AWM Challenge Fund 2003.
Proposal Co-ordinated by West Midlands Higher Education Association Libraries Group

Project Chrysalis

1) Brief Description

This proposal is to establish a repository that will be used to provide resources and materials to support Learning, skills development, information literacy and provide some access to wide ranging resources relevant to the local history and cultural identity of the West Midlands.

Potential content for the repository will fall into a number of categories ranging from existing content which requires no adaptation or modification to content that exists wholly or in part but requires additional resource for completion to an appropriate standard. To enable content across the categories to be available within the repository, the project proposes to use some of the funding to enable a range of small scale re-purposing of content to be facilitated, potentially from across all the participating organisations. The other major purposes of the project will be:

- To create lasting and embedded administrative protocols to ensure the repository and its content are maintained and enhanced through cross organisational collaboration and co-operation
- Building partnerships with other regional organisations to continue to develop and enhance the content exploitation of the repository and assist in the maintaining the long term viability of the project

The proposal falls within the following content themes:

- Learning and skills development
- Local history and cultural identity of the West Midlands

It will be concerned with creating:

- Signposts, finding aids, guides and access to resources
- Learning packages
- Digitisation of existing resources (limited to exemplars only)

2) Organisations applying

This is a project based around the West Midlands Higher Education Association Libraries Group (WMHEA-LG) which is a sub-group of the West Midlands Higher Education Association. The purpose and aims of the Group are appended to this application (Appendix 1).

In addition the project is further supported by Staffordshire Library and Information Service and Stoke-on-Trent Libraries, Information and Archives.

For the purposes of the project the local organisation that will "host" the Technical Innovation Centre (tic) based at Millennium Point in Birmingham. The project will be ultimately managed by the WMHEA-LG. This body will act as a management group for the project with the addition of partners from the public library sector, and create a Project Steering Group specifically to support the project. The Project Steering Group will represent one element in the long-term sustainability of the overall initiative.

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3) Background Context for the Work

The WMHEA-LG has been established for 3 years and is dedicated to collaboration and partnership across and between sectors. It meets regularly 4 times per year and has established a number of initiatives. One particularly successful initiative has been Access West Midlands Scheme between the HE libraries in the region.

The Higher Education sector of UK libraries has been funded over a number of years to develop the concept of hybrid and digital libraries. The sector also benefits from a consolidated approach to these developments represented by the JISC. Over a number of years West Midlands Universities have delivered JISC funded projects, currently, for example, the x4L intra-operability projects at Wolverhampton and Staffordshire Universities

The establishment of the Resource Discovery Network (RDN) to support both FE and HE has further allowed the University of Birmingham, to gain experience in the establishment and maintenance of hubs for information and resources notably ALTIS and EEVL. This combination of long standing funding and continued development means that the Universities in the West Midlands are well placed to provide the advice, guidance and expertise required to create the proposed repository including established knowledge of contracts, intellectual property and technical and IT issues. Experience in these areas has shown that effective collaboration needs to be underpinned by clear definitions of the roles and responsibilities of all partners. These agreements need to incorporate appropriate safeguards to ensure intellectual property and other statutory rights along with suitable recognition of contributed effort and resource.

One purpose of this proposal is to release this expertise, knowledge and resources to the benefit of all libraries in the West Midlands and to establish a true collaboration and partnership both within and across library sectors in the region.

The libraries across the West Midlands all share a common requirement to support learning and information literacy. There is a range of existing materials within HE which have been created to support student learning and information literacy. Primarily these relate to formal education and training but have the potential for adaptation to self-directed and informal learning. This material has been created, developed, quality assured and maintained over a considerable timescale and it is intended that such material be presented in a format which allows other library sectors to use or re-purpose it to meet their local needs. Partners from the public library are anticipating working closely with HE colleagues on such content as part of this project.

Finally the HE sector in particular holds a vast range of resources which are of great relevance and interest to local communities and regional organisations of all kinds. Many of these are identified through the *Futures Together* project and the proposal intends to build on this work to provide small quantities of exemplar digitised resources and virtual tours of some of the range of Collections and resources available to open up such resources to further exploitation by regional organisations.

4) Aims and Objectives of the Project

The overall aim of the project is to establish a repository of quality assured information and resources to support learning and skills development, information literacy and provide access to a range of materials and resources relevant to the local history and cultural identity of the region.

