TROVE STATUS REPORT 2012

Introduction

This report summarises Trove activities since the last briefing to the Libraries Australia Advisory Committee in April 2012.1 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:

- confirmation of the vision and scope of Trove;
- an investigation into the application of staff resources to identify where value can best be added;
- a review of the success of Trove Stage 4;
- the continuation of work to finalise the integration of Picture Australia, Music Australia and Australia Dancing into Trove;
- the implementation of a customised WordPress instance to manage the relationships with all contributors to Trove;
- the addition of a wide range of sources of Australiana;
- the design of the new framework for presenting documentation;
- monitoring and supporting the expanding, diverse uses of Trove in research projects and publications; and
- receipt of the Australian and New Zealand Internet Award for Innovation (2012).2

Trove scope and vision

The first responsibility of the Trove Reference Group was to confirm the scope and vision for the service in its post-project life. A review of the original project drivers found that, with modest qualification, the scope of the project had been successfully achieved:

- the discovery experience for users has been improved by providing access from one place to the resources discoverable via multiple discovery services until recently;
- access to a significantly greater range of resources from a wider range of sources has been achieved and continues to increase;
- ease of discovery has enhanced by providing relevance ranking, refinement by facets, and FRBR grouping of related items. The originally mooted importance of the exploitation of thesauri was not realised, following analysis revealing that some thesauri are not widely used;
- the engagement of the general public through content and metadata annotation services was achieved to a high degree, as recognised by the Australian Government's eGovernment Award;

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the reduction in the number of separately maintained and branded discovery services offered by the National Library is almost complete.

Many aspects of the original Trove vision, which informed development of these project objectives, have remained constant. These include:
- the focus on Australian content and Australian users
- the decision to include both digital (i.e. full-text) and non-digital content (i.e. bibliographic data) in the service
- the desire to increase the volume and variety of available digital content
- the desire to concentrate the Library’s development resources in a single national discovery service and to progressively decommission our individual format-based services
- the desire to provide attractive, useful and value-added options for users to engage with Trove content
- the desire to avoid ‘dead ends’ for users, i.e. to provide clear pathways to access content and other assistance.

A complementary document, the Content Inclusion Policy, continues to be refined.3

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**The Value Edge review**

In May 2012, the National Library’s Corporate Management Group approved the engagement of Value Edge to facilitate the Trove team in identifying activities which will derive the most value from the available staff resource. Due to extremely well conducted sessions held over five full days, the short-term outcomes of the process were very successful.

The outcomes included decisions to: (a) more finely balance the time available to respond to enquiries with a mini-project which is likely to reduce their number, (b) endorse pre-allocated research time to explore possible new directions for Trove, (c) consider broader use of contract resources when funds permit, and (d) refine information-sharing with colleagues across the Library so that advocacy for the use of the service is more widespread. The latter has already been achieved to a certain extent by improving the connections between the Trove enquiry service and the Library’s general reference service.

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**Integrating Picture Australia, Music Australia and Australia Dancing**

On 28 June 2012, the separate user interfaces for Picture Australia, Music Australia and Australia Dancing were removed from public view. Concerns about their removal were mitigated to a certain extent by explanations of future intent for this content.4

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3 All of the descriptive documents will be available in the newly redesigned Trove help pages.
The content from other smaller services has been integrated into Trove, where possible without losing its collation aspect. For example, *Mura Gadi*, the guide to manuscripts, pictures and oral histories in the National Library of Australia relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has been re-created as a Trove list.\(^5\) The Oral History Directory will undergo similar integration.

Several functions from the larger services still require software development. Since June, the Trove team has worked with its IT counterpart to design solutions for a simple biographical data entry tool to continue adding and updating details of prominent Australians associated with the Library’s collections, and for the long-proposed discipline view. While the first view to be ‘launched’ will highlight music (and possibly the performing arts), it is anticipated that the solution will be extensible to other ‘slices’ of the Trove corpus.

The individual service logos on the National Library’s home page, which now link to the relevant Trove zone, will be removed by the end of 2012.

**Contributor relationships**

An instance of WordPress was implemented and customised to manage information about the status of existing and potential contributors to Trove. A review of potential contributors is also underway, to prioritise their addition. Selection criteria will meet the new Trove Content Inclusion Policy still under development, and include filling a discovery gap in Australiana, strategic or innovative inclusion, is technically simple and has no cost except for business area support.

