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Partnerships in preservation: the experience of the Newsplan 2000 Project

John E. Lauder

Project Director
The Newsplan 2000 Project
The British Library
London, UK

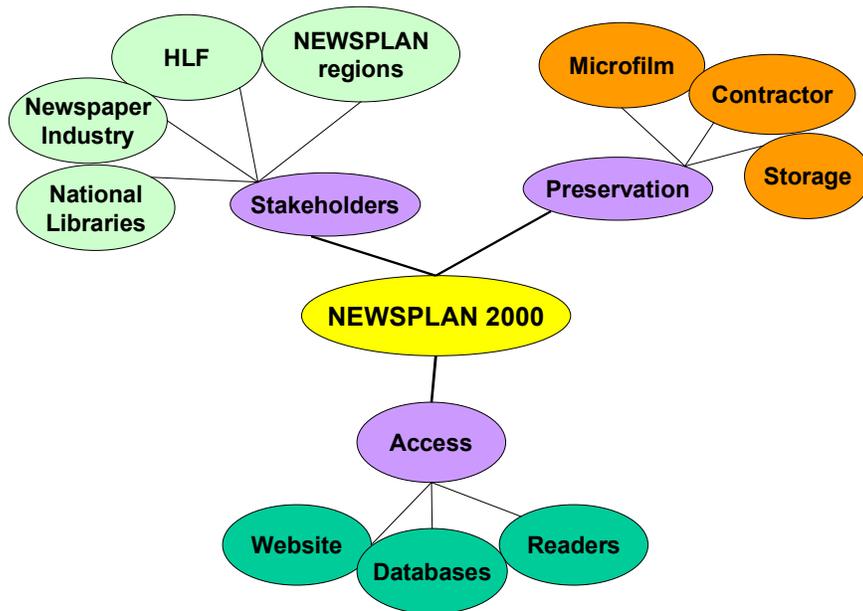
1. Introduction

The NEWSPLAN 2000 Project brings together a number of participants and combines them into a unique partnership approach towards a large-scale preservation programme in the UK.

This talk will focus on the participants in the NEWSPLAN 2000 Project and provide some background into the aims and objectives of the programme being undertaken from 2002-2004.

2. Aims and Background of the Project

- Illustrated Overview of the NEWSPLAN 2000 Project



3. Core Aims

- To preserve a fragile and rapidly disappearing part of the cultural history of the nation.
- To save 1,700 local newspaper titles of the United Kingdom from destruction and open them up to new and future generations.
- To pioneer a new approach to preservation using the involvement of libraries, the newspaper industry and archival-quality preservation microfilming.
- To create a partnership approach to a complex cultural preservation programme.
- To benefit all sectors of society throughout the UK.

4. Objectives

- To preserve 1,700 local newspaper runs held in libraries and archives, universities and publishers' offices throughout the United Kingdom.
- To create archival microfilm to preservation standards.
- To deliver one free copy of each film to the appropriate local library.
- To store master negative microfilm to archival standards.
- To catalogue each title to international standards.

5. Background to the NEWSPLAN 2000 Project

5.1 In 1998 the Heritage Lottery Fund awarded funding for a feasibility study into an archival microfilming programme for historic files of regional newspapers. A full application for a £16M preservation programme to cover all titles was made March 1999. The Trustees of the HLF provided £5M for Stage 1 in April 2001, and the understanding that the Project could seek funding in due course for further stages.

5.2 The need for a programme to arrest the rapid deterioration of local newspaper files was highlighted by a series of ten regional reports produced by NEWSPLAN throughout the late 1980's

and early 1990's. These reports confirmed that *'The value of the intellectual content of the newspaper increases in time, just as the physical strength of the paper decreases'*.

5.3 The internationally accepted solution is to transfer the fragile text to a robust and secure preservation medium: 35mm archival-quality microfilm. Archival microfilm is extremely robust, resistant to natural disasters and free from technology obsolescence. Its advantages are:

- **Preservation microfilm is a secure platform, and the Project should not risk a vulnerable part of the United Kingdom's cultural heritage by transferring it to any medium that is not yet proven for long-term preservation.**
- **Film is cheap to produce and much cheaper to store than digital data because digital data requires continuing funding to migrate it to new operating platforms.**
- **Archival-quality microfilm can be scanned to a digital image quickly and more cheaply than scanning from the original.**
- **Archival-quality microfilm allows the decaying newspapers to be moved to a safe and reliable medium, from which digital images can be taken.**

5.4 Local newspaper runs in the UK are decaying quickly: moving them onto a safe platform, which is heavily standardised, will save them.

