AN LEABHARLANN : THE IRISH LIBRARY

Inside
Remaking the Printed Word in the Digital Age

LGBTI+ Archives in Ireland: Alternative Approaches to Recording Queer Community & Culture for the Past, Present and Future

Sharing Stories at Maynooth University Library

Conference Report: BOBCATSSS 2023

CONTENTS

Guidelines For Contributors

An Leabharlann: The Irish Library publishes articles on libraries, librarianship and related topics of interest to the library and information community on the island of Ireland. The Editorial Board invites original, unpublished articles for publication. Articles should be between **1,500** and **3,000** words. Occasionally, longer articles may be published.

Articles

- Manuscripts will be reviewed by the Editorial Board.
- Authors are asked to submit an informative abstract of not more than 200 words. Authors are responsible for the accuracy of statements and references in their articles.
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Format

- Manuscripts should be submitted by email attachment or on disc as Rich Text File (RTF). Text should be formatted in Times New Roman 12 pt., double-spaced, with margins of 2.54cm (i.e. standard A4 margins). Formatting of text (e.g. italics and bold) should be kept to a minimum.
- Authors should provide their name, organization, position and the title of the article at the top of the first page. If the article was presented at a conference, details of the sponsoring organization, the date and title of the conference should be given.

- Book reviews should include the full title, author or editor, publication details and price.
- Conference reports should be approx. 650 words and should include details such as the sponsoring organization, the date, place and title of the conference.

Style

- Microsoft Word and other word processing programs allow for a language to be selected. Please ensure that the language selected is either UK or Ireland English (i.e. NOT United States English).
- The Oxford Style Manual should be followed for acronyms, capitalization, captions, punctuation, quotations and tables.
- *An Leabharlann: The Irish Library* uses the Harvard system for references.

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- Substantive changes to articles will be discussed with the author. For consistency, all material submitted will be copy-edited.
- For additional information on style and referencing, please consult: Ritter, R.M. (Ed.). (2003) The Oxford Style Manual. Oxford: OUP

Copy Deadlines

- 31 July 2023 for Autumn edition
- 31 December 2023 for Spring 2024 edition

Editorial

Editorial, Vol 32 (1), Spring 2023

I am delighted to share this issue and to introduce myself to you in this editorial. I am currently the Head of Library and Information Services in South East Technological University Carlow Campus. Previously, for many years, I worked at Maynooth University where I was Senior Librarian for Learning, Teaching and Research Development. I have an Arts Degree in English and History and a Masters in Library and Information Studies from University College Dublin and a Doctorate in Education from the University of Sheffield, I truly believe in the transformative power of education and throughout my career I have always enjoyed working in libraries with staff and students. I have a wonderful network of colleagues across libraries many of whom I count as friends. Throughout my career I have always believed that libraries are so important for a number of reasons. They provide a valuable space in which we can welcome our library users and treasure our collections. All libraries provide learning opportunities, whether it is for formal learning, to foster an imagination, to satisfy a curiosity. These critical thinking skills are so vital. By continuing to value research, knowledge, scholarship, curiosity, learning and imagination as well as a space in which bring all of this together we offer a significant service to society.

Critically, libraries value stories, the recounting of events. Stories, captured in our collections, tell us about undertakings, journeys, the work of individuals, the works of teams. They provide an insight and context into a different space or time. They offer us a glimpse into a world other than our own and enrich us by offering us the chance to take that story, learn from it and build on it. Our collections are not just about words on pages. They are about the authors, about representing all, about the challenges in capturing the unrepresented and remind us about the important role libraries play in providing voices and historical records, about capturing social and cultural moments in time, and recording these moments for future generations. The three articles in this edition of An Leabharlann remind us about the role libraries play in giving voice to important stories and the importance of library collections. Morgan & Thornley examine the current status of LGBTI+ archives in Ireland, exploring perceptions of their part in the historical record, their potential to be included in national cultural institutions, and their role in continuing to document current social change. Harrington shares her insights from UCC library Special Collections and reminds us of the complex challenges and opportunities in making valuable special collections more accessible. Bean shares the success of the Short Story Dispenser in Maynooth and outlines the opportunities that stories and poetry have brought to staff and students when passing through the library. Each of these articles present a different lens through which to capture the complexity of stories, the authors, the viewpoints, the representation, their importance and the role libraries have in preserving and sharing these stories in our collections.

News from the Stacks provides its regular updates regarding some recent appointments and retirements. We wish all our colleagues well in their recent moves. Upcoming conferences are listed including the CILIP LAI Conference in Dundalk 26 and 27 April. Registration is still open and we look forward to two packed days, don't forget you can book for just one day if you cannot attend both. We are reminded by the IFLA President Barbara Lison of the earthquake tragedies in Syria and Turkey and of the important role libraries can play through our network and knowledge in helping our library colleagues there at this time. We have a conference review from Elaine Harrington who attended BOCATSSS 2023 with the appropriate theme of "A New Era – Exploring the Possibilities and Expanding the Boundaries". Conference and book reviews are always welcome and if you wish to submit either or have an article idea for the Autumn edition please get in touch: editor@libraryassociation.ie

I want to leave the final word as a note of thanks. I would like to extend my gratitude to the selection committee for putting their faith in me, to thank the Editorial Board and Designer for their help with my first edition and to pay particular thanks to the outgoing editor Marjory Sliney for sharing her wisdom with grace and kindness throughout this handover.

Dr Mary Delaney, Editor, editor@libraryassociation.ie

Remaking the Printed Word in the Digital Age

Elaine Harrington

Abstract

This article describes collaborative activities between Special Collections and Digital Learning departments at UCC Library from January-May 2022 which was presented in a poster format at IFLA 2022, and since May 2022 activities building on that first tranche of work.

Keywords: *Special Collections, Academic Libraries, Digital Learning*

This article is based on a poster presented by Stephanie Chen and Elaine Harrington at the 87th International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions World Library Congress (IFLA WLIC), Dublin 26-28 July 2022.

Introduction

In 2013 John Overholt reflected on the 2012 American Library Association Rare Books & Manuscripts Section conference and summed up its themes and learnings in "Five Theses on the Future of Special Collections." The future of special collections is:

- ■ …distribution
- ■ …openness
- ■ …disintermediation
- ■ …transformation
- ■ …advocacy

Ten years later the theses are more relevant than ever and spurred me to consider what emerging technologies in a special collections' context would permit these theses to be.

