Making an exhibition of for yourself
Using the Library’s exhibitions for teaching and learning

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The Past
The Old Library exhibitions

The Book of Kells has been on exhibition since 1838

The Old Library has functioned as a tourist destination since the Victorian period

The display of exhibits in the Long Room has occurred since the Librarianship of TK Abbot around the turn of the last century

The current cases date from the Librarianship of Peter Fox – 1980s-90s

The Long Room exhibitions have grown more sophisticated in the last few years and have included loans from other cultural institutions, sponsorship and proper exhibition design
The Present
The Old Library exhibitions

Up until this year, the following physical exhibitions have been seen in the Old Library:

1. Permanent exhibition on the Library’s treasures – currently, “Turning Darkness into Light” exhibition running since 1998; due for replacement as part of new Trinity Visitor Experience plan

2. Large six-month-long exhibitions, such as “Upon the Wild Waves: a Journey through Myth in Children’s Books”. Not envisioned that large physical exhibitions will continue in the Long Room

3. Small, temporary displays – mini exhibitions - in some of the glass cases, lasting from a few days to a few months
Some of the large exhibitions
The mini exhibitions

The small physical exhibitions are curated to:

• Celebrate certain anniversaries (e.g., there is currently one displaying photographs of TCD students killed in Gallipoli)

• Highlight recent acquisitions (e.g., there is a display from the Louis Lentin papers in the Long Room at the moment; Lenton was an RTE director and Head of Drama who died in 2014 and the papers were given to us earlier this year)

• Tie in with conferences (e.g., the Anglo Norman History books conference earlier this year); or other TCD events (e.g., a display of Beckett material is always produced for the Samuel Beckett summer school)

• Be seen by the great and good (e.g., Scottish manuscripts for the visit of Alec Salmond)
Baby steps... experiments with online exhibitions

Until 2006, only printed pamphlets accompanied our biannual exhibitions

The first virtual exhibition was for a display on Edmund Burke produced as a test case by Estelle Gittins and Richard Kirwan from the Long Room Hub (here it is!)

After that we asked our exhibition designers, Vermillion, to produce online versions of our large exhibitions as a matter of course. These date from 2009 to 2014

The earlier ones were done using the technology of the time – Flash – and hence are not now easily viewable on mobile devices such as tablets
Experiments with making online exhibitions ourselves

No online versions of the smaller exhibitions were produced until we started experimenting a couple of years ago – this was as part of a “task and finish” group looking at the Library’s online presence

Newer online exhibitions use JavaScript – the larger exhibitions produced after summer 2012 use this technology

We’d been asked to look at the feasibility of doing exhibitions like this ourselves – the best way to do that was by making some

We recreated Estelle’s Edmund Burke one from 2006 as an example

Small online exhibitions using this technology are fairly easy to do – you can make one in an afternoon, if all the background work (imaging and metadata) is in order – there are online tools that will do it for you

So we created a few more...
Dorothy Price

*What Price the Children: the Work of Dorothy Price among the Dublin Poor*

Photograph of Dorothy Stopford, graduating as a Bachelor of Medicine, Trinity College Dublin. 1921.

TCD MS 7534/5

In particular, she was especially associated with St. Ultan’s Children’s Hospital, founded by fellow combatants in the Irish Revolutionary War, Kathleen Lynn and Madeleine ffrench-Mullen, and with the Royal City of Dublin Hospital, whose radiological facilities she used to research children with TB.
How the Research Collections help already

The Library’s Research Collections are already used extensively for teaching. The new virtual exhibitions mean they can be embedded into modules for use off campus, as well as bringing students into the Reading Rooms to see physical items.

To see our current online exhibitions go to http://www.tcd.ie/Library/about/exhibitions.php
Classes held in Early Printed Books & Special Collections 2014-5

20th-century Irish private press books Angela Griffith, Department of History of Art and Architecture

Irish crime fiction & Irish periodical literature Chris Morash, School of English

Detective fiction Clare Clarke, School of English

Children’s books from the Pollard Collection Lydia Ferguson, the Library

17th-century French festival books Derval Conroy, Dept. of French, UCD

17th-century French drama Alain Riffaud, independent researcher, France

Texts of the Enlightenment Linda Kiernan, School of History
Online exhibition being used in learning & research
Online exhibition being used in learning & research

*Drawn to the Page: Irish Artists and Illustration 1830 - 1930*

Part of the reading list for “HA2003 Making and Meaning in Irish Art” taught by Dr Angela Griffith

Used by undergraduates studying History of Art and Architecture, but also as part of the broad curriculum for students outside of History of Art, for visiting students, and in extramural classes. So has a wide appeal and usage

Dr Griffith has used this as a basis of a database of Irish illustration which students will add to and keep up to date, getting experience of writing commentary and curating content.
The collaboration with Google

We first saw that Google offered a tool called Google Open Gallery, which would allow us to easily make exhibitions

...so we tried it out and produced a few small examples, which looked really good

