



Collaboration Development Officer’s Report, March 2018

Dr Gaz J Johnson, March 2019

This report is an update on activities conducted by the Mercian Collaboration (MC) Development Officer (MCDO), covering the period Nov 2018-Mar 2019. The following are matters of interest which the MCDO wishes to bring to Directors’ attention. It also provides insights into the Collaboration’s online presence, with particular reference to the use of the website and social media channels.

Governance

The Steering Group has met once (telcon, Feb 2019) since the last Directors Board, after regretfully having to postpone a planned December 2019 meeting. Discussions have been held with the outgoing Chair and are planned to be held with the incoming Chair to ensure a smooth transition of power. Informal briefings with other incoming new members of the Steering Group will also be offered, as required. Additionally, in collaboration with the Conference Group chair and the approval of Steering Group, the MCDO has revised the Collaboration’s sponsorship policy in line with the experience of the 2018 conference.

Formal contact with SCOUNL, as the Collaboration’s parent body, remains infrequent.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

A number of SIG Committee meetings were attended during this period, notably the Conference Group (Nov 2018), MDF (Jan 2019), Copyright Group (Feb 2019) and MSDG (October 2018, Mar 2019). The Officer also attended a meeting with the proposed Marketing and Communication (Dec 2018) and the Metadata and Cataloguing Groups (March 2019) to provide input and guidance on their proposed existences. Subsequent support via email has continued to be provided to these proto-groups. As usual, due to increasingly diverse demands on the Officer’s time regretfully prohibits attendance at all SIG events or meetings, which has been highlighted to the Steering Group. Contact with SIG chairs continues to form a regular activity for the MCDO, as does maintaining the related event website, promotional work relating to their activities, and maintaining their current membership lists.

Website, Marketing and Communications¹

The Website has continued to be developed and grown in content, especially relating to SIG meetings and activities. The 2018 Conference microsite now incorporates a range of presentations from the event. The site has remained stable and functional, with no technical issues noted. Populating the news section with fresh content remains an ongoing challenge, with around half of all events having an associated news item (pre/post event). However, the MSDG is to be especially commended for their efforts to provide reports, with all news items in the past half-year period originating from this SIG’s activities.

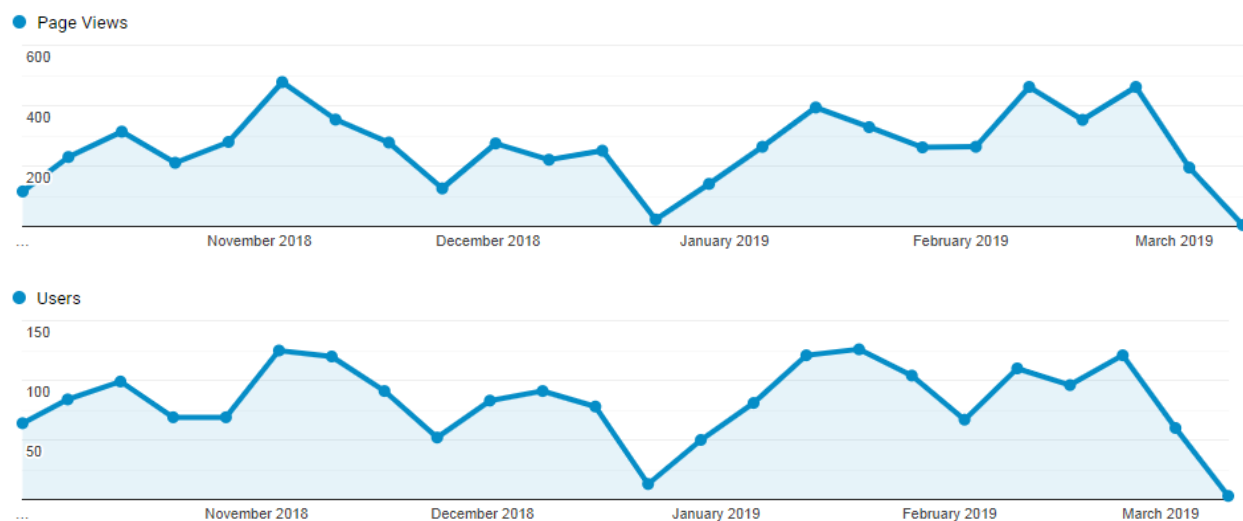
Mercian Section	News Item (Nov 17-Mar 18)	News Items (Mar-Oct 18)	News Items (Oct 18-Mar 19)
General News	2	1	0
Conference Group	4	3	0
Copyright Group	1	0	0
Mercian Disability Forum	0	1 ²	0

