

I. PROJECT CONTENT

Vision (your overall idea of what will be achieved)

To create an open-access, on-line and searchable edition of the Old Bailey Proceedings, 1670-1834, and in the process give family historians, the communities of London and students access to the largest single printed historical source for the actions and beliefs of non-elite people ever published.

Key aims and objectives (main targets to be completed in order to achieve the vision)

- To create a digital version of a valuable original source (approx. 57,000 pages).
- To create a search-engine, website and a range of learning packages to support the use of the source.
- To promote life-long learning and reskilling in both history and information technology by attracting a wide range of users to the source, including those from diverse communities, non-elite backgrounds, and with little experience of ICT.

2. AUDIENCE

We have identified several important user groups for the resource created. These include:

- Family historians
- Community and Local Historians
- Students (key stage 3 and A level, undergraduate and post-graduate)

For each of these groups we have undertaken an extensive, but non-statistical, survey of need, based on the distribution of a project proposal and a request for direct (but unstructured) feedback.

Family Historians (12 organisations consulted):

Family historians have been at the forefront in the development of the internet as a research tool. The evidence for this can be found in the usage figures for the major family history websites cited in the project Business Plan (WP2). Family historians are the largest single category of users in London archives. We have circulated a wide range of family history societies based in the greater London area, and they have expressed universal enthusiasm for the project. Westminster & Central Middlesex FamilyHistory Society, for instance, 'endorse wholeheartedly' the project. In their view, 'Such information would be of immense value to our membership and is the way forward'. Court records are a source which have hitherto been little used by family historians, but which provide access to a unique wealth of detail and information. By adding a qualitatively new component to the research tools available, this resource will encourage an even higher proportion of family historians to do their research on the internet.

Local and Community Historians (14 organisations consulted)

We have circulated all the major local history collections in the greater London Area, and a high proportion of the Local History Societies; as well as groups dedicated to work on the histories of individual communities. Archives and local studies centres both in London and throughout the country have strongly welcomed the project, noting that the resource would be frequently consulted by their readers. We have also surveyed the local and community history groups of greater London. The London and Middlesex Archaeological Society, for instance, felt the project 'would result in a new and invaluable research tool for LAMAS members'. The Black and Asian Studies Association felt that the project would complement and further their own data base of local historical material on the Black and Asian experience in Britain. Local historians have yet to make the same use of the internet as have family historians, but by providing a rich and easily accessible resource for local history online, this project will encourage them to do so.

Students in Formal Education (7 schools, 3 relevant policy bodies, and 27 university lecturers consulted)

We have surveyed a wide range of history teachers and consulted with educationalists working on the development of the new national curriculum for history. Opinion has also been canvassed among university teachers in the field and internationally recognised experts in the history of crime. From those involved in secondary education the response has been uniformly positive. Peter D'Sena, for instance, one of the consultants/writers of the National Curriculum for history believes the material will be used extensively at Key Stage 3 and A level, and will be eagerly taken up by teachers who 'will not only be in search of rich historical sources, but also for opportunities for pupils to access and interrogate them using ITC'. Heads of history at secondary schools indicate that the project will create a valuable teaching resource for all key stages of the new Curriculum 2000.

Teachers in higher education have expressed strong support for the project, and foresee its widespread use in both undergraduate and MA teaching, and in research for publication. This view has been confirmed by the anonymous assessors of our funding application to the Arts and Humanities Research Board.

3. PATHWAY TO IMPACT

The University of Sheffield website attracts more than six million hits per year and some fraction of the users who browse the website will encounter this project and investigate it. But most users will be local historians and genealogists who come to the source from linked sites. The demand for on-line resources from this sector is strong and growing rapidly.

- Enquiry statistics for EARL's e-mail service and to individual libraries and archive centres are estimated at in excess of 1.8 million per year.
- The use of the IGI online service, 'familysearch', receives 500,000 page impressions per day.
- Genuki, a gateway site for genealogical research in the UK received 28,284 hits in the year to September 2000.

While local and community historians have yet to discover the usefulness of on-line searching in the same numbers as family historians, we are encouraged by these statistics to expect a high and growing level of usage.

By virtue of being posted on the web, this resource will become available to anyone searching the internet. But in order to ensure all the target groups are made fully aware of this new resource and its potential value, four techniques will be utilised.

- First, the Genealogy Consortium will provide an effective mechanism for the promotion of this website to family historians. By participating in collective promotional activities, such as presentations, flyers, and the consortium home page, organised by the lead partner, EARL, the Old Bailey Proceedings will be brought to the attention of a large number of potential users. This form of publicity will be particularly important for making family historians aware of this resource.
- Second, information on the resource will be posted on a number of related webpages, with direct links wherever possible, including websites run by public archives. These links, outlined in work package 9 of the Business Plan, will be established within one month of the formal launch in December 2002.
- Third, a flyer and poster describing the resource and explaining how to access it will be mailed to all local and family history organisations with a London connection; public libraries and local archives in the London area; and teachers of history in secondary schools throughout the country. In addition, wherever possible we will use organisational mailing lists, such as that of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society and EARL, to contact members directly. Similarly, flyers will be sent to lists of researchers working on this period obtained from the Institute of Historical Research and user groups in other disciplines such as the London Historical Geographers Group. This will be co-ordinated to reinforce and publicise the formal launch in December 2002, and will be completed within a month of the launch.
- Fourth, we will call attention to this new resource and demonstrate the wealth and detail it contains through an international conference, to be held near the end of the three year project. This will be used to generate media attention, as well as to reinforce earlier publicity. The conference, to be held in London, will include papers presented by the project directors and other scholars and will present preliminary findings derived from use of the search engine, as

well as presentations reflecting the source's use in family and community history. This will be held in March 2004. The conference proceedings will be published in book form by Autumn of 2005.

Monitoring the effectiveness of the resource will be undertaken through both the direct measuring of 'hits' on the website, and through formal feedback mechanisms on the website and associated with particular events and publicity initiatives. We will also make regular use of the focus groups established by the Genealogical Consortium to assess the impact the site is having on the broader family and community research audience. Each of these monitoring mechanisms will be reported to the annual meetings of the Board of Management. In particular evaluation reports based on the usage figures, in combination with other types of feedback from focus groups to online questionnaires, will be formally reported and discussed at the Management Board's meetings in March 2003 and June 2004. We have also incorporated time and resources into our plan and budget to respond to this feedback by modifying the resource as necessary during the year ending August 2004.

The usability of this resource will be built into its very structure. While the site will be organised around the basic source and associated search engines, it will also include a range of learning packages directed at the needs of our identified user groups.

New users will be directed to tailored learning packages that give them both appropriate background information on the Sessions Proceedings, and clear instructions on the search facilities available. More experienced users will be able to proceed directly to the search engines and statistical package, or indeed to the resource itself.

From a clearly designed home page users will be able to click on one of several pathways (for family historians, local historians, groups and communities, schools, and advanced users) which will include tailored examples for a variety of searches, and descriptions of the background to the source itself. There will also be pages directed at users interested in particular communities, which will include information on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century usage and phraseology, as well as brief community histories. Users in formal education will find suggested exercises and structured learning materials. All pathways will include links to the search template.