Then we saw you could become a partner with Google as part of the "Google Cultural Institute", and be featured on their website devoted to it

...so we decided to try doing a couple of bigger exhibitions, and have made one available to view
A mini exhibition

HISTORY BOOKS FROM THE ANGLO-NORMAN WORLD AT THE LIBRARY OF TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

Start

RS 177 f. 69r
by Matthew Paris
The Library of Trinity College Dublin
Using a mini exhibition

Laura Cleaver, History of Art, on the exhibitions we have created with her:

Uses them most with postgraduate groups, as a way of getting them to think about how to mediate complex and fragile material to different audiences

Uses them to talk about the difference between manuscripts and digital surrogates - what are the pros and cons of digital images

A useful way of showcasing parts of the collection in the context of research events

Uses them at conferences, public lectures etc. as a way of directing people back to the collection

In theory they are a good way of making lesser-known material available to a wider public
“The Great War Revisited” – our first in-house large exhibition
Embedding our current Google exhibitions...

• ...is actually quite easy. If you have access to a website, you can pop in a line of code and it will appear. A website could be:
  • A self-hosted blog
  • Blackboard
  • TCD webpages
• It’s almost exactly the same as embedding a YouTube video
• You can embed just one item, or the whole exhibition

Here’s one we prepared earlier:
http://www.tcd.ie/Library/about/exhibitions/psalters/

- the code for this was just <iframe allowfullscreen width="900" height="768"
src="https://embed.culturalspot.org/embed/exhibit/uQKizEygt_MBIAMB"></iframe>
Changed Utterly blog

A weekly blog that in many ways functions as a growing exhibition of material concerning the Rising. Could we use a similar format to commemorate other major events?
The Future!
The near future

Large Clarke Studios online exhibition

1916 exhibitions, based on items used in our Changed Utterly blog and items freshly digitised for Google Cultural Institute

“The Great War Revisited” and Changed Utterly likely to be used in the next iteration of Trinity’s flagship MOOC “Irish Lives in War and Revolution: Exploring Ireland's History 1912-1923”

More “ad hoc” mini exhibitions

More online-only large exhibitions?
Idea?

• We aren’t even halfway into the Decade of Commemorations – so what’s left after 1916?
• Are you planning any online courses or MOOCs? Virtual exhibitions are perfect for inclusion
• What about cross-departmental collaborations?
• ...or cross-institutional ones? With other cultural or academic institutions in Dublin, or Ireland...
• ...or international ones?
Have we whet your appetite?

So you want to make your own exhibition?

Use our collections as part of teaching a class?
Why use the Library’s collections?

Trust
Authenticity
Expertise
Using our resources

If it’s an exhibition we’ve already produced, just drop us a line and if you need assistance, we’re happy to help! That way, we also know how our collections are being used.

Or, do you want to curate a brand new exhibition?
First off, talk to us!
Contact details

Manuscripts: Estelle Gittins:
gittinse@tcd.ie 01 896 1189

Early Printed Books: Lydia Ferguson
Lydia.Ferguson@tcd.ie 01 896 1173

Music: Roy Stanley
Roy.Stanley@tcd.ie 01 896 1156

Maps: Paul Ferguson
Paul.Ferguson@tcd.ie 01 896 1544
Virtual only?

Online exhibitions have some advantages over physical ones:

- You can exhibit items that it might be difficult to exhibit physically on the grounds of size (e.g., maps)...
- ...or conservation conditions (e.g., humidity for vellum/parchment manuscripts, or metal objects)
- Many more items can be include
- Video and audio can be easily inserted
- They can reach a larger audience than the small physical exhibitions
- Useful for lecturers, but also as an entry point for researchers
- ...and not just at TCD
...or physical as well? Instead of?

Many people really want to see (and touch?) the “real thing”, but that is a reason to have an online exhibition *as well* as a planned physical exhibition:

• Virtual exhibitions can be used to drive traffic towards the physical one; they will act as an advertisement

• We believe in the majority of cases, having an online exhibition should be factored into the workplan for the physical one

• Main reason *not* to have virtual exhibitions is copyright of the selected items, such as the current Louis Lentin bequest, or Samuel Beckett’s works
Planning a new small exhibition

What story are you telling?

3 months minimum lead time

Think of 10-12 exhibits as a very first step

Then spend time in the Reading Rooms looking at potential items, narrowing them down and researching them

Also, are there any YouTube videos? We can include these too

Once a shortlist is drawn up the next priority is for us to order the images in consultation with DRIS (Digital Resources & Imaging Services) in the Library

Supply us with very short label text and we match the text and images

Then meetings to review and make any changes before launch

This whole process is very fluid!
What could you do in the future?

Your students could mount exhibitions, mixing and matching (already digitised) TCD and non-TCD items to tell a narrative

This could be in conjunction with the Library, or off your own bat using the consumer version of the Google tool we use: Google Open Gallery
That's all Folks!
Thank You