

MyLearning project options report

Version 5.2



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Overview

Renaissance Yorkshire commissioned Martin Bazley & Associates to explore options for sustaining and developing the MyLearning project www.MyLearning.org

Work is due to be completed on this contract by 31 January 2011.

This is the draft final report with revised recommendations and suggested next actions.

Outline summary of recommendations

Editorial:

1. Widen scope nationally through a phased approach, in terms of:
 - area of production of resources and
 - promotion to teachers – but hold off until critical mass of content achieved
2. Focus output more strongly on curriculum provision and needs of teachers. Adopt a more proactive approach to developing content: MyLearning team author the learning resources using assets and material provided by content providers
3. Move away from up-front training – instead content providers learn through involvement in development process
4. Review and optimise structure of online learning resources in light of continuing research into teachers' needs and preferred ways of working
5. Improve searchability and findability of assets (images, videos, audio, interactives, sheets etc) through
 - enrichment of metadata (small project) and
 - configuration of Google site search (very minor internal modifications coupled with fine-tuning in Google site search panel)
6. Optimise existing online learning resources and explore new ways of dissemination and promotion.

Business planning:

7. Renaissance income expected for next year.
8. Cultivate relationship with Arts Council England to try and secure further Renaissance funding and other funding opportunities that ACE would suggest.
9. Explore new ways of fundraising. Consider adopting income pipeline approach to fundraising – target larger number of smaller funds.
10. Explore merits of acquiring charitable status during the next year.
11. Aims and SMART objectives: monitor and review effects of changes on motivation and engagement among content providers, quality of resources, uptake by teachers etc
12. Continually review activity for cost reduction and improvement opportunities and explore potential partnerships including East Midlands.
13. Clarify current situation regarding IPR and formulate copyright statements for future resource development

Suggested actions

Agree firm set of aims and objectives for MyLearning

See Appendix.

Pilot new model for content production focusing quality and efficiency

Various materials already drafted. Need to take forward.

Set up Teachers Advisory Panel

Initially Yorkshire-based but extend nationally. See Appendix.

Improve metadata especially to images and other assets

This could be framed as a set of small volunteer projects for AMA or history or museum studies students. Some technical input will be required from MyLearning developer and perhaps also some external input.

Fine-tune Google site search

Improvement possible with minimal or no amendments to website, via adjustments to Google site search panel. Some technical input will be required from MyLearning developer and perhaps also some external input.

Establish clear policy in respect of IPR

Implement clear T&Cs going forward and resolve current uncertainties through informal agreements – see appendix.

Maintain MyYorkshire content as is

'Freeze' the current website after renegotiating hosting rate, and review after a year to see whether the content should be archived for possible repurposing, or whether it should be left on the site for a further period. See appendix.

Development options – editorial

Widen the project reach to become national

A phased approach to widening the scope nationally, in terms of:

- area of production of resources
- promotion to teachers – but hold off until critical mass achieved

It looks very likely that Leeds Museums service will take over ownership of MyLearning next year.

Given a more efficient system for creating new resources it should be possible to build up a critical mass of resources around England and Wales (the boundary for the National Curriculum) over the next few years.

Analysis of Google Analytics shows that teachers all over the UK are already using MyLearning. Even so, it is recommended that the resources are not specifically promoted to teachers outside the NW until a critical mass of resources exists.

Other implications of making the project national in scope are addressed below.

Review the process for commissioning MyLearning resources

Current system

Museums and other content providers wishing to participate in MyLearning currently need to attend a day of initial face to face training at events held a number of times throughout the year, to learn how to use the MyLearning Content Management System (CMS) to create resources, structured by templates and other guidance. Subsequent to the training (but not always immediately) content providers can upload images and write their own content directly in the CMS.

The MyLearning team then review what is being produced and offer suggestions for improvement.

Reasons for the proposed changes

The main aims here are:

- To tighten up quality control in terms of educational relevance, slimming down text, etc so as to improve the end result for teachers
- Streamline the content production process to reduce costs and save time both for MyLearning team and for content providers
- Widen reach, scope, and create potential for growth

There are some excellent resources being produced. Currently, however, about 50% of learning journeys are still being worked on, and the quality and relevance of learning journeys varies considerably.

A significant amount of MyLearning time is taken up in reviewing resources, composing feedback and suggestions for improvement which are then sent to content contributors, and then chasing people up to finish their resources – not all of whom respond quickly. This time could

be used instead to actually create the resource, and then use feedback from content contributors on the draft resource to finish off.

Currently there is no overall coordination of content production. Some curriculum areas are more popular with teachers or easier to cater for, than others. Often the outputs to MyLearning reflect the popularity of particular sessions run at museums. Currently content providers can create as many resources on, say, Victorian schoolrooms as they like.

There is no direct control on the quality or relevance of content being produced. Obviously it is content providers' interests to produce good resources, but not all museum education officers or others involved in producing the resources are fully up to speed with latest good practice in developing online learning resources for schools.

By taking a focused approach to commissioning resources based on teacher demand, and reflecting current best practice, the MyLearning team can help all the content providers they deal with stay up to date themselves, as they create online learning resources together.

Proposed resource creation process

Content produced and edited by central team, using assets supplied by content providers.

