

Managing Museum information...

- Final output of the London Hub Information and Records Management under Renaissance
- Follow up to a workshop “Ways Forward in Information” we held in February 2009
- Survey of the project and its outcomes
- Examination of some of the current information challenges facing museums



Programme

- 10.00 -10.40 **Managing information in the 21st century: one museum's perspective** (Claire Sussums)
- 10.40 -11.15 **Overview of the London Renaissance project – results and products** (Sarah Demb, Museum of London)
- 11.15 -11.40 *Break*
- 11.40 – 12.20 **Case Studies: Records Management Consultancies 2009-2011**
(Anne Fineman, Whitelodge Museum; Martin Wyatt, Handel House Museum; Susan Buhr, Greenwich Heritage Centre & Hampstead Museum; Chair: Samira Teuteberg, Museum of London)
- 12.20 - 1.00 **Managing information without a parachute** (Tim Callister, The National Archives)
- 1.00 – 2.00 *Lunch*
- 2.00 -2.40 **Resolved: Social media and information management are mutually exclusive** (Tim Turner, 2040 Training)
- 2.40 - 3.10 **Open Mic Session** (Jackie Urwin, Northumbria University, Laura Whitton, Collections Trust, Kate Smith, Untold London)
- 3.10 – 3.30 *Tea/Coffee*
- 3.30 – 4.00 **New contexts for museum information** (Nick Poole, Collections Trust)
- 4.00 - 4.15 **Panel discussion – Managing Information in the 21st century**
(Claire Sussums, Sarah Demb, Tim Turner; Chair: Nick Poole)



Managing information in the 21st Century: one museum's perspective

Claire Sussums: Museum of
London, 29/02/2012



The Information and Records Management project: a recap

- Started in 2007
- Funded by Renaissance
- 2 strands IM and Records Management
- Initial aims of IM strand: to assess the what gains could be made by implementing information policies in the hub museums
- Investigate the risks, impacts and missed opportunities arising from the lack of information polices/strategy



Information policy: what does it do?

A tool that defines:

- The objectives of information use
- The priorities among those objectives
- The principles by which information will be managed

A dynamic tool that can be used to develop information strategy, assist effective decision making on resource allocation, and provide an objective criteria for assessing information based activities.



Information Policy Framework

The project developed a framework to assist museums with improving the way they manage information via the implementation of information policy and strategy

Enabling effective information management and access

The need to know what information is where, who is responsible for it and to put in place processes to manage and provide access to it.

Informing strategic thinking

The need to ensure that information is managed strategically; that it can be informed by, and underpin corporate priorities and contribute to innovation within the museum.

Gathering and using management information

The need to manage the provision of performance and management information effectively and rationally.

Developing cohesive services and products

The need for museums to take a broad view of their information services and products and to plan these in response to user needs in the context of the wider information marketplace.

Developing effective records management

The need to ensure that the public record of museums' business is properly documented and managed.

Developing and sharing skills

Ensuring that museums have access to appropriate skills to enable the implementation of the Information Policy Framework.

Recognising the cost and value of information

The need to put in place processes to capture and share information, and to develop an organisational ethos which reflects the intrinsic value of information.



Fulfilling legal and ethical responsibilities

The need for museums to ensure that they fulfil legal and ethical obligations.

... ..



In this session...

I want to do two things:

- 1: Tell you how the Museum of London got on with implementation of the framework
- 2: Outline the challenges for managing museum information in the 21st century: as we are experiencing them at MOL



Framework launched in February 2009...

- Information was managed at a departmental level
- No Records Management function
- Information policy did not exist
- New systems were conceptualised and developed at a departmental or divisional level
- Our shared drives were unregulated
- MOL was in the middle of conducting an information audit



February 2012

- Where are now?
- How did we get here?
- And what have we learned?



Information Management at MOL in 2012

Since 2009 we have:

- Implemented an Information Policy and associated rolling 3 year strategy
- Implemented a governance structure to manage the above
- Written and implemented a number of sub policies including Information Security and Social Media
- Implemented a records management programme



How did we get here?

- formal and informal canvassing
- Engaged with key stakeholders and potential detractors
- Presented issues at each departmental meeting



How did we get here?

