own identity, that is it should neither be museum nor university centred. Concern was expressed that the network may end up being used as a vehicle to promote the University of St Andrews’ own research agenda and so lose some of its integrity and value. To combat this it was suggested that the network should be labelled and promoted as a Scottish Network, and although it would be ‘hosted’ by the University of St Andrews, it would not be use as a promotional tool for its gain. This issue closely relates to the theme of Inclusivity in this category (Weaknesses) and in the Strengths category. For the network to be inclusive it must be accessible, and therefore it must develop its own identity as an impartial intermediary between the museum and academic sectors.

**Overload**

- Dependent on engagement with overstretched collections staff
- Capacity to deal with interest
- Delivering access when demand exceeds provision
- Lack of time and resources
- Student supervision

Museum staff expressed concern that, although they were in favour of the network in terms of the potential for collaborative projects, they felt that they were unsure of their capacity to cope with increase in demand. Currently collections staff are overstretched and constrained by lack of resources, therefore they felt that on a personal, individual level they may not have the time to participate in the network, and in terms of the museum, they may not be able to deliver access when demand exceeds provision. For example, posting their collection on the website may raise its profile and therefore generate more demand for access which in turn requires collections staff to facilitate the visit and so reduces the time that they may have to spend on another aspect of their job.
Time and commitment are also required to help to supervise any student or researcher that comes out to work on a collection as part of a collaborative project. Some collections staff felt that they had neither the experience necessary to do this nor the means. This could be addressed by the development of a skills-training section within the network, whereby collections staff could be guided and supported through this part of the project.

**Inclusivity**

- **Lack of inclusivity**
- **How comprehensive can it be?**
- **What happens if it becomes an incomplete network?**
- **Presumption of access to computers**
- **Lack of standard terminology**

This issue is the antithesis of the theme inclusivity in the Strengths category. Here the network is questioned due to its lack of inclusivity as it could potentially exclude participation for a variety of reasons for example the presumption that everyone has access to computers, or the lack of a standard terminology. There is a concern that due to the scale and scope of the proposed network there is a danger that it fails to be comprehensive and truly inclusive. The participants then posed the question, ‘what happens if it is an incomplete network?’ It was accepted that there would be an element of uncertainty surrounding this question, as it cannot be answered at this stage or the development stage because engagement cannot be guaranteed. Therefore we would suggest running a pilot of the network and accepting that it will not be comprehensive at the outset but that ‘inclusivity’ is ultimately what we are working towards. (See the proposed research network section for further discussion)

**Elements missing from model**

- **Funding**
- **Disclaimer (quality control)**
- **Enquiries filter**
- **Directory of collections**
- **Intangible (oral) heritage**
- **Output – as personal contact is lost and that is often more effective**

These points were raised in direct response to the proposed model (as illustrated in Fig 3.1 Proposed Model). It was noted that there should be a funding section available on the website whereby funding opportunities could be raised and posted, for example when grant submission deadlines were approaching or when new funding opportunities were available. This section would allow participants to see where they could access resources and allow potential funders to promote their bursaries.

In relation to the directory of experts, it was felt that there should be some form of quality control in place here to ensure that those people who were posting their details as experts were in fact specialist in their given field. This concern was expressed in relation to the potential problems that could arise if a partnership were entered into and the so-called expert turned out not to be *bona fide*. After investigation this issue could be addressed by ensuring that there was an adequate disclaimer visible on the website, which would explain that the network was not responsible for the verification of the ‘experts’ and that this must be carried...
out at the participants’ own discretion. In short, it could be dealt with by introducing a few simple precautionary measures.

As with the theme of overload (Weaknesses category, see above) there was some uncertainty surrounding the possibility of an influx of enquiries following the launch of the network. This would be due to the increased visibility of certain collections. Therefore the issue of an enquiries filter was discussed alongside the possibility of hiding personal and staff emails so that they were not readily accessible to anyone browsing the Internet. The web design report addresses this issue and explains the steps that can be taken when building a website that will allow personal contact details to be hidden and so allow enquiries to be filtered accordingly. (see the web design report for further discussion of this issue)

4.3.4 Opportunities

**Fig. 4.4 Summary of Opportunities**

- **Website to house**
- **Collaboration**
- **Links / Contacts**
- **Collections management**

**Website to house**

- *A directory of expertise*
- *Register pieces of work undertaken*
- *Understand what has been done*
- *Facilitate a higher level of targeted enquiry*
- *Filter some general enquiries*

The website was seen as an opportunity to bring together various aspects of knowledge, resources, and information in one centralized database. This would provide searchable directories of expertise and registers of work that has been undertaken. One participant described it as ‘trying to bring together that which we know we don’t know’. This was accepted as one aspect of the network, however a further role would be to provide information about that which we do know through a register or directory of work that has been undertaken.

This issue of filtering enquiries and ensuring that members of the network were not overloaded with enquiries was mentioned within this section as it was felt that there was an opportunity to facilitate a higher level of targeted enquiry. This was welcomed as many felt that it would help to filter some general enquiries which in turn may help to ease some of the current workload and prevent any further increase. This issue relates to, and addresses, the previous theme of overload in the weaknesses category.
Collaboration

- Opportunity to provide collaboration beyond the registered museum sector
- Student projects / student placements
- Undergraduate research – unpaid!
- Smaller museums to become engaged with research activity and output
- Interdisciplinary / transdisciplinary
- Mutual learning
- PhD / Postgraduates
- Achievable as a national network
- Curators’ knowledge

The extensive opportunity for collaboration was recognised at each focus group. It was noted that the network would provide opportunities for collaboration beyond the registered museum sector and so allow smaller museums to become engaged with research activity and output. The opportunity to develop and create research projects and placements for undergraduate and postgraduate students was also highlighted.

Words such as interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary were used to describe the myriad ways in which partnerships could be developed between sectors, departments, institutions, and organisations. One of the important factors underpinning the success of these proposed collaborative opportunities was the sense that this network would be ‘achievable as a national network’.

From the outset, the network has been proposed as a national system, and this geographical limitation was interpreted as an opportunity for success. It was felt that the size of Scotland and the proximity of organisations and institutions would help to make the network more achievable.

Links / Contacts

- New contact with other networks / specialisms
- Links to other websites / SSNs- to raise profile / visibility
- Long-term relationships
- Specialist organisations outwith Scotland

This follows on from the previous theme of collaboration; representing the view that the directory of networks, as it appears in the proposed model, could provide opportunities for advocacy and further collaboration. This could be achieved by linking to other networks, SSNs, or specialist websites. The profile of the network would be raised and so it would become more visible. This would be desirable as it would help to promote the network, encouraging its use and therefore justifying its existence. As stated previously under the originality theme in the weaknesses category, the role of the network is to underpin and enhance existing partnerships and collaborations.

Collections Management

- Improved collection documentation
- Expand collections records and accessioning of more objects
- Improved status of collections
- Forum for improving training in standards
Before a database of existing collections and possible research topics could be created, existing collections need to be documented. Therefore an opportunity exists for improved collections documentation. This is already taking place in relation to collections-level descriptions, which conforms to the Museum Documentation Association’s SPECTRUM Standard (3rd Edition, 2007). It may be that one of this report’s recommendations is to make use of current collections documentation and so the website may be created with links to this information. (See the Recommendations section for further discussion).

