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Planning Report to Evaluate British Library Learning Services: Arts and Images

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This report is submitted for the fulfillment of the Module 6 – Users and usages of Digital Libraries: Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis

Executive Summary

The existence of all information centers or the libraries and the focal point of the information systems is the user. The main objective of the information services is to act as a bridge between the existing information and the end user. For ensuring an effective use of the information services, the information users, their information needs, their approaches to the information use and search should be well-known. Users frequently report certain types of shortcoming while others are ignored. That is why this plan has been designed to implement a project to evaluate the Arts and Image's services of the British Library learning program.

The evaluation project broadly aims to improve the services according to users' perspective. It focuses the Arts and Image's learning services with the view of the state of art to satisfy present users' needs and draw attention of potential/non-users. The project will use both qualitative and quantitative approaches, if there is any deficiency in one the other one will cover that. Moreover, a comparison of both approaches will give more fruitful outcome which may not be identified by a single approach. In addition, the log analysis, will give clear evidence of real use of the service. Analysis of all together will express dynamic outcomes. The project will take total eleven months to complete from January to November 2012.

The project will provide sufficient resources to the British Library to improve the Arts and Image services. The results from the viewpoint of effectiveness, user satisfaction, and the strategic positioning will come out. Simultaneously, it will reflect the state of the service at present too, and will demonstrate whether it is worth continuing or not, and also how the service can be improved. Concurrently, it will give feedback whether the present position of the service is praiseworthy or not according to the British library's mission.

Contents

1 Introduction

Users' characteristics play a vital role, ranging from the establishment of the information services to the collection and from determination service policies to restructuring the services (Burroughs, 2009). Sometimes, libraries put much attention to information-centered approach rather than user-centered approach, and overlooked the characteristics, needs, and approaches of the users. It is quite confusing to design a library service by ignoring the needs of the people to whom it obliged (Tenopir, Hitchcock, & Pillow, 2003). Without the knowledge of which information is needed and why it is needed, the design of a library service becomes impossible. That is why the user behaviors' should be taken into account not only for the establishment stage of the information centers, but also for the restructuring of the existing systems. Moreover, user can facilitate better understanding the problems and their reasons, and help to design more efficient services. In this digital age, it is possible to offer access to materials, but in reality, an evaluation is much appreciated in order to offer satisfactory services according to users' demands. In addition, it is obligatory to evaluate the existing service to identify how fruitfully this service fulfilling the mission of the parent organization. Keeping in mind all these issues, this planning report has been designed to implement a project to evaluate the British Library's Arts and Images learning service.

This planning report includes related background information of the library provided services and more focus on Arts and Image's learning services. It also contains aim and objectives of the evaluation, SWOT analysis, justification of the evaluation, data collection methods, collection of sample, management process, project evaluation process, challenges, project outcome and a Gantt chart. This project illustrates conclusions about the users for arts and collection images services.

2 The British Library

The National Library of United Kingdom is widely known as the British Library. The library is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. It is the world's largest library in terms of collection and holding over 150 million items from every country in the world, in almost all known languages, and in many formats including digital media. The collections include around 14 million books, along with extensive holdings of manuscripts and historical items dating back as far as 2000 BC. It adds nearly three million items every year. As a legal deposit library, it receives copies of all

books produced in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, including a significant amount of overseas titles distributed in the UK. The legal Deposit Act 2003 was expanded to include digital non-print objects, such as CD-ROMs and even web pages (Parliament of the United Kingdom, 2003). This law reflects the modern approach to collection development in which no media-type ranks above any other. This is exceptionally up to date way of thinking, as well as the many different user-groups, is also reflected in the stated purpose of the British Library

2.1 Historical background

The British Library was created on 1 July 1973 as a result of the British Library Act 1972. Under the Act the following institutions were administratively combined to form the British Library i) British Museum ii) National Central Library iii) National Lending Library for Science and Technology iv) British National Bibliography and the Office for Scientific and Technical Information (from 1974) v) The India Office Library and Records (from 1982) vi) Her Majesty´s Stationary Office (HMSO) Binderies (Wight, 2004). All these different institutions' originally had many different kinds of users – which is still true today. In addition, the library has to serve as a museum, as a national library, as a lending service for Science and Technology and a bibliographic consultant.

