Institution: Loughborough University
Unit of Assessment: D36a Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management
a. Context - Staff in this Unit develop and implement novel research that addresses society's most complex and pressing information and knowledge needs. We have specific impact in the areas of public policy making, public services development, the cultural life of society and key aspects of information management in the private, public and voluntary sectors. During its 40-year history, the Department of Information Science (DIS) has led most of the work for this unit and has developed extensive engagement with external partners and practitioners in the UK and abroad at all stages of its research. The Unit has maintained a consistently high reputation for research and has exploited this to provide multiple opportunities for external collaboration, nationally and internationally. Much of its research is thus close to practice, which has enabled work with a range of stakeholders from project development to fruition, and for impact to be embedded throughout the research process. The Unit is supported by our research and consultancy centre, LISU, who has a track record of collaboration with practitioners on evaluation and assessment of services. Recent examples include on-going work with the Royal National Institute of Blind People on the value of reading and accessibility of reading material for blind and partially sighted people, and two projects for CyMAL (Museums Archives and Libraries Wales), leading to the development of the next public library standards framework in Wales. The significance of the Unit's work is shown through numerous examples of research leading to a specific improvement, as typified by the three impact case studies (Section d). To evidence the breadth of research approaches and engagement with non-academic groups from the Unit, examples other than the impact cases, Section d, are provided here to illustrate recent and current user groups involved and the range and significance of research intended to generate impact:

- **MAIPLE** (Managing Access to the Internet in Public Libraries) – this on-going research (Cooke, Creaser, Muir) measures and influences the impact of regulation and management of access to the Internet in public libraries. Beneficiaries of the research include users of public libraries, policy makers, librarians, professional associations and the providers/developers of access control software.
- **Sus-IT** (Sustainable IT) **-** this recently completed project researched (Damodaran) sustained digital engagement of older people. Key determinants of sustained engagement were identified as access to help, and support of appropriate design of hardware and software. The findings are influencing future government policy which will be beneficial to the older generation. Non-academic involvement includes: *Government* – Dept. of Communities and Local Government, Erewash Borough Council, Derbyshire Borough Council, SocITM; *Technology providers*: Fujitsu, Dolphin Computer Access; *Third Sector*: AgeUk, Abilitynet, Headway.
- **iMAPS** (Integrated Mapping of fActors for Participation in Swimming) – this recently completed research (Jackson) created a model to predict swimming demand in the UK which is being used by the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA). The model enables pool timetable optimisation based on varying factors (weather, economy, etc.) to increase swimming participation and improve the health of the nation. |
| **b. Approach to impact** (2008-2013) – The Unit's approach to realising impact was developed over the REF period to maintain a continuous dialogue and knowledge exchange with our key stakeholders and non-academic user groups. Non-academic stakeholders are directly engaged with individual projects through participation in advisory groups, and help shape the Unit's strategy to ensure downstream impact. The Unit is strongly supported by the university through its embedding of impact and enterprise throughout its activities. The Unit has utilised the university's Enterprise Office in applying for, and managing, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) (e.g. Re-engineering Information Processes and Embedding Knowledge within Leicestershire County Council (LCC)) and LU Knowledge Transfer Awards (KTA) (e.g. iMAPS project with the ASA) which support practical research with high impact. The Unit has developed a six-pronged strategy and a number of methods to delivering impact, monitored every 6 months through the University's Personal Research Plan process. |

i) Building new, longstanding, and emerging relationships with users and stakeholders

The *method of building on previous research networks and funding* has been used, for example, by Harrison, who built on previous health information research and partnerships which led to research (with Creaser) in 2012 on a review of Irish health libraries, and has since been awarded (competition) a European Association for Health Information and Libraries 25th Anniversary Research Grant to develop a model for European health library standards. The model is to be used by the practitioner community. The *method of joint funding PhD studentships* has been used many times before (e.g. LCC, National Police Improvement Agency) to build relationships and will be part of the on-going building relationship strategy to foster research that matters and has impact. Building on previous research funding is another *method that is frequently used to secure specific knowledge transfer funds to maximise impact*. For example, building on a two year KTP project and a PhD, working with local government agencies to develop a research proposal that enabled them to develop an understanding of people's information behaviour and information management capabilities, Hepworth and Jackson used a KTA (£45,657) to develop resources (e-learning material, animations, participative workshops) with LCC and Learning Pool. The e-learning resource tool is being rolled out to local government agencies across the UK.

ii) Reflecting and revising the research and impact strategy with users and stakeholders

A **method used to gain non-academic insight** is regular consultation on industry trends with Honorary Research Fellows (e.g. Jaeger from SAP AG). *Another method used is for academics to serve on stakeholder advisory boards,* Unit staff are encouraged and supported to take an active role in professional committees with practitioners to gain valuable knowledge and insights that will feedback into the strategy. For example, Matthews has continued to be a member of the [UK] Preservation Advisory Centre's Advisory Panel and has thus been able to continue to monitor and influence the impact of earlier preservation research. All major research projects have non-academic Advisory Panel members; the PEER Project had Advisory Board members, for example, from China, Germany, Spain, and the USA.

iii) An impact assessment of every internally or externally funded research project - All research proposals are reviewed within the Unit by senior academics; proposals must include robust and novel plans for academic and non-academic impact. Stakeholders are significantly involved at the proposal stage.