Once the collection documentation is in order then there may be opportunities to use this knowledge and certain aspects of the collections to improve visitor information. This could be achieved by creating subject-specific exhibitions or displays with more accurate and recently researched interpretative material. Exercises such as this may help to improve the status of the collection, which could help in any attempts to gain accreditation.

### 4.3.5 Threats

**Fig 4.5 Summary of Threats**

- Perceptions
- Decline in use of material culture
- Relevancy
- Resources
- Legalities

**Perceptions**
- Psychological barriers
- Modesty issue
- Stereotyping
- Communication / terminology

The issue of perceptions arose during the focus groups as it was felt that there might be various barriers to participation stemming from misconceptions surrounding the culture of academic research. This issue was also interpreted as a strength, under the theme of research culture, as it provided an opportunity for a symbiotic relationship whereby one culture could help to boost another by providing support and resources at various levels, which would help to maintain a successful partnership. In this instance, however, the differences were regarded as barriers rather than opportunities.

Again, the issue of terminology was mentioned for reasons similar to those mentioned previously (see inclusivity theme within the terminology category). Under this heading the lack of a standardised terminology is regarded as a barrier to participation. This issue would have to be addressed to ensure that the network is inclusive and accessible to all. Another barrier to participation that was mentioned by museum staff in particular was the modesty of
curators. It was noted that curators may not want to identify themselves as experts and if this were the case, the directory of experts may not be comprehensive or indeed a true representation of experts working in the sector.

Decline in use of material culture

- Decline in academic use of material culture

This theme follows on from the previous theme of Advocacy in the Strengths category, where the issue of decline in the use of material culture was recognised and partially addressed by the network under its role as an advocate for engagement with collections for research. As mentioned previously, due to the shift in the way subjects are taught within universities there has been a move towards learning at a molecular level and this has resulted in a decline in the use of objects, and so collections, for research. For example, the traditional taxonomical categorisation of species is not taught in the same way that it was previously and so there are large collections of insects and creatures that are not being used for research or teaching and the skills required to conserve and categorise these collections are not being passed on.

This issue was interpreted as a threat to the network as collections and objects are not being used as a main source for research and teaching purposes. Therefore it was felt that there may not be a high demand from undergraduate and postgraduate students to undertake research in collections as it was not something that they were currently doing nor possibly aware that they could do. This then could be addressed by the advocacy role as outlined in the strengths category (see Proposed Research Network section for further discussion).

Relevancy

- Too many other networks – SSNs
- Competing with information resources
- Keeping up to date
- Lack of interest
- Needs to reach a broad audience

This issue has been addressed from several other angles under the theme of originality in the links contacts theme, Opportunities category, and the originality theme in the Weaknesses category. Within this category, it refers to the threat of duplication and competition, as it was noted that there were a number of other networks and established information resources.

This issue could be addressed by the notion proposed earlier in the Opportunities category, where it was suggested that this network would provide a centralised portal to this information, which would help to underpin the existing networks and promote them alongside useful research information.

Resources

- Lack of time – museum staff to be involved
- Lack of time – to supervise students
- Lack of funding – continuity issues

The perennial issue of limited resources was noted here, in specific relation to overstretched museum staff. This could be perceived as a threat to participation, as museum staff do not
have the time to become active members of a network, nor to supervise students that may wish to come and conduct research on their collections. This issue relates to the previous theme of overload in the Weaknesses category.

The issue of funding was mentioned for the first time in this category, with the main weakness being identified as continuity. There could be issues in terms of sustainability if funding were provided on an *ad hoc* basis. It would be very difficult to establish any stability or consistency to the tangible output aspect of the network, for example conferences or seminars, if there were no long-term commitment from a funding body. It was agreed that this was an issue facing many projects in the developmental phase and that it would continue to be an issue throughout the project. It was suggested that a process of reflexive evaluation and advocacy could address it in part, as this would help to ensure a strong case for continued funding (see the funding section for further discussion).

**Legalities**

- *Ownership of knowledge*
- *Verification of experts*
- *Disclaimers*
- *Copyrights etc.*

There were some concerns raised surrounding the legalities of developing a network of this type, for example concerning the ownership of knowledge, verification of experts, disclaimers, and copyrights. These issues need to be carefully considered, and the network would need to take legal advice to ensure that they were being adequately addressed. This issue was partially addressed under the theme of elements missing from the model, Weaknesses section.

### 4.4 Summary

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<th><strong>STRENGTHS</strong></th>
<th><strong>WEAKNESSES</strong></th>
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<td>Resources</td>
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*Fig 4.6 Summary of SWOT Analysis*
The various issues as summarised in Fig 4.6 Summary of SWOT Analysis, show the variety and extent of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that surround the development of this type of network. It is understood that there will be a strong advocacy role throughout the developmental stage of the network, which will address the majority of the threats and weaknesses discussed, for example perceptions, decline in use of material culture, and inclusivity.

The issue of sustainability is a recognised weakness and it is dependent upon long-term funding in the initial developmental stages to ensure that there is continuity to the network. The advocacy role will address this in part by demonstrating the relevance and originality of the concept, thus encouraging partnership and use of the network.

The legalities and formal design aspects of the website, which include the issue of overload, are considered in the Web Design report.

In the main, the concept of the network was well received, with the majority of participants indicating that it would be of benefit to them, and their organisation, by offering them a service that is not currently available.
5 Proposed Research Network

This investigation has established that a sustainable Scottish research network is feasible and would fill a perceived gap. Following extensive consultation, it is proposed that an information exchange network should be developed that would promote and encourage the use of collections for practical research. It is suggested that it is called Scottish Heritage and Arts Research Exchange (SHARE).

5.1 Scottish Heritage and Arts Research Exchange (SHARE)

A website should form the front face of SHARE. The website would provide access to searchable databases and menus under a number of headings:

- **Research Projects** – This would include various topics and collections available for research as well as various case studies of completed projects. Those members looking for potential partners to conduct research on their collections will be able to submit information and images of their collections onto the website.

- **Case studies of completed projects** – This will provide examples of successful collaborations, thus illustrating the types of partnerships that could be developed, and demonstrating the diversity of research topics.

- **Expertise knowledge base** - The members, using a feedback form, which will submit their biographical information, will populate this database. Thus providing the information required to match the research project to the relevant expertise. This section will be reviewed by SHARE and will be covered by appropriate disclaimers.

- **News and events section** – This will provide current information regarding funding, conferences, seminars, training and the SHARE newsletter. It would also house the newsletter subscription information.

- **Networks and Resources** – This will provide contact information and links to relevant websites, under the sub-headings, knowledge base, resources, funding, networks.

- **Contacts** – This will provide all institutional information and contact details.

Both of the databases will be constructed so that enquiries can be linked, and searches can be grouped, in such a way that related topics and collections could be highlighted. Therefore suggestions for ‘other areas of interests’ can be made to members alongside their original search. This would further interdisciplinary research by demonstrating links to areas that may not have been targeted in the first instance.