Rather than receiving up-front training in use of the MyLearning CMS, museums and **content providers learn through active participation in the content-creation process.**

In other words rather than receiving training at the beginning and then developing resources independently, contributors learn through working with MyLearning to create resources, in the same way as museum clients work with a web development agency – the difference being that the design, CMS and so on are already agreed, so that **effort can focus entirely on the educational value of the resources being developed**, and the assets that will best contribute to that.

An introduction provided on the MyLearning site for content contributors on 'How we create resources for MyLearning'– including a short video or series of videos, and brief notes.

Copyright clearance remains the responsibility of content providers.

A resource could use material from more than one museum / content provider – the mix being driven by what will work best for teachers

Parallel running of existing system

For those content providers already well versed in the system, production of resources under the existing system could continue during the trial phase while establishing the new system, but it is recommended that no further up front training is provided to new contributors. Provided the new system proves successful, use of the CMS by content providers could be slowly phased out, or potentially even continued indefinitely (subject to available resources and priorities).

Teachers' advisory panel

There is a need for expert, independent assessment of curriculum need and relevance of specific existing and proposed resources to teacher's needs. One option is to set up a panel or working group of mostly teachers, who could review resources in development and help identify areas of need.

Costed proposal provided below as an appendix.

Editorial review

Review learning journey structure – currently too much emphasis on narrative, with implications of didactic approach.

Consider 'package' concept, with focus on **assets** and **key questions**.

Background information provided only if and where needed – teachers do

not always need this, may know enough already, or can just look it up elsewhere (quite possibly not as reliable or well written, but they do it anyway).

Consider producing more **video-rich resources** using interpretation and communication skills of MLA / Heritage practitioners

Deliver via YouTube and Vimeo (bring in additional traffic) but also on MyLearning site, for those schools where YouTube etc is blocked.

Promotion and dissemination

There could also be greater emphasis on getting resources accessed via other sites.

- Culture 24 (as now but more so)
- CultureGrid
- Teacher-frequented sites such as schoolhistory.co.uk TES Online, etc, and others

Technical enhancements

Make **MyLearning resources searchable** by topic, curriculum area etc (currently learning journeys are searchable, but assets are not: images, videos, interactives, worksheets etc)

Also look into ability to tag resources as having come from more than one institution

Metadata – technical and editorial

Besides making data compatible with current and future aggregation platforms (including CultureGrid, Culture24/ShowMe, Europeana etc), metadata enrichment will almost certainly improve findability by search engines, which are the primary source of traffic.

Setting up the feed should be easy in technical terms once the data exists, but actually creating metadata would take a significant amount of editorial input.

It is suggested that a costing is obtained from the developer Rob Yorke re setting up technically and Vicky and Alison re editorial work, based on examination of what is there currently and a brief trial of metadata creation.

It might be possible to use students to undertake some of this work. Induction should be relatively simple, and dividing the site content into work packages will mean that if one or two students drop out it will not be too damaging.

This work also presents an opportunity to weed out / improve content while reviewing resources.

Culture 24 are employing a curriculum vocabulary based on the old Becta-managed version, but may look at using a slightly different system. Either way, it would make sense for MyLearning resources to be tagged using this system from now on.

Development options – business planning

In this section My Learning and My Yorkshire are treated together as they have been funded together. Going forward it will be important to separate these out.

Overheads

Current annual overhead:

Staff (2 x freelance)	£36,400
Expenses	£1,000
Training	£4,000
Marketing	£3,000
Site development	£500
Service Level Agreement / Support	£5,500
Hosting	£2,050
Total	£52,400

Assessment: most of the annual expenditure for the two sites is already quite efficient, so there is little scope for savings if activity is to continue at current levels. The exception is the service level agreement which is high for the scale of the project. It may be worth exploring if this aspect can be renegotiated - perhaps kept at the same level but with more spent on development and less on guarantees.

If MyLearning moves towards independence, there will probably be extra overheads to cover. These may include:

Overhead	Minimum	Maximum
Fundraising activities	£5,000	£12,000
Accommodation	£3,500	£6,000

Additional marketing	£2,000	£8,000
Administrative expenses	£2,000	£5,000
Accountancy	£1,000	£1,500
Site development	£2,000	£10,000
Total	£15,500	£42,500

So the total budget for the project will range from approximately £65,000 to £95,000

Income

Currently costs are covered by a single income source, Renaissance Yorkshire. This is likely to continue next year but may be reduced or disappear altogether thereafter.

It is therefore important that capacity and reliance on income are made scalable, so that activity can be stepped up or down according to demand and/or available income. Options include:

Funding bodies / grant making trusts

This could be the sites' main source of income. It is likely that fundraising will have to become a significant part of MyLearning/MyYorkshire's activity. Funding will probably be more attached to particular projects and/or developments rather than a regular, ongoing arrangement.

Some typical funding bodies that could be a good match are:

- Arts Council England [a contact at ACE was encouraging about possible funding on a small scale]
- Wellcome Trust
- Clore Duffield Foundation
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- Paul Hamlyn Trust

- JISC

Core fields, categories for fund raising: Arts / Cultural, Education

There is a question about the corporate entity that MyLearning/MyYorkshire will need to become. Until now it has no legal entity of its own, but if it does not move to a new, “host” organisation, it will need to become at least a limited company before approaching funders.