2.2 Mission and Vision

The mission of the library is 'Advancing the world's Knowledge'. There is a strong emphasis on the global aspect in this statement,

The visions of the library are: will be a leading hub in the global information network, Advancing knowledge through collections, expertise, and partnerships, For the benefit of the economy and society, and the enrichment of cultural life.

In fact, it is really the leading hub in the global information network. An important aspect of the vision is the notion that enables access to everyone who wants to do research. In Addition, the library actively wants to enrich the cultural life of the nation, i.e. the citizens of the United Kingdom.

2.3 General overview

Learning at the British Library is an expression of several of the ideas. It is a way to advance knowledge through expertise as well as a way to benefit the economy and society. It provides free high-class learning materials for everyone. Moreover, it serves as a way to enrich the cultural life of the citizens, by exposing them to new perspectives on old maps, books, letters etc. from the collection.
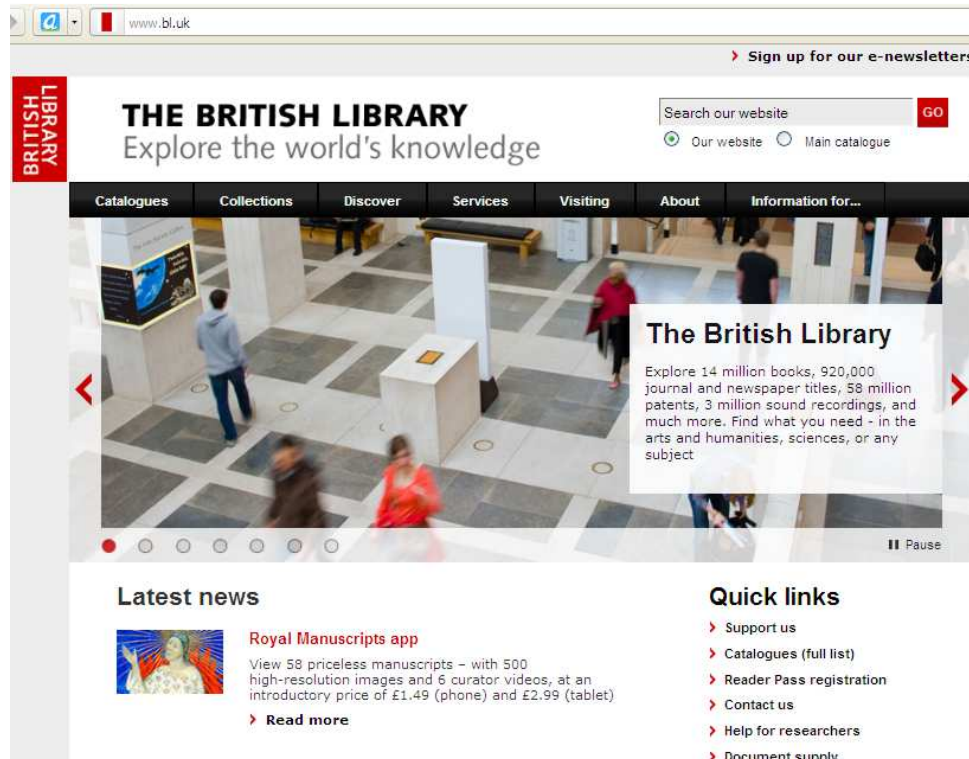

Figure 1: The website of the British Library

The Library is open to everyone who has a genuine need to use its collections. To use library's reading rooms for the first time one need to register for a reader pass. This is a very inclusive statement about the British Library's users. But one does, however, need to document a genuine need. This is probably meant as a way to restrict access to certain parts of the collections to everyone, but academics and a fairly normal precaution to take when it comes to invaluable objects. The British Library, takes appropriate use and handling of collection items seriously. It has reinforced the importance of having clean, dry hands to readers by developing an icon which is displayed in reading rooms and in leaflets. It also provides leading interlibrary loan library in Europe and the world and is used widely by other National Libraries.