It is imperative that SHARE is realistic and does not expand beyond its need, therefore it will begin as a Scottish-wide network at this stage. However, the website would be built to allow for possible expansion at a later date. Full design and detailed logistics regarding the development and maintenance of such a website are considered in the Web Design Report section.
In response to the consultation requests, and to ensure a human element to the service, the website would be supplemented with **tangible outputs**, for example:

- an e-flyer
- a seasonal newsletter
- conferences
- training days
- seminars

These outputs would reflect the overall development and expansion of the project. Therefore a seminar series may be focused towards highlighting a particular collaboration as a case study, or a training day may be based upon one aspect of collections-research methodology. The underpinning aim is to encourage face-to-face interaction, and to create and develop working relationships between all members.

There would be a **strong advocacy role** inherent in the development of SHARE. This role would address some of the issues raised during the consultation period, for example the decline in use of material culture within academic institutions and the marginalized research culture within museums. Effective advocacy will encourage membership and use of SHARE.

Initially, SHARE will capitalize on existing expressions of interest generated during this feasibility study. These contacts will provide sufficient data, in the first instance, to create a website. This initial framework can then be used to demonstrate the potential of SHARE.

**Long-term funding** will be sought to finance the developmental stage and beyond. This security will help to ensure continuity and commitment from potential partners. A three- or five-year funding package will address the concerns raised regarding sustainability and longevity. This type of longer-term commitment will allow SHARE to broker collaborative projects and potentially see them through to completion; thus establishing and demonstrating its necessity within the sector.

### 5.2 Staffing

SHARE would require two part-time members of staff during the developmental stage. Both posts would run concurrently.

#### 5.2.1 Research Fellow

To develop the website, extensive consultation would need to be carried out to gather the information required to populate each database in the site. This would require significant travel throughout Scotland to meet with potential experts and those organizations housing possible collections and research topics.

The Fellow would act as an advocate for SHARE, attending conferences, seminars and meetings to promote and highlight its role and its use as a tool for research. It is envisaged that there could
be up to 40 trips around Scotland; approaching each university in Scotland, and various heritage agencies.

5.2.2 Project Administrator / Officer
The main task will be to populate, update and maintain the website. A Web Architect will construct the website and will provide training for the Project Officer to learn how to update and maintain the site. It is expected that the Officer will undertake any administrative duties relating the compilation and publication of any newsletters, e-flyers, and seminar or conference material as necessary. This role will include the handling of any day-to-day enquiries and issues relating to SHARE on an on-going basis.

Full estimated costings for staffing and development are provided in the estimated costings section of this report.
Web Design Report

Introduction

While technology offers a backbone for collaborations, it is the way in which people view and work with technology that determines the effectiveness, efficiency, and validity of it.

Design is a means of facilitating interaction between technology and the people who use it. However, it is the designer’s willingness to understand the relationship between the two within this proposal that will determine the appropriateness and effectiveness of a design solution.

Scottish Heritage and Arts Research Exchange (SHARE) has a vision which capitalizes on the communities’ strengths and sense of unity, while creating opportunities to bridge knowledge transfer and sharing.

This proposal by ‘Not Just Design’ (NJD) is presented in the context of a web presence for SHARE. The requirements for the proposed site are that it must meet the needs of the people who would use a knowledge base such as SHARE offers: Firstly that the site serves the proposed community, in sharing information and knowledge - both formal and informal.

Secondly, that the site offers SHARE the opportunity to present the services and people to a broader audience. We would expect SHARE to set a benchmark in the use of Web technology by promoting the SHARE community, its culture and the people.

Our philosophy is based around ‘content in context on command’ where we ensure that the message, values, and information which an organization wishes to communicate are appropriate and powerful; carefully placed in the context in which they operate now and where they aspire to be in the future; and can be accessed and easily digested by the variety and diversity of people who will frequent the web location(s). It requires the project aspirations to be viewed and listened to from multiple perspectives, and for the portal design to reflect the project’s dynamic opportunities to share knowledge and expertise.

We will use a Knowledge Management (KM) programme to design, develop, implement and maintain a portal for SHARE.
Capacity development for maintenance and development of website

Partnerships are strengthened when all participants have the opportunity to contribute and grow. This is often called capacity building.

Knowledge Management

The success of a web portal for SHARE lies in how it uses knowledge and converts it into organizational capabilities. SHARE will not attain success, be it financial, social or political by owning resources, but by knowing what to do with the resources and when to use them. As Larry Prusak contended, “The only thing that gives an organization a competitive edge - the only thing that is sustainable - is what it knows, how it uses what it knows and how fast it can learn something new.” It is knowledge that is at the heart of an organization, and indeed, it is knowledge that is at the heart of a successful Web presence. This is paramount for a sustained and prolonged approach to promoting, preserving and extending SHARE services, culture, language and way of life.

A Knowledge Management approach looks at what people do on a day-to-day basis; how they behave and interact with one another, and with the systems and tools at their disposal, as well as changing the processes they follow, and building up the skills they have - building the internal capacity. The aim of KM for the design of the site is to give SHARE what it needs to deliver an exceptional service through mobilizing knowledge. If done on the communities’ terms this could be central to both the curatorial continuity and sustainable future of SHARE.

Online Awareness

NJD understands the uncertainty surrounding constantly changing circumstances. Our approach to working with partners, to resolve the increasingly ‘fuzzy’ problems that we face in the design, development and implementation of highly technological business tools, optimizes informed decision making throughout each project.

Of particular importance to SHARE will be the process of decision-making involved in an online identity. Perceptions are difficult things to shift and St. Andrews is a prestigious institution involved in high academic research. This may put off staff in smaller local museums who may not feel that it is relevant to them, so in developing an online presence this awareness must remain paramount in making SHARE inclusive and accessible. The site must invite a diversity of users, embracing an environment of knowledge, available to all.

By capitalizing on SHARE’s collective knowledge, NJD will create a portfolio of initiatives aimed at achieving maximum understanding of SHARE culture, and others interested in the community. Our approach is colourful, instructive,
embracing, exact, persuasive, reactive, paradoxical, and enlightening. It commands, begs, questions and provides the opportunity to learn through playful interaction.

Communication

The classification, flow and structure of information is paramount for communication, none more so than in an information environment. In order to meet the communication needs within the SHARE site an information strategy has been devised (see appendix I). It will draw upon our knowledge and experience of information architecture, graphic design, and usability engineering to formulate an intuitive navigational approach to information delivery.

NJD uses a holistic approach to the end-user experience within their design methodology, and during the planning and development stages, the overall user experience remains paramount. It is our experience that inadequate attention in this area can result in information being inaccessible, diminishing the value and potential of the site.

Web Strategy

Content Management System (CMS)

*Fundamental to the success of your site will be the CMS and what it offers.*

Selecting and implementing a content management system (CMS) is one of the largest IT projects tackled by many organizations. With costs running from a few thousand to millions for large corporate bodies, it is vital that the right CMS package be selected.

Our CMS is a browser-based system allowing a web administrator to publish content to the SHARE site from any location, internal and external. This includes computer files, image media, audio files, electronic documents and web content.