Within this broad aim the project will have the following specific objectives:-

- To recommend an appropriate existing repository all the Projects with AWM Libraries Challenge
- To actively share information and resources within HE and across the region, in support of learning, skills development and information literacy.
- To identify, evaluate and make accessible relevant materials and resources from all participating organisations

- To ensure that all resources and information made available within the repository are quality assured, regularly updated and monitored and that new and additional materials and resources are made available over time.
- To ensure that all resources are accessible to all and can, if required, be re-purposed and/or re-packaged to meet local needs and requirements, particularly those pertaining to the public library sector
- To create a sustainable administrative infrastructure which allows the repository created to become a valuable and accessible resource available to all. This will require the establishment of clear and embedded cross-organisational administrative protocols
- To begin to build a legal framework to enable the sharing of content while still safeguarding intellectual property rights and other necessary legal infrastructure to protect the interests of individual and organisational contributors
- To actively promote the repository for use by students, public and private organisations and local communities across the region
- To build long term partnerships with regional organisations of all kinds to enable and secure the future of the repository and the service

We believe the project proposal will meet elements of all six of the objectives of the Challenge Fund in that it will:

- Create content that can be shared across the region
- Enable collaboration and cooperation across organisations
- Contains the potential to create content with a "local dimension" particularly local history and cultural identity
- Covers the whole geographical region in terms of participating organisations from HE
- Aims to create new administrative protocols and legal frameworks for the maintenance and continued creation of content for the proposed repository
- Content targets learning and skills development with the potential for use of such materials by organisations across the region

5) Description of the Work to be Undertaken

WMHEA-LG will create a Project Steering Group comprising members of the Group and project partners. This will provide advice and an overall management role for the project.

The first step will be to appoint the Project Officer to undertake the day-to-day management of the project.

On the appointment of the Project Officer, their first task will be to establish a detailed project plan with the support of the established Project Steering Group. They will also immediately commence work on the identification of appropriate content which will then be categorised according to the five categories of content established for the project.

These categories are outlined in **Section 14: Costs and Levered Funds**.

Each piece of content will be primarily evaluated for its use and relevance to learning, skills development, information literacy and the provision of access to wide ranging resources relevant to local history and cultural identity of the West Midlands. In this evaluation the advice and guidance of the Project Steering Group will be essential.

Once the work on identifying and evaluating content is complete, outcomes will be referred to the Project Steering Group to identify priorities for allocation of funds for content update or development. For example, one of the highly relevant aspects of such projects will be the re-purposing of content for cross sectoral use (HE to public library and vice-versa). Some content will, of course, be able to be transferred to the repository without any further work apart from the addition of appropriate metadata.

Content projects will commence immediately following this prioritisation process. The range and size of the project is anticipated to vary considerably but most are anticipated to be relatively small and likely to be of short duration. Funding awarded would depend on the organisational contribution (which could include the estimated value of the existing product), the level of intra-operability to be achieved, the breadth of the scope for the product to various

audiences and the quality of the proposed final product. As appropriate content is made available it will begin to be loaded on the repository. This process will trigger the Project Officer to commence work on the potential administrative protocols required for loading, updating and maintaining content produced or provided by project partners. The Project Officer will be expected to devise a range of such protocols to match all categories of content for the repository by the end of the duration of the project and have them all formally agreed by the Project Steering Group. In parallel with these developments will be the building of a legal framework to enable the sharing of content whilst still safeguarding intellectual property rights and individual and organisational interests. This will fully exploit existing expertise in these areas within the HE community.

As the content of the repository develops the Project Officer will be expected to devise a training and dissemination schedule utilising the active support of the Project Steering Group. One of the key by-products of this work will be the links to other likely partner organisations in the region.

The building of these links over the duration of the project and beyond will be one of the key ways in which the project will be made sustainable into the long term.

6) Expected Outcomes and Measures of Impacts

We propose to measure the outcome and impact of the project as follows:-

Achievement

- The establishment of the repository is achieved
- The establishment of the administrative protocols for loading, maintenance and updating of the content are established
- The building of partnerships to help establish longer term sustainability have commenced

Activity

- A variety of categories of content for the repository has been made available across the region
- The number of attendees and contacts made during the training and dissemination phase
- Expertise, knowledge and resources within libraries (particularly HE) have been released for the benefit of the West Midlands region.

Outcomes

- The establishment of sustainable cross sectoral collaboration and co-operation in the maintenance and creation of shared content for mutual benefit and for active exploitation by a range of organisations across the region
- A legal framework that provides for the sharing of content, for the mutual economic benefit of the partner organisations and the region as a whole, whilst safeguarding individual and collective interests and giving suitable recognition for contributed effort and resource

7) The Market for the Project or Service

The proposal aims to provide a single and central repository for information and resources freely available across the region in relation to:-
- Learning and skills development
- Information literacy
- Local history and cultural identity

It will begin to unlock some of the vast range of resources available and enable all sizes and types of organisation to share and exploit the resources held.

8) Standards

All materials made available as a part of this project must be suitable for delivery on a number of systems – including a range of web servers, content management systems and virtual

learning environments. It must be possible to apply and repurpose materials in a range of contexts. In order to achieve these objectives the materials will need to be produced and tagged in accordance with the following standards.