Becoming a limited company, limited by guarantee (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Private_company_limited_by_guarantee for explanation) is a structure suited to non-profit organisations. This structure protects the founders from liability if the company was to fail but also does not allow for funds to be distributed to shareholders (a condition for many funding bodies).

Many funding bodies or trusts will only fund charities and so it would be a good idea to look into the possibility of registering as a charity. This is surprisingly easy from a regulatory point of view - see http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Start_up_a_charity/Guidance_on_registering/Help_setting_up.aspx

There will be some small financial overheads attached to submitting returns for the new legal entity and a board of trustees will have to be recruited (but they must be voluntary and can not receive financial benefit).

To many grant making trusts and funding bodies, paying for the ongoing costs of an organisation is not an attractive prospect. They are far more interested in projects that deliver clear benefits to end users, develop an audience, take an organisation forward or make an excellent case study. Because of this it might make sense to look at My Learning and My Yorkshire’s activities and also your “wish list” of things you’d like to do

and package them up into a series of projects. The projects will be scheduled over the next few years. Fundraising can then be concentrated on each of these projects and therefore have a much higher chance of success. The projects need to compliment the core activities of My Learning so that money raised can be spent on those activities and the new project at the same time.

A series of 3 large projects in a year averaging £30,000 in budget would pay for the whole year's activities.

Income from / partnerships with museums

Currently museums benefit from participation with My Learning without contributing their own funds. In the crudest terms, 3.5 years of My Learning @ £52,000 annual expenditure could be said to have benefited the 132 museums listed by an average of £1,200 each.

Obviously it is unlikely that each contributing museum can afford to pay much towards the resource created, however many of them probably could pay something.

As an illustration, if 30 resources are created in a year:

Average contribution per resource	Income
200	£6,000
350	£10,500
500	£15,000

At £500 per resource, enough is raised to practically pay for one staff member.

If My Learning shifts from a regional to a national provider, there is an

opportunity to change the relationship it has with museums. Assumptions about editorial quality, interacting with My Learning and fees can be shifted. If it is part of the package that museums contribute financially as well as editorially (no matter how small) then a number of benefits could arise:

- My Learning gains an income stream
- The Museum will probably take the project more seriously
- My Learning will appear more credible to funders

Because of My Learning, museums gain traffic to their own sites and potentially physical visits from schools and individuals. However, it is not clear to site users that this is possible. The museum marketing message needs to be strengthened so it's clear to a teacher (for example) that they can take their class to the museums whose online activities they use.

Different museums will have different expectations about how much they can spend. To some independent, mainly volunteer run museums, even £100 seems like a lot of money. To others, especially those backed by a local authority, a fee of £500 or £1000 would not necessarily present any problems, especially if the benefit was made clear to them.

Museums themselves spend a lot of money developing e-learning resources independently. The annual total spend by the sector on just this area must run to the millions. My Learning could market itself as a project partner that can help deliver these resources at a lower cost, and with better quality results, than most private sector suppliers.

Getting in early and being part of the funding bids that museums are making to help develop their e-learning resources would also be a good strategy. This way, if the museum is successful, an income will be available to My Learning. However the fundraising costs will largely be covered by the museum.

If a mechanism could be developed whereby museums can embed their learning resources into their site as well as have the resource appear in My Learning (much like embedding a YouTube video), then a clear case could be made for why museums should commission their learning resources from My Learning.

These income and partnership options could be set out in a marketing push to museums. The same campaign would be used to announce that My Learning had become a national programme.

Income from schools

One of the biggest beneficiaries of the project are schools. It would be tempting, then, to consider introducing subscription fees so they help fund the website.

However, we believe this would damage one of My Learning's main assets, its visitor numbers, significantly. Although schools do subscribe to services, and often spend more than most people think on web subscriptions, they might find it difficult to justify spending money on My Learning when there are other things to pay for.

In the long run, it is worth keeping in mind what additional services can be provided for schools (or other learners) that could be paid for on a subscription model. If these services were developed as part of a future project then My Learning and/or My Yorkshire could begin to establish the "freemium" model of income that many web services rely upon. Freemium (a neologism that combines the words "free" and "premium") is defined as offering facilities for free to gain the largest user-base possible, then persuading a proportion of that audience to upgrade to paid accounts in order to get access to more functionality, information or services.

Revenue from advertising

The site has very healthy statistics and so a small income from advertising could be brought in quickly and without much investment. It would require a small amount of administration time and some development time on the site's templates.

The options are to use display advertising or keyword-based text advertising.

The leading provider of keyword-based text advertising is Google. To sign up to their AdSense network (www.google.com/adsense) is very easy and there is a lot of control over which ads will and will not appear on the site. Ads are displayed according to who is advertising, the keywords they have bid for that appear on your page and the preferences you have set in your AdSense control panel.

If somebody clicks on one of the advert links, the advertiser is charged a fee by Google and a percentage of that revenue is paid to your account. The percentage and the "cost per click" vary from ad to ad. There is also an option to be paid per 1000 page views of the ads (known as "impressions").

Other search providers such as Yahoo and Bing offer similar advertising services.