In March 2022 Stephanie Chen, UCC Library's Digital Learning Specialist and I submitted to IFLA WLIC a poster proposal matching the 'connect' part of the theme 'Inspire, Engage, Enable, Connect, especially in uncertain times.' In our abstract we noted that access to physical spaces is not guaranteed and may be very restrictive but by having virtual/digital ways to access collections, UCC Library can provide both continued and increased access, during certain and uncertain times. Our interactive poster with complementary website highlighted a series of collaborative projects enhancing access to rare and unique library collection items using emerging technologies.

Creating a Poster

Despite having presented at over 25 seminars or conferences this was my first poster and it really required me to think, not for the first time, of Randy Bass (1999):

- • Which learning outcome is the one thing that students would retain from this [poster] after leaving?
- • Could I honestly say that I spent the most amount of time on this [poster] teaching to the goal I valued most?

Remaking the Printed Word in the Digital Age

Firstly to entice the greatest number of people we focused on the printed word rather than 'book.' Content in the poster encompassed prints, maps, newspapers, objects that created the printed words and slightly cheating, a manuscript book. This I hoped would show that Special Collections is not limited to books alone and a wide range of items and material is available when using digital platforms/tools. Equally because I wished to maximise digital access to Special Collections four different digital platforms/tools were used with this wide range of material types. It was clear that balancing the static poster with the digital outputs of each project needed something extra and so an interactive version of the poster is also available. This interactive poster also comprises feedback from two student workers, Cara Long and David Leen, who participated in each project element.

I had initially thought of using volvelles (see this example from the J.Paul Getty Museum) where visitors to the poster could turn paper arrows to the chosen content. While that would have provided a whimsical interactive element it proved not practical in the timeframe present. However this visitor-selecting approach resulted in using a map and wayfinding markers instead. The background to the poster combines William Beauford's 1801 map of Cork with traditional Google map markers indicating each project. Doffing our digital hats to the original hard-copy sources where font selection is an integral part of the typographic process Stephanie selected the 19th century font 'Harrington' for the initial part of the title 'Remaking the Printed Word' and the 2008-created font 'Quicksand Light' for the last part of the title 'in the Digital Age.' In both content and style, the poster was a balance between hard-copy printed word and the digital age.

Entering a play in the middle of the third act

No work is created in a vacuum and describing the projects without their origin story is like entering a play in the middle of the third act. Each of these collaborative projects builds on existing work which is then developed in new ways.

#ColourOurCollections or #ColorOurCollections

This began with a LibGuide page called *Play!* (created April 2020). *Play!* had both jigsaws and colouring sheets. The LibGuide page was accessed 65 times in the first month and 197 times April 2020-April 2022. #ColourOurCollections is an annual international colouring festival in February on social media where libraries, museums, archives and other cultural institutions share free colouring content featuring images from their collections. UCC Library's *The Riverside* participated in the February 2022 iteration to spread awareness and better engagement with our collections by inspiring creativity, sparking curiosity and as a means for bibliotherapy. As Orla Breslin on Twitter noted "I love seeing what you can do with digital collections." When there is so much online content available to us we do not know how possible users of our content may first meet that content. Maximising access to well-being resources by partnering with an internationally known provider was key: UCC Library's colouring book was accessed 122 times in the first four months it was live. In addition, Special Collections & Archives team blogged about the selection and creating process. Subsequently the reach of the colouring book was extended by creating a PressBooks version.

BL/CV/PolP/N/11, Special Collections, UCC Library.

Historical Recipe Books on Scalar

In 2019 Patrick O'Dwyer undertook Special Collections' work placement as part of a postgraduate history module 'Skills for Medieval Historians.' During the placement he created an Excel index for two 18th century manuscript recipe books and for a blog post selected and transcribed two of the recipes. Fast-forward to 2022 and rather than using WordPress we turned to Scalar, an open source, web-based publishing platform. This platform allowed us to visualise connections between the different recipes that are not so readily identifiable when using the paper manuscripts. However Cara, David and Kian O'Mahony, a student on placement, met with some of the same issues Patrick had met: reading the handwriting and understanding the terms used and they blogged about their difficulties in "Reflection on the Use of Scalar." The students created a digital interpretation of the paper manuscript recipe book *Historical Recipes in the Digital Age* selecting what was for them the most readable recipes and transcribed those recipes, in addition to providing context to the production of such recipes. To maximise engagement with an international audience of bakers and mathematicians Emma Horgan, Archivist at UCC Library, and I made some of the recipes and blogged about our endeavours: "Pi Day and Historical Recipes."
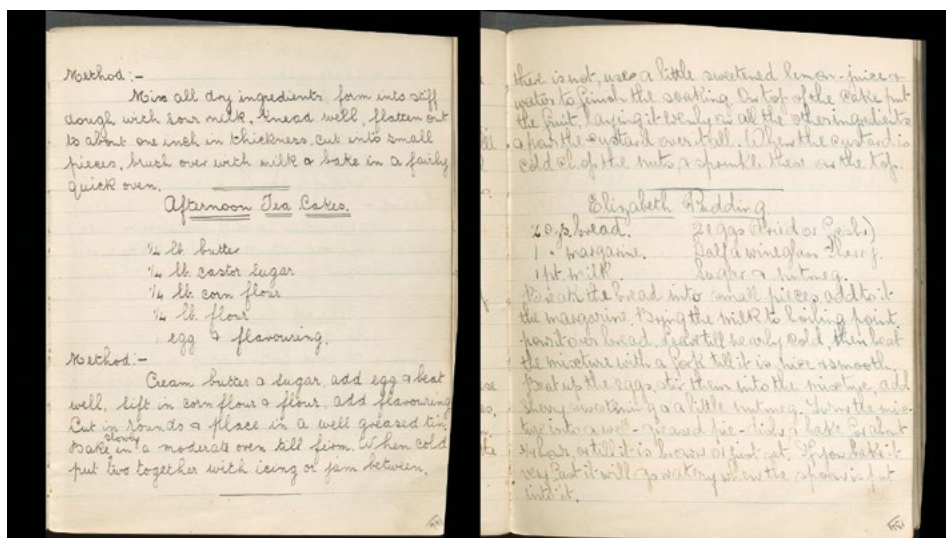
U295, Special Collections, UCC Library.