The CMS we develop will be a robust and intuitive solution for the easy management of website content. As well as the many features outlined, the site will be supported by an extensive database to accommodate the diversity of information across the site.

Additional features include:

- User registration: biography, CV etc
- Case studies
- Collaborative networks
- Discussion forum
- Subscription forms to e-news
- Front page news links
Text editor

Browser-based WYSIWYG Editor within your CMS

- Fully browser-based, no plug-ins required
- Works on all the major browsers.
- Works on all OS: All Windows, Linux, Mac, etc.
- Works on JS
- P, ASP, PHP, CFM, PERL, etc.
- 100% pure XHTML output with HTML source editing
- Tables, CSS, Image-Text wrapping, Spell check
- Copy & paste directly from MS Word, etc.

Information Architecture

The term *Information Architecture* was coined 25 years ago by Richard Saul Wurman. It is the discipline of grouping, categorizing and labeling of information. The theory is built around library science. The architecture of your site is fundamental to the success of your web presence.

The classification, flow, and structure of information are vital for communication. In order to meet the needs of the internet, the design of a website requires an information strategy, drawing upon the knowledge, experience and skills of information architects, graphic designers and usability engineers to formulate an intuitive, navigational approach to information delivery. Similarly programmers, utilizing software packages such as Java, Cold Fusion, Oracle and hypertext market language (HTML) compliment the process. The development of a large-scale web site requires teamwork with a holistic approach to the end-user experience. Each specialization and its methods have individual and collective roles to play in order to function as a coherent force, focused on achieving a common goal. During planning and development stages the overall user experience should remain at the forefront.

In summary, to make a good site requires a combination of all of the skills highlighted. Deep analysis of the content structure will be a priority.
Database

Your database underpins your whole existence - your knowledge lies here.

The database will take the form of tables which have rows and columns to show the relationship between items, and in which information can be cross-referenced between two or more tables to generate a third table. A query language is used to search for data. If data is changed in one table, it will be changed in all related tables. We would expect it to be built around relationships due to the nature of the content.

A relational database can draw information from across the database and present it to the user in a variety of ways. The classification of this information can be retrieved by name, project title, image or date for example.

The mining of this information can also throw up many unexpected and serendipitous results. Data mining is the use of automated data analysis techniques to uncover previously undetected relationships among data items. This technique will compliment the knowledge aspect of the SHARE site very well as users will be able to see other projects which might relate to their own in some way.

Database Interaction

JavaSE - Java Database Connectivity (JDBC)

The Java Database Connectivity (JDBC) API is the industry standard for database-independent connectivity between the Java programming language and a wide range of databases – SQL databases and other tabular data sources, such as spreadsheets or flat files. The JDBC API provides a call-level API for SQL-based database access.

An example of this is given in our development for The Demarco Foundation, an AHRC-funded project to manage a 17,000 item digital archive.

Example 1: Search criteria and relationships

Example 2: Results
Storage and Categorisation of Images & Content

The ability to upload, present and store image assets that can be categorized by title, relationship, date etc. will form part of the database of museum collections or projects which will be available to search. Another consideration will be external uploads. An example may be contributors who have a user account. A user account will give registered users the opportunity to upload, content and images to the site for a variety of reasons: open discussion forum, content related query, image library, collaborative news and on-going case studies are examples of this.

Scalability

We propose to design the site with scalability in mind allowing scope for further development in terms of future growth. The web site characteristics will be clean, informative, easy to use, well designed with appropriate architecture and server side tools for feedback.

In the early planning stages we will establish what is achievable within the timeframes and design accordingly. We would expect to deliver a comprehensive core product with the capability of continued development.

Rich Media Interactivity: (Flash, movie, animation, sound-bites)

In terms of the components that contain rich media, ‘Interactive Case studies’, for instance we see these as very important areas in which the SHARE culture is presented as well as represented. NJD understand this area requires thoughtful construction and should be seen as on going. Second phase developments could perhaps include education and could be based around interactive tools such as e-learning, or embrace the international community and languages.
Web Presence

You need to communicate quickly, to your target audience and users, who you are, what you do, how you do it and the values that underpin your organization. This needs to be achieved within an innovative and co-temporal framework.

Hosting

NJD expect SHARE to be hosting within the St Andrews University but the following are considerations in relation to hosting. We recommend a feature-rich professional hosting package which offers:

- 24/7 security monitoring
- 24/7 technical support
- Versatile email package panel.
- 100% dedicated facilities
- Linux web hosting with PHP, Perl, Python, MySQL, SSL, SSH, virus & spam protection.

Graphical website statistics

Suggested statistical information to monitor who is using your site:

- Custom watches (giving live feedback on real time visitors to your site)
- Geographic location analysis
- Referrer URLs
- Search engine keyword referrals
- Browser and operating system analysis
- Page popularity
- Broken pages
- Session lengths
Email Accounts

- A Professional Advanced Mailbox account to suit a variety of users
- The Advanced Mailboxes combine every feature needed for professional email:
  - Virus scanning
  - Spam filtering
  - 100 MB mailbox space - ideal for business attachments
  - Individual mailbox control panel
  - Assign your chosen level of administration and configuration rights to mailbox users
  - Uses the common POP3 standard
  - Roaming SMTP allows you to send email using Outlook, Thunderbird or your choice of software, directly through your email account from any browser.

Virus scanning

Using respected, industry-leading virus scanning software, our mail servers prevent harmful, malicious emails from reaching your computer. Accurate interception is ensured by regular, automatic updates of both the scanning engine and the virus definition file.

Viruses are intercepted in real-time, following heuristic scanning of all inbound and outbound email, to identify and remove suspect attachments and malformed messages. Even archived files are searched, ensuring your email is trustworthy.

Spam filtering

Multi-level, Bayesian spam filtering traps unwanted, unsolicited emails. Each email is checked against a set of criteria and depending on your chosen filter strength, is determined to be spam or legitimate email. You choose whether the filter adds "SPAM" to the front of suspect emails' subject lines, or deletes the email entirely.

Special Considerations: accessibility

Meeting the standards of an accessible Web site requires an awareness of the special needs of users who have disabilities. The four main categories of disabilities are visual, hearing, mobility, and cognitive and learning disabilities.
Each person with a disability might encounter one or more barriers that can be eliminated or minimized by the Web developer, the browser, the assistive technology, or the underlying operating system software and hardware platform. Consideration should be given to the above to accommodate usability needs but be mindful that to meet full accessibility guidelines require an adequate budget. Disclaimers and Legal content should be integrated accordingly.

**W3C: Web Standards**

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is a recognized Web standards group. It develops and publishes specifications, software, guidelines, and tools for the Web, including HTML and accessibility standards. In developing the SHARE website we need to promote its full potential as a forum for information, commerce, communication, and collective understanding with these accessibility guidelines in mind.

**Timescales**

The complexity and scale of the project will undoubtedly play a major role in timescales. The reality and our experience so far, is that unless timelines and project management are strictly adhered to then slippage is inevitable. To minimize the risk, our ‘Project Manager’ will generate progress updates and reports. It is estimated that SHARE could be designed, implemented and developed within 3-4 months.
Estimated Cost

**Design and implementation to include:** £16,200

- Architecture of Content
- Design (typography, layout, graphics, interaction)
- Image preparation & Digitising
- Coding to include: html, java, php, flash
- Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)
- Browser compatibility and cross platform testing
- Interactive Tools (e.g. Case studies, interactive knowledge base)

**Content Management System**

**Site development** £6,300

To develop back end CMS and subsequent integration with site.