During the last six months, the Trove team welcomed the following new sources of content as well as refreshing all Picture Australia contributors’ metadata by harvesting it direct into Trove:

- images from the Roads and Maritime Services Library of the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority;
- the National Archives of Australia’s finding aids;
- Australia Post’s Chapman Collection of digitised albums showing early stamps from each State and Territory;
- the Australian Broadcasting Commission’s Radio National programs including ‘The Philosopher’s Zone’ and ‘The Science Show’;
- the Powerhouse Museum;
- Obituaries Australia (from the National Centre for Biography at the Australian National University);
- AuScope records for CSIRO researchers;
- 12 of 22 metastores (research repositories which are funded by the Australian National Data Service) which have applied for new Trove researcher.

identities and include James Cook University, the Australian National University, and the University of Tasmania;
  o images from the CO-AS-IT, the Italian Historical Society, Victoria; and
  o the Dictionary of Sydney.

As a result of the inclusion of Australia Post, which uses an eHive platform, the Trove team was invited to speak at a meeting of agencies using the same platform to explain how to join Trove. Approaching agencies on the basis of platform was one of the avenues encouraged by the Trove IT support team to engage with new collaborators.

Reviewing documentation

A new design for the information and assistance pages commenced following usability testing. Wording to enhance information regarding privacy has also been drafted, to ensure the general public understands that published annotations could be reused by other discovery services. Annotations such as comments are made available to other agencies via the Trove API.

Supporting diverse approaches for using Trove’s content

As highlighted in the April report, Trove as a platform is becoming increasingly indispensable to national research infrastructure. Research is now dividing into two streams. The first stream encompasses academic projects which are examining approaches and motivations surrounding the use of Trove, in particular its public aspects. The results of this research have not yet been made public.

However, since 21 August, a public phenomenon has also started to emerge. Known as Trove Tuesday, Amy Houston who blogs at Branches, Leaves and Pollen, encouraged all of her contacts to blog about their experiences with Trove every Tuesday.

Watch this space next Tuesday when I show you some more treasures from Trove! And why not join me on "Trove Tuesday" and blog about what you've found too - it doesn't have to be something about an ancestor, you might just find a good yarn and want to share it. If you don't want to blog it, but still want to share it, why don't you put a link in the comments below?

The author is now keeping track of other efforts made, which is assisting the Trove team in observing how the use of Trove is expanding.

The second stream illustrates the variety of purposes to which the content in Trove is supporting transformative research.

- Professor Shurlee Swain of the Australian Catholic University has constructed a database of 12,000 adoption advertisements from 1860-1954 using Trove.
The database will be made available on the Adoption Australia website when the project is finished.

- Professor John Rayner of the University of Canberra has studied how science has been represented over decades in the Australian Women’s Weekly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Notices</th>
<th>What Good is the Atom?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BABY, boy aged 9 months, fair, blue eyes, healthy child, available for adoption. Apply Box 1018 G.P.O., Perth.</td>
<td>Australia will soon be sharing in the world-wide scientific work of finding ways to use atomic energy for the benefit of mankind, rather than its destruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By DAVID LILIENTHAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Australian Women’s Weekly (1933 - 1982), Saturday 17 September 1949, pp. 20-21

Local and family research is also a strong motivation for using Trove, as exemplified by the Gilgandra Weekly, 3 October 2012, p.10

And a moving story, Of Maps and Murder, illustrates the use of Trove in conjunction with an undigitised part of the collection of the State Library of Western Australia, http://flyingblogspot.com/2012/07/685/.
The extraordinary endorsement of Trove internationally continues, and provides us with comparative benchmarks for success.

Trove, the website of the National Library of Australia, has, as of today, 310,226,952 Australian and online resources. Too bad we aren't all Australians, although I am sure they are glad we are not. As a matter of fact, some of my ancestors came to the United States from Australia in my Parkinson and Boyant lines; although they were not natives, having immigrated from England, I still have relatives that live in Australia and a niece that lives near Perth. When I was younger, I dreamt about going to Australia and particularly digging for opal in Coober Pedy. Now that I am much older, it looks like this is one dream that will never come true.