Display advertising places graphical adverts in banners, "towers" (long portrait format running down the side of the page) or within defined space within the content. Several advertising networks exist which can be signed up to in a similar way to the Google AdSense programme. One example is Adify (<http://www.adify.com/adify-united-kingdom>) which offers a platform where other media organisations or companies can put

together advertising packages by theme and then syndicate ads to a network of sites. An example of this is the Guardian's Diversity Ad Network - <http://www.guardian.co.uk/ad-networks/diversity>

It's very difficult to quantify potential earnings from this income stream. However, any income gained in this way could be declared as part of My Learning/My Yorkshire's contribution to budget in a funding bid. Funding bodies almost always require some percentage of matching funding from applicants and direct revenue of this nature would usually be viewed favourably.

Affiliate Marketing

Affiliate marketing is similar to online advertising, but instead of the site publisher receiving money for clicks or impressions on an ad, they receive a percentage of any sale that is made once a user has click through to the advertisers site. Different advertisers have different mechanisms to monitor the user journey from your site through to eventual sale and different percentages of the sale price are offered.

Amazon is a long-established "player" in the affiliate marketing world. It is very simple to set up listings from their catalogue onto your site and tracking is reasonably effective. 5 - 15% of revenues are paid to the referring site. Amazon might be a good choice for this kind of income since books and other educational resources could be listed alongside My Learning/My Yorkshire content without lowering the tone of the site.

Other relationships, perhaps direct with specialist publishers such as Scholastic or Usborne, could be established.

This income stream is likely to remain small, so it should be regularly assessed if administration time is costing more than the affiliate marketing revenues.

Becoming part of another organisation

This option is not necessarily compatible with the other income streams outlined above, but should be considered nonetheless.

Income “pipeline” – summarising and predicting income

Rather like GANTT charts for project management, a funding pipeline is a way of forecasting income and managing the contacts involved.

Further information is available on www.businesslink.gov.uk on sales forecasting and other techniques: <http://bit.ly/couAYW>

www.smartsheet.com is an online service that may be helpful.

The most successful income generation strategy is likely to tap into a mixed economy involving:

- Public
- Grant funding
- Commercial income

At any one time, this may mean working on or following up on a number of funding bids, selling consultancy to a number of clients and selling advertising space to a number of other clients, as well keeping track of and reporting on any core funding streams.

It can be difficult to keep track of all the various types of income.

Usually only the person actively pursuing funds will have an overall view - but it can be useful to be able to share this with others in the organisation, and also to have a way of planning cash flow over the next year or so.

Many businesses and non-profit organisations use a model known as an income (or sales) pipeline. This concept allows an organisation to predict the income it is likely to receive over a period of time by categorising potential income sources and their probability of coming to fruition.

For example, all prospects for funding could be classified as follows:

- **Opportunity** - a funding programme that is suitable for My Learning / My Yorkshire
- **In discussion** - contact has been made with the funding body
- **Proposal stage** - a proposal is being put together and discussions continue
- **Awaiting decision** - the proposal has been submitted
- **Awarded** - My Learning / My Yorkshire has secured the funding

Each of these categories can then be set out in a spreadsheet with the total number and total value of sources listed for each stage.

Category	Number	Value
Opportunities	10	£1,200,000
In discussion	7	£200,000
Proposal stage	5	£120,000
Awaiting decision	3	£70,000
Awarded	2	£40,000

To start to quantify the likely income for all of this activity, a column for the probability of success and a column for the income for those successful bids can be added. At first, the figures used for each probability will be guesses, but as the organisation gains more experience, the numbers will be refined.

Category	Number	Value	Likelihood	Income
Opportunities	10	£1,200,000	2%	£24,000

In discussion	7	£200,000	10%	£20,000
Proposal stage	5	£120,000	20%	£20,000
Awaiting decision	3	£70,000	50%	£35,000
Awarded	2	£40,000	100%	£40,000
			Total	£139,000

Your spreadsheet might end up being more precise than this outline, with more categories or with rows for other kinds of revenue (as described above), but the aim is always the same – to predict income.

If the predicted income falls too low, you know you need to put more work into fundraising or other income generation. If it rises higher than your required income, you can begin to plan new initiatives.

Fundraising activity

There are several ways in which fund raising could be undertaken:

- take on additional freelancer on % bonus basis or mixed basis (retainer plus commission)
- use agency (potentially more reliable / sustainable but may not be economic)
- build up skills within core team – commission freelancer for say 6 months to fund raise and mentor

The recommendation is to recruit a freelancer on a mixed basis (retainer plus commission) for 6 months to actively fundraise for the coming year and mentor other staff to develop skills within the core team.

Getting systems in place

To avoid wasting too much time, you can allocate a specific amount of time to be spent on each level or sector.

Essentially what you are setting up is a 'machine' for writing proposals, and managing contracts

Part of this is to match proposals to funders' questions, to increase the likelihood of success.

Charitable status

Many benefits can accrue from acquiring charitable status, including eligibility to apply for a wider range of funding and partnership opportunities, free online advertising and so on.

A different name or sub-brand may be needed for the 'commercial' aspects, including MyLearning acting as an agency developing online learning resources for clients.

It is recommended that this is more actively explored after April 2011

MyLearning as a web development service provider

– could contribute to income and marketing

MyLearning could offer to produce and host online learning resources for museums and other institutions for a small fee – this process is likely to appeal mostly to very small institutions, as it will undercut traditional web development commissioning, and guarantee certain standards such as educational value, accessibility, findability etc.

