

By using digital technology, libraries can preserve and enhance their historic collections.

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*Digital innovations can extend the reach and relevance of libraries beyond their existing print collections. [Peter Carrol](#) of the LSE Library provides an overview of recent digital projects undertaken and highlights their role in protecting LSE's heritage and contributing to its future. Of particular interest is how archived material from *The Women's Library @ LSE* have been transformed into interactive platforms, ranging from online exhibitions to smartphone apps.*



LSE Library is committed to developing its digital collections so that they match the strength of existing print collections. With this objective in mind, the Digital Library has embarked on a number of major projects to enhance the digital experience of all Library users, enhancing the profile of the entire collection and utilising the full range of resources available to the Library. The Digital Library aims to support research and teaching at LSE in two specific ways. The first is by building, collecting and preserving digital collections for the future. The second is by making the Library's historic and contemporary collections available to the online community through new and innovative platforms. Here is a selection of some of the projects the Digital Library has been working on.

During 2012, the Library successfully launched two major digital projects; [PhoneBooth](#), and [The Beaver](#). PhoneBooth recreated Charles Booth's socio-economic maps of London as an interactive digital website and smartphone app. The app enables users to plot their locations on Booth's maps and retrieve his historic observations. PhoneBooth also saw collaboration with the Department of Geography, with staff and students from the department accessing the app while walking through London's streets. The projects contribution to undergraduate teaching enabled new types of engagement with the archive and created the potential for new forms of assessment.



Other projects launched in recent years include the digitisation project for [The Beaver](#), the newspaper of the Students' Union at LSE, which ensured that print issues from the publication from 1949-2008 were made available. Over 20,000 pages were covered in total. Similarly [Beatrice Webb's diary](#) saw the digitisation 17,000 pages of the LSE co-founders' diaries and notes. In June 2013, the Library launched its [Emily Wilding Davison Online Exhibition](#) to mark the 1913 centenary of the suffragette's death at the Epsom Derby. The carefully chosen materials used in the exhibition provide a record of Davison's remarkable life- her achievements, relationships and her dedication to the suffragette cause.

This month, the Library launched [The Women's Library @ LSE Online](#), a presentation of materials relating to women's history from the 16th century to the present day. The site allows users to take a historical journey through the personal, political and economic struggles that have symbolised women's battle for equality through the ages, presenting a representative sample of the broad range of unique materials contained within the collection.

The digital projects continue- LSE Library are currently working on [Women's Walks in partnership with Arts Council England](#), an exciting new mobile phone app that enables users to engage with archive materials from historic locations from women's history. *Women's Walks* combines smartphone technology with the diverse archive material from *The Women's Library @ LSE*, transforming the collection into an interactive historical journey. The app will work by tracking the user's position as they walk through the streets of London, identifying images, documents and

audio clips relevant to each location, and downloading them to the user's smartphone. *Women's Walks* will be publicly available from January 2014.

As these projects demonstrate, the range of digitisation programmes the Library have completed have provided a fantastic opportunity for digital innovation. By working to preserve historic collections and building capacity for the future, the Digital Library will play a key role through both protecting LSE's heritage and contributing to its future- supporting teaching and research at every step of the way.

Note: This article gives the views of the author, and not the position of the Impact of Social Science blog, nor of the London School of Economics. Please review our [Comments Policy](#) if you have any concerns on posting a comment below.

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