I have mentioned this website before several times, but it bears repeating. It is an example of what can be done if the powers that be are convinced that digital records are important. Here is a breakdown of the Trove collections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>1,378,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps</td>
<td>456,763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaries, letters, archives</td>
<td>626,811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journals</td>
<td>21,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music, sound and video</td>
<td>1,265,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discontinued Newspapers and more</td>
<td>7,128,387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People and organization</td>
<td>908,499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures, photos, objects</td>
<td>491,909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archived websites (1996 - now)</td>
<td>70,126,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>310,226,952</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compared to Australia's premiere Trove website with over 309 million Australian and online resources, the Library of Congress is slim pickings.

Trove, the website of the National Library of Australia, has, as of today, 310,226,952 Australian and online resources. Too bad we aren't all Australians, although I am sure they are glad we are not.

Old Maps Online
The Trove API

Since its launch in April 2012, more than 90 people have registered to use the API. Most have recorded an intent to experiment with the data to build research tools, but a few have indicated a goal to establish new services by repurposing the records in library discovery layers or utilising the newspaper content in new ways. An example of the latter is Elephind, at www.elephind.com, which combines the newspaper content from Trove, the Library of Congress, Papers Past (New Zealand), and the California Digital Newspaper Collection (University of California). Similarly, image records sent to Trove have been extracted via the API to represent the Manly Local Studies image library at the Manly Public Library. These services will expand the use of Trove content and should increase outreach.

Use of the API has been encouraged by external advocates in several ways:

- An online presentation prepared by Anna Gerber on getting started with the API www.slideshare.net/annagerber/getting-started-with-the-trove-api
- Mining for Meaning, a podcast by Harold White Fellow, Tim Sherratt www.nla.gov.au/podcasts/media/Harold-White/tim-sherratt.mp3 on how to use new digital technologies to explore the content of Australian newspapers
- These were complemented by a presentation on the status of the use of the API at the annual Electronic Resources Australia (ERA) Forum in July. The scope of what can be retrieved from Trove via the API is not inconsiderable:

![Trove Work Count by Zone](image)

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Service usage

Trove regularly exceeds a daily peak of 50,000 visitors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visitors</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>% Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unique visits</td>
<td>4,051,813</td>
<td>7,934,622</td>
<td>95.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total visits</td>
<td>7,980,004</td>
<td>14,804,081</td>
<td>85.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest # daily visits</td>
<td>37,201</td>
<td>57,445</td>
<td>54.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile device visits</td>
<td>140,199</td>
<td>856,027</td>
<td>510.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile device as % of total visits</td>
<td>1.76%</td>
<td>5.78%</td>
<td>229.13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some demographic analysis was possible as the result of adding questions to the Contact form for Trove.

This information was similar to survey results obtained in 2010 regarding Trove usage, when the highest percentage of use was by family history researchers (50%), librarians (22%) and recreational researchers (17%).

In addition, Google Analytics has shed some light on the geographic location of Trove users. The data suggests that Australian use of Trove is closely aligned with state and territory population distribution, but that non-metropolitan use may be slightly lower than expected on a population distribution basis. Firmer demographic

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data should be obtained during an extensive Trove user evaluation, planned for the 2013-2014 year.
Despite significant increases in service use, enquiries have dropped, indicating that interface and documentary changes are assisting users to be more self-sufficient.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>% Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Users registered</td>
<td>39,849</td>
<td>62,553</td>
<td>56.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tags added</td>
<td>998,361</td>
<td>1,573,297</td>
<td>57.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments added</td>
<td>25,509</td>
<td>41,758</td>
<td>63.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Records Merged</td>
<td>10,876</td>
<td>13,552</td>
<td>24.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Records split</td>
<td>2,135</td>
<td>3,196</td>
<td>49.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lines of text corrected in</td>
<td>40,205,241</td>
<td>68,908,757</td>
<td>71.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lists created</td>
<td>9,968</td>
<td>24,563</td>
<td>146.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public images added via</td>
<td>102,320</td>
<td>140,972</td>
<td>37.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flickr</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messages in Forum</td>
<td>1,056</td>
<td>2,361</td>
<td>123.58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Enquiries for Newspaper title suggestions were not counted in these statistics from 17 November 2011, as they are able to be automatically rerouted.
Since April 2012, the number of people following the Trove Twitter feed has increased to 2,395. Twitter proved extremely useful when Trove was unavailable due to a catastrophic server failure, pointing to the National Library’s disaster recovery log as the restoration status changed. Reactions to Trove’s unavailability were reassuring.

Recommendation

That the Committee note the report.

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10 October 2012