CMS is supplied under a perpetual license agreement. There are no annual license fees. However an annual support fee is chargeable if the site owner wishes to continue to receive support beyond 3 months post sign-off.

- Project Management £3,600
- Client liaison
- Content Management Administration
- Travel & Expenses

**Total:** £26,100

Not Just Design reserves the right to amend these costs for any alterations or additions to the content.

Not Just Design would invoice on a monthly basis for all work undertaken.

**NB.** *We constantly explore the options available to us during development and may offer alternatives offering possible savings. Technology is a constantly changing environment.*

**In Summary**

Skills and knowledge transfer will play a major part in the success of the project therefore we will work closely with the local community to foster partnerships and inclusion whilst developing a web presence.
A review and assessment thereafter to establish interactive content, for instance, e-learning artists folios health initiatives & diagnostic tools.
CMS Training and skill transfer.
Further discussion will be required to identify and establish areas for further development.
7 Estimated Costing

7.1 Estimated Costing for 5-year Grant Application

Research Fellow at Grade 6, full-time cost for one year
Project Administrator at Grade 4, part-time for 5 years
Salaries total £49,155
Travel and subsistence costs – 40 trips around Scotland
(average £50 per trip) £2,000
Marketing Budget
  Branding (logo design) £600
  Leaflet £500
Bi-annual Newsletter £350 x10 £3500
Consumables £2000
Equipment £1000
Launch Conference £1500
Two workshops a year for 5 years £5000
Cost of website development and training £26,100

Total including indirect costs, inflation and fEC at 100% £202,500

7.2 Estimated Costing for 3-year Grant Application

Research Fellow at Grade 6, full-time cost for one year
Project Administrator at Grade 4, part-time for 3 years
Salaries total £41,015
Travel and subsistence costs – 40 trips around Scotland
(average £50 per trip) £2,000
Marketing Budget
  Branding (logo design) £600
  Leaflet £500
  Bi-annual Newsletter £350 x 6 £2100
Consumables £1500
Equipment £1000
Launch Conference £1500
Two workshops a year for 3 years £3000
Cost of website development and training £26,100

Total including indirect costs, inflation and fEC at 100% £164,000
The following is a preliminary list of possible funding opportunities

- **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation**
  Under its Arts and Heritage strand, this foundation supports partnerships between heritage organizations. However they do not normally support website development.

- **Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland**
  This trust will provide Larger Grants, up to £40,000, as part-funding for projects which are of interest to Scottish Universities as a whole.

- **Research Councils**
  - **EPSRC (Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council)**
    Currently working with AHRC on a new UK Science & Heritage Research Programme
  - **NERC (Natural Environment Research Council)** also has funding for Knowledge Transfer Networks

- **AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council)** runs a number of schemes into which this project could fit, apart from the Standard Research Grants Route.
  - **The Strategic Resource Enhancement Programme** (if funding is returned to this strand) would be the most appropriate programme for this project.
  - **Research Networks and Workshops**. The Interdisciplinary Research Networks and Workshops scheme is designed to encourage and enable the discussion and development of ideas by researchers, either through establishing new research networks or by running a series of workshops, seminars or similar events.
  - **Knowledge Catalyst Scheme** “supports partnerships between universities and non-academic partners, such as businesses, charities, not-for-profit organisations and some publicly funded bodies”.
  - **Knowledge Transfer Fellowship Scheme** “The knowledge transfer project should be planned around an existing piece of arts or humanities research which has the potential to make a significant difference beyond the world of academia. The AHRC's definition of knowledge transfer recognises a broad range of knowledge transfer routes, including business interaction, engagement with the heritage and cultural sectors, production of content for film, broadcasting and other media and informing public policy”

- **DTI (Department of Trade and Industry) Knowledge Transfer Partnerships.**
  AHRC is a partner in the DTI's scheme which sponsors “partnerships designed to harness academic expertise to solve business problems. The scheme sponsors partnerships between research organisations (higher and further education institutions and public and private research institutes), businesses (which includes private sector companies, charities and public sector organisations) and recent graduates who are employed to work on a specific aspect of a business.”
• **Leverhulme Trust**
  o One of this Trust’s criteria is the removal of barriers between traditional disciplines
  o the originality of the work, i.e. the extent to which the proposal moves beyond the incremental development of a single discipline;
  o the significance of the work for future activity in the immediate subject area, i.e. the extent to which future work will be ‘enabled’;
  o the significance of the work for other subject areas, i.e., its ability to excite those working in other disciplines

• **Wellcome Trust** might be approached under its Public Engagement funding strand.
9 References

http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/images/4_97502.pdf [accessed June 2007]


Glasgow Museums. (undated) *Regional Framework for Local History and Archaeology*


Museums Association, (undated) *Arts and Humanities Research Council: a strategy for supporting and sustaining high quality research in the UK’s museums, galleries, libraries and archives. Response from the Museums Association.* Available from:


University of Liverpool. (undated) *Researching Together: The University of Liverpool and National Museums Liverpool*. Available from: [http://www.liv.ac.uk/researching_together/index.htm](http://www.liv.ac.uk/researching_together/index.htm) [accessed June 2007]
APPENDIX A

Initial Funding Proposal

Proposal for a Feasibility Study for a sustainable Scottish Collections Research Network

Aim
The object of this proposal is to assess the feasibility of a sustainable research network bringing together researchers working on Scottish collections from universities, museums and galleries and other heritage agencies.

Rationale
It is quite clear from a number of recent reports, consultations and surveys that a real need exists for the development of structured networking in the museum and gallery sector. It has been demonstrated that, while museums are widely recognised as having an important role to play in the cultural life of the country, collections research on which much of that role is founded has been seen as something of a luxury in many museums in the recent past. In its response to the AHRC’s consultation on research support for museums, the Museums Association (MA) commented that “Museums have a considerable amount of untapped research potential, but will need to be given development support if that potential is to be realised.”

Approach
• To examine the feasibility of using MGCI to set up sustainable collections research networks for Scotland, bringing together museums, galleries, heritage agencies such as NTS and Historic Scotland, expert amateurs and the higher education community.
• To examine possible models and structures for the network including virtual networks through the WWW

Key Objectives
• Consultation with partners and, through them, with the wider museum and academic communities including all University Collections in Scotland
• Researching collections networks elsewhere
• Carrying out a needs assessment for collections research networks in Scotland, identifying specific subject and thematic areas which might benefit from the pooling and sharing of expertise, knowledge, and information

Deliverables
• A publishable report with recommendations for structure of organization, budget and other resource implications; a list of possible funding sources; an action list.

