John Thompson (English department, QUB) emphasized this when he spoke about the Percy collection: a collection which can be viewed as a construct by means of which Thomas Percy selected and affirmed an identity as linguist and scholar.

There are various ways in which collectors can work their books in further pursuance of such identities. These include annotation, the use of bookplates, decisions on how the books are to be organised, and private binding. Percy, for instance, heavily annotated his books as he consulted them. Canon O’Hanlon attached great importance to bookplates. Penny Woods (Russell Library, NUIM) included in her paper a detailed analysis of these: from the plain “Ex libris J. O’Hanlon” to a design that the clergyman-scholar used after 1885 and which incorporated an elaborate coat of arms. Other collectors do not seem to have needed such physical affirmation of their identity as collectors. As Gerard Long (National Library of Ireland) noted, Jaspar Joly rarely ventured to write his name in the books he so avidly acquired. Personal methods used to organise collections are another support to a collector’s identity. While a standard classification scheme such as DDC organises books according to a publically generated arrangement of ideas, private collectors using individually created schemes can make their collection a representation of their own thought and interests.

Sarah Evans (RIA) explained that Halliday organized his vast collection of pamphlets in chronological order and had these bound in volumes with the generic title “Pamphlets relating to Ireland”. William Cooke used personally selected bindings to affirm a cultural identity, as Cronan Doibhlin (UCC) explained. Cooke, whose interests included Spanish literature, would purchase items abroad and have them privately bound at home in Cork.

The two strands of the seminar (i.e. the institutional versus the privately created collection) merge precisely around the issue of identity. When a private collector bequeaths books to an institutional library, it is partly to perpetuate (after death) the identity nourished by his or her collection. The institutional library is the permanent repository. The speakers at this seminar, whose skill, expertise, and dedication were so striking, fully justify the private collector’s faith in the institutional curator.

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web based services including social media functionality. The solution provides support infrastructure, full standards compliance and, importantly, great value for money.

A session on discovery tools – Summon (a Proquest/Serials Solutions product), Primo from Ex Libris and the EBSCO Discovery Service (EDS) – illustrated that all users want the simplest, easiest, most effective and fastest way to access online information. Users no longer want to go to a number of different catalogues, websites and platforms to find information.

Resource Description and Access (RDA) the new, unified cataloguing standard, designed for the digital world and an expanding universe of metadata users, was addressed by Gordon Dunsire (freelance consultant). For more information see http://www.rdatoollkit.org/

In Worcester, both the university library and the headquarters for Worcester public libraries services are now housed in one building. Darren Taylor (Worcester University Library) and David Pearson (Worcestershire Libraries) spoke about the integrated front of house team and the print collections of both libraries, which are shelved together. Further information is available from: http://www.wlhc.org.uk/designandenviron-ment.htm


This was a very useful conference. The format, with workshops and plenary sessions from practitioners from a wide variety of backgrounds, allowed for the sharing of experience in areas such as statistical analysis and shared catalogues, as well as exploring new developments in Library Management Systems (LMS), textbooks, the latest resource discovery tools, and identifiers such as the ISNI (International Standard Name Identifier). The event also provided useful opportunities to network with publishers and library suppliers.