

A crumpled blue paper ball sits in the center of a notebook page. The page is filled with various hand-drawn sketches, including arrows, a star, and the text "What?!". The notebook's spiral binding is visible on the left side. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

Understanding Academics

A UX ethnographic research project at the University of York

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Aims

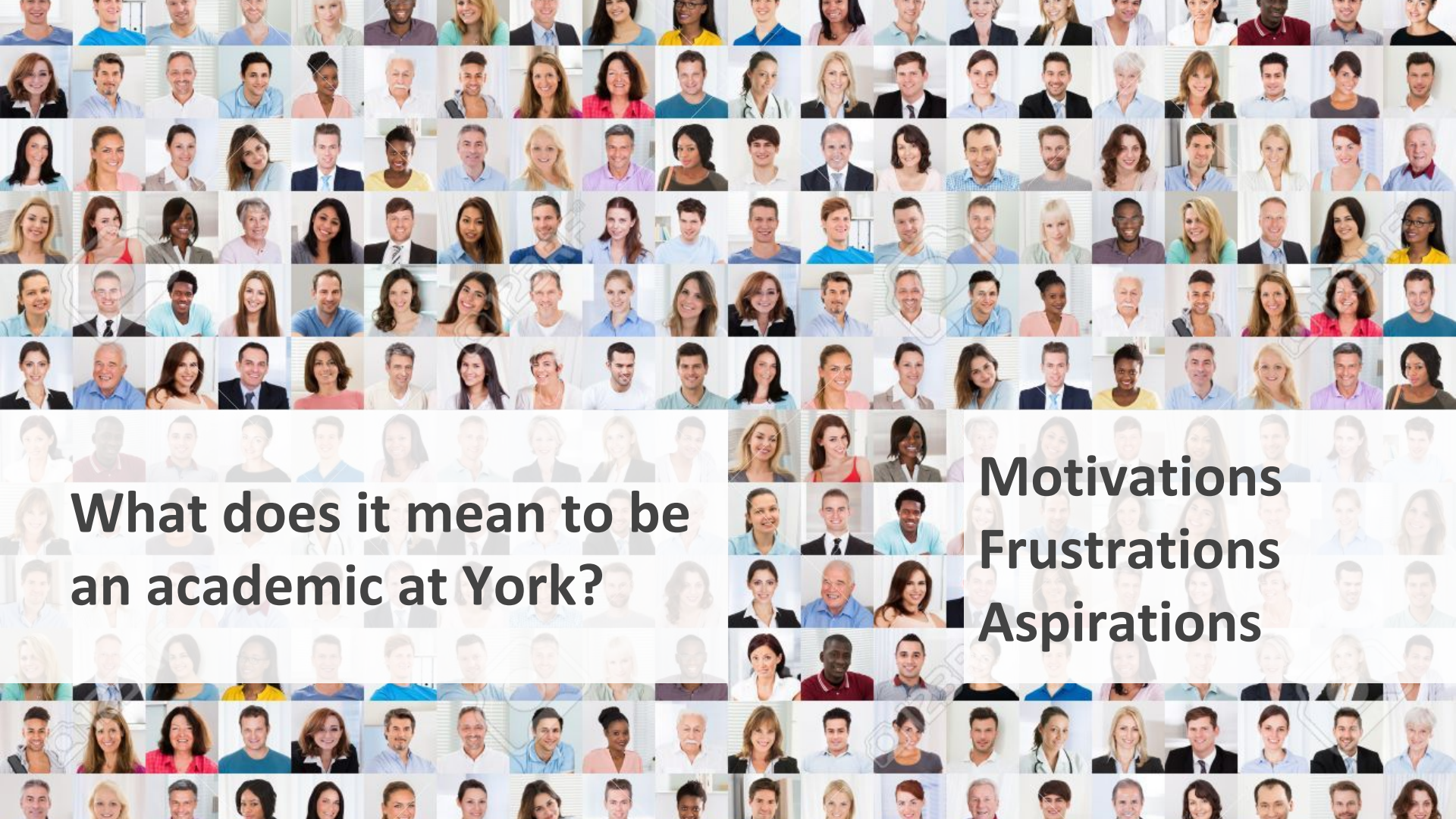
- to gain a much **better understanding** of how academics at York **approach** their **research and teaching activities**;
- to consider **how Library services** currently **facilitate and support those activities**;
- to **integrate** the **'academic voice'** into **future service planning** and development of support for academics, ensuring that the Library continues to **engage departments in innovative ways** that respond to both **current and future needs**

Map your process for preparing and delivering a new or existing module. Draw each of the key elements or stages, along with the systems or tools you need to make them work, and show how they link together. You will have 6 minutes to do this, and every 2 minutes you'll be asked to use a different coloured pen (green, red, blue). At the end you'll be given time to label your drawing. Try to be as complete as possible, and don't worry about the quality of the drawing! The information is more important.



A grayscale photograph of a young boy singing into a professional studio microphone. The boy is shown in profile, facing left, with his mouth wide open as if in the middle of a song. The microphone is mounted on a stand and has a circular pop filter in front of it. The background is a plain, light color. The text "Project outputs" is overlaid in the center of the image in a white, sans-serif font.

Project outputs



**What does it mean to be
an academic at York?**

**Motivations
Frustrations
Aspirations**



Key Themes: informing the new Library Strategy

**Space
Scholarship
Skills**

Space