6. The NEWSPLAN 2000 Project: working in partnership

The Project involves five distinct partners all working toward the same objective, i.e. the preservation of local newspaper collections. The partners are:

6.1 The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), which is providing £5M in funding support. The HLF distributes support to culture and heritage throughout the United Kingdom (UK) on behalf of the national lottery held weekly in the UK.

6.2 The UK regional newspaper industry, which is working with the Project to gather £1.1M in funding to match the pledge made by the HLF.

6.3 The ten NEWSPLAN regional groups, which make up the NEWSPLAN programme in the UK and have identified and are supplying the 1,700 newspaper titles to be preserved from 2002-2004 at an estimated cost to participants of £1M.

6.4 The three national libraries of the United Kingdom, the British Library, National Library of Wales and the National Library of Scotland.

6.5 The NEWSPLAN 2000 Project office, which co-ordinates the programme of preservation, issues tenders for the purchase of services and presents the Project to all the participants and the wider society.

7. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)

7.1 The grant made by the HLF of £5M for Stage One of the project is the largest single grant ever issued by the HLF to support a preservation programme.

7.2 Throughout 2000 and 2001 the HLF and the NEWSPLAN 2000 Project worked together to agree the detailed running of the Project. This period, known as the 'Development Stage', allowed both parties to explore and settle the detailed and some times contentious areas of the working of the Project. The Development Stage culminated in the production of the Project Implementation Document (PID), which is the documented agreement between HLF and the Project on how the Project is to be run, managed, monitored and costed from 2002-2004.

7.3 The HLF monitors the progress of the project through its monitoring team, which is made up of a Case Officer, Lead Monitor and Technical Monitor. The team working with the NEWSPLAN 2000 Project is Ms Henrietta Ryott, Case Officer, Dr Mike Smethurst, Lead Monitor and Ms Nancy Elkington of RLG who acts as Technical Monitor.

7.4 The relationship between the Project and the HLF has been effective and structured in such a way that both parties clearly understand how the Project plans to run. The Project and the HLF have agreed a series of statistical reporting mechanisms that allow the monitoring team to quickly analyse the performance of the Project.

8. The UK regional newspaper industry

8.1 Under its regulations, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) requires partnership funding to be provided from other sources. The Project has worked closely with the Newspaper Society to agree levels of funding support from industry and has begun receiving financial contributions from industry groups.

8.2 The regional newspaper industry throughout the UK has supported the Project from the inception of the original application to the HLF in 1998.

8.3 The Newspaper Society, the London Press Club and many leaders of the UK newspaper industry gave their active support to the Project, and through the work of Dr Dennis Griffiths, who conducted the original feasibility study for the UK-wide programme, provided written confirmation of support for the Project for inclusion in the final application.

8.4 The settling of the Project Implementation Document (PID) between the Project and the HLF in March 2001 meant that the Project could, for the first time, accurately establish the exact amount of partnership funding required for Stage One of the Project.

8.5 Through introductions from the Newspaper Society, the Project talked to a number of the leading newspaper groups in the industry and so began a series of meetings between the Project Chairman and Director and the Chief Executives of these groups. The Project offered the industry a unique opportunity of involvement in a prestigious and ambitious endeavour and a number of other benefits. In return, the Project looked to the industry to provide funding support and expressions of willingness to work with the project to widen the funding net further.

8.6 The industry expressed its support through the Newspaper Society and by agreeing a Memorandum of Understanding between the industry and the Project. This set out the broad framework of support from the industry to the Project.

8.7 The support for the Project from industry clearly demonstrates that the industry is willing to collaborate in the ‘national interest’ to assist in saving a vital part of the country’s history. It also, uniquely, is evidence of an industry assisting to preserve what it has produced for the last two centuries.

8.8 The support from the regional newspaper industry is vital for the success of the Project, without funds to ‘match’ the contributions from the HLF; the Project could not function.

8.9 The industry has proved to be helpful, co-operative and willing to support the preservation of the legacy their industry has left the nation. Their support cannot be underestimated.

9. The NEWSPLAN regional groups

9.1 The NEWSPLAN 2000 Project divides the UK into ten Regions, each with its own active regional committee. This devolved structure allows for local sensitivities and arrangements to be gathered within a centrally controlled framework, so allowing the Project to work closely and effectively with 196 library services, and other organisations such as archives and museums, publishers and universities.

