Themed Collections are now Online Resources

In this HubbuB...

- Themed Collections are now Online Resources
- Keep Calm and Keep Going with Calm
- Citations

We flagged this change in the last HubbuB, and now want to tell you more about it.

We introduced Themed Collections as a way to ensure that researchers can find out about archives aside from searching traditional archival catalogues. They may include archives that are not yet catalogued in the standard manner and archives that are part of a website exploring a theme or topic, from Charles Darwin to Zandra Rhodes. Essentially, they are websites, or web pages, that represent archives in some way other than via a fonds-based catalogue.

However, feedback from your good selves (the contributors) and others has led us to re-think the name, because the assumption was that we were creating themed groupings of archival collections on the Hub. Whilst this is a nice idea, it is not what these resources are. So, as these are always online, and a URL is required, we have given them the broad title of Online Resources.

A few people have asked if finding aids could be included, and this 're-branding' does allow for that. Our aim is to include anything that has a URL and that might be useful to researchers looking for archives, whether it be to consult them in a traditional way, to find specific information, or simply for inspiration.

Please do consider whether you have sites that could be included. Have a browse around what we currently have to get a better idea of what is in scope, and do ask us if you are not sure.

https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/?tab=themes
By now you will be very well aware that we constantly work towards exporting descriptions from a range of systems. Our main focus has been Axiell Calm over the past few years, but our plan was to focus on AdLib from this month, to aim for a preliminary export template in October. However, we've ended up finding a few more problems with Calm exports that we felt were important to sort out now. These include recognition of 'closed' status in cataloguing and access (the ability to ensure this information is not displayed); changes to the export to allow for an image (a URL) to be exported without a corresponding description (currently this can cause an error message); grabbing some more data from the persons/organisations database, in particular VIAF IDs that some cataloguers are adding. We're hoping this will only take a few weeks, and then we'll be back on the AdLib export.

If you export from Calm (or plan to) then do please use the up-to-date export template, June2019, available from our website: https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/calm/

We will move back to AdLib work in October. There are major challenges exporting content from the Persons/Organisations database in AdLib, such that we are going to struggle to export life dates and titles. There is simply no way to do this easily - it actually has to be done as a hack. In addition, within AdLib most cataloguers don't add the required information to distinguish between people and organisations, so the actual catalogue record doesn't tell you which one a name is. It is likely to restrict the use that we can make of these names in our own Hub interface.

Anyway, more news as we have it...
We are hoping to develop our citation facilitation a little further in the coming year, to provide different download formats. But we think that it has been a useful addition to the Hub. We recently asked the Australian Trove service about how they chose to implement a similar feature, and they explained their approach and said "Having looked at the way you've structured the citations on Archives Hub I think you've attained a good balance with your implementation. By not attempting to generate citations specific for the various different formats of citation I think that you've saved yourselves a lot of headaches with researchers complaining that the citation isn't 100% accurate." Saving headaches is, of course, always something to aim for!

We'd love to get any feedback from you on whether this feature is useful and whether you have had any researchers commenting on it.