The study will be coordinated by the Museums, Galleries and Collections Institute (MGCI) which was launched in September 2005. The Institute is founded upon the expertise built up over many

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8 Gunn, AV and Prescott, RGW, *Lifting the Veil: Research and Scholarship in UK Museums and Galleries*, London and St Andrews 1999
years of running our postgraduate Museums and Gallery Studies courses, which have helped to establish St Andrews as Scotland’s leading centre for training and research in the heritage sector.

MGCI is sited in the School of Art History and the proposed research fits within the School’s Research and Knowledge Transfer Strategy by maintaining and developing existing institutional partnerships and links, and developing relationships with Enterprise councils and other professional and commercial bodies.  

It will also match the aims of the Institute.

MGCI is well placed to carry out this study. It is the only facility in Scotland primarily concerned with collections research, and has established links to academics in a wide variety of disciplines, to museums and galleries throughout Scotland, and with other museum and heritage sector bodies.

SRDG support is requested to provide a dedicated researcher for this feasibility study. The researcher will need to travel widely in Scotland and to London to consult with UK-wide museum organizations, and Scottish museums and universities.

**Strategic need**

The importance of scholarship in collections-based research has often been stressed. ‘Scholarship is the bedrock of our profession and without it we cannot hope to deliver any of our predetermined objectives, whether at a national or local level.’ More recently the need for this kind of research was highlighted at the UMIS (University Museums in Scotland) conference held in St Andrews in November 2002.

The value of museum collections for research has also been acknowledged by the AHRC in a consultation paper on the funding of museum research projects.

[Museums] …act as the laboratory for a great deal of research in the arts and humanities, holding the key research materials and resources from which new knowledge and understanding can be generated. They are also major users of arts and humanities research, which enables them to conserve, organise and explain their holdings, and they act as key intermediaries between the research base and a wider public… The effective delivery of the research strategy will be dependent upon successful partnerships between specialists and/or researchers in museums and galleries and their colleagues in universities.

In its own recent report, *Collections for the Future*, the Museums Association wrote:

> It is not desirable - let alone practical - for a museum to have all the expertise it requires in house. Individual museums can work together to share expertise across the sector. It will be equally if not more important to build closer links with external sources of knowledge and expertise. Links between museums and higher education are far less well developed than they might be.

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10 See School of Art History Draft Strategic Plan, Operational Plan and SWOT analysis, 2005/6 – 2009/10
11 [http://www-ah.st-andrews.ac.uk/mgci/index.html](http://www-ah.st-andrews.ac.uk/mgci/index.html)
12 Barbara Woroncow, Presidential address, MA conference, Portsmouth 1998
14 [http://www.museumsassociation.org/12187](http://www.museumsassociation.org/12187)
There is a wealth of knowledge and expertise throughout Scotland’s universities, which could benefit collections research if museums had a systematic way of identifying relevant experts and tapping into the knowledge base. Collaborations could also significantly enhance and extend the research capability of HEIs in Scotland. The establishment of collections-research networks has the potential to involve university researchers in a variety of new research areas and to engage them in productive relationships with the stewards of the material culture of Scotland, providing access to evidence which is often forgotten or overlooked by academic scholars. For example, there is considerable potential in the use of natural history and anthropological collections for scientific research. The way forward is to set up collections-based research networks.

Existing networks

A wide variety of museum-based networks already exists. The Scottish Museums Council (SMC), in its response to the Museums Association’s *Collections for the Future* commented:

> Many [networks] are long-established and can draw from amongst their members a wealth of knowledge in the form of local authority curators, academics and volunteers. But lack of formal recognition and under-resourcing means such networks are currently stretched beyond their limits and cannot provide the levels of support now required.

The opportunities for joint collaboration between national and non-national museums and galleries in subject specialist areas must be taken and enhanced, though clarity of roles and responsibilities and parity of esteem within a national or operational framework are critical if partnerships are to be meaningful. This is true not only for national advice and support programmes but in the wider context it is essential for the long-term sustainability and development of the sector.15

In England, following up recommendations from the *Renaissance in the Regions* report16, the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), has invested 200,000 in setting up Subject Specialist Networks (SSNs), offering a mixture of exploratory and implementation grants to networks throughout England. A second round of grants is now being offered. These subject-specialist networks bring together groups of museums with common collection types to share information and expertise, develop joint projects and to help museums with significant collections but no specialist curators. However, MLA funding is directed to English museums and museum organisations. There is no funding for this kind of support in Scotland at this time. The AHRC has offered grants under the Museum and Galleries research workshop scheme to enable collaboration to take place, but these are for a short-term series of workshops, seminars or other events.

These issues have also been highlighted at the highest level; partnerships and collaborations are on the agenda of the Scottish Executive.

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The Executive believes there may be a place for a forum that brings together the collections bodies and other leading keepers of the nation’s cultural treasures, including built heritage interests. The forum would share good practice and consider joint working.  

The SMC has also conducted its own research relating to collections development. Following a series of consultations with museum staff throughout Scotland, a report was published which highlighted the problems of collections research and listed some specific needs, several with relevance to this application. The role of SSNs was felt to be important, and stronger links with universities and higher education bodies would be helpful. An audit of research would identify gaps in knowledge, and collections web portals and e-forums would be useful, if managed by one organisation for all users.

Setting up specialist networks would result in high-quality research which could not be achieved within the existing research base. Partnerships brought together by projects funded by the Scottish Executive and administered by the SMC have already demonstrated the wide variety and high quality of research and outcomes made possible by collaborations between museums, archives, libraries and universities.

Two examples will serve to illustrate this. The Scotland and Medicine: Collections and Connections project, a Regional Development Challenge Fund project, brought together 13 partners – universities, museums, libraries, tourist boards, the NHS and local authorities. The Distributed National Burns Collection was a 16-month Strategic Change Fund project which brought together museums, libraries, archives, universities and private individuals.

These collaborations produced research outcomes which could not have been achieved by individual institutions, and have resulted in a wide variety of deliverables: databases, websites, publications and exhibitions which could open up new areas of research. But these initiatives, and others, are time-limited. While their research potential has not been fully tapped, their sustainability beyond the initial funding period is questionable.

It is our belief that this proposal meets a strategic need and opportunity in Scotland. The MGCI is well placed to act as a broker for collections-research networks. The MA has stated that “It appears that many museums are missing out on the benefits collaboration has to offer because they simply do not know how to go about developing links”. MGCI can help make and maintain those links to scholars in a wide variety of subjects and disciplines, and this will enable us to bring an academic dimension to the networks, facilitating the matching up of interests and expertise. Such brokering will also introduce university researchers to new areas, materials and resources for research.

**Partners**

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17 Scotland’s Culture Scottish Executive Response to the Cultural Review, Edinburgh 2006, p. 37
19 [www.scotlandandmedicine.com](http://www.scotlandandmedicine.com)
21 [http://www.museumsassociation.org/12199](http://www.museumsassociation.org/12199)
The proposed partners for the feasibility study are:

**Scottish Museums Council.** They are interested in developments from the MLA’s SSN initiative. They highlight the need to offer strategic direction and organisational commitment to networks. We will ask them to contribute strategic analysis to proposed models for our project.