2.4 Organogram

The structure of the library serves different purposes of different strategic goals achieved by many different units, each dealing with a fraction of the whole. The 'Unit for Public Engagement & Learning' that is in charge of the Learning at the British Library, is worth mentioning and it is part of the 'Strategic Marketing and Communications' pillar.
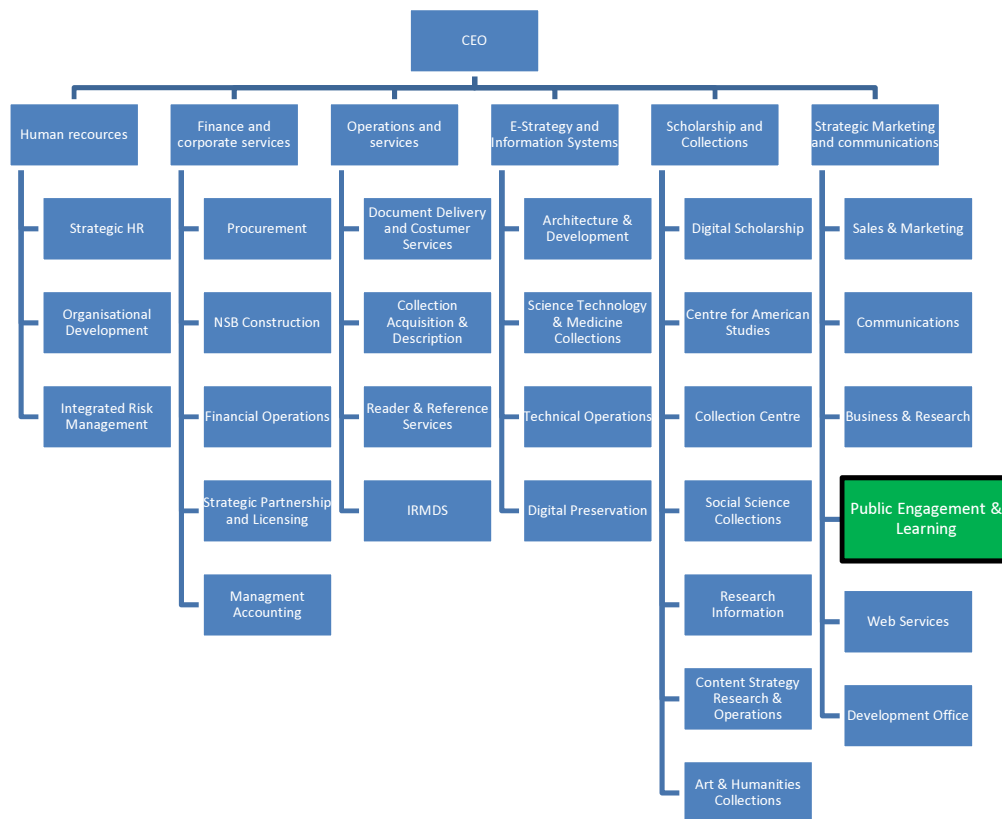
Figure 2: Organogram of the British Library

These notions of service seem to be a strategic way to promote the collections by offering a service that goes beyond simply making the collections available.

2.5 Collections

It is the custodian of the most important research collection in the world, spanning almost 3,000 years and from every continent. The core of the Library's historical collections is based on a series of donations and acquisitions from the 18th century, known as the 'foundation collections'. It adds nearly three million items every year. As a legal deposit library, it receives copies of all books produced in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland,

including a significant amount of overseas titles distributed in the UK. It is the world's largest library in terms of total number of items holding over 150 million items from many countries, in 400 languages and in many formats. It adds some three million items every year. Its collections are particularly strong in the areas of Arts and Humanities, Science, Social Science and Business.

2.6 Services

The library provides a good number of services among them the mentionable are Reading rooms, Business and IP Centre, Conference Centre, Learning program, Online or by post in print services, Audio transcriptions, Documentary supply, Online shop, Publishing, Wi-Fi in the premise, Expert advice etc.

2.6.1 Overview of Learning Services

The British library has five learning services, e.g.: i) Language and Literature, ii) Citizenship, iii) History, iv) Arts and Images, v) Culture and Knowledge. The 'Learning at the library' can be viewed value-added information services. The Library compiles information from their collections into meaningful packages and provide context as well as coherence between objects and different kinds of information. By publishing a digitized selection of otherwise hard-to-get or even inaccessible objects, along with a story or a framework for understanding, they reach potential new users. It is a way to engage the public, as well as a way to promote their collections and encourage use of their digital objects. The different services are not meant for high level researchers, but for the general public and more specifically, it is aimed towards students and teachers, in that the prepackaged information is suited as learning material.