Certain conditions would need to be met to keep costs low, notably sufficient assistance from the client staff in sourcing assets and responding to requests for further information, approval of draft versions, etc but also a reasonable level of independence – in other words to make

it cost effective, the client will need to cede control to the MyLearning team on matters such as educational relevance, the best way to display certain topics, etc

Need to consider potential conflict between commissioning 'required' or demand-led content and facilitating publishing of supply-led content: museum A contracts MyLearning to produce and host an online resource for a fee, and then learn that museum B down the road is providing assets and material and having a resource produced for free – can this be delineated clearly enough to make sales possible?

Marketing

Current visitor stats are very healthy. Should strategy focus on increasing audience further, or to increase quality of product and usage?

- print e.g. posters
- online marketing: online advertising (Google AdWords offer a simple and fairly reliable test of ROI) - free listings
- personal contact, email, phone calls, etc
- conferences

It is recommended that the marketing strategy is reviewed during the second quarter of 2011-12.

Appendix: Consultancy action plan

Research phase

List of contacts

Contact

Fact finding

Analytics

Data inc financial

Summarise current operations

Review and summarise business models

Draft plan

Summarise research activity and findings

Recommend options and next steps

Agree plan

Interim meeting (27 Oct 2010)

Developing options (ongoing)

Initiate one or two commissioned or other digital content creation projects

Resource planning e.g. who will do what –medium and long-term

Implementing systems and processes

Prepare toolkits for operations – e.g. Funding pipeline, editorial commissioning

Scope small scale technical/editorial development e.g. adding adverts to templates, metadata creation / editing etc

Feedback from MLA Digital Board

Final report and debrief including strategy for maintaining developments

Appendix: Outline summary of options for MyLearning

These were the options considered at the outset of this review.

1. **Continue as before** – this is almost certainly not possible
 - (a) because of a likely reduction in funding going forward
 - (b) because there is a perceived need for change in approach, to continue to meet the changing needs and patterns of use of teachers, and to reflect changes in prevailing Internet ecology
2. **Discontinue MyLearning as a project** and archive content via a suitable platform. This would mean losing most or all of the social capital built up over the entire research and development period. If the content were archived there would still be a need for periodic maintenance, whether in the current CMS or any other – so this is not a zero-cost option.
3. **Hibernate to ride out adverse funding climate** accept developer Rob Yorke's offer to continue to host and maintain, in return for him monetising the content via targeted advertising – this could be viewed as a fallback option if for any reason income drops too low. It is suggested that an informal agreement is reached with Rob Yorke to this effect, as 'insurance'.
4. **Migrate content to another CMS** (content management system) set up specifically to hold MyLearning resources - there would be web development and management costs associated with this, and there seems no reason to do so, provided good relations continue with current developer Rob Yorke.

5. **Adapt existing resources for migration to an existing service, such as Culture 24, Culture Grid etc** – this might seem an attractive prospect at first glance, but there is currently no match within the cultural sector in terms of data structure and audience. Culture 24 is already showcasing MyLearning content, but does not host such resources itself, and the structure of MyLearning resources means that the Culture 24 CMS cannot accommodate them. Similarly, Culture Grid points to resources, rather than hosting them.

6. **Develop the MyLearning project** to maximise impact, manage funding, and drive it more strongly from teacher needs. Maintain and develop social capital of core team and sector through action-learning while working with the core team to develop resources.

Option 6 is the recommended approach. Within the broad decision to 'develop' the project there are many variations possible, and these are explored below.

Appendix: Google Analytics data analysis

This analysis was compiled by Peter Pavement of Surface Impression

See end of this section for an estimate of UK coverage in schools

In the following section, statistics are based on the period 1st January 2010 to 1st November 2010

We derived a "segment" of visits known to be from schools by identifying their service providers that they use to connect to the internet.

General stats for all users vs schools

- Total number of visits to the site was 373,602 with 73,811 known to be from schools.
- The average time on site for all users was 1 minute 55 seconds, whereas schools spent longer on site , but not significantly so, with an average time of 1 minutes 59 second.
- Schools had a slightly lower bounce rate (50.87%) compared with all users (52.50%).
- There were slightly less new visits from schools (70.71%) compared with all users (74.13%).
- Schools visited on average 4.12 pages, whereas general users averaged slightly less with 4.06 pages being viewed in one visit.
- Unfortunately the unique visitors statistic in GA isn't currently displaying any data.

Schools usage is very similar to general usage. Most differences are in the realm of statistical error.

Content analysis

We used the Minibeasts section as an example to look at content types viewed (content viewed by page title)

- 'Minibeasts - interactive - Create your own super bug' = 46,277 visits (20,000 visits were from a single referring site so this figure is a bit distorted)
- 'Minibeasts' (all pages with the title 'Minibeasts' are generally the pages in the journey) = 20,067
- Images:

'My learning - images from minibeasts' = 2,157 visits

Individual image pages = 2,542 visits

So we can estimate that 385 images were viewed from the journey pages and 2157 viewed from the image section.

We know with a reasonable degree of certitude that there are 20% of visits from UK schools. 5% of visits from overseas schools.

