

Press Releases

Historic Welsh ballads online for a new global audience

Wed 11 August 2010: Historic news once sung on street corners is now being captured online in a virtual resource. 4,000 ballads from 18th and 19th century Wales are launching on a website run by Cardiff University and the National Library of Wales. The songs document the important issues of their day, such as workers' rights and crime, as well as local festivals and village gossip. Funded through a £66,000 grant from JISC, the project has completed a network of digital resources giving access to these precious documents.

Academic editor of the Welsh Ballads project, Dr Wyn James of Cardiff University's school of Welsh, commented: "Ballads were the 'daily newspapers' for the poor throughout the 18th and 19th Centuries, and were sold cheaply and widely at markets, fairs, and villages; they communicated news on local matters and overseas events of the day.

"We have selected around 15,000 pages of rare Welsh and English language ballads and have now made them available for audiences around the world to study and enjoy."

Ben Showers, programme manager at JISC, said: "The Welsh Ballads project puts in place the final piece of a national jigsaw of digitised ballads. Adding to the ballad collections of England and Scotland this new archive will help make this a unique and indispensable resource for researchers, students and interested members of the public.

"This project is part of JISC's continued work to enhance collections of significance, and ensure that resources are not left in isolation, but brought together for the benefit of research, teaching and learning for everyone."

Digitisation of the ballads collections was carried out in Cardiff University's Information Services Directorate and the National Library of Wales.

Access the collection at

<<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/insrv/libraries/solar/digital/welshballads.html>>

London Libraries Consortium uses RFID for self-service, stock management and extended opening

14 July 2010: Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) is being extensively used by members of the London Libraries Consortium for self-service, improved stock management and to facilitate longer opening hours. Around a third of London is served by the consortium's library services. The most recent RFID installations are at Tooting (Wandsworth), Wandsworth Town, Clapton (Hackney), John Jackson (Enfield), Enfield Town and Gants Hill (Redbridge) where public library technology specialist Axiell has provided Bibliotheca Venus machines which offer easy-to-use self issue and return facilities in over 1,000 libraries worldwide.

Wandsworth libraries has had RFID in its Earlsfield library since 2008 and at the new Wandsworth Town library since it opened in August 2009. Geoff Boulton, Library Strategy and Performance Manager, explains the reasoning behind its introduction, "Wandsworth Town library is in a listed building and comprises a series of rooms rather than an open plan library. In order to provide maximum opening hours over six days a week and to make best use of staff, we decided to use self-service machines so that we did not need to have a librarian permanently in each of the six rooms." Branch Librarian, Daniel Andrews, added, "People are still wowed by being able to put a whole pile of books on the machine and the machine reading the information from them all at once." The machine in the children's library has been configured with a choice of safari or deep sea images and they are very popular with children of all ages. Tooting Library serves a strong Asian community and the RFID machines have been set up so that the instructions are available in the relevant language such as Urdu or Punjabi, 87% of issues at the branch are through RFID machines. The technology will be introduced to the remaining Wandsworth libraries by the end of the year.

In the east of Greater London, **Havering** will carry out stock taking using hand held RFID readers for the first time this year. Six of the borough's libraries have RFID, the latest being the new Central Library in Romford, the remaining four libraries will gain the technology in 2010 with a target of 80% of transactions to go through the machines this year.

At neighbouring borough **Redbridge**, the technology is also used for stock management as well as self-service. Gants Hill library was recently refurbished and now offers extended opening hours thanks to the introduction of RFID. Staff have been trained in the new customer service model and actively encourage patrons to use the RFID machines and 86%

of issues are now going through self-service. RFID will be rolled out to three further branch libraries this financial year and the Ilford central library in financial year 2011-2012.

Brent Libraries have 10 fully self-service libraries with the remaining two facilities to follow suit by Autumn 2010. There the main motivator was to free up staff to help customers and to promote stock and events. Sue McKenzie, Head of Libraries in the borough, says, “The key to moving to self-service is to build up staff skills and attitude in advance, to promote RFID to the public and to encourage staff to floor-walk. The customer panels we have for each library were also immensely helpful in providing advice on the best ways to promote and introduce the new technology.” In the self-service libraries the library counters have been removed so that the public are naturally drawn to the self-service machines; staff are available for queries via at least one information pod in each branch. The introduction of the machines also coincided with a makeover: libraries now have improved layouts and additional facilities such as self-service printing. The machines also handle money so that customers can pay for DVD loans or overdue fees themselves and Brent now has an average rate of 80% RFID usage across all its branches.

In the borough of **Ealing**, a recent libraries refurbishment and modernisation programme allowed RFID to be installed in five libraries. At the new Northolt Leisure Centre which opened this year, patrons can find facilities such as swimming pools, a gym, community hall and a library. The centre building is open beyond the library opening hours and RFID machines allow users to issue and return books after the library has closed. Two new library partnerships with Sure Start Children’s Centres will use RFID and are planned for this financial year.

Facet Publishing Announce the Launch of the RDA Toolkit

12 July 2010: The RDA Toolkit is an integrated, browser-based, online product that allows users to interact with a collection of cataloguing-related documents and resources, including RDA and offers a one-stop resource for implementing RDA.

Facet Publishing, the commercial publishing and bookselling arm of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, along with co-publishers the American Library Association and Canadian Library Association are pleased to announce that [The RDA Toolkit](#) is now live. The Toolkit includes RDA: Resource, Description and Access, the long-awaited new unified cataloguing standard designed for the digital world.

Highlights of the toolkit include:

- Fully searchable and browseable instructions
- AACR2 Rule Number Search of RDA instructions
- Workflows
- Mappings (tools to customise the RDA instruction set to support organisational training and processes)
- Two views of RDA content – by table of contents and by element set
- AACR2
- Various tools to help evaluate and implement RDA

The RDA Toolkit will be supplemented by two print components which will be available directly from Facet Publishing and will be released later this year: [RDA Instructions](#) and [RDA: Element Set View](#). Facet are also publishing [Introduction to RDA: A guide to the basics](#) by Chris Oliver, [Practical Cataloguing: AACR, RDA and MARC21](#) by Anne Welsh and Sue Batley and [Cataloging Nonbook, Electronic, Web and Networked Resources Using AACR2 and RDA: A how-to-do-it manual and CD-ROM for librarians](#) by Mary Beth Weber and Fay A Austin.