The collection of Arts and Images is used to explore the different ways in which visual images communicate ideas. This planning report focus on Arts and Image's services, which consists four sub collections that are a) mapping history b) bodies of knowledge c) why write d) sacred book
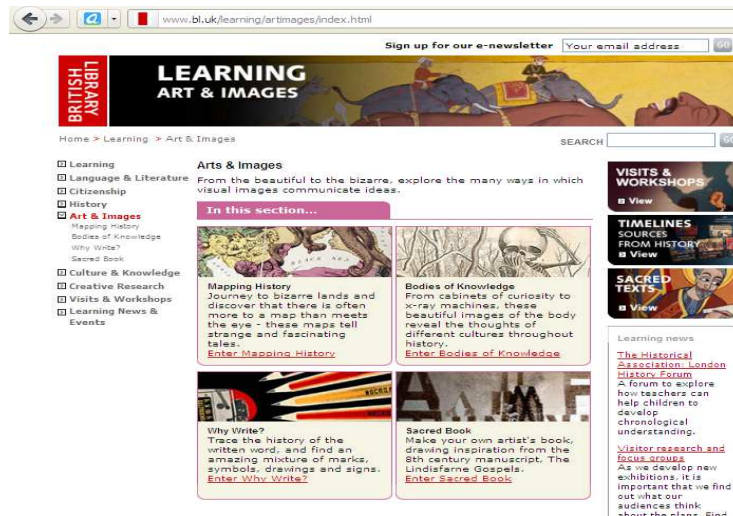
Figure 3: Arts and Image's services of the British library

The 'mapping history' collection is a reminder that there is often more to a map than meets the eye. By reading the explanations on the website, a student can gain insight on how maps can or have been made, read and used throughout history. It provides annotated access to a sample collection of the old digitized maps, and students can see the maps in the following different perspectives: Mapping ideas, Deception, lies, and made-up lands, Worlds at war, Wealth and Poverty.

The 'bodies of knowledge' looks at the way different cultures, at various points in history, have looked at the body, and how these ideas have been translated into pictures. For example, how the patterns of the stars were believed to influence the workings of the body, how Chinese doctors use needles to manipulate the 'life force' in the body, etc.
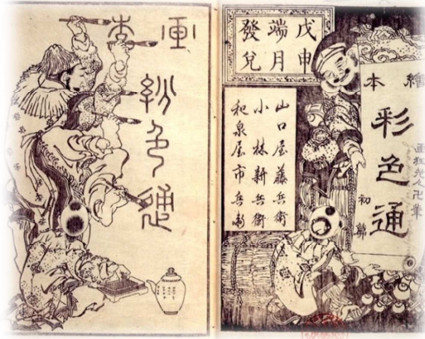
The 'Why Write' collection traces the history of the written word. It shows a mixture of marks, symbols, drawings and signs. The service allows users to explore how writing can incorporate sight, sound, touch and gesture. Users will also see the ways how cultural, social, historical and personal circumstances influence the way people write and the scripts created.

The 'sacred books 'subsection illustrates how research books are a way to collect and explore ideas. It also suggests ways to make and bind a simple book, mainly aimed at students. There are also projects, approaches and activities to fill a book. This section has four themes – 'object', 'time', 'place' and 'word'. Each connects to one of the four gospel authors. Anyone can download images from this site to use in his own work.

Brindley (2004) gave an insight into the way the British Library views its users in their quest of 'Advancing Knowledge'. She mentions five audience groups: researchers, business, libraries, education and the general public; and states how the target audience in the case of E-learning is mainly the educational sector, but they include a wide range of groups when preparing E-learning for the sake of inclusion. However, she has not described the current Learning-service, there is enough overlap in terms of the actual content to justify the claims, that the intended users are largely the same. The overlap is both in terms of themes (citizenship, British origins, Language), format (workshops, virtual exhibitions) and the actual content (digitized maps, etc).

3. Planning for evaluation of Culture and Knowledge learning Service

Any library services are designed for the users. Evaluation of library services is an essential component of the designing more effective services. Therefore, the evaluation criteria should be applied from the user's point of view for an effective outcome of the evaluation. It is also true for the British Library as well.