There are 15 LEAs in the region

Roughly 1350 schools

It is difficult to get a dimension on just Yorkshire & Humberside visits to establish how many schools from the region are using the site as GA blocks certain data to comply with data protection.

Regional vs National usage

All visits:

Top 10 in terms of all visitors for this month:

1. London 8,324
2. Leeds 1,254

3. Birmingham 998
4. Manchester 950
5. Hull 681
6. Sheffield 575
7. Bradford 428
8. Belfast 422
9. Glasgow 419
10. Edinburgh 349

compare to:

Top 10 population centres

1. London 7,074,265
2. Birmingham 1,020,589
3. Leeds 726,939
4. Glasgow 616,430
5. Sheffield 530,375
6. Bradford 483,422
7. Liverpool 467,995
8. Edinburgh 448,850
9. Manchester 430,818
10. Bristol 399,633

There is a bias to Yorkshire & Humber but national usage is close to the overall population picture. Smaller Yorkshire population centres feature often in the "long tail" of usage but numbers are not high.

Interestingly there's nearly 1 visit for every 1000 head of population for these top 10 centres. 1 visit for every 5000 is from a school. A very good "reach".

In conclusion, expanding the remit to a national service would not be a huge hurdle - that audience has already found you!

Evidence for penetration of the school market – please see summary at the end of this section

In the following section, statistics are based on the period
30 November 2009 to 30 November 2010

Count of visits from this visitor including current	Visits that were the visitor's nth visit	Percentage of all visits	Corresponding % of unique visitors (from schools)	
1 times	73,481.00	72.17%	1	72.17%
2 times	14,582.00	14.32%	2	7.16%
3 times	5,479.00	5.38%	3	1.79%
4 times	2,781.00	2.73%	4	0.68%
5 times	1,577.00	1.55%	5	0.31%
6 times	1,001.00	0.98%	6	0.16%
7 times	683	0.67%	7	0.10%
8 times	465	0.46%	8	0.06%
9-14 times	1,073.00	1.05%	12	0.09%
15-25 times	394	0.39%	20	0.02%
26-50 times	220	0.22%	30	0.01%
51-100 times	68	0.07%	75	0.00%
101-200 times	19	0.02%	150	0.00%
	101,823.00	100.01%		82.55%

Therefore number of unique visitors (from schools) is

84,054.89

average per UK school

2.981515554

percentage of all learning computers reached by MyL	4.40%
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Rough usage by teachers (unique visitors / avg machines per teacher)	19415.32385
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Reach to teachers (% of usage by teachers of teachers as a whole)	4.40%
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If usage is roughly confined to relevant subjects (50% of subjects, source QCA)	8.80%
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cost per school unique user for 60k turnover	£ 0.71
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	Sec	Prim	
Numbers of schools	3225	17,041	
	223	873	
	376	1,478	
	223	2,153	
	4047	21,545	25592

Plus independent schools	2,600
TOTAL SCHOOLS IN UK	28,192

Avg computers used for learning per school

275	37
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total computers

1112925	797165
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1910090

Number of UK teachers	441,200
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Avg machines per teacher	4.329306
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These estimates are based on analytics data generally accurate to within 5% but necessarily based on some broad assumptions, and indicate:

From Nov 09 – Nov 10:

There were **102 000 unique visits to MyLearning by UK schools** meaning **3 visits per school**. Based on the number of computers in schools, this suggests

19400 teachers used MyLearning

This represents **nearly 9% of teachers in relevant subjects** (source QCA) or 4.4% of the total teacher population in the UK

If possible, data on other educational resource providers will be obtained for comparison, but given that the project nominally covers only Yorkshire, this is quite impressive coverage.

Note: **these figures represent only 25% of the total number of visits** and are restricted to those definitely attributable to school computers. This should therefore be taken as a conservative estimate.

A proportion of the remainder of visits will be from schools not captured by this 'segment' in Google Analytics. Also many teachers access such sites from home. **It is reasonable to assume that the true level of use by teachers is significantly higher than the figures above.**

Appendix: Proposed commissioning process in more detail

This is an overview of the proposed process for demand-led commissioning of content (as opposed to museums commissioning MyLearning to produce resources for a fee).

MyLearning would be acting as a commissioning agency with in-house web-development capacity.

A better way to learn how to create online learning resources

Currently, content providers receive training, then go away and maybe some time later, start to produce their own resource, perhaps taking quite a long time to work on it, by which time they may have lost sight of the best ways to keep it focused on audience needs, etc.

The advantage of the proposed approach is that the interaction will necessarily be more structured, probably quicker (although obviously working within available capacity, especially in volunteer museums) and there will be more iterations in the dialogue between MyLearning central team and content provider.

By raising the bar in terms of relevance for teachers, succinctness, avoiding repetition, etc participants will benefit from a more stringent approach, which is likely to equip them better for any future online learning projects they may be involved in.

Summary of process for production of resources

- **Identify potential resources**

MyLearning central team identify gaps in MyLearning coverage, and areas of particular demand by teachers.

- **Identify potential content providers**

The MyLearning central team select one or more potential content providers (a) from those who have expressed interest already, and (b) from those likely to have relevant collections

- **Explore options with each potential content provider**

The central team 'broker' a deal with one or more content providers to produce a specified resource.

Content providers learn from introduction, project planning form, etc as part of this stage.

