TROVE STATUS REPORT 2012

Introduction

This report summarises Trove activities since the last briefing to the Libraries Australia Advisory Committee in October 2011. As Trove makes itself indispensable throughout Australia, it is becoming more challenging to choose directions for its development. The key activities in this timeframe were:

- the establishment of an internal Trove Reference Group to govern the directions of Trove, determine its scope and prioritise development to retain an engaging and valuable experience for the Australian public;
- the release of the Trove Application Programming Interface (API);
- the incorporation of functions into the Trove user interface to replace similar functions in Picture Australia, Music Australia and Australia Dancing;
- the completion of interface enhancements to meet full visual accessibility compliance;
- preparations for the addition of three newly digitised community language newspapers in Estonian, Greek and Italian;
- selection of a software package to manage relationships with the 450 potential contributors to Trove;
- commencement of a review of the framework for the supplementary information and assistance pages in conjunction with a review of legal compliance requirements;
- streamlining of enquiry management; and
- responding to an increasing number of diverse approaches to use Trove in research projects and publications.

The Trove Reference Group

The Trove Reference Group was first convened in January 2012. Representatives from across the National Library meet quarterly to discuss and recommend priorities for the development of Trove, which are then approved by the Library’s Corporate Management Group in accordance with the new Strategic Directions.2

At its second meeting in March, the Group flagged the need to revisit possible business models for Trove to ensure its long-term sustainability.

The Trove API

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1 Refer to the separate LAAC paper in this set for the Trove content inclusion statement.
2 National Library of Australia Strategic Directions 2012-2014
The Trove search API was released on 4 April\(^3\). During the summer, it was offered in beta test mode to several agencies to comment on the available functionality. The feedback received from the agencies including a state library, a vendor, universities and aggregator services was used to refine the service. Potential commercial use will be closely monitored. It is anticipated that the API will inspire agencies to:

- share Trove content around the world;
- analyse Australian cultural heritage collections and content;
- generate new research, especially in the digital humanities and scientific longitudinal studies;
- return enhanced user-generated content such as annotations to the communities from which it came; and
- use the content in mash-ups and other services.

Integrating Picture Australia, Music Australia and Australia Dancing

During 2009 and 2010, the Trove support team spoke to the communities of contributors responsible for building the Picture Australia and Music Australia services, to flag the National Library’s intention to integrate the services with Trove. Their content has been available in Trove since 2009. In 2011, the work to integrate various functions from these services into Trove was scoped, and 30 June 2012 was identified as the cessation date for the separate user interfaces.

Functions in Trove such as lists are able to be adapted for the trails in Picture Australia and themes in Music Australia. Selecting only digitised images in Australian collections, to emulate Picture Australia’s coverage, can be achieved via the relevant filters and a new results display for thumbnail images will also be introduced.

Other functionality such as buying options will be progressively added.

Meeting accessibility compliance

An accessibility audit of Trove (including the Digitised newspapers and more zone) was completed in late 2011 by Vision Australia. Some of the accessibility improvements, to ensure Trove conforms to the accessibility and validation level required by the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) version 2.0\(^4\), included:

- providing meaningful titles to all Trove pages. The title attribute of each page is the first piece of information that users of assistive technologies encounter when the page is loaded. Meaningful titles for all Trove pages have been added which helps users to decide whether the page content is relevant to

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\(^4\) [http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcag](http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcag).
their needs. The title information is also used for search engine optimisation and this change will improve the discoverability of Trove content;

- reviewing help text and error messages in Trove forms. They now include help text to more fully describe the type of information required for each field. This change helps to reduce user input errors. Error messages were improved and simplified;

- supplying descriptive information for images. Trove content contains numerous images from a variety of sources. For visually impaired users using assistive technology such as screen readers, it is critical that all images contain a text description of the image; and

- identifying when Trove content is displaying a different language. Considerable effort has been made to correctly identify and inform users where these language changes occur.