iv) Stakeholders and users on advisory panels - Utilising the connections reported in (i), and other mechanisms, every medium to large externally funded project has an advisory panel that provides direction and governance and an industrial or professional focus, objective overviews, and steers research priorities; this is designed to ensure the overall success of the project, research quality and impact and value for money. For example, SUS-IT: Helping older people to use information technologies for a better and more independent future (New Dynamics of Ageing, cross-council research programme) has wide ranging stakeholder involvement including local government, commercial companies, NIACE, Age UK, AbilityNet and partners in Canada.

v) Dissemination to users as an output - Public visibility and hence impact are facilitated by the Institutional Repository (dspace.lboro.ac.uk), an open access information resource of all LU research. Where appropriate, articles are published in professional periodicals, and media outlets are exploited (for example, Jackson, STV news, Jackson, O'Brien EMOTIVE project-multiple news sources: http://emotive.lboro.ac.uk/?p=165).

vi) Agile activities to promote impact - The unit has developed structures to enable staff to respond rapidly to opportunities to create impact. Staff are supported financially to attend meetings to promote research and its outcomes, discuss possible new ventures with potential industrial and professional partners and to develop networks that facilitate impact. *The method is built into staff time* (as part of their individualised workload models), including at short notice, to undertake such activities. For example, following the outcomes from the research into mobile data terminals with Leicestershire Police, Jackson and Cooke were invited to give 'expert evidence' to the Budget and Performance Review Committee of the London Assembly to assist them in their response to the Metropolitan Police Service's plans for expenditure on mobile technology. They attended a meeting in March 2013 and Jackson took part in a panel discussion comprising members of the Assembly and representatives from the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the National Audit Office, and specialised police technology consulting organisations. The team has subsequently

been approached by the Home Office, who are interested in learning from their research in this area.

Overall, the strategy and methods provide a strong foundation for the co-production of information and knowledge between research and practice and these relationships generate a valuable set of conduits for ensuring the down-stream impact of our work.

c. Strategy and plans - Based on the foundations of the previous five years we will continue to develop the strategy. Our proven systems will be used to support staff in enhancing the impact of our research over the next five years. We shall continue to take steps to influence national and international policy developments and exploit the inter-relationship of our impact mechanisms and pathways using our existing networks and contacts, and developing new ones. The former will involve staff secondments to international bodies and study leave to enable global engagements with our work. The university has established (August 2013) a new research centre, the Centre for Information Management (CIM), led by colleagues in this Unit (Director, Jackson) but also including colleagues from School of Business and Economics (SBE) and elsewhere in the university. They are now framing CIM's research strategy and vision, including pathways to impact. For example, a new Institute for Consultancy and Research Application (ICRA), including LISU, will be established, a self-financing unit undertaking applied research and consultancy in the information management domain. ICRA is specifically tasked with developing impact-based funding bids with academic staff, e.g. KTPs and engaging with corporate sponsored 'close to market' research. CIM will facilitate the extension of the reach and significance of impacts, for example, by merging the Unit's External Advisory Board with that of SBE, both comprising highly influential industry figures, through which we can gain closer industry and government involvement. We will use the SBE Research and Enterprise Committees to recognise the potential impact of research projects and to encourage and facilitate the development of impact with appropriate user groups (e.g. to strengthen links with commercial sector organisations).

d. Relationship to case studies - As described below these studies have informed the Unit's development of its approach and helped development of future strategy.

The Police Mobile Data terminals (MDT) study has increased the patrol time of officers, leading to improved police metrics. The research stemmed from building and then maintaining relationships (bi) with the police which started in 2006. The research proposal was created by then researchers and the Force using the Enterprise Office to ensure maximum impact via the KTA scheme (bi). The outputs of the study have been placed into the university repository and have gained much media coverage to highlight further the impact of the research (bv). Using an agile approach (bvi) Jackson and Cooke were invited to the Budget and Performance Review Committee of the London Assembly to provide expert advice on potential mobile data solutions.

The Preservation Management study. As an example of the strategy this area of research has established and nurtured relationships over 20 years with key stakeholders, such as the British Library and other national libraries (bi) and has worked with them to identify, prioritise and review a policy development and research agenda that has impact in line with findings of previous research (that identified needs) and national strategy to which the research has contributed (biii). It has also sought new relationships - evident, for example, in the area of digital preservation as it has emerged (bi). Stakeholders and beneficiaries have been involved at all stages of research projects (biv) and have offered advice on dissemination (bv) to practitioners. A wide range of internationally targeted dissemination activities aimed at practitioners in several domains to facilitate impact have been undertaken (e.g. articles in professional press, presentations at conferences and to user groups, announcements on e-lists, information and guidance on project and stakeholder websites, input to stakeholder advice and guidance, membership of advisory panels) (bv).

The Scholarly Communications study. The Unit has contributed to Open Access over the last ten years through the relevance and impact of its research in this area to both the national and international research agenda by working closely with national bodies, including JISC, RCUK and the PEER Consortium (Publishing and the Ecology of European Research), in many projects (bi), (biv). Working closely with policy makers and industry groups has enabled research outcomes such as reports and presentations to be directly targeted towards end users, maximising the opportunities for impact and helping to shape the views of influential stakeholders (bv). We have also worked with partners to develop practical services e.g. SHERPA RoMEO service.