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Article

The Use of Volunteers in Local Study Library Projects: A Case Study of the Walter Gardiner Photography Project

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Abstract

Objectives – Interviews with library staff and volunteers were conducted to evaluate the use of volunteers in UK public libraries via a case study of the Walter Gardiner Photographic Project, a digitisation project based in Worthing Library, to inform future guidelines on volunteer usage and to make recommendations to existing practice.

Methods – Fourteen semi-structured interviews were carried out to explore the perceptions and experiences of both staff and volunteers of the project. All interviews were fully transcribed and then coded to identify emergent themes.

Results – Key positives for volunteers were professional training, good time management and organization by staff, the friendliness and approachability of staff, and the informal nature of the volunteering. Enjoyment of the work and forming close relationships with others were key motivating factors. For staff, the completion of work which would have otherwise been impossible was the most positive outcome. Problem areas identified by volunteers were lack of contact time with project staff and feeling isolated from other library staff. For project staff, a lack of professionalism on behalf of some volunteers was the primary negative. Key issues to emerge were the

need to strike a balance between formal and informal management, the need for good integration between the volunteers and host organization, and the importance of acknowledging the nature of the voluntary commitment.

Conclusions – The project proved overall to be a successful example of using volunteers in public library projects with good examples of volunteer recruitment, training, and management being demonstrated. Areas of conflict that did arise stemmed from differing expectations of levels of service between staff and volunteers. Clarification on these expectations through a written volunteer agreement is advocated for further projects.

Introduction

The use of volunteers in U.K. public libraries is (and has been) a controversial and complex issue, balancing the potential benefits (e.g., increased community involvement, expansion of existing services, and injection of enthusiasm, new skills, and knowledge) against the possible disadvantages: damage to staff relations, expense incurred through time and money for training, and management of volunteer work and expectations (Gale, 1999; Jervis, 2000; Cookman, Haynes, & Streatfield, 2000; Cookman, 2001; McDiarmid & Auster, 2004). Over the last 18 months, the twin political and economic influences of the UK coalition government's "Big Society" agenda and the severe cuts to local authority budgets have re-ignited the controversy around the issue: "community-managed" local libraries have been posited as an alternative to both library closures initiated by local authorities and as an ideological alternative to state-run public services. Consequently, there is a more fundamental need than ever for the library profession to address the subject of library volunteerism and for library services to consider best practice strategies for managing volunteers to ensure productive, mutually beneficial relationships with volunteers.

This article documents the key findings of a qualitative research study carried out in 2009, which sought to explore the perceptions and experiences of both staff and volunteer participants of the Walter Gardiner Photographic Project, a local studies project based at Worthing Library, a public library within the West Sussex Library Service in the south east UK. The project was set up in 2007 to preserve, digitize, and catalogue a photographic collection of historical significance to the local area (Worthing). Following a publicity campaign and an interview process, 12 volunteers were recruited to work with over 5,500 paper photographs, glass negatives, film negatives, documents, and ephemera from the pre-1946 part of the collection. Items were numbered, cleaned, re-housed in archival sleeves and boxes, researched, and listed on a computer. Nearly 1,000 originals were selected for more detailed research, high quality scanning, and digital restoration. The project culminated in an exhibition of the best photographs from the collection, which volunteers stewarded, talking to the public about the images and giving demonstrations of the archival work they had undertaken.

The project was the first of its kind run by the local studies team and was to be used as a benchmark for further volunteer-involved projects. The research set out to evaluate project participants' experiences based broadly around the themes of recruitment, training, and management, as experienced by both staff and volunteers. At a local level the findings of this research were to form the basis of a "volunteer's toolkit," a set of good practice guidelines for future use in West Sussex Library Service projects involving volunteers. On a broader level the project sought to contribute to the limited research on library volunteers, to document the hitherto underrepresented "volunteer perspective" on library volunteering, and to move away from the existing "advantages and disadvantages"

discourse which has traditionally dominated LIS research on volunteerism (McDiarmid & Auster, 2004). Further, the project sought to focus on volunteer experience, as opposed to recent policy literature, which focuses only on volunteer usage and best practice for management of volunteers (e.g., Cookman et al., 2000; Capital Planning Information Limited, 2000; Howlett, Machin, & Malmersjo, 2005). A qualitative methodology was employed to allow for exploration of the social processes of the project and to reflect the complexities of volunteer and organizational relationships.