Addition of community language newspapers

As part of a project to enhance understanding of the issues pertaining to the digitisation of non-English language newspapers, four titles (two in German, one each in Estonian and Italian) were selected for inclusion in Trove. They are:

- **Meie Kodu = Our Home (Sydney, NSW : 1949 - 1954)**
- **Il Giornale Italiano (Sydney, NSW : 1932 - 1940)**
- **Adelaider Deutsche Zeitung (SA : 1851-1862)**
- **Sud Australische Zeitung (Tanunda and Adelaide, SA : 1859-1874).**

Minor modifications to allow text correction of the most common symbols used in each language were made to the Trove interface. The titles will be available by the end of May.

Managing contributor relationships

A range of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software packages, social media software, and other Commercial-Off-The-Shelf (COTS) applications already in use at the National Library, were assessed against the specific requirements of the Trove team for supporting relationships with Trove contributors.

More than 450 potential collaborators have been identified, many of whom have approached the Library during the last two years. In order to ensure the opportunities for future engagement were not lost, it became imperative to more efficiently manage the status of each relationship. The project identified an open source solution which will be modestly customised and implemented before the end of the financial year.
Streamlining enquiry management

Many of the enquiries received by the Trove team are repetitive, especially regarding the progress of digitisation of newspaper titles or why others have not been selected for digitisation. As the Trove support team is not involved in the selection of titles or the scheduling of their release, it was important to ensure the question was appropriately answered. This was achieved through the introduction of a lightbox overlaid on the enquiry form, which is then forwarded to the Newspaper Digitisation team.

Reviewing supplementary pages

As the use of Trove becomes more sophisticated, a review of the information and assistance pages became necessary. The integration of Picture Australia and Music Australia and a review of the legal compliance of disclaimers, privacy, and terms of use, also require new information to be provided in the Trove interface.

To devise a new framework for the presentation of the information, usability testing was carried out with the public during March. The resulting changes will be implemented as ongoing improvements over the next several months.

Supporting diverse approaches for using Trove’s content

There has been a notable increase in the number of agencies approaching the Trove team to discuss opportunities for using the content. Although guidance may only need to be given at the outset, keeping track of the success or otherwise of each initiative will become a large task. As more niche collaborations are identified, Trove as platform is becoming increasingly indispensable to national research infrastructure. Recent examples of this include:
a proposal by MacquarieNet to provide crafted search links to Trove from three of its Macquarie Dictionary ebooks. Images will be the key content type used, and individuals’ biographical details will also be targeted;

an Australian Research Council funded project to establish The Australasian Legal History library. Led by the University of Technology, Sydney, newspaper content from South Australia and Western Australia between the 1830s and 1850s will be used to provide an historical context for legal research;

addition of unique entries from the Dictionary of Sydney: “The Dictionary’s articles have been included in the National Library of Australia’s invaluable Trove service for the first time, and we are thrilled to be playing a small part in this important national endeavour.”
http://trust.dictionaryofsydney.org/we-are-part-of-trove/

Trove also continues to be identified as an exemplar by other countries:
“This site is sponsored by the National Library of Australia and from looking at Trove and at the National Library of Australia website, I am reminded that sometimes I feel like the United States is regressing technologically into a third-world country. We certainly do not have some of the progressive and innovative things I see in places like Australia, China, Indonesia, Taiwan and other places. Trove is only part of the National Library website, but it will certainly make you ask the question as to why we don’t have something like this in the U.S.”
http://networkedblogs.com/vIKZt

Usage and feedback

Trove regularly exceeds a daily peak of 48,000 users, and use on mobile devices has also climbed steadily.

In the last 12 months, the number of people following the Trove Twitter feed has quadrupled from 500 to 2,055 followers. Twitter is a core part of the viral marketing strategy for Trove. There have been some wonderful mentions of Trove:
During March, two tweets were retweeted 11 times, and on 2 April, Trove received 615 visits from just one tweet, linking to an article about April Fools’ Day at trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/12441110.

Recommendation

The Committee to note the report.
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4 April 2012