9.2 During 1998 each committee selected newspaper titles from its local NEWSPLAN Report to go forward to the main list being compiled by the LINC NEWSPLAN Panel for inclusion in their submission for funds to the HLF.

9.3 This list was subsequently shortened to take account of the award of £5M made by HLF in 2001.

9.4 Each committee has responsibility for the participation of each service in its area in the Project. They also decide on the location of the microfilm readers and reader-printers that the Project will supply and they settle the destination of microfilm of newspaper titles where there is no obvious location. Ensuring that all participants in the Project fulfil their obligations is a major task for each group, the Project estimates that services throughout the UK will contribute £1M to the Project through their servicing of newspaper files ready for microfilming and their subsequent transportation to and from the microfilm contractor.

9.5 The groups meet regularly to discuss the progress of the Project and to review the Schedule for Microfilming, which the project Office uses as its timetable for the preparation of newspaper files for filming and their preservation by the microfilm contractor.

9.6 The active support of every NEWSPLAN regional group is therefore pivotal to the success of the Project. Without the participation of the regional groups, no titles would go forward for filming, microfilm without an obvious location would not be available locally and contact with the local newspaper titles reporting the progress of the Project would be much more difficult. In all cases, the regional groups represent the NEWSPLAN 2000 Project in their local areas.

10. The National Libraries of the UK



10.1 The three national libraries of the UK are providing generous support to the Project, through the provision of newspaper files for filming and other areas.

10.2 British Library

The NEWSPLAN 2000 Project is based in the British Library Newspaper Library (BLNL) where offices are made available by the BL. In addition, and crucially for the Project, almost three-quarters of all newspaper titles to be preserved are held in the BLNL in Colindale, North London. BLNL staff is servicing these newspaper files ready for microfilming and transporting them to and from the Contractor. Without this level of support, the Project would have a mammoth task in gathering newspaper files for filming.

10.3 National Libraries of Wales and Scotland

Both the National Library of Wales (NLW) and the National Library of Scotland (NLS) are acting as co-ordinators of the NEWSPLAN 2000 Project in their areas. Both are supplying sizeable newspaper files for preservation and are generously assisting the Project with other support.

11. The NEWSPLAN 2000 Project office

11.1 The strategy behind the Project and its day to day running is the responsibility of the Project Office.

11.2 A Project Director, John Lauder, and a Project Officer, Simon Kellas, staff the Project.

11.3 In addition, a Board of Trustees, who in 2001 appointed an Executive Committee to meet on their behalf with the HLF, governs the Project. The Executive is made up of Dr Ann Matheson, Chairman, Mr John Byford (British Library) General Secretary and Dr Rhidian Griffiths who represents the National Library of Wales.

11.4 The Project Office controls the flow of work to the microfilm contractor through the use of a Microfilm Schedule, which governs the timetables for the servicing. Advice for participating services is provided through the publication of a Project Handbook.

11.5 The office also creates the website, from which both the Schedule and the Handbook are available, and on which lists of all titles to be preserved, being preserved and available locally, will all be available. The Project's website is at www.NEWSPLAN2000.org.

11.6 The Project Office also works closely with the Microfilm Contractor, Microformat UK Ltd; to ensure that the preservation programme remains on time and observes the quality requirements set out in the Project's Tender for Microfilming. An Ombudsman, appointed by the Project, receives lists of microfilm reels from which a random selection is made for analysis.

11.7 The Office is therefore the hub of a network of participants and plays the role of a communication centre as well as project management.

12. Conclusion

12.1 The NEWSPLAN 2000 Project is therefore made up of a series of participants all of whom require different information and communication streams.

- The HLF must be sure that its grant is being used correctly and that the work of the Project is as agreed in the contract between the two.
- The newspaper industry must be confident that its financial support is also being used wisely and that they are receiving a good return for their investment.
- The regional NEWSPLAN groups must be sure that services in their area are participating to timetable and that microfilm and equipment is being received to plan.
- The Project office must be sure that all these needs are being addressed and that the quality of microfilm being received by participant sin the programme is also to the expected quality.

12.2 The challenge for the Project is to ensure that all the participants in it receive the information they need and the reassurance that the Project is moving forward and meeting its aims.

12.3 Behind this requirement is the principal aim of the Project, which is to make sure that 1,700 of the most fragile newspaper titles in the UK are preserved for current and future generations.

John E. Lauder
Project Director
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john.lauder@l.uk