Using Historical Cork Newspapers

Across 2020-2021 Garret Cahill, Special Collections & Archives, created an Excel index to the content of selected 18th century paper newspapers. Until then there was no means to know what was included in each issue as the different titles are not available in any digitised format. Following this work John Rooney, Special Collections & Archives, created various visualisations including a mapping of advertisements in *The Cork Chronicle* and *The Corke Journal* across 1769-1772. Since December 2021 the mapping has had over 1500 views. As a means to bring the past into the present student workers, Cara and David, developed the mapping by using the approximate locations to create 360° tours of businesses mentioned in the original mapping. The resulting 360° tours contain transcriptions of the advertisements, summaries of the businesses and images of the advertisement entries in the newspapers.

Based on The Corke Chronicle, Special Collections, UCC Library

Creating 3D Objects

For a few years I had used a selection of 19th century Queen's College Cork objects for classes with Digital Humanities 2nd year and postgraduate students and in late 2019 started working on University College Dublin's Associate Professor Niamh Pattwell *Fragments* project. During the various lockdowns across 2020 there was limited access to these items which prompted me to consider other means to access the items. Stephanie used an EinScan-SP desktop 3D scanner to collect data which was then used to
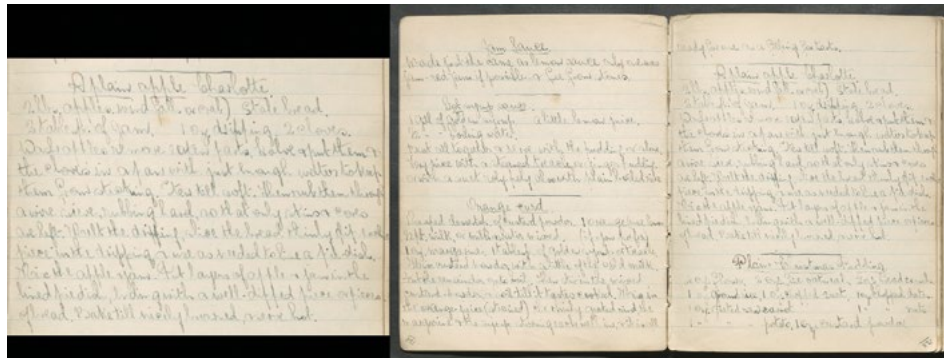
construct digital 3D models. The 3D models were uploaded to SketchFab for viewing in a 3D environment but the scans could also be exported as mesh files that are compatible with 3D printing. The resulting scans, though imperfect, serve as an example of what is possible. Not only is the text on the fragment visible so too is the topography of the parchment fragment. 3D scans of these fragile items mean less handling is required but not at the expense of new or ongoing research. This innovative technique gives insight into the creation of manuscripts irrespective of the language of the manuscript fragment.

Parchment fragment in binding of G.2.1, Special Collections, UCC Library.

Reflections

What purpose did creating the poster for IFLA WLIC serve? UCC Library's unique and distinct collections reached the highest number of potential users in a short space of time. From the series of collaborative projects 'Remaking the Printed Word in the Digital Age' provided inspiration and learnings. We noted that while the four examples used material from Special Collections, they served as an example of what is possible. The digital tools and platforms used can be applied to all types of collections and material.

The different projects reminded me of work that needs to be done with respect to how we identify permissions for our collections. What are the limits and why? This series of projects were created by library staff but if they were created by non-library staff then a different set of permissions would apply. I believe if we wish to enhance access to our special collections, limiting barriers, where possible, and identifying items as public domain or a specific Creative Commons License is key. For some items there are a multiplicity of sources available to users. All things being equal, why would a user choose to work with one institution's collections if reusing another institution's collections is much easier?

With these digital projects we should always be mindful of what is omitted. For example with the recipes in *Historical Recipes in the Digital Age* part of the page rather than the whole page or the opening is shown. Did one recipe inspire another? It's hard to know when the body of work is presented in this way.

U295, Special Collections, UCC Library.

We should not lose sight of what digital access does not give help with when working with primary sources: all the student workers indicated that reading handwriting is difficult. Tools such as Transkribus can learn to read handwriting but only if that hand is available in sufficient quantity. Similarly new digital tools are not always easy to use or intuitive, no matter our level of familiarity with digital tools in general. With each new technology there is a learning curve and time to master that technology. Such time and effort must be factored into any new project.

Where to Next for Special Collections?

In January 2023 I presented a different perspective of the 'Remaking' poster at BOBCATSSS 2023: ['From Books to Bytes: Transforming Access to the Printed Word in the Digital Age.'](#) This hybrid conference took place at Oslo Metropolitan University, Oslo, Norway, 25-27 January 2023. In February 2023 we participated in #ColorOurCollections with a Sustainable Development Goal themed colouring book based on Special Collections' *Life on Land: Birds & Trees from the 17th to the 21st Century* online exhibition. In March 2023 we'll return to the world of Pi/Pie: Stephanie, Emma and I aim to submit a blog post on our experiences of creating Irish historical recipes in digital and baking format for *The Recipes Project*. This project is a collaborative international research community that brings together and showcases interdisciplinary research on recipes across broad temporal and geographic spans. John Rooney will use Python to interrogate *The River-side's* Twitter archive. Special Collections & Archives team will start work on creating tutorials on reading handwriting using items from the collections though a means to disseminate these tutorials has yet to be identified. I will continue to seek out the most appropriate digital tool/platform to enhance access to what Sarah Werner has termed 'the afterlives of books' (2019, p.118).