Literature review

Volunteers play an active part in the delivery of U.K. public library services. In 2000 Cookman et al. reported 85% of English authorities, 82% of Scottish, and 63% of Welsh authorities were using volunteers, and deployed them across (amongst others) housebound services, children's story time, IT instruction, newspaper indexing, and library promotion services. Recent figures suggest little sign of this changing, and show an increase of 8.5% between 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, with a total of 16,271 volunteers providing libraries over half a million person hours (Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, 2010).

Existing research

Despite this topic being one of long standing interest to the LIS community, only a small body of research studies exist to complement the much larger amount of anecdotal literature which is available. For example, the studies by Lock (1994) and Flood (2004) offer brief accounts of the work undertaken, but reflect little on the nature of volunteering.

Central to existing LIS research on volunteers is a discussion around the advantages and disadvantages of using volunteers (McDiarmid & Auster, 2004). A number of perceived common benefits of volunteers are evidenced in Gale's (1999) study of London library managers, in Jervis' (2000) study of 25 U.K. national services, and in the work of Cookman

et al. (2000). Cookman (2001) further notes advantages in the opportunity to forge links with the local community, to demonstrate in a tangible manner the library as a community resource, to promote library services informally, and the opportunity to take advantage of local knowledge. Volunteers are used to add value to existing services by undertaking "extra" library projects (such as the Walter Gardiner Photographic Project), which may not be otherwise achievable. For example, Howlett et al. (2005) found that 74% of library services surveyed cited "allowing us to do things we would not normally be able to do" as the most advantageous aspect of volunteers (p. 12). Similarly, freeing paid staff from more routine tasks meant they could contribute more time to such projects. Staff morale can be increased by the enthusiasm and new skills displayed by volunteers, and opportunities exist to improve management skills by working with diverse people (Jervis, 2000). Roy (1988) found that structured volunteer programs were favourably viewed by library management, and McCune and Nelson (1995) suggest that staff felt more socially and professionally confident in their jobs when working with people from various backgrounds.

A disadvantage of using volunteers reported by Jervis (2000) was the difficulty of recruiting suitable people, alongside concerns about reliability and professionalism (Gale, 1999). Similarly, McDiarmid and Auster (2004) found that the major pitfall perceived by volunteer managers in hospital libraries was poor attendance and commitment. Additionally, there was a worry that "services could run the risk of being seen as second class" if overly staffed with volunteers with no professional guidance (Jervis, 2000, p.16). Debates in the USA echo this sentiment:

> Those opposed to volunteer programs are concerned with a decline in professionalism in libraries, threats to staff employment, and a decreased probability for adequate public funding. (Nicol & Johnson, 2008, p. 154)

Many of the concerns relating to recruitment reported by Cookman et al. (2000) were as much to do with maintaining levels of volunteers to sustain service delivery standards, as they were about taking volunteers on at all. The strong commitment of volunteers was often more acknowledged than concerns about their durability. Without the incentive of a pay packet it is understandable that managers may be concerned over the commitment given by volunteers; however the nature of the voluntary relationship between volunteer and organization is one which is not underpinned by the same motives and incentives as paid employees, and should not be judged as such (Gay, 2001; Zimmeck, 2000; Gaskin, 2003).

This research found that the commitment of the volunteers was equal to and perhaps greater than that of paid staff. The "bind" to the organization was not a contractual one but rather a moral one which was perceived as being of more value than a piece of written documentation. The enthusiasm of volunteers was actually cited as an advantage of using volunteers by one member of staff:

> *I think what has really shone through is the enthusiasm. They've come here because they've really wanted to.* (Member of Staff B)

Library and government policy

In 2001 the then Library Association published volunteer guidelines, covering the three areas of policy, recruitment, and management, and emphasized the need for a clearly defined policy before volunteers are recruited. The guidelines advised that volunteers should have access to effective supervision, reviews, and necessary support mechanisms such as training, which reflects the more formalized, work-based approach that developed in the wider voluntary sector (McCurley & Lynch, 1998). How many library services have such a policy is not measurable, however the research of Howlett et al. (2005) showed that 57% of responding libraries in their survey (174) had a formal policy, 10% more than in 2001.

The current U.K. government, via the championing of its "Big Society" concept (see http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/big-society-overview), has increased the pressure to make use of volunteers in libraries as part of a wider ideological move to shift the running of services away from local authorities.