**National Museums of Scotland.** Consultation has already taken place on ways of working collaboratively with the Institute, and the benefits of research networks emerged from those meetings. NMS is committed to partnership working with the wider museum and academic communities, as evidenced by the appointment of a National Partnerships Manager

**University of Glasgow, Institute of Art History**

The Institute was formed in 1998 to provide a framework for promoting research projects between the Department of History of Art, Hunterian Museum & Art Gallery, Glasgow Museums and Glasgow School of Art. It is currently a partner, with Birkbeck College London and the National Gallery London, in the National Inventory of European Paintings Project, which aims to assist over 130 of the UK’s museums research and catalogue their collections and to present catalogue data on a publicly accessible website. The project is in receipt of AHRC, Getty and Kress Foundation grants.

**VARIE.** The Visual Arts Research Institute, Edinburgh was established in 1999 to instigate, support and disseminate research initiatives undertaken by its Partner Institutions: the University of Edinburgh, the National Galleries of Scotland, the National Museums of Scotland, and Edinburgh College of Art. The University of St. Andrews and the University of Glasgow are Associate Members.

**How the study will be carried out**

Appointment of a researcher for six months to undertake:

- a needs assessment for collections-research networks, identifying specific subject areas and thematic areas which might benefit from the pooling and sharing of expertise, knowledge, and information, to be undertaken by questionnaire, as the quickest way of acquiring information
- investigation of the Scottish research base, including museum and gallery research; research in universities which does or could contribute to collections research; research in universities which might benefit from being involved in collections research, or from the results of collections research.
- consultation with partners and stakeholders, including university and museum staff and volunteers; academics; representatives from UMIS, SMC, MA, MLA; existing SSNs and other networks. This will involve traveling throughout Scotland to meet with museum and higher education representatives in each region, and to England to consult with the MA and MLA, and the AHRC.
- identification of ways to involve business, the voluntary and public sectors and other organisations with an interest in the area, (e.g. Scottish Executive, local authorities, tourist boards and heritage sector bodies such as the National Trust for Scotland, Historic Scotland, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS)
- investigation into research-funding bodies and their funding criteria, including research councils, charitable foundations, and museum organisations to identify possible funding streams for the recommended structure
preparation of a report detailing options for MGCI to act as a broker or facilitator for collections-research networks, and host for a network website including organizational structure, staffing, and resource implications

Appointment of IT specialist to:
Investigate web portal for register of expertise and register of networks, website hosting sites for individual networks.
Report on set-up costs, equipment needed, and ongoing costs for sustainability and maintenance.
Scottish Museum Council Research Summary

Collections-based knowledge creation in museum

Introduction

• Commissioned by SMC
• Scoping exercise
• Targeted to SMC membership
• 32 responses from 200
• Desk research for context
• Outcome- Production of discussion paper. This paper still to be signed off but will be used to facilitate further discussion of key issues revealed by the exercise and to prompt constructive action and partnerships

Aims and objectives of the scoping exercise

• To explore drivers for collections-based knowledge creation amongst member museums
• To establish how such activity is defined and resourced
• To sample the extent and scope of collection types benefiting from this work
• To determine the range of groups and individuals undertaking this work
• To understand the range of outputs and outcomes associated with it

Methodology

• Reference to ‘Lifting the Veil’ (Gunn and Prescott) MGC, 1999, a major investigation of research in museums and galleries
• Desk research to explore context and examine new initiative and opportunities which could support more knowledge creation
• Survey – email questionnaire
• Collation and analysis of survey results
• Presentation and feedback to Scottish Museums Council
• Production of discussion Paper

Findings

• Creation of new knowledge about collections is a central activity in museums
• Broad definition – extending from pure research to creation of knowledge for specific outputs or as a result of interaction with collection
• This activity is under-resourced and has a low profile within museums
• Collection types – the survey was not able to produce reliable data on the range and types of collections benefiting from research but curators are able to identify which collections have been researched or which have the potential to be researched
• Wide input - paid and volunteer staff are involved in creation of collections-based knowledge
• This activity supports all outputs: temporary exhibitions, catalogues, leaflets, lectures
• One of the major outcomes of collections-based knowledge is that the quality of service that museums can provide is dependent on the level of knowledge held within the museum

Key issues

• There is a need to highlight benefits of collections-based knowledge
• There is a need to raise the profile of collections-based knowledge
• Funding opportunities do exist at present and need to be used and developed strategically
• Museums are keen to find means for sharing information
• There are opportunities to increase collections-based knowledge activity through workforce development and through community engagement
• Museums are keen to enter into partnerships in order to further collections-based knowledge
• Increased activity in this area highlights the need to introduce and maintain standards in knowledge management within museums

Rachel Hunter
Museum Consultant

May 2007  1.5  SMC Report Overview
Interview Schedule

1. Involvement in research?
   a. Who undertakes research?

2. Collaborative research?
   a. How did it come about?
   b. How is it sustained – leading to anything else?
   c. What support would you have liked during this? If any

3. Involved in any networks?
   a. With whom?
   b. External agencies?
   c. How were these developed?
   d. How are these sustained?

4. Need for networks?
   a. Examples of successful networks?
   b. Why are they useful?
   c. Benefits?
   d. Issues surrounding networks?
   e. Need identified? Examples?

5. Ideal network
   a. Who would be involved?
   b. What form would it take? Meetings, WWW, newsletters?
   c. Examples
Email Questionnaire Request

SCOTTISH COLLECTIONS NETWORK FEASIBILITY STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE
School of Art History, Museums, Galleries and Collection Institute,
St Andrews University

We are undertaking some research - a feasibility study, - funded by the Scottish Funding Council looking at collections research networks. Part of this study is to assess to what extent people in the academic world are using museum collections for research purposes.

We would be most grateful if you could complete our short, online Questionnaire by FRIDAY 16TH MARCH 2007.

Your response is important even if you DO NOT USE museum collections.

NOTE
The questionnaire should take 5 mins max. to complete. Once you have opened the link please complete the questionnaire in full, in one session, otherwise the data will be void.

Please click on the link below to begin.

http://www.dundee.ac.uk/~rparsons/leu/zz08864input.htm

Thank you for participating.

Dr Beth Christie
Research Fellow,
School of Art History,
University of St Andrews
Tel: 01334 342316
APPENDIX E

Questionnaire

**University of St Andrews**
**MGCI, School of Art History**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scottish Collections Network Feasibility Study</th>
<th>Automatic Web Evaluation</th>
<th>Program by LEU, UoD</th>
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</table>

This study aims to assess the feasibility of sustainable research networks bringing together researchers working on Scottish collections from universities, museums, galleries, and other heritage agencies. When completing the questionnaire please bear the following definitions in mind. The term ‘museum’ is used as a generic term to refer to all museums, galleries, and heritage agencies. The term ‘research’ is used to describe all object-based research involving scholarship and specialist expertise. The information contained within this questionnaire will be treated in the strictest confidence. Any inferences drawn from the eventual data will not be directly attributable to any individual.

If you require further information regarding this research please do not hesitate to contact: Dr. Beth Christie tel: 01334 462136 email: ec71@st-andrews.ac.uk. Thank you for participating.