Elaine Harrington, MA, Dip ILS (Aberystwyth University),
Special Collections Librarian, UCC Library, University College Cork

Software Used

- "Remaking the Printed Word in the Digital Age: Poster" https://libguides.ucc.ie/remaking
- Sketchfab: Models from Special Collections' Collections https://sketchfab.com/schen
- PressBook: #ColourOurCollections https://ucclibrary.pressbooks.pub/colourourcollections/
- Scalar: Historical Recipes in the Digital Age https://scalar.usc.edu/works/historical-recipes-in-the-digital-age/index.
- LibGuides: Visualising Cork Newspapers https://libguides.ucc.ie/newspapers/corknewspapers
- LibGuides: Life on Land: Trees and Birds from the 17th to 21st Centuries https://libguides.ucc.ie/lifeonland
- LibGuides: Play! https://libguides.ucc.ie/speccollarchivesoutreach/play
- #ColourOurCollections blog post series: https://theriverside.ucc.ie/tag/colourourcollections-2/
- HI6091: Work Placement in Special Collections (2019) https://theriverside.ucc.ie/2019/08/27/hi6091-work-placement-in-special-collections-2019/
- Pi Day and Historical Recipes https://theriverside.ucc.ie/2022/03/14/pi-day-and-historical-recipes/
- Reflection on the Use of Scalar: https://theriverside.ucc.ie/2022/07/13/reflection-on-the-use-of-scalar/

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LGBTI+ Archives in Ireland:
Alternative Approaches to Recording Queer Community & Culture for the Past, Present and Future.

Gerard Morgan and Clare Thornley

Abstract

This article examines the current status of LGBTI+ archives in Ireland, exploring perceptions of their part in the social, cultural and historical record, their potential to be included in national cultural institutions, and their role in continuing to document current social change, as 'living archives'. The results illustrate challenges encountered by community archives, often volunteer-run and lacking resources, and the value of creating networks locally and internationally, to develop practices and establish models for access and preservation.

Keywords: *Archives; Queer archives; LGBTI+ heritage; Standards; Republic of Ireland; Museums; Cultural Memory*

Page **10** of 24

LGBTI+ Archives in Ireland: Alternative Approaches to Recording Queer Community & Culture for the Past, Present and Future

Introduction

This study expands the knowledge and understanding of the experiences of LGBTI+ archives in Ireland and provides insights relevant to current ambitions to accurately reflect histories that may have previously been underrepresented or rendered unseen in the national record.

Studies have shown how significant a personal or emotional connection to the materials can be in community archives, and often the input of a dynamic individual has played a vital part in their initiation and preservation (Parris, 2005; Cooper, 2016). This was the case with the Irish Queer Archive (IQA), founded in 1997, "from pre-existing collections held since 1974 by the Irish Gay Rights Movement, Sexual Liberation Movement and the National LGBT Federation" (Irish Queer Archive, 2020), prior to the IQA Working Group being convened in 2001; and in the foundation of Cork LGBT Archive, the core of which is made up of a private collection begun in the 1970s (Cork LGBT Archive, 2020).

IQA has been held by the National Library of Ireland (NLI) since 2008; Cork LGBT Archive is volunteer-run but has developed collaborative relationships with Digital Repository of Ireland (DRI) and Cork Public Museum; while the recently initiated LGBTI+ Living Archives Project is "a collaborative community-focused project to start the introduction of LGBTI+ history" at the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) (National Museum of Ireland, 2020).

This study aims to explore the experiences of such archives in Ireland, considering the factors that influenced the forging of partnerships with more mainstream institutions, challenges experienced within partnerships and practices employed in preserving and making materials accessible.

Page **11** of 24

LGBTI+ Archives in Ireland: Alternative Approaches to Recording Queer Community & Culture for the Past, Present and Future

The role of collaboration with national cultural institutions

The discussion on this issue concerns differing views and perspectives on the place and purpose of Queer & LGBTI+ Archives and the relative values of balancing wider access *vis a vis* community ownership, identity, and control. While collaboration can potentially provide solutions to challenges faced by many archives (Parris, 2005), including lack of resources in funding, staffing and other supports (Bettine and Mattock, 2019), others express concerns regarding the transfer of community-based collections to institutional settings, related to the loss of community ownership, cultural commodification, and the risks of integrating content previously perceived as omitted or obstructed, with some suggestions that this calls into question the very "nature and purpose of queer archives" (Madden, 2013). The literature also points to the idea of LGBTI+ archives as more than a mere resource, rather a 'refuge' or 'sanctuary', somewhere both identity and community can be formed (Parris, 2005; Madden, 2013).

Watts (2018) cites an interview by Rawson (2015) with Ben Alwin of the Sexual Minorities Archive (SMA) in Western Massachusetts: "Everything that we can do to erase the erasure and to give voice where there was silence, that's what we're doing with this archival work every day."

Ferentinos (2019) sees value in presenting these histories in non-specifically LGBTI+ or Queer identified spaces, however, arguing that foundations have been laid by community-based organisations for other institutions to build on, reaching audiences that might not otherwise seek out such events or exhibitions.

Method

Data was collected by conducting qualitative semi-structured interviews with four people involved in such archives, in various capacities over several years; in founding and maintaining archives, negotiating partnerships with state institutions, or working within institutions, where there have been efforts to expand upon collections or initiate projects to increase LGBTI+ representation.

While none of the respondents expressed a wish to have their identity hidden, in the interests of protecting their anonymity, each participant has been assigned a code:

P1	Former member of IQA Working Group; employed in large state institution
P2	Former member of IQA Working Group; academic who consults with NLI on IQA in capacity as NXF (National LGBT Federation) Board Member
P3	Cork LGBT Archive
P4	Employee of large state institution supportive of further LGBTI+ representation in state institutions

Findings

Three distinct experiences were identified among LGBTI+ archives in Ireland at present:

i.	a former community archive within a state institution;
ii.	a community archive that has attempted to retain its community status outside of an institution, while partnering with other bodies;
iii.	a state institution initiating its own LGBTI+ archival collection.

The community archive within a state institution

Chief among the aims of the IQA Working Group, which counted among its number activists, academics, archivists, and librarians (Kirwan, 2009), was securing a permanent home for the archive and safeguarding the materials therein, while retaining its status as a community accessible resource in as much as was possible: " ... because [IQA is a] community-based archive formed by and donated to, by members of the broader LGBT communities." (P1). Recognition for the significance of IQA was a further factor. The National Library of Ireland is "the place where people go to consult with major archives and this would be another major archive"; acceptance of the IQA there

Page **12** of 24

LGBTI+ Archives in Ireland: Alternative Approaches to Recording Queer Community & Culture for the Past, Present and Future

symbolised "the importance of our narratives, our histories, our stories in the national story." (P2) A widespread process of engagement with communities across Ireland took place, taking into consideration concerns of donors to IQA, with the result that "the overall wish was for this move to proceed." (P1)

That much of the non-manuscript-based material remained to be catalogued and digitised a decade later, often stored offsite and inaccessible, has been a "bone of contention over the years" (P2). Delays related to funding and other resource restraints, as well as issues with the material content of the collection, which includes ephemera such as "…badges and T-shirts and banners and flags and whistles…" (p.1); P2 asserts that "…material culture is so important to visibility and to activism." Part of the agreement was that IQA would be taken on as a complete collection, and the commitment is to ensuring that this is a collaborative relationship. A consultation process continues through the appointment of a member of the board of the NXF (National LGBT Federation), to act as a "conduit" between NLI and NXF on the digitisation process. NLI reiterated its commitment to its LGBTI+ collections in March 2021, "drawing on its Irish Queer Archive" to present a programme exploring Irish LGBTI+ identity and experiences over the last several decades.