- **'Kick off' phone meeting with selected content providers**

(or if nearby, meet face to face.) Agree who will do what by when – use the project planner form – see below.

Participants all learn as they go, for example how to structure an online learning project, the importance of clear structure, focusing on audience needs, etc

- **MyLearning team produce beta version of resource**

- using the MyLearning CMS, applying best practice in writing for the web, tagging, choice of titles, etc

- **Content providers feed back on accuracy, balance etc.**

Advisory panel feed back on curriculum relevance, etc (initially for all resources, then once numbers increase, representative sample)

In reviewing the beta resource , offering comments and writing or proposing additional material, content providers will strengthen their skills and awareness of issues relating to producing online learning resources for teachers

- **MyLearning team produce final version**

The link is made public and made searchable, browsable by teachers, and added to RSS feeds and other distribution channels.

Project planner form – to be filled in during kick off meeting

This will be a short document for MyLearning and the selected content provider(s) to complete. It will summarise key elements crucial to project such as:

Working title of online learning resource

Target curriculum areas

Overview of what the resource will offer users

Outline structure of resource, including page titles and

Summary of assets required

Date by which content provider will provide a sample of images and draft text of one or more sections, to enable central team to give initial feedback and identify remaining assets required

Date by which content provider will provide all required assets

Statement re copyright

Etc

Etc [to be completed shortly – see above]

Suggested "Introduction to 'creating an online resource for MyLearning' from an editorial point of view"

Rather than training content providers in use of the MyLearning CMS, they provide assets (including text) which the central team will use to create the resultant resource(s).

If staff at content providers (including education staff, curators and others) understand the key elements of producing successful online learning resources, they are more likely to supply assets that are more relevant, including any text they write (which will be edited by the central team).

A short video - using a mixture of screencast and talking heads - could:

- Introduce MyLearning and use its high reputation and strong take-up by teachers and museums /content providers to encourage other content providers to get involved
- show how new resources are produced using the MyLearning platform (focusing on editorial, without going into details of the CMS)
- Motivate potential content providers to participate

There is potential for a series of very short such videos, some of which might feature previous and current museum contributors, comments from Culture 24, Collections Trust, MLA Digital Board members, Rob Yorke, etc

Templates

It is suggested that the content provider should supply assets, including text, via templates designed by MyLearning so as to:

- Impose a suitable structure on the online learning resource (for example requiring a clear introduction, self-explanatory page titles, etc)
- Streamline the process and reduce unnecessary liaison activity over minor details
- Avoid submission of too much redundant text, thereby reducing the writing and editing time by both content provider and MyLearning staff

Rather than using Word documents, these templates could be implemented using a simple CMS or a Google form, or perhaps as an extension of the MyLearning CMS, but via a 'lite' interface, which accepts just text and images, and does not involve content providers having to learn how to use the CMS.

The main function of the templates would be to elicit suitable material from the content provider, which the central team will then review and select relevant elements to produce a draft resource. This is a change from the current situation where content providers essentially author the resource themselves under guidance from MyLearning.

Appendix: Teachers' Advisory Panel (TAP)

Purpose: to help target development of new MyLearning resources with reference to curriculum areas, geographical coverage, and style and content, taking into account any feedback emanating from museums through consultation with their local schools.

Set up

3 days of freelancers time:

- Define target composition (probably 1 x KS1; 3 x KS2; 3 x KS3 inc Science, Humanities) spread around England and Wales.
- Set up Basecamp (37signals.com - free for a single project, 1 hour approx to set up) to post files (such as draft lists of curriculum coverage etc) and collate messages and comments.
- Recruit teachers via email lists, contacts, LEAs etc. Offer £30 following initial review meeting, if accepted for panel, plus annual incentive (see below).
- Speak to teachers individually before appointing – check they are good communicators, likely to be reliable and have balanced views on curriculum and use of online resources, happy to use Basecamp etc.
- Hold initial review meeting (remotely, via conference call using www.powwownow.com and Basecamp to view files, comments etc). Agree communication procedures, dates of meetings for rest of academic year, and create initial snapshot of curriculum needs. Review any feedback from local schools via museums, to look for patterns, ideas.
Also elicit comments from teachers for refining structure and content of MyLearning resources (but with a light touch – avoid substantial changes unless essential).
- Each teacher given £30 by online transfer – set up for regular payments as below

Cost to set up TAP: 7 x £30 = £210 approx plus 3 days freelance time

TAP operating costs

- Hold 3 review meetings per year (by conference call and Basecamp to view files, comments etc).
- £30 transferred to each teacher after each review meeting (total of £90 per teacher per year)
- Detailed rough notes taken during meeting, from which key points extracted.
- Occasional recruitment of new teachers as required

TAP annual operating cost $3 \times 7 \times £30 = £630$ plus approx 1 day of freelance time

Culture 24 may be able to help scope this element, and perhaps assist in finding teachers.

Appendix: Notes on IPR and copyright

Note regarding possible issues in transferring My Learning from the Yorkshire Hub to Leeds, or in transferring the site to a third party:

Caveat: obviously a definitive answer to this question would be best answered by a legal professional, but our opinion on the matter, based on our understanding of copyright is as follows.

The only intellectual property that is relevant to the MyLearning project is copyright. There are no patents, trademarks or design rights to worry about.