¹ <http://merciancollaboration.org.uk>

² This was two separate reports on the same event, combined into one item

RDM Support Group	0	1	0
Mercian Staff Development Group	2	2	4
Event Coverage	44%	63%	50%

Over this period (1/Oct/18-10/Mar/19) 2,337 website sessions by 1,536 unique users were initiated. A weekly average close to 100 users, ignoring the usual Christmas break slump, was seen. Page views totalled 6,288 unique impressions, averaging around 300 pages/week. These figures are somewhat but not drastically fewer than the previous half-year ones, although earlier values may have been inflated by a counting error on the part of Adaptive (web support company), which was corrected during October 2018. Likely the close correlation between user numbers and page accesses indicates that user site access continues to be for individuals seeking specific information, with few people browsing far from their landing page.



Geographically, the UK remains the primary source of website traffic as would be expected given the Collaboration’s remit. England represents 95.8% of all access locations within the UK. However, a marked increase in accesses originating in USA should be noted.

Rank	Top Geographic Accesses	Previous Report Period
1	UK (65.8%)	UK (72%)
2	USA (19.0%)	France (9.6%)
3	South Korea (3.5%)	USA (7.4%)
4	Philippines (2.1%)	South Korea (3%)
5	Italy (1.5%)	Brazil (1%)

Other Channels

Our Twitter account ([@MercianCollab](https://twitter.com/MercianCollab)) has grown to 175 followers (158 at last reporting), with continued engagement from delegates to Collaboration events but increasingly in response to original tweets. Content and alerts are pushed through this channel by the Development as time allows. Scheduled tweets continue to be used to maintain a more regular promotion of events and the Collaboration. The member staff exclusive discussion list (mercian-collaboration@jiscmail.ac.uk), launched in March 2018, has now risen to 130 members (from 114 at last reporting). Traffic on the list mainly remains limited to announcements and news from the MCDO. A semi-regular *News of the Mercian Collaboration* newsletter



conflates forthcoming and recent events and committee meetings, as well as propagating announcements and news to the membership. Notably the format of this newsletter has been adopted by NoWAL³.

Training and Development

The MCDO attended the Positioning the Academic Library workshop hosted by Goldsmith's University (Nov 2018), fed back issues of interest to the Chair and Steering Group, alongside promoting the Collaboration's work to delegates.

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Outreach

The Officer represented the Collaboration at the SCONUL Regional Officers' Day (Nov 2018, DMU) and the Regional Collaborations' Annual Colloquium (Jan 2019, UCL, London). Matters of operational and strategic concern arising from these discussions were reported to the Chair and Steering Group. The next Regional Collaborations meeting is planned for 18th March 2020, at the University of York. The Officer continues to regularly communicate with other collaborations, and less-frequently other sectoral bodies, to represent the Collaboration's interests and concerns. Notably during this period, and following discussions at Directors Board, the Officer has been in contact with representatives of CILIP and Jisc.

Workload

As discussed at the recent Steering Group (19/02(f)), the continued expansion of activities under the Collaboration's umbrella, continue to make greater demands on the limited time resource for the MCDO. Workdays wholly or at least partially devoted to regional and national travel to attend events and meetings during this period made up 65% of the MCDO's employed days, with the remainder of time (35%) was spent homeworking. Pre-existing administration, liaison, governance, coordination, website support and communication requirements to meet the Collaboration's operational requirements, means the Officer is now increasingly limited in accommodating any additional work.

The incoming Chair, in her role as the line manager for the MCDO and Steering Group lead, will continue to monitor this situation going forward.

³ Albeit at a more regular frequency, due to their greater staffing resource.