Another condition sought at the time of transfer was that the IQA would be treated as a 'living archive', and promoted as such: something "that people can continue to add to … and that is what it is to this day" (P2).

The community archive experience outside the institution

Tracing the evolution of the lesbian community in Cork, the originator of Cork LGBT Archive unearthed a private collection begun in the 1970s, and quickly became convinced that if the materials contained therein could be showcased, even in a minor way, support for such a project would be forthcoming. Improvisation involving a borrowed colour printer and photographic paper enabled an early exhibition to take place. Participation in National Heritage Week garnered the archive a hidden history award from the Heritage Council, which P3 regards as "symbolic of the recognition that this is an important part of our heritage (as well as the practical thing of having […]

proper storage boxes)," but admits: "I'm not a trained archivist, I'm not a trained librarian and my digital skills were very limited. So there was an incredibly steep learning curve"; highlighting the challenge inherent in "all of this […] happening essentially with one person on a voluntary basis."

Funding facilitated the creation of six pull-up banners, enabling the exhibition to become portable, taking it to Belfast and onto ALMS, the Archives, Libraries, Museums and Special Collections Conferences in London and Berlin. Cork LGBT Archive sought to contact other such archives internationally, and draw on their example and experience, visiting Outhistory, and the Lesbian Herstory Archive (LHA) who have linked with Pratt Institute School of Information on digitising material and creating digital archives, and working with Omeka and Reclaim Hosting to establish their own digital archive.

Cork LGBT Archive aimed to establish a model that could "be replicated and used by other community organisations who wanted to […] record and preserve their history", delivering workshops on creating a queer digital archive to European based LGBTI+ associations, while also striking up relationships with Irish Trans Archive and Irish Left Archive, highlighting the importance of community archives establishing collaborative associations with each other, as well as with institutional organisations.

When Digital Repository of Ireland (DRI) ran a community-archives award scheme in 2019, Cork LGBT Archive entered and won, meaning they could begin putting material into DRI. The archive was commended for the fact that "it is ready for ingestion, with regard to well-prepared metadata and licences" (Digital Repository Ireland, 2019).

While the aim of digitising materials was to make them accessible, another concern was for the continued preservation of the physical collection, and the archive has established links with Cork Public Museum, with the goal that the museum will continue the process of cataloguing the collection.

P3 expresses concerns about long-term sustainability, acknowledging the fragility inherent in "these kinds of projects [that] happen as works of passion

and madness," while expanding on their primary goal to enable "people to engage with [the archive] in different ways […] that work for them."

Initiating an archive within a national institution

The LGBTI+ Living Archives Project collecting LGBTI+ oral histories is a recent initiative of National Museum of Ireland, building on the success of their 2019 Rainbow Revolution exhibition, which "included digitised material from the Irish Queer Archive, the Irish Trans Archive, the Cork LGBT Archive, RTÉ Archive film footage and contributions from many Irish photographers, artists and activists" (National Museum of Ireland, 2020).

A key concern for the museum when sourcing material was: "how do we get the community to trust us?" (P4), underscoring the importance of consultation with LGBTI+ groups and organisations and again drawing attention to the value of working in association with other archives. NMI opted to focus on the archival element, specifically by initiating the LGBTI+ Living Archive Project, building on the foundation provided by Edmund Lynch's pre-existing Oral History Project, with the aim of recording interviews with "people from across the entire LGBTI+ community … to create a rich permanent oral history record of Irish LGBTI+ history." (P4)

The NMI website states that: "The Archive of the National Museum of Ireland (NMIAS) is designated as a place of deposit under the National Archives Act, 1986 and is responsible for preserving and providing access to its historical papers, collections records and relevant collections of private archives acquired by the Museum." NMI identified an opportunity to use the privilege afforded by its "particular sort of statutory mandate… [as] …a place of deposit for archive, which means we're the only cultural institution or museum in Ireland that has the same status as the national archives."

"So, for example, if we're creating a state archive of LGBT history that is permanently recorded and has to, in perpetuity, always be cared for by the state… [which] has to be able to give it a platform […] you have to make this material accessible to the public. It can't just be locked away in a store. It has to be there for the people of Ireland" (P4).

NMI introduced training and support for staff around its new LGBTI+ related content, directly addressing concerns among communities that these materials may be misinterpreted or misrepresented. Participants stress the importance of putting policies in place when developing LGBTI+ related collections and p.4 acknowledges that they are looking to the examples of other institutions who "have put into their policy specifically [that] they collect LGBT material."

Discussion

Results were analysed in the context of a literature review which examined the experiences of such archives in other countries.

The practice of LGBTI+ archives partnering with wider institutions is not unique to Ireland (X, Campbell and Stevens, 2009), nor is it a recent development: the Hall-Carpenter Archives (HCA), (which, in an earlier form, like IQA, was partly based on a press-cuttings service), originated as an independent, community-based archive housed at London Lesbian and Gay Centre (Donnelly, 2008), before being transferred to London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) in 1988.

Participants involved with LGBTI+ archives within the community express conflicted feelings regarding the relationships they have entered into with state institutions, betraying a sense of resignation in discussing decisions taken to do so: "it had to be somewhere safe […] and that was it." (P2)

Other studies caution against a narrative that suggests community archives need to be 'saved' by institutions, asserting that "when community collections are absorbed into archival institutions, […] contemporary discourse stresses the need for equitable partnerships and carefully negotiated terms of acquisition" (Bettine and Mattock, 2019), and this is what LGBTI+ archives in Ireland have sought. Poole cites Sellie *et al.* (2015) who argue that "community archives are not failures per se if they prove unable to preserve their collections indefinitely," or indeed, independently.