- Information audit was instrumental
- It raised staff awareness
- Put the spotlight on problems and issues
- We used the results of the audit to make the case for the policy
- Got senior stakeholders to debate the issues which informed the creation of the policy



MOL Information Policy

- Formally signed off by the Board
March 2010
- States the importance of information to the business and the risks of not managing it correctly
- Sets out who is responsible for what
- Defines what we mean by information
- Establishes the principles by which we will manage our information
- Specifies the governance structure (Mandated the establishment of an Information Committee)
- Articulates the framework which we use to manage information



Principles

- Train and develop our staff in information management
- Support effective dissemination and sharing of our information
- Recognise the cost and value of our information
- Establish clear responsibilities for information creation and preservation
- Develop cohesive information services and products
- Ensure the quality of our information resources
- Develop and implement effective records management
- Fulfil legal and ethical responsibilities towards information
- Implement appropriate information security



MOL Information Policy: some key points...

Mandates that

- all new information systems or major adaptations of existing systems must be presented to Information Committee (IC) for assessment
- All new information products hosted outside our network should be assessed by IC



A policy about policies

- Maintain an Information Security Policy and risk register
- Maintain policies and procedures for compliance with relevant legislation (including the Freedom of Information Act, the Data Protection Act, Copyright and Intellectual Property etc)
- Maintain a Records Management Policy



It also contains practical actions and instructions e.g.

- Designate official channels for the distribution and storage of information and provide associated guidance to staff for them
- Institute a programme of museum wide training designed to train staff in the core policies and procedures



Articulates potential points of tension and asserts value

- “The Museum recognises that information is a valuable corporate asset and will promote an information culture in which good practice can thrive and information assets can be successfully exploited. We also recognise that information has a cost both with regard to its creation, storage and use and in regard to gaps, inaccuracies and duplication.”



The Role of Information Committee

- Information Committee meets every 6 weeks
- Manages the 3 year rolling Information Strategy
- Uses a checklist for assessing information products
- Uses a PID and PPD's adapted specifically for assessing new systems



There is work to be done

- Policy and governance just the starting point
- Strategy = a three year plan of action
- Contains work ranging from small scale changes to procedures to major projects



Information Security

- We deliberately left this till after the Information Policy was embedded
- Wrote a skeleton policy focussed on priority areas
- Consulted with all departments
- Conducted a survey
- Made policy live
- Are still rolling out aspects of it



What have we achieved?

- Information is seen as needing to be managed
- Information Committee is an established part of the management structure
- Reduced use of staff time to assess new ideas
- Input/resources from key depts. agreed at the beginning of a project
- Have established key responsibilities e.g. Records Manager signs off permissions on our shared drives
- We have got rid of a lot of duplicate paper and electronic information...
- Better understanding of information needs and priorities
- A plan of action



Lessons learned?

- We started in a vacuum so initial policy is more wide ranging and aspirational than future versions will need to be
- As concepts of IM becomes more embedded some of duties and business of IC will probably be devolved to other committees
- Workloads for staff involved in implementation increases at least initially...



Lessons learned?

- This takes time...
- Cross over between IM and other functions is still blurred and needs constant review
- Still an interesting relationship between the business systems and strategic use of information
- Policies result in work that you don't always foresee
- This is about people more than it is about processes
- Keep having the conversations



Reality is that there
are still many
challenges



The “still to do list”:

- Digital preservation
- Information access
- Training
- CRM...



Specific challenges arising from implementation

- People still need reminders
- The project represents a change management process and the implementation of the policy was just the beginning
- Continual management is required
- We need to find a better way to get new staff up to speed with the policies and procedures quickly
- Need to ensure that we don't hold stuff up
- Perceptions of bureaucracy are a danger



Some general challenges

- Rapid speed of change
- Legal environment is unclear (Social Media) and challenging/changing (Copyright, PSI)
- Social pressure and perception



Some general challenges

- Technology still sometimes seen as an end in itself or as a one off solution to a problem
- Information versus communication
- Volume of information growing exponentially
- Speed of interchange required increasing



There is no such thing as the data fairy...

- Still an under-estimation of what it takes to create and maintain information
- We need a better way to articulate the time and investment required