If no terms and conditions have been established for when resources have been created by museums and MyLearning then we believe:

- a) The museum retains its copyright in the material it has submitted

- b) The web developer retains copyright in the design and functionality of the website unless the original development contract specified the transfer of copyright to the Hub

- c) Any creative work by Hub staff members (text, images etc) contributed to the website is the intellectual property of the Hub

Where two or more people have created a work protected by copyright and their contributions cannot be distinguished, those people are joint authors and the copyright is shared. It is likely that much of My Learning would fit this definition of shared copyright.

It can probably be assumed that the museums considered they were contributing to the MyLearning resource and not to the Hub. If MyLearning continues as a distinct entity then it is unlikely any dispute over copyright would emerge. If a museum does complain then the resources they submitted can be removed.

The Hub should draft an agreement that states *all IPR that it holds in MyLearning will be passed to Leeds for the purpose of maintaining and developing the MyLearning project.*

If there is no pre-existing agreement, there should be an agreement that the freelance contributors to MyLearning either:

a) assign all copyright in their works to MyLearning/Leeds

or

b) grant an irrevocable, royalty-free, worldwide license in perpetuity that allows Leeds to use their work for MyLearning

The web developers should be encouraged to agree to the irrevocable, royalty-free, worldwide license in perpetuity that allows Leeds to use their work for MyLearning statement. This allows them to use their code and interface designs in any way they see fit for other projects but clarifies that MyLearning can keep on using those assets.

It would be quite sensible to also *include a clause in these agreements that states that if the MyLearning project becomes part of any other organisation other than Leeds, or becomes an independent organisation, then it will be assumed that the copyright agreements will also pass to the new organisation.*

All new resources should have clear terms and conditions that assert what happens with copyright. All dealings with other contributors (freelancers, consultants, developers etc) should also have clear contracts or terms and conditions.

To avoid having to chase for agreements too much it's plausible to use a set of standard terms and conditions as a default. If this is in place and is available to the "client" (eg by download from a link on your site) then these terms apply unless the client actively seeks to modify or replace them as part of the deal.

Include fair copyright and other terms in that agreement and many contributors will not seek to change them. If the Ts & Cs are available, you do not actually need signatures or anything like that for the terms to be deemed as accepted by the client.

Appendix: MyYorkshire options

The principal options are:

1. To maintain it as an active site
2. To stop developing but ensure the content remains accessible
3. To close it down completely

The freelance consultants are currently costed at £175 per day.

Based on last year's figures the share of overhead for each day (excluding hosting and support as this is costed into each option) is approximately 15%. (£8,000 overheads / £52,000 turnover)

So the freelancers' day rates should be multiplied by 15%.

This fits in with the idea of full cost recovery, which is an important factor in costing non-profit projects. As yet MyLearning does not have accommodation or professional advice (legal / accountancy) overheads.

1. Maintain as active site

Costs will remain the same as currently established, subject to negotiation with developers for hosting and support.

MyYorkshire's share of the MyLearning hosting and support costs are: £2000 pa (estimate).

Staff (freelancer) time per annum: 15 days (estimate) + share of non-hosting/support overhead (15%) = £3018 pa.

In terms of audience figures, the return on investment for this project is quite low. The time spent on developing it could instead be allocated to ensuring the success and sustainability of MyLearning.

2. Stop developing but keep content accessible

Costs will be reduced to hosting costs, possibly a few enquiries to respond to on an ongoing basis.

This seems to be the most sensible option, given that the investment in the resources will remain valid for a long time and the best context for presentation is the site as it is now.

Hosting fees could be negotiated with the developer. Ideally they should be in the £200 - £400 range for a site of this scale and traffic levels. Support for a dormant site should run at about the same level.

3. Close down completely

Wrap up tasks - create archive of resources or arrange with British Library / archive.org to absorb material.

Estimated at: 3 - 8 days to organise plus share of overhead (15%):
therefore £603- £1610

If hosting is a fixed term (e.g. annual) there may be a period that has already been paid for or MyYorkshire will be obliged to pay for.

The recommendation is to implement option 2 above, renegotiating a more appropriate level of hosting costs based on minimal intervention by the developer going forward.

Appendix: MyLearning project objectives

Draft objectives for MyLearning – for discussion

1. By December 2011 raise a proportion of funds outside of Renaissance funding,. Target proportion to be agreed in April 2011
2. By December 2011 new system for commissioning and editing content fully established.
3. By December 2011 resolve current IPR issues and establish clear T&Cs for future development
4. By December 2011 complete a quality audit of resources and production processes
5. By December 2011 establish a system to develop resources nationally.
6. By December 2011 gather evidence that MyLearning is serving teachers well, for benchmarking and advocacy purposes

‘Elevator pitch’ for MyLearning

Elements to include in funding proposals and advocacy:

“MyLearning: Free learning resources from museums, libraries and archives” [as on website currently]

Museums have fantastic resources for learning, and MyLearning offers direct access to them.

Local, specific, authentic – original objects and documents with key questions to help bring classroom learning alive.

Museums and archives have a wealth of experience in telling stories based on expert knowledge of their collections.

[‘people will buy people’] – museums are all about creating meaning – need to communicate that -

MyLearning brings together the talents of education officers, curators and historians to create practical, easy-to-use resources for teachers and others