Participants articulated additional reasons for wishing to see such materials

represented in state institutions: "I'm representative […] of at least 10% of the population […] and more, of the taxpayers. […] I am a stakeholder actually in the national collection, as held by the national library. So I believe my voice is equally important."

Others contend that the outcome of the Marriage Equality referendum of 2015 signified a change in culture and society that reached into institutions, giving tacit permission to now tell these stories, or at least acknowledge them. P1 relates that "the overall climate was against taking in such a collection" when the IQA Working Group sought to open discussions with cultural institutions during the first decade of the 21st century.

Any recognition that has been afforded LGBTI+ communities in Irish society may have implications for how such collections can continue to accurately document or record further progress within broader LGBTI+ communities in future, however. Cork LGBT Archive sharing its experiences with other minority archives and related organisations, such as Irish Trans Archive and Irish Left Archive, points to possibilities for collaboration among community archives, in terms of informing practice and managing potential tensions in preserving identity while attempting to ensure sustainability and maintain visibility for their collections. Citing Marston (1998), Parris (2005) asserts that: "Queer history is created by networks of people."

Poole (2020) recommends that institutions engage in continued consultation with communities, citing Allard and Ferris (2015): "Trusting relationships with communities emerge from practices that have very little to do with archiving […] they develop through shared goals, mutually agreed upon benefits for all parties, and a demonstrated support of community activism."

Reflecting on their experience with Cork LGBT Archive, P3 muses that "what I'm doing, isn't just a practical thing, but […] very much the political thing," describing themselves as a "queer archival activist" …, "challenging … how we do archival work and who can do archival work and what is an archive", concluding that: "I think it's important to remember […] that we are fundamentally trying to change the world."

Conclusions

This research reveals a clear expectation that LGBTI+ histories take their place in national repositories, as national records of national relevance in Ireland. Desire to have seen a dedicated LGBTI+ physical space is balanced by acknowledgement that this may segregate Irish LGBTI+ history from the broader, national history; perceptions that such collections should be run by their communities, for their communities, from within their communities, are tempered by the fact that several information, library and archive professionals are also members of LGBTI+ communities, committed to working within institutions, which is beneficial for the inclusion of LGBTI+ perspectives in collections and exhibitions. Ferentinos (2019) welcomes institutions developing an interest in the area, albeit cautiously, stressing the importance of presenting the variety of experience, the "conflict and difference", within LGBTI+ communities.

Digitisation can be a factor in the continued role of LGBTI+ archives as a place of refuge. Digitisation is not a replacement for a properly catalogued physical collection but should be seen as an extension of it. The significance of the physical space was often limited to those in urban areas where community-based archives were generally situated. Digital platforms can open a doorway to those who may be isolated, offering evidence of the existence and experience of others who faced similar struggles and flourished. Seeing themselves reflected may be enough to help them to affirm that "I exist" (Caswell *et al.*, 2018).

Gerard Morgan, MLIS, Online Learning Coordinator,
Trinity Online Services, Trinity College Dublin,

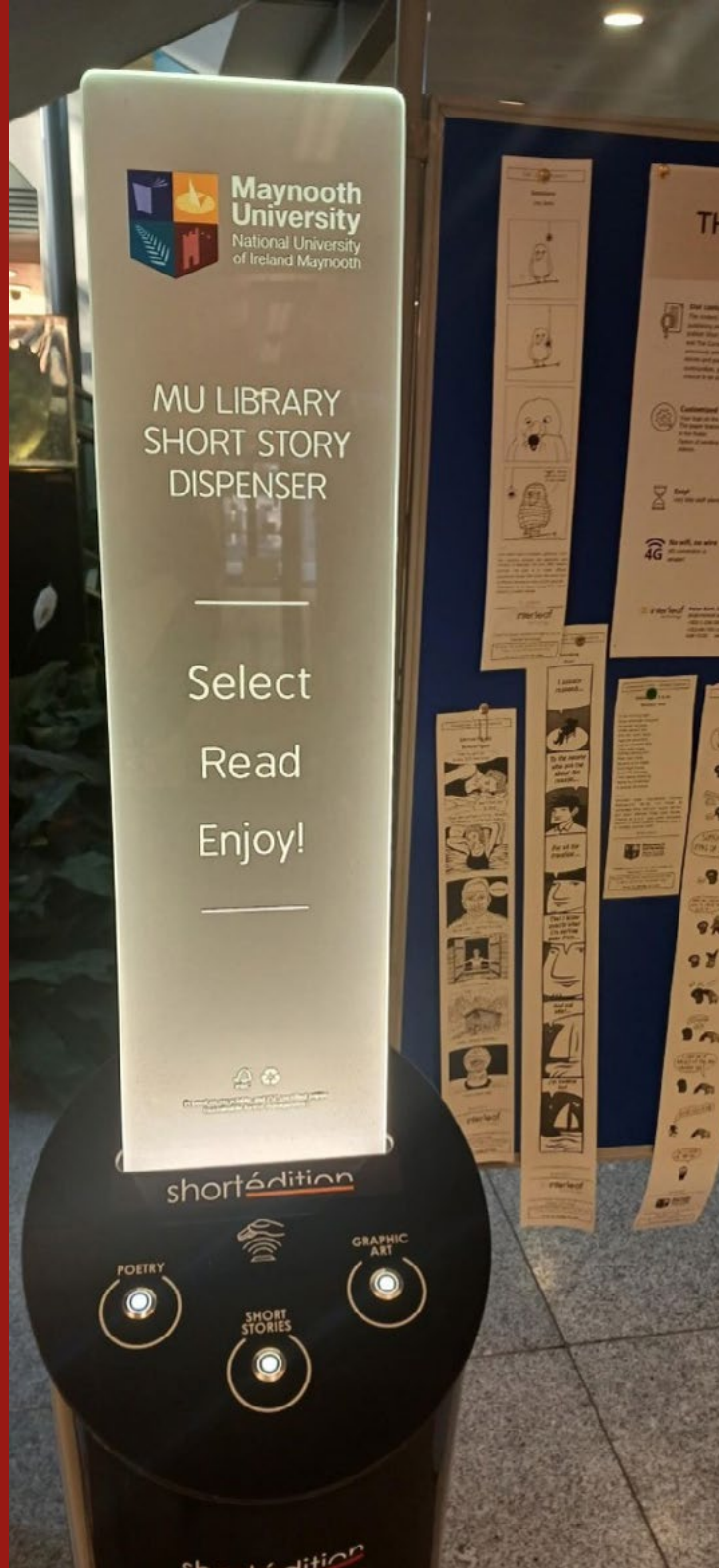*Clare Thornley, MA, MSc, PhD, Associate Lecturer,*
Dublin Business School