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<th>Position</th>
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<th>School /Department</th>
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<tr>
<th>University</th>
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| Are you aware of any museum collections that may be relevant to your research themes? |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Yes | No | Don't know |
| C   | C  | C           |

| Currently are museum collections used within research in your school? |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Yes | No | Don't know |
|     | C  | C           |
If yes, please describe the collections below (e.g. archaeology, fine art, natural history etc.)

If you currently make use of any museum collections for research, who made the approach?
- You to the museum
- Museum to you
- Joint development
- Don't know
- Not applicable

For what purpose was the collaboration developed?

What level of research is being undertaken? (please select all that apply)
- Undergraduate
- Postgraduate
- PhD
- Post doctoral
- Other
- Not applicable

If other, please provide details below.
What are, or were, the proposed outcomes of the research? (please select all that apply)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dissertation</th>
<th>Thesis</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Catalogue</th>
<th>Exhibition</th>
<th>Conference</th>
<th>Increased knowledge of collections</th>
<th>Other</th>
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If other, please provide details below.

Would you consider using museum collections for research in the future?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

How interested would you be in the development of a Scottish Collections Research Network as described at the start of the questionnaire?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very interested</th>
<th>Quite interested</th>
<th>Neither interested or uninterested</th>
<th>Not very interested</th>
<th>Not at all interested</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✅</td>
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Are you aware of any existing networks that provide this type of information?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
If yes, please provide details below.

Would you be willing to provide specialist expertise to museums?

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<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
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<td>🗔️</td>
<td>✗</td>
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Would you be willing to contribute to informal follow-up discussions regarding this research?

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<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
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<td>🗔️</td>
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Would you be interested in attending formal workshops regarding this research?

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<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
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<td>✗</td>
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If yes to any of the previous three questions, please provide your email address and contact details below.

Do you have any additional comments or questions regarding this research that you would like to add? (e.g. if you have been involved in collaborative research with museums describe any unexpected outcomes or barriers?)
Automatic Web Evaluation program written and supported
by Dr Richard Parsons, Learning Enhancement Unit,
Centre for Learning and Teaching
Available for use within the
University of Dundee
© 2007 Richard Parsons
Collections List

Currently are museum collections used within research in your school?

![Pie chart showing percentages of responses]

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
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</table>

Yes:
- Textiles
- Zoology Museum
- Fine Art - especially portraiture (and similar materials) relating to iconic historical figures and the changing manner of their presentation. Archaeology - artefact materials connected with medieval/early modern agriculture.
- Marischal College (various) Aberdeen City Archive Aberdeen Art Gallery
- All of National Museums of Scotland Fine Art- National Galleries
- Geology
- Archaeology, natural history
- Textiles and fashion design
- We have a collection of scientific instruments from the past ~200 years. Some of the items are used in teaching demonstrations to illustrate points.
- Textiles - Paisley Shawls, some garments, Bernat Klein, Donald Bros. and others
- Fine Art and archives, National Gallery of Modern Art, National Gallery of Scotland, Royal Museum of Scotland
- NGS, SNGMA, Dean Gallery, SNPG, National Museum of Scotland, fine art, decorative arts Also City Art Centre and Fruitmarket Gallery
- Maybe the University's Musical Instrument Collection (Music Dept.) or the National Galleries (Art History)
- NGS, NMS, NLS, university collections
- Visual arts
- Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments Hunterian Museum
- We have some (archaeological) material in our own university teaching collections that is relevant to research.
Purpose of Collaboration

- contextual research
- I act as honorary curator
- The first collaboration was developed as part of a 'Reputations in Scottish History' project by colleagues researching the changing historiographical representations of key historical figures from St Margaret to John Maclean. The second is as part of a current research strand in environmental history focusing on the nature of resource exploitation by rural communities in upland and lowland Scotland.
- Short piece of research
- To further my research + thus to inform students
- Making connections between ECA and NMS.
- Undergraduate projects; Postgraduate dissertations; postdoctoral research. Mounting exhibitions
- Researching and writing a book using archive material in the Dean Gallery (SNGMA). Work Placements and Internships for undergrad and postgrad History of Art students. Lectures to Friends of the NGS. Lectures in symposia organised by and/or held in the NGS.
- We've collaborated on conferences and held seminars both at postdoctoral level and for teaching undergrads, particularly about paintings in NGS. In collaboration with colleagues in English and History, we're organising a series of seminars based on internationally important Renaissance/ Early Modern Collections in Edinburgh, starting with jointly organised seminars at NMS (majolica) and NLS (Early modern literary texts). Many of our ug and postgrad students do research on aspects of the collections and use files at museums plus expertise of staff. I've used drawing in article and am presently writing book on renaissance nudes which uses NGS collection, though not exclusively.
- Musical Instrument Research
- Research on authors
- A research project to develop a film about a photographer
- Museum houses skeletal material from ongoing vertebrate studies
- To verify and update the taxonomy of the bird family Oriolidae (Old World orioles) for the "Handbook of the Birds of the World", Lynx Edicions, Madrid.
- Research
- I co-curated the international touring exhibition 'De T’a Hoti Ts'eeda' (We Live Securely By The Land'). This exhibition utilised the 150 year old Tlicho Dene ethnographic collection in the NMS. It was opened in Canada within the context of a successful First Nation land claim. Please refer to the exhibition website for more information, http://pwnhc.learnnet.nt.ca/nmsathcoll/index.html It was jointly developed by the NMS, the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (the museum of the Northwest Territories, Canada), the Ticho Government, and myself.
- To assist in the sourcing and collation of material for our research project
- Storage of material from long-term studies of wild animal populations; skeletons of known individuals from studies of red deer and Soay sheep.
- National Gallery of Scotland, to organise Age of Titian exhibition (2004) Glasgow Museums, to commission catalogue of Italian Paintings
- A number of staff and pgs conduct research on archaeological materials for research or research degrees. Most collections used are outside Scotland. We have been rather slow at making use of Collaborative Doctoral Awards from AHRC and the like, and have no formal collaborations of which I am aware.
• Not collaboration exactly - just personal research on items in museum collections
• Not applicable because the museum concerned is within our School
• Various 'collaborations' including teaching of Museum and Gallery Studies, teaching in specific subject areas and research on individual items or collections in various subject areas across the University. Also, research (for publication) on items in other museums.
• I contact regional museums fairly often to request access to materials useful for my research. It's always an informal, ad hoc arrangement.
• National Gallery -- public collection
• Primarily teaching, but the online collections (through NMS / SCRAN) are widely used by myself at all levels, including research postgraduates.
• The most recent examples of collaboration were in connection with two temporary exhibitions which I curated and which required searching out and selecting artefacts from a number of museums.
Focus Group Agenda

Museums, Galleries and Collection Institute
University of St Andrews

Scottish Collections Research Network Feasibility Study

Focus Group Agenda

1.45pm    Arrivals & Coffee
2.00pm    Welcome & Introductions
2.15pm    “Collections-based Knowledge Creation in Museums”
           Rachel Hunter - Freelance Consultant
2.25pm    “Scottish Collections Research Network Feasibility Study”
           Beth Christie – University of St Andrews
2.35pm    Discussion Session – Rachel Hunter
2.55pm    SWOT Analysis – Breakout groups
3.30pm    Feedback
4.00pm    Finish