NOF (New Opportunities Funding) Digitise Technical Standards and Guidelines as specified at http://www.peoplesnetwork.gov.uk/content/technical.asp

IMS (Instructional Management System) Specifications as specified at http://www.imsproject.org/specifications.cfm and including the QTI (Question and Test Interoperability) Specification as specified at http://www.imsglobal.org/question/qtiv1p2/imsqti_oviewv1p2.html

SCORM (Shareable Content Object Repository Model) as specified at http://www.adlnet.org/

Responsibility for ensuring standards compliance will be that of the full-time project officer who will report on matters relating to this project, to the Project Steering Group. In order to support this role the Project Officer will be able to call upon support and advice from e-learning teams within other institutions who have considerable knowledge and expertise in this area.

Professor Mark Stiles, Head of Learning Development, Information Services, Staffordshire University will act as a consultant to the project with a particular brief to oversee standards compliance.

9) Quality Assurance

Quality assurance is a key aspect of the project. Operationally the implementation and management of the quality assurance methodology will be the responsibility of the project officer. This methodology will be carried out in accordance with guidelines agreed by the WMHEA-LG consortium and project partners represented by the Project Steering Group. These guidelines will include specification for quality standards covering areas including authority of information, perceived quality and reliability, currency, review periods, relevance, ease of use and corresponding monitoring and reporting procedures. The development of these Guidelines will support the long term sustainability of the repository.

10) Infrastructure for Content Management

All content will be stored and described on a single, resource repository located at the Technical Innovation Centre (tic) Birmingham.

The resource repository will require access for a range of user types in a range of ways. Content authors will need to be able to upload, update and describe materials, metadata specialists will need to be able to extend, update and modify metadata and metadata schema, end-users will need to be able to download materials for repurposing and integration into other content and to gain direct access to materials.

11) Sustainability

Content will continue to be created, added and updated by the member institutions of the WMHEA-LG and project partners working in a new collaborative groupings. It is anticipated that by the end of the project new and innovative administrative procedures, and protocols and a legal framework to protect individual and organisation interests, will have been created and embedded which will enable this model of collaboration to continue and develop over time.

In order to further secure the long-term future of the service considerable effort will be applied in the first year of operation to forming partnerships with regional organisations, such as other public library authorities and also museums, tourist information offices etc. that can find benefit from access to the content available and can make a sustainable contribution to the service

12) Risk Assessment

Risks associated with the project are:

- Failure to achieve a critical mass of content within the initial project period.

Part of the initial project phase will be to identify suitable content. If this proves to be substantially less than anticipated then the development priorities will need to be adjusted to ensure a critical mass of total content can be achieved. This would be achieved in the first instance by targeting funds on to value added development to raise existing content to the necessary standards rather than the development of new content.

- Insufficient expertise within target user groups to exploit content effectively.
  Training and dissemination will be a key part of the project. The balance between these two can be adjusted in accordance with the needs of the target user groups.
- Failure to source and design an appropriate hardware and software solution for the content repository within the required timescales
- Inability to integrate the repository into institutional portals.
- Failure to agree on administrative and legal framework to allow the maintenance and long term development of the initiative. We feel this is not a major risk mainly due to the project co-ordination through WMHEA-LG which is a well established organisation that has and is assisting in cross regional initiatives.

13) Timescale and Schedule of Work

- Establish a Project Steering Group comprising all partners
- Recruit and appoint project officer
- Sourcing of content repository
- Design and implementation of content repository
- Identification of appropriate existing content
- Implementation and testing of content repository
- Identification and commissioning of appropriate content category projects
- Implementation of content category projects
- Establishment and agreement of administrative protocols
- Training and dissemination
- Building partnerships across the region

Project Milestones

- Appointment of Project Officer   End of month 6
- Sourcing of content repository   End of month 7
- Implementation of content projects   End of month 6 onwards
- Agreement on administrative protocols   End of month 8
- Repository launched   End of month 10
- Training and dissemination   End of month 9 onwards
- Project Evaluation Report   End of month 11

Content targets

The following further expands upon how the content values, development costs and targets have been estimated.

Setting targets for content is very difficult as some content can be very small, perhaps a single photograph, some content will be extensive covering a complete area of study. In order to provide a sensible basis for comparison of both content value and development cost hours are used. If we assume an average item of content to represent around 20 hours work, with more granular objects designed for incorporation into larger works being around 10 hours, then we can set some targets and assign some values to existing content.

To assign value to existing content and to estimate development costs we need to know the true cost of employing a person for 1 hour. Salary costs are only a proportion of this cost. For a person with the skills required to produce high quality content the project estimates an hourly cost of £50, to cover all salary costs and overheads.

For convenience the content has been divided into five categories representing the spectrum from "repository ready" content to items that may need to be commissioned from scratch.

These are:-

Category 1   Existing content that requires no adaptation or modification
Category 2   Existing content that requires adaptation and modifications to enable interchange and interoperability
Category 3   Content that exists wholly or in part, but that requires additional resource for completion to a sufficient standard
Category 4   Content that does not exist, but for which there is a demonstrable need
Category 5   Granular learning objects suitable for repurposing as a part of more substantial content

Based on the above assumptions the following figures show levels of content that might be available and estimated development resources that would be required.

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