Page **15** of 24

LGBTI+ Archives in Ireland: Alternative Approaches to Recording Queer Community & Culture for the Past, Present and Future

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Page **16** of 24

LGBTI+ Archives in Ireland: Alternative Approaches to Recording Queer Community & Culture for the Past, Present and Future

Sharing Stories at Maynooth University Library

Elaine Bean

Abstract

A recent addition to the foyer of Maynooth University Library has caught the attention of staff, students, libraries, and the media. Elaine Bean, Senior Library Assistant at Maynooth University provides an insight into the success of Maynooth University Library's Short Story Dispenser.

Keywords: *Short Story Dispenser, Library Engagement, Maynooth University Library*

Where did the idea start?

While at CONUL 22[1], Elaine came upon a demonstration of a short story dispenser. This machine provided opportunities for the user to select short stories, poetry or graphic art and this selection was then printed out on what looks like a till receipt. The many possibilities of how this could be used at Maynooth University Library became apparent quite quickly. A key benefit focused on Student Wellness as the dispenser provided obvious opportunities for students to read something other than their course work and take some time out for their mental health. Additional benefits included the opportunity to bring more of the arts on campus and finally it provided a great opportunity to develop further collaboration with staff and students across the University. Initially, MU Library was given an opportunity to have a Short Story Dispenser on short-term loan. As soon as it was installed it drew attention. Library users were stopping to get a short story or poem, and small groups of people gathered around the machine chatting about their printout.

What is a Short Story Dispenser?

A short story dispenser typically works by dispensing literature in the form of a short story, poem or graphic novel form without charge. It is up to the user to decide which format they wish to choose from. It started in France but has spread to other countries and the one in Maynooth is the first one in Ireland. It appeals to fleeting readers and is suited to high traffic areas with lots of people passing through interested in a literary digression.

How does it work?

Looking at the content, initially the dispenser came with three options: 1 minute, 3 minute or a 5 minute story. However, they can be edited to suit differing needs. Short Éditions (the Company who make the dispenser) amended the content of the buttons to include 1. Short Story, 2. A Poem, 3. Graphic Art.

1 Consortia of National and University Libraries Conference 2022 https://conul.ie/conul-annual-conference-2022-registration-programme/

Figure 1: Screenshot of usage statistics from short story dispenser at Maynooth University Library from 19/12/2022 to 2/3/2023.

These figures clearly indicate how hugely popular it has been with 1,319 stories dispensed in the 75 days that the usage stats cover (which includes weekends and the Christmas holiday period) or over 17.5 stories per day. The Administration Portal is very user friendly and gives easy access to content and statistics which is very useful in determining future content. Four library staff have received training and can now amend the content.

How has collaboration evolved?

One great benefit of the dispenser has been opportunities it presented including the ongoing work between the Library and the Department of English among other University colleagues. A key aim is to build content from Maynooth authors and dedicating one of the buttons accordingly, allowing MU to showcase the talents of staff and students.

"It offers students a break from whatever is racing through their minds, makes space for art and storytelling in an everyday way, and offers intriguing possibilities for the many writers and creators we have on campus. I direct the new MA in Creative Writing and I also work with some of our talented undergraduate Creative Writing students; I'm looking forward to facilitating some interesting collaborations with the library and its friendly art robot in the months ahead".

Belinda McKeon, Associate Professor of Creative Writing / Co-Ordinator, MA in Creative Writing, Maynooth University Department of English

Locally, staff and students could submit content in a similar way as if publishing in a journal or book. The content would be checked for accuracy and grammatical errors and it could then be added to the dispenser content.

Green Campus

Keeping the Green Campus in mind, it is ideal that the text is printed on sustainably sources paper, printed on demand with thermal technology so there is no ink, no cartridge or no waste. And for those who love their phones or prefer not to print, a new development being explored is the use of QR codes where the Library can position codes around the Library or indeed across the campus giving access to content from the dispenser.

What are people saying?

"It's a way to look at something that you don't see everywhere … something unique. If you aren't into poetry it could be your first experience with it and open your mind to something new" Eleanh, MU Student

"It is a very novel and exciting experience to press a button and get a short story, poem or a piece of graphic art. In a few seconds I was transported to Belgium where my wonderful short story was based. A perfect way to take a short break from it all." Marie, MU International Student

The Short Story Dispenser, which looks like a friendly robot hanging out at the entrance of the university library, is just a brilliant idea and a joyful and generous presence on campus". Belinda McKeon, MU

Future Plans

Moving forward and looking to make the most of the dispenser, MU Library's plan is to align content with specific themes and events such as focusing on climate change during Climate week or sharing content related to LGBTQ during Pride month. This will also compliment traditional print exhibitions and side by side in the library they will present opportunities for staff and students to engage with library collections and also with literary material.

Conclusion

In summary, the installation of the short story dispenser has been a great success. It's great to see library users stop for a few minutes and read. It makes people smile, and that has to be a good thing. For further information please contact Elaine.Bean@mu.ie or PBarr@interleaf.ie or explore recent media coverage:

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Elaine Bean, Senior Library Assistant, Facilities and Events at Maynooth University Library.

A New Era - Exploring the Possibilities and Expanding the Boundaries

BOBCATSSS 2023 Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet), Norway, 25-27 January 2023

BOBCATSSS is an independent European non-governmental and nonprofit association with LIS lecturers, students and professionals as members. This year I am undertaking a Postgrad Certificate in Professional Practice & Leadership and I identified that a key aspect of my role needing additional focus is 'Engaging with the wider context'. Given this, I applied to BOBCATSSS to engage with the LIS community beyond Ireland. While BOBCATSSS is a European association, participants came from Europe, Africa, Asis and North & South America. There were rates for students, online and in-person attendance and a 50% discount for participants from a country on ASIS&T's list of Tier 2 countries.