3.1 Aim and objectives of Evaluation

The evaluation project broadly aims to improve the services according to the users' point of view. However, it will focus the design and collection of Arts and Image's learning services with the view of the state of art to satisfy present users' needs and attract potential/non-users. The objectives are:

i) to measure user's satisfaction about arts and image collection
ii) to acquire feedback from users identify gaps in the service
iii) to identify barriers to use of the services
iv) to assess the service in terms of interface, contents, organization, and usability
v) to identify more resources that may be appropriate for the collection
vi) to evaluate in terms of its overall design, and establish what users need when exploring the collection from remote areas
vii) to improve the learning environment

3.2 SWOT Analysis of the evaluation

A SWOT analysis has been done to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats involved in this project:

3.2.1 Strength

➢ The Library has a strong profile in the UK and the rest of the world, recognizing the quality of service and sound and effective management.
➢ The British Library offers many resources and dedicated library professionals are working.
➢ The Library has very rich service modules and a tradition to develop more services that aim to increase the usage of resources.

3.2.2 Weakness

➢ Direct communication between remote users and professional library staffs are limited.
➢ It described topics highlighting various segments of the universal cultural heritage, but the library may not have all of them.

- Due to extent of collections and intensive use of facilities, there is a lack of development of new learning services.

3.2.3 Opportunities

- There are plenty of potential users in the Culture and Knowledge learning services.
- Opportunities for collaboration offer benefits for procurement and service development with partners in various groups.

3.2.4 Threats

- Search engines such as Google and other internet resources are more attractive to the users than the e-resources of the Library.
- Digital divide and lack of digital Information literacy of the remote users.
- The economic recession driving down resource allocation and library funding, including bequest income, affecting the maintenance and development of collections and services.

3.3 Justification of the Evaluation

The Arts and Images collection are one of the unique gatherings of the British Library. Since its inception, it has been providing services to the users. However, it is quite necessary to evaluate this service to find whether the users' expectations are satisfied by the service or not. If it is satisfying the user's needs, then how far and if not, then what is/are missing? It will identify the potential users and non-users too. It will indicate what measure should be taken by the library for marketing of this service. Moreover, the evaluation will look on the anticipation and the familiarity of the user community of the collection. More specifically, the project team will like to know:

 i) What are the characteristics and the information behavior of the user?
 ii) How satisfied are the users with the arts and image learning services?
 iii) How far the users' expectations fulfilled by the service?
 iv) Does the interface user-centered or not? Why?
 v) What are the common barriers that faced by the users?
 vi) Who are the non-users of this service, why?
 vii) What measures should be taken to create a center of attention of potential users?

viii) What to do to render the relationship between the users and services more effectively?

ix) What can be done to improve the overall service?

3.4 Methodology

The methods of this evaluation, combine quantitative and qualitative approaches. If there is any deficiency in one, the other one will cover that. Moreover, a comparison of both approaches will give more fruitful outcome that may not be identified by a single approach. Dedicated project personnel will conduct interviews with pre-defined questionnaire for the regular users, and potential users of the service. In addition, an online survey questionnaire will be design and send to registered users of the service. The questionnaire will appear for a certain period in the arts and image learning services interface. It will help the library to get feedback from non-frequent users or potential users of the services. Simultaneously, the user logs of exploring and downloading will be analysis to identify the user's information seeking behavior. In addition, the searched terms used by the users in search box that are related to the services will be analyzed.

3.5 Collection of sample

The project team will identify the regular users and potential users of the service. A maximum ten percent of the regular users and equivalent number of potential user or non-user will be interviewed. The online questionnaire will be e-mailed well in advance to all the registered users of the services and allow sufficient time for feedback. The same questionnaire will be available in the interface of the service as long time as the time allowed for regular users. The users' information seeking logs and download logs will be analyzed since the beginning of the services. The log analysis, will give clear evidence of real use. Analysis of all together will lead to productive outcomes.

3.6 Management Process

A dedicated project team consisting of library professionals and specialize in arts and images collections will be from in the beginning of the project. The management of the 'Strategic Marketing and communications' division and chose the best people from other units too will select the personnel. They should also consider the diversity, skills, attitudes, and experiences of the people. The management team will ensure that all the resources that need to

successfully implement the project are readily available, e.g. tools and equipment, human resources, fund, etc. The project team will be dedicating their time for the success of the project. Several sub-teams will be created to accomplish specific tasks within projected time. The project manager will be in charge to monitor and evaluation of the process. The project team will meet frequently to solve the weakness and challenges' that may arise during the implementation process.

