



Mercian Collaboration Development Officer

SDG Update Report, June 2017

The following is an update on activities conducted by the Mercian Collaboration (MC) Development Officer (MCDO), relevant to the SDG. It covers the period following the March Directors' meeting (13/3/2017) to early June 2017.

Administration & Governance

The venue for the Monday 6th November 2017 Directors' meeting was confirmed as Coventry University, and initial arrangements have been made on site. A guest speaker will be discussing collaborative collection management, and the topic of library partnership experiences will also come up for examination. Minutes for the March 2017 Directors' meeting and May Steering Group meeting are now available on the website. It is anticipated the SG will meet again in early August (Friday 11th August).

The election and transfer of power between the outgoing and incoming Mercian Steering Groups has occupied a fair portion of time. On top of the regular quarterly SG telcon, two in-person meetings were held with incoming Mercian Officers, to brief them on past activities, upcoming priorities and assist in transitioning into their new roles. Firstly, with Paul Reynolds (Treasurer, Keele, 7 April) and secondly with Dave Parkes (Chair, DMU) and the Past Chair (11 April, Leicester). In the latter case, the outline agenda for the May SG meeting was generated from discussions during this meeting.

Communications

Annual Report

In line with other regional library collaborations, it is planned to produce an annual report for the Mercian Collaboration from 2017 onwards (11th May 2017, 17/13(e)). This would be collated and distributed in early 2018, likely in a born-digital format. It is anticipated that space would be provided for Mercian SIGs to briefly report on their activities. The hope is to draw on and collate pre-existing materials (e.g. the SDG's annual report) rather than require extensive new authoring.

Mailing List

In line with the revised requirements (13th March 2017, 17/04(e)), the main Mercian list membership now incorporates Deputies at member establishments. 24 Deputies have been added, with 2 instructions noting no appropriate staff to add. 8 further member organisations have declined to provide any deputy details.

External Collaboration

Ongoing ad-hoc discussions have continued with other Collaboration Officers during this period, and a face-to-face meeting arranged for mid-June in Sheffield, to facilitate further exchanges of experience, advice and insight. As per (11th May 2017, 17/13(d)), the SG planned to explore potential avenues of inter-collaboration relationships in the coming months.



Website

The Website continues to operate as anticipated, with additional information in the form of news, events and expanded SIG information comprising the major content updates. All SIGs, and Directors, are strongly encouraged to continue provide original materials, in discussion with the MCDO, to continue to build the sites relevancy and value to the Mercian community. The SG has recently reviewed its desired or anticipated audiences for the site's contents, and a position statement on this is now available on the Website. Nevertheless, the core audience remains library staff within Mercian member organisations.

Development work, beyond the addition of new content, is currently paused, given recent investigations by the MCDO and Treasurer regarding the charging arrangements for any work on the site conducted under the website provider's contract with SCOUNL. Directors have been reminded where possible or appropriate on their own sites, that links to the Mercian site and social media presence are desirable.

Social Media

The Mercian social media presence ([@MercianCollab](#)) slowly grows followers, with efforts to promote events and activities of the Mercian during MCDO working days, showing successful spikes in site access. Additionally, the #tag #MercianCollab has been adopted as the 'core' Mercian #tag for use when tweeting about/during events, or pertaining to online discussions which relate to the Mercian's interests. The account, currently, has 61 followers.

Special Interest Groups

Conference Group

During the (31 March 2017) meeting of the MCG the main conference theme was set (*'in libraries we trust'*). The call for papers was issued (4th May 2017) and closed 9th June. A day-long planning meeting is to be held at Loughborough (14th June 2017) to review submissions and outline the draft programme. A keynote speaker has been identified, and approached, and is currently pending agreement by the Conference Group members before being confirmed. While this year's conference is non-fee charging for delegates, a review of potential costs for future events means a number of areas for securing additional funds will be explored by the CG in tandem with the SG, as part of the post-event evaluation process. It is anticipated that 80-100 delegate places will be made available initially exclusively to Mercian regional library staff.

Disability Group

Following the decisions to progress the Disability Group's proposals, the MCDO has been liaising with their convener (Beck Maguire, Nottingham). It is anticipated that a face-to-face meeting with Group will be necessary in due course to move things forward in a coherent fashion, which will be facilitated by the Officer, in consultation with the SG.



RDM

Support for the RDM Group has centred on promoting, and attending part of their launch meeting (24 April, Loughborough). As a relatively new group, still forming their identity and purpose, it is anticipated that a higher level of support will be needed by this Group's conveners as they explore their place within the Mercian structures, and delivering on their intentions. Notably, post-launch their website section has been revised to reflect their new status and developing governance structures. The RDM group has also expressed interests in a buddying scheme, and have been encouraged to talk with the SDG Chair rather than developing a scheme parallel to the SDG's plans.

SDG

Event reports and write ups, suitable for the website, have been forthcoming from some, but not all SDG events. Where they have been, these have made for excellent promotional tools for the Group's activities and hopefully will encourage other library staff to attend future events. The MCDO notes his particular thanks for these, and welcomes more in the future. However, organisers' submissions of event flyers and supplementary event information has been less than timely in some cases. Given the MCDO only works 1 day a week (and has vacation to take), means more advance notification of this information is very strongly encouraged, if recruitment via the website is desired. Ideally, a lead time of one month, ahead event dates, would be the gold-standard. Due to the variance in the MCDO's working patterns, less than two week's notification of event details risks only minimal web presence.

The Open University, Universities of Birmingham and Wolverhampton have yet to supply headshots to the MCDO for the SDG webpages.

Gareth J Johnson, Mercian Collaboration Development Officer, June 2017