BOCATSSS 2023 theme was "A New Era – Exploring the Possibilities and Expanding the Boundaries" and the program panels in parallel were wide-ranging: digital collections, repositories and content hubs, open access and content, information and knowledge management, Information behaviour of diverse groups, libraries and users, inclusion and representation, serving diverse communities, LGBTQIA+ themes in LIS, libraries and accessibility, archives, school libraries and services aimed at children, and academic libraries. In addition there were workshops on wikimedia, shared reading and SDGs, keynote speakers and a keynote panel discussing the conference themes in a forthcoming anthology. There was a poster session on the first day but poster presenters were also assigned to present at a panel giving these participants experience at poster creation and two types of session delivery.

Speakers & Papers

With 65 keynotes, papers, posters, workshops and visits this conference report will mention papers, interactions and visits I found to be the most interesting.

Aslak Sira Myhre, director of Nasjonalbiblioteket | The National Library of Norway (NLN) delivered the first keynote 'Digital Library Dead Ends.' The NLN is viewed as 'the memory of Norway' and if it is to be relevant in the future then the memory needs to be online. If the collection needs to be online then it all needs to be digitised. If the NLN is digitising everything then it does not matter where it starts as it will all be online. The only criteria is volume and for volume to be

achieved it must be done at industrial level. It was a radical ambitious concept. In 1989 the first Norwegian legal deposit law was introduced describing 'documents' not 'paper.' The implications of this is far-reaching: in 1996 the NLN were the first to harvest and archive web pages. In expanding the boundaries of what should be preserved they provided the means for anyone to explore what is of most interest to them. Myrhe noted that digital does not replace paper but it is a new starting point. The 'dead ends' of the title refers to most digital library content being unused but it is not for the NLN to judge what to make digitally available; it is up to the users to choose what to access within Norway's memory.

Paulo Vicente's paper, arising from his PhD research, focused on uncovering negative bias and misrepresentation of sexual orientation in the Universal Decimal Classification. He noted that classification is constantly changing and should represent the time we live in and more importantly deal with its subjects with respect. I chatted with Paulo during the conference dinner and he was excited by the response to his paper. Paulo was the recipient of 'favourite paper.'

Exploring the Possibilities: Oslo's Newest Public Library

On the final day we visited Deichman Bjørvika, IFLA's Public Library of the Year, (2021). Head of Library Services, Annike Selmer, gave a 30-minute introduction describing challenges faced when they opened three months later than scheduled in June 2020. Each floor is themed: together, the square, the stories, the garage, curiosity and studies, with a mix of shelving and programming on each floor. Following Annike's presentation we were encouraged to explore. I was fascinated by the 'Silent Room', part of the Future Library. The 'Silent Room' where Future Library manuscripts will be kept is built using wood from the original trees felled to make way for the trees planted for the project. A highlight was the varied exhibitions and art works. Initially library staff thought they would be the only ones creating exhibitions focusing on the library collections but this would have been unsustainable given the amount of spaces, number of staff and demands on their time. Instead the spaces are used to form connections with local and international artists and users seek out all spaces of the library to discover what might be held there.

Expanding the Boundaries

Returning to Oslo Met from Deichman Bjørvika (Oslo is a walkable city, even in -8C) I passed Oslo Metropolitan's MakerSpace on Pilestredet. It was invigorating to see a university space recognising the limitations of the wider community to access those spaces and take steps to mitigate it. On their windows and main entrance OsloMetMakers note they are a community of students, teachers, researchers, start-ups, companies and individuals interested in creating, building, hacking and tinkering together.

BOBCATSSS was held in Clara Holsts hus, one of Oslo Metropolitan's buildings. In the foyer are different artworks including bilingual signs about Clara Holst, the first woman in Norway to be awarded a PhD (1903), and Karen Grude Koht, a feminist pioneer in pedagogy in Oslo. It was affirming to see Oslo Metropolitan's commitment and recognition of its historical female students and teachers.

Conclusion

Across the three days I learned about the semantic web, online gaming, FOSS, e-learning in Bangladesh; how we could mis/use ChatGPT in a similar way; the role of non-English Wikipedia; the dearth of research into Norwegian rural libraries (is it the same in Ireland?); and Norwegian phrases to indicate something is wrong "Ugler I mosen /owls in the moss". BOBCATSSS 2024 will be held in Coimbra, Portugal. I would highly recommend *An Leabharlann* readers to submit proposals. The breadth of papers with the unusual integration of posters in the panels resulted in many interesting discussions. BOBCATSSS 2033 fulfilled my goal: I have never connected with so many LIS students and lecturers, librarians and archivists' perspectives.

Elaine Harrington, Special Collections Librarian, UCC Library

NEWS from the STACKS

People

Recent Appointments:
Phillip Russell, Information Services Manager, UCD
Hugh Murphy, Deputy Librarian MU
Lorna Dodd, Deputy Librarian UCD
Arlene Healy, Associate Librarian UCD
Dr Audrey Whitty, Director of the National Library of Ireland

Retirements:
John FitzGerald, Director of Information Services & University Librarian, UCC
Gobnait O'Riordan, Director, Library & Information Services, Glucksman Library, UL

Forthcoming Conferences

ALA: https://2023.alaannual.org/

BIALL: https://biall.org.uk/annual-conference/

EAHIL: https://eahil2023.org/

IAML: https://www.iaml.info/congresses/2023-iaml-congress-cambridge-united-kingdom

IFLA: https://2023.ifla.org/

LAI/CILIP: https://www.libraryassociation.ie/lai-cilip-joint-annual-conference-2023/

LIBER: https://libereurope.eu/event/liber-2023-annual-conference/

LILAC: https://www.lilacconference.com/lilac-2023

UKSG: https://www.uksg.org/event/conference23

CPD

CILIP Ireland: https://www.cilip.org.uk/events/event_list.asp?show=&group=201287

DBS: https://www.dbs.ie/course/postgraduate/msc-information-library-management

UCD: https://www.ucd.ie/ics/

Ulster University: https://www.ulster.ac.uk/courses?query=Information,%20librarianship&f.Level_u|Y=Postgraduate

LIBRARIES in the Media:

https://www.rte.ie/culture/2023/0108/1278497-lyric-feature-the-story-of-irelands-first-public-library/

https://www.rte.ie/archives/2023/0108/1342017-ucd-library-opens/

International News

https://www.ifla.org/news/earthquake-in-turkiye-and-syria/