

## UK LOCKSS Alliance Case Study De Montfort University

This case study is based on an interview with Phil Adams, Head of Content Delivery at De Montfort University Library (September 2012).

### Background to the UK LOCKSS Alliance

UK LOCKSS Alliance is a co-operative movement of UK academic libraries that deploy LOCKSS (Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe) technology to share archival responsibility through a network of local archives.

LOCKSS provides libraries with open-source software that enables them to:

- Set up a LOCKSS box that acts as the digital equivalent of a library shelf.
- Select content for preservation according to an institution's collection policies.
- Build an archive of content using the web-crawling capabilities of LOCKSS, taking content as it was rendered to the web.
- Take advantage of the LOCKSS automated preservation technology, designed so that almost no daily administration is needed to assure long-term access.
- Access preserved content when needed via integration with existing library and university systems.

### De Montfort University and its library

The Library is part of the Library and Learning Services division at De Montfort University (DMU), providing print and electronic resources along with study and writing support for students. Continuity of service is important and the Content Delivery team is responsible for troubleshooting when students and researchers cannot access authorised electronic resources. DMU also has commitment to the broader community in its geographical area. It is currently engaged in a project called 'DMU Square Mile' which endeavours to impact the area surrounding the University. DMU frames its mission in terms of quality and distinctiveness.

### Library journals collection

The library holds around 426 current print journals and provides access to over 61,000 electronic journals through its SFX journal



Figure 1: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ccacnorthlib/3554627894/>

portal. Many of the electronic titles are open access (OA).

### Motive for participating in UK LOCKSS Alliance

DMU was one of the libraries that participated in the JISC-funded UK LOCKSS Pilot Programme and has been a member of the UK LOCKSS Alliance since it was founded in 2008. At the time of the pilot, DMU was beginning to move towards e-only access to journals and staff were aware of the vulnerability of electronic content over the longer term. Staff want to be able to guarantee reliable access to articles for as long as that access is needed, giving teaching staff confidence that specific articles cited on reading lists will be accessible for years to come.

### Why use LOCKSS?

DMU values LOCKSS as a preservation solution because the content in the LOCKSS box is 'on the premises' so its access is under the control of library staff. In the event that access is denied from current sources, DMU need not wait for another agency to determine release schedules for the preserved content. Particularly appealing is how LOCKSS addresses disruption to service in the short term as well as withdrawal of access for the long term. For example, if a publisher's server is unavailable due to maintenance, DMU users can still access the content from the LOCKSS box via DMU's OpenURL resolver. The reliability of LOCKSS as a source of content to address short-term outages instills confidence in its reliability as a long-term preservation solution.

LOCKSS is also used to support decisions by library staff to dispose of print, alleviating pressure for space. The availability of a title in the LOCKSS box demonstrates that the library



Figure 2: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ccacnorthlib/4131074185/>

has acted to secure long-term access to the electronic version and is addressing any anxiety about disposal of print.

Recently, library staff have begun to consider how they might ensure continuity of access to other types of content, for example, electronic books and research data. The demonstrated success of LOCKSS as a reliable archive for electronic journals could stand as a model that may be extended to other types of content. DMU is currently considering how a Private LOCKSS Network (PLN) may help them to secure non-journal content whereby DMU and other universities share the cost and responsibility of preservation.

### **What's involved in using LOCKSS?**

Staff at DMU have developed a clear workflow for selecting content for preservation into their LOCKSS box. This collection workflow has helped new staff gain an understanding of the complexity of journals, including issues related to embargoes, subscriptions and fluctuating content of aggregator services.

Periodic content releases (every three to six weeks) are issued with an accompanying spreadsheet listing the newly available titles and volumes. DMU library staff compare the spreadsheet with their subscription records and the titles listed in their SFX journal portal. Library staff use this process to determine whether they have a current subscription, whether their subscription has ceased, or whether the title is available on an OA basis. The importance for teaching and learning of each title is reviewed to clarify the long-term value. They also note whether the publisher or title has previously been selected for preservation, as it is likely that

new volumes will follow the previous collection decision.

A few weeks after title configuration, DMU staff check the LOCKSS box to determine which titles and volumes have successfully been retrieved and collected. Content that has been successfully collected is made accessible via DMU's OpenURL resolver. Users can then see that this content has been archived and can access it if the primary source (e.g. publisher website) is unavailable at any time and for whatever reason. LOCKSS simply appears as one of many targets on the menu of the journal portal.

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### **Improving the LOCKSS software**

DMU have an interest in the preservation of Open Access titles. To streamline the content administration process, it would be helpful to indicate whether titles required a subscription or were available under an Open Access licence. The LOCKSS development team will review this in 2013.

DMU relies on LOCKSS as a backup service when the primary source goes down, and the library would like to authorise access to content through the single sign on (SSO) used for other resources. This will mean that off-campus users, such as students in halls of residence, will access content in the LOCKSS box with the same username and password used for other resources. Integration with Shibboleth features on the LOCKSS development roadmap, with implementation scheduled during 2013.

Implemented in response to UK community requests, DMU staff look forward to working with the newly released COUNTER statistics reporting feature so that they can monitor usage of the content preserved in LOCKSS, demonstrating value to budget holders.