Embedding Using Primary Sources in the Liverpool Curriculum

This blog post was written by Emma Thompson, Education Lead, University of Liverpool Library.

Using Primary Sources (UPS) was published 18 months ago, and we now have one full academic year of usage. Where did that time go?

During the 2017/18 academic year Using Primary Sources has been established as key reading here in Liverpool on seven modules in History. These range from the first year module History Matters, though the second year module The Historian’s craft, to the final year dissertation module. Fully embedding this new resource in the curriculum, and ensuring that access is there for all students has enabled lecturers to develop lesson plans around it. This is a resource that really helps teaching and learning in Liverpool, but because it is open access there are benefits for the wider academic community as well.

The eTextbook has allowed lecturers to use an interactive resource in a way that encourages students to think about research techniques, and the range of source materials that are available to them. Dr Jonathan Hogg, Senior Lecturer in History and editor of Using Primary Sources, has developed a Study and Research Guide for Using Primary Sources to aid Liverpool colleagues with the integration of the resource, this can also be used by other institutions with a creative commons licence.

‘The e-textbook format allows our students to access archival source materials online, and offers accessible advice on how to integrate source materials into written work. It has emerged as a cornerstone to our revamped curriculum, and the department plans to develop further lesson plans in the future.’

AS UPS is open access the benefits of this rich eTextbook are not just available to students in Liverpool. Statistics show 964 users of UPS of whom 263 have created accounts on the Biblioboard platform.

Analysis of the usage has shown that the majority of people who visit UPS are in the United Kingdom, many of whom will be Liverpool students and staff who we can see are referred from our VLE, reading lists system and Library catalogue. We were not surprised that peak usage was during October 2017, around the time when students’ modules are underway and they will be working on their first assignments of the semester.

There is interest outside the UK with visits from North America, mainland Europe, Australia and some have come to the eTextbook from Japan, Algeria, and Brazil. The only continent not yet reached is Antarctica (yet).

As well as plotting how to integrate UPS into Antarctica, during 2018/19 we will be ensuring that UPS will be introduced to more Liverpool students in History. There is also interest in other parts of the University of Liverpool where the success of this resource has been noted and plans are being developed to create similar eTextbooks.
Institution as e-textbook publisher toolkit

This article is part of the Institution as e-textbook publisher toolkit:
https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/institution-as-e-textbook-publisher-toolkit

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