> Local government should seek to devolve to the most local level possible and to encourage communities to take over services. One example would be libraries . . . (Downey, Kirby, & Sherlock, 2010, p. 12)

The Future Libraries Programme, for example, has established 10 projects to "test drive an ambitious change programme for libraries" ("Future Libraries Programme", 2010) including exploring "increased use of volunteers to run libraries or to work alongside professionals to support opening hours and services" (Local Government Group, 2011, p.13). A Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) report drawing on 29 existing community libraries suggests that already volunteers are replacing, rather than complementing professional staff:

> The majority (86%) of community libraries are not staffed by professional librarians or library service staff, with volunteers taking on the roles not only of frontline staff but also of managing events and activities, stock development and rotation, and premises and budget management. (Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, 2011, p. 7)

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), the successor body to the Library Association, reiterated in 2010 that volunteers enrich libraries and help to sustain their viability. However, CILIP noted that volunteers are not "free" and need proper management, training, and development, and that their use should be:

> part of a professionally managed public library service that has at its core sufficient paid staff to ensure

the direction, development and quality of the service provided. (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, 2010)

Whether volunteers take over the running of libraries completely, or merely continue to complement existing services, this trend is likely to continue, which makes it vital for libraries that they are able to manage the process of recruiting, training, and managing volunteers.

Methods

In order to investigate issues of volunteering in depth, a case study approach was adopted, based on the assumption that

> [via] an in-depth investigation of a discrete entity . . . it is possible to derive knowledge of the wider phenomenon from intensive investigation of a specific instance or case. (Gorman, Clayton, Rice-Lively, & Gorman, 1997, p. 50)

Selecting this approach was appropriate for a number of reasons. The Walter Gardiner Photographic Project was "a functioning specific" case (Stake, 1995) in that it had clearly defined parameters and it was therefore possible to study it as a 'discrete entity'. As Denscombe (2010) identifies, case studies are an appropriate means to study detailed workings and social processes, rather than restricting attention to outcomes. The aims and objectives of the research were to obtain an in-depth, holistic account of the project from both staff and volunteer perspectives. The case study approach thus facilitated an understanding of the perspectives of all those involved and explored the complexities of the relationship between volunteers and staff. The project can be seen as a "typical instance" of its type (Denscombe, 2010, p. 57), and thus provides opportunities to generalize from the findings. Caution must be taken when generalizing from such a small scale study, however the authors suggest that the findings "allow for transferability . . . based on contextual applicability" (Pickard, 2007, p. 93),

as the case study is similar enough to others of its type to allow for this.

Based on a qualitative approach, project staff and volunteer interviews were the sole method of data collection employed. Fourteen interviews, lasting up to an hour each, were conducted over a 3 week period in July and August 2009: 4 library staff and 10 out of 12 volunteers participated. Interviewees were provided with full information on the research project, and an interview consent form was signed by both the interviewee and the researcher prior to each interview.

As the research aimed to record the perceptions, emotions, and motivations of the volunteers and staff, semi-structured interviews were identified as the most appropriate means of acquiring this descriptive data (Denscombe, 2010). An interview schedule was developed and used as a guide for the interviews, based on a number of key themes arising from the review of the literature: volunteer recruitment, training, and management. To avoid misrepresentation, respondent validation was sought after the initial interviews to check the factual accuracy, and also to allow for the researcher's understanding to be confirmed.

All fourteen interviews were transcribed verbatim, concurrent with the interview process. A line by line analysis of the transcripts was undertaken and the material was assigned a series of codes. Codes here refer to:

> . . . tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to information compiled during a study. Codes are usually attached to chunks of varying size . . . they can take the form of a straightforward category, label or a more complex one. (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.56)

An element of pre-coding existed at the outset due to the broad thematic structure of the interview schedule. The research aimed to explore "social processes" and not merely provide a simple analysis of themes, moving the coding beyond "data reduction," towards

"data complication." The analysis was used to "expand, transform and reconceptualise data and open the data to further analysis, using codes as heuristic devices" (Coffey & Atkinson 1996, p. 29). Codes were refined so that synonyms were removed, making the codes standardized, and colour coding was used to denote concepts within the transcripts to aid "data display." A systematic examination of commonalities and differences among interviewees was undertaken, drawing out a number of themes but also highlighting complexities.