3.7 Project monitoring and evaluation process

The project manager will be in charge to monitor and evaluate the process. The project team will meet regularly to solve problems or challenges that may arise during the implementation process. The project will evaluate step-by-steps. After completion of the each segment the project team will discuss about the progress, whether the target is achieved or not, if there is a need to redefine tasks or not. Through frequent evaluation, the project team will develop and improve what they are doing, know when to make changes, and share this information with others, celebrate success and learning from valuable mistakes.

3.8 Project Evaluation Process

The project will evaluate step-by-steps. After completion of the each segment the project team will discuss, about the progress, whether the desired target achieved or not, whether there is a need to redefine the activities or not. Through frequent evaluation, the project team will develop and improve what they are doing, know when to make changes, figure out what success looks like and share this information with others, celebrate success and learning from valuable mistakes.

3.9 Challenges

Expectation of users is varied and multifaceted. Besides, it is practically difficult to reach all the users as the library is a National Library in nature. Therefore, the project team can only reach to the user who resided in the UK though the library has a wide range of user worldwide. Consequently, the project team may arrive to a portion of users and consider their views in analysis, which may not reflect the each ones view rather than a collective view. Moreover, the team needs to consider the diversity and different age and sex group of the users and their taste to choose the best tools to conduct the project.

4 Project outcome

The project will provide sufficient resources to the British Library to improve the Arts and Image services. The result from the viewpoint of effectiveness, user satisfaction, and the strategic positioning will come out. The scope of the analyses that will carry out and the amount of data obtain in the evaluation process will make it recommendable to refer not only to the summary report but also to the many detailed issues. The outcome will also indicate the weak points and proposals for improvement. It will include the report for improving the situation based on end users' views. It will facilitate the library on the changing roles of the services, and to strengthen the structure of with sufficient support to allow them to organize according to user demands and to make plans to foster the use of the existing resources. In addition, the evaluation project will also try to find to have views of non-users of the collection. This will help to know the state of the service at the moment, determine if it is worth continuing and also how the service can be improved if required. Simultaneously, it will give feedback whether the present position of the service is praiseworthy or not according to the British library's mission.

5 Gantt chart
The project will run from January – November 2012. The entire project will take eleven months to complete. Here is the Gantt chart at a glance:

Task Name	Start Date	End Date	2012
Project team building	01/02/12	01/09/12	Project team building
Orientation	01/10/12	01/16/12	Orientation
Questionnaire design	01/17/12	02/16/12	Questionnaire design
Structure interview design	02/17/12	03/14/12	Structure interview design
Online questionnaire interface design	02/17/12	03/05/12	Online questionnaire interface design
Conduct structured interviews	03/15/12	05/11/12	Conduct structured interviews
Testing both structure interviews questions and online questionnaire	05/14/12	06/07/12	Testing both structure interviews questions and online questionnaire
Evaluation of done work	06/08/12	06/13/12	Evaluation of done work
Identification of regular user and potential users	06/14/12	07/12/12	Identification of regular user and potential users
Send questionnaire to users	07/13/12	07/18/12	Send questionnaire to users
Receive and analysis questionnaire	07/19/12	08/09/12	Receive and analysis questionnaire
Analysis interviews	08/10/12	09/11/12	Analysis interviews
Analysis of users logs	06/04/12	07/31/12	Analysis of users logs
Analysis of download logs	07/02/12	07/31/12	Analysis of download logs
Analysis of search terms	07/02/12	07/30/12	Analysis of search terms
Compilation of findings & Evaluation	09/12/12	10/11/12	Compilation of findings & Evaluation
Reporting	10/12/12	11/27/12	Reporting

The above Gantt chart described each of the tasks of the project indicating a specific period with start and end date. It also shows the dependencies with previous tasks.

6 Conclusion

The evaluation project will help the British library to know how successful the Arts and Images service is till now. It will influence the acquisition and access policy for that service, and give new thought for interface design and promotion initiatives. This planning report concludes that the beneficial impacts of evaluation can be significantly increase the use of the British library, enhance user satisfactions and draw attention of more users.

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