Subjects

The request for volunteers was made through the local media and the Internet from November/December 2008. Advertising was placed in local newspapers and television and an estimated 300-400 people expressed an interest in the project. Interviews took place in January 2008 conducted by the County Local Studies Librarian and a member of the Digitisation Unit. Fifty volunteers were interviewed and 12 chosen, of which 9 were female and three male. Of these volunteers two female volunteers did not participate in the research. Of the 10 interviewed for the research, all were White British, and 8 of the 10 were retired. The final selection was representative of those who had made initial inquiries. Of the 50 interviewed, staff estimate that 75% were women and at least 89% were retired people, with the great majority being over the age of 65. This is consistent with other research on volunteers in the museums, libraries, and archives sector. Howlett et al. (2005) found that volunteers across museums, libraries, and archives in the UK are predominantly white (on average, 96%), aged 55 years and over (72%), and female (68%). Two of the volunteers had previous library experience: one had been an Information Librarian and the other had worked as a library assistant, both for West Sussex Library Service.

Four members of staff were interviewed: two Local Studies Librarians and the two Project Officers in the West Sussex Digitisation Unit.

Key Findings and Discussion

Key issues emerging from the data were organized thematically around the main areas of recruitment, training, and management of volunteers. The results from volunteer and staff perspectives are interwoven, which provides a detailed picture of the successes and limitations of the project, and highlights some areas of tension which speak to the sometimes complex nature of the relationships between volunteers and paid staff in institutions.

Recruitment

All volunteers interviewed stated that the interview and recruitment processes were well done. All agreed that they had an opportunity to talk about their skills and interest in the project at interview, and received an appropriate introduction to the project. Two thirds of the volunteers commented on the informality of the interview, which was viewed positively. This supports the evidence in volunteer recruitment literature, which emphasizes veering away from a formal "workplace" model of interviewing, and concludes that volunteer interviews work best as an informal two-way process (McCurley & Lynch, 1998; Volunteering England, 2011). At odds with this desire for informality is an increased expectation for libraries to have more rigorous recruitment policies in place in which volunteer agreements outline details such as the length of a project, its expected outcomes, and an anticipated number of volunteer hours (Library Association, 2001). Eight of the 10 volunteers in this project indicated a formalization of the recruitment process, such as providing a reference, would be acceptable; however, all also felt that whilst it would be necessary to have a reference if you were working with children or vulnerable people, for a local studies project it was too officious, and "*a bit county council*" (Volunteer F).

Training

All 10 volunteers felt the training they had received had equipped them with the right skills and knowledge to do the job. An initial practical session with a conservator was identified by 8 of the 10 volunteers as the most successful element of the training and over half emphasized his professionalism and thoroughness:

> *Very professional more so than we needed really.* (Volunteer A)

Even though at least six of the volunteers emphasized the work was "commonsense," having professional training made them feel more confident about their skills, and half of the volunteers mentioned that it also gave them confidence that staff were serious enough about the work they were undertaking to invest time and resources in them. All four staff participants stated that the volunteer training was a time consuming process, corroborating the research of Howlett et al. (2005) who found it to be the most cited concern amongst library personnel about involvement of volunteers. However, in line with other studies – for example those of Jervis (2000), Gale (1999), and Cookman et al. (2000) – this was not seen as a "disadvantage" but just a necessary part of using volunteers:

> *I'd never use the term pitfalls or disadvantages. You have to create a lot of documents for them and you have to spend a lot of time thinking about them. You have to think more carefully than with staff. . . . As long as you are aware of that I don't regard it as a disadvantage.* (Member of Staff D)

Management

Nine of the 10 volunteers believed they were well managed and could not think of any major improvements. The most frequently mentioned positive aspects were: friendliness and welcoming attitude of the staff, the informality of the project staff-volunteer relationship, and the feeling of being valued by staff. Of these, particular weight was placed on

the importance of staff being friendly and the informality of the volunteering experience in both work schedule and interpersonal relationships.

> *It was good management the training everything it was a real pleasure.* (Volunteer D)

> *All the staff are very friendly and good at listening to any problems that we had.* (Volunteer A)

This informal culture was deliberately fostered by the library staff:

> *I like to have fun in sessions as well. That's always been motivational. It's the way I work. Not to sit there in silence . . . that's our methodology.* (Member of Staff D)

Further to this approach was the reinforcement of their usefulness to the service. Every volunteer showed an awareness of their purpose and function in "doing something that otherwise could not be done."

> *I motivate people by making them realise they are extremely important and they are important part of an important project . . .* (Member of Staff D)

As Locke, Ellis, and Smith (2003) suggest, being able to put one's contribution into some context and clarify one's purpose can be motivational.

All staff reflected that time management was one of the biggest difficulties of the project, due to a lot of hands-on management, and as one interviewee reflected:

> *I think maybe if we made more time at the beginning . . . it probably would have saved time in the long run, because things keep coming up . . .* (Member of Staff C)

This was reiterated by another interviewee:

> *It was fine in the early days* [answering queries]. *But it's*

not useful to do that because they become dependent on you. Even after five or six months. I'd get [name removed] to deal with stuff that was routine by then. There wasn't a set policy for that and that would have been useful actually, and I could have defined roles different, better. I could have got [name removed] to be a first point of call. (Member of Staff D)

Evidentially, it would have been an improvement to clarify the supervisory structure and define early on in the project the roles allocated to each member of staff, so that volunteers would have had a clear point of reference.

Formality vs. Informality

An interesting emergent theme was the juxtaposition of formality against informality. On a number of occasions during the project, inconsistency between the less formal approach in certain contexts and the adherence to more rigid, formal hierarchies resulted in difficulties for both staff and volunteers. In particular this occurred when the volunteers were used in a customer service role as exhibition stewards. Four volunteers recounted incidents concerning disagreements with library patrons. Common among these incidents were volunteers attempting to deal with problems which, following library protocol, should have been referred to the library staff member on duty. As one member of staff stated:

> *They still have to represent the service in the same way that a paid member of staff would do, and I think again that's a tricky area.* (Member of Staff C)

One particular incident involved a volunteer disagreeing with the library first-aider over the treatment of a visitor at the exhibition who unexpectedly felt dizzy. Common to most policy- bound public sector workplaces, the first-aider was expected to follow a set procedure which involved calling an

ambulance, which was deemed totally unnecessary by the volunteer. Although an isolated incident, this exemplifies the potential difficulty of involving those employed on an informal basis in contexts where strict adherence to protocol is expected.

Relative to this issue is the difficulty in using suitable disciplinary measures. The incident with the first-aider related above resulted in the volunteer being "reprimanded." The difficulty here was that this contrasted starkly with the hitherto informal relationship between staff and volunteer, and led the volunteer to believe the project was "*badly managed*" (Volunteer B). One of the tensions of volunteer management is that the relationship between volunteer and manager is underpinned by a reciprocal relationship which is not the same as paid employee relations:

> *How much can you ask of them, you know?* (Member of Staff C)

Zimmeck (2000) and Gaskin (2003) have argued that using the same methods of interview, recruitment, contracts, and disciplinary procedures with volunteers is fundamentally flawed:

> They work, but they are not employees: they do not have to do what they do: they do it in more episodic, circuitous and idiosyncratic ways: they are not paid for doing it: and, if they do not feel that they are properly involved, supported or cherished, they will walk away. (Zimmeck, 2000, p. 5)

She reflects that a "home grown" model should be more widely adopted, which recognizes the differences between volunteers and employees, but treats them as partners who participate in decision making by consensus and exercise shared authority. This is qualified by recognizing that there is no one size fits all model, but the ethos of understanding what volunteers want and need is the preferred basis from which to manage volunteers. Gaskin's research explored this

further, proposing a model of progressive volunteer involvement, concluding what volunteers wanted from management was to feel welcome, secure, accepted, respected, informed, well-used, and well-managed (2003).

As a result of these reported incidents it was suggested by project staff that a formalization of the volunteer process in implementing policies around wider library management would have been beneficial:

> *Maybe if we had some policies in place regarding volunteers operating alongside other members of staff, volunteers being alongside members of the public. Looking back on that it probably would have helped.* (Member of Staff C)

Volunteer responses to the issue of formalizing their relationship with the library service suggest that this might run the risk of undermining the inherent freedom and reciprocity perceived to be characteristic of volunteering. Whilst volunteer agreements are advocated as a means of *ensuring* commitment (Cookman et al., 2000) many of the Walter Gardiner Photographic Project volunteers demonstrated the potential for the opposite to be true:

> *We all feel more duty bound to complete it and do it properly than we did when we were in paid employment.* (Volunteer F)

> *In some ways if I feel I've got the freedom then I'm more dedicated than if I feel more constricted by something.* (Volunteer C)

Volunteer-organization relationship

A further significant theme was the ambiguous position of the volunteers within the wider library service and the importance this played in the success of the public aspect of the project. The three volunteers who specifically mentioned staff relationships outside of the immediate project staff were positive about those relationships:

> *They treated us as part of the team. They were never superior or patronising we always felt we were wanted.* (Volunteer H)

The majority of volunteers perceived other library staff as friendly and welcoming. However, evidence from a staff perspective arose suggesting that the introduction of volunteers was not as unproblematic as might be supposed from volunteer accounts:

> *Yes and it came from the staff themselves* [reinforcing separation]. *You know, "who's that lot downstairs?" You have to feel both sides there. Make the staff realise they* [the volunteers] *are working for us and not getting paid so they're great . . . and at the same time make the volunteers feel like they're a part of our team and not excluded.* (Member of Staff C)

Seven of the ten volunteers reported feeling "not completely part of the library," whilst one volunteer reflected:

> *Name badges might have been a good idea. . . . No matter what level you work on it's nice to feel which position you're in.* (Volunteer E)

As documented in Gaskin's (2003) work, the importance of volunteers feeling like they belong within an organization is key to a successful experience for both parties. In this project the self-perceived and staff attributed "otherness" of the volunteers proved to be problematic once the project moved to a customer focused level where volunteers were expected to be aware of and supportive of the organizational culture.

Recommendations

Recommendations to library services considering use of volunteers are divided into the three themes: interviewing, training, and management. As discussed above, these recommendations stem from the results of this local study, but may have transferability to similar library projects. At the interview stage, it is useful to maintain informality yet be

rigorous in discussing volunteers' motivations, as this will aid in allocating appropriate tasks and thus maximising commitment. Training is a key aspect throughout any project; it is perhaps self-evident that induction sessions need to be welcoming, but they also need to facilitate volunteers' understanding and establishment of their place within the organization. A key recommendation for induction sessions is clarifying paid staff roles, so volunteers know how to access appropriate assistance. Induction and ongoing training needs to be professionally designed and delivered, so a clear message is given about the investment a service is willing to make in their volunteers. This can also help to facilitate a professional ethos amongst volunteers, and be used as a forum to introduce the ethos and management practices of the service. If there are specific codes of conduct expected, they should be explained (e.g., health and safety procedures). It is important to be responsive to the ongoing training needs of volunteers and be alert to their initial, developing, and perhaps changing needs.

Maintaining the informality of the volunteer experience and making it less like a work experience can be key to a project's success, particularly with certain volunteers (e.g., older, retired volunteers who are not looking to gain "career" skills; statistically likely to be the majority of volunteers). Integrating volunteers within the wider organization fosters a sense of community, which can be achieved by inviting volunteers into staff areas and to staff meetings.

Developing a "volunteer agreement" which sets out mutual responsibilities and expectations (rather than being prescriptive or restrictive) can help with the clarification of roles. Expectation of time commitment and hours should be addressed, but this should be done sensitively. The freedom inherent in volunteering is very important for some volunteers, and something that erodes this might be counterproductive. As part of this, establish a procedure for volunteers to have a point of contact elsewhere in the organization (outside of the immediate project management team) to deal with complaints, similar to a grievance officer for paid staff.

Conclusions

The key success factors in this project can be summed up as: good volunteer recruitment strategies at the initial stage of the project, providing training of sufficient quality and depth, and a friendly and informal management style. Despite these successes a number of tensions arose – largely as a result of the project moving away from its self-contained dimension into a more public arena. The volunteers' lack of familiarity with the wider library organization protocol (e.g., the managerial structures and hierarchy), and the huge importance placed on customer care and public service proved problematic. Future projects can learn from this by implementing some of the recommendations listed above, particularly the integration of volunteers into the wider service "ethos."

On a wider policy level, the findings supported the use of a volunteer agreement which would clarify volunteer and organization expectations, but showed clearly that the freedom of choice underpinning the volunteer-organization relationship was of great significance. As such, the key to success is to find the right balance between formality and informality to satisfy both parties.

This research is limited by the scale and locality of the project. Future research could further explore the role volunteer motivations play in the success or otherwise of a project. Future research will also likely need to address the issue from the perspective of a greatly altered policy landscape, which may bring significant changes to the nature and scale of volunteering in libraries. However these develop, it is likely that libraries will need more resources and guidance to support a potentially expanding set of volunteer staff. There may be a role for dedicated paid staff to develop, manage, and train volunteers within contexts where professional librarians are co-ordinating – and perhaps co-managing – their services with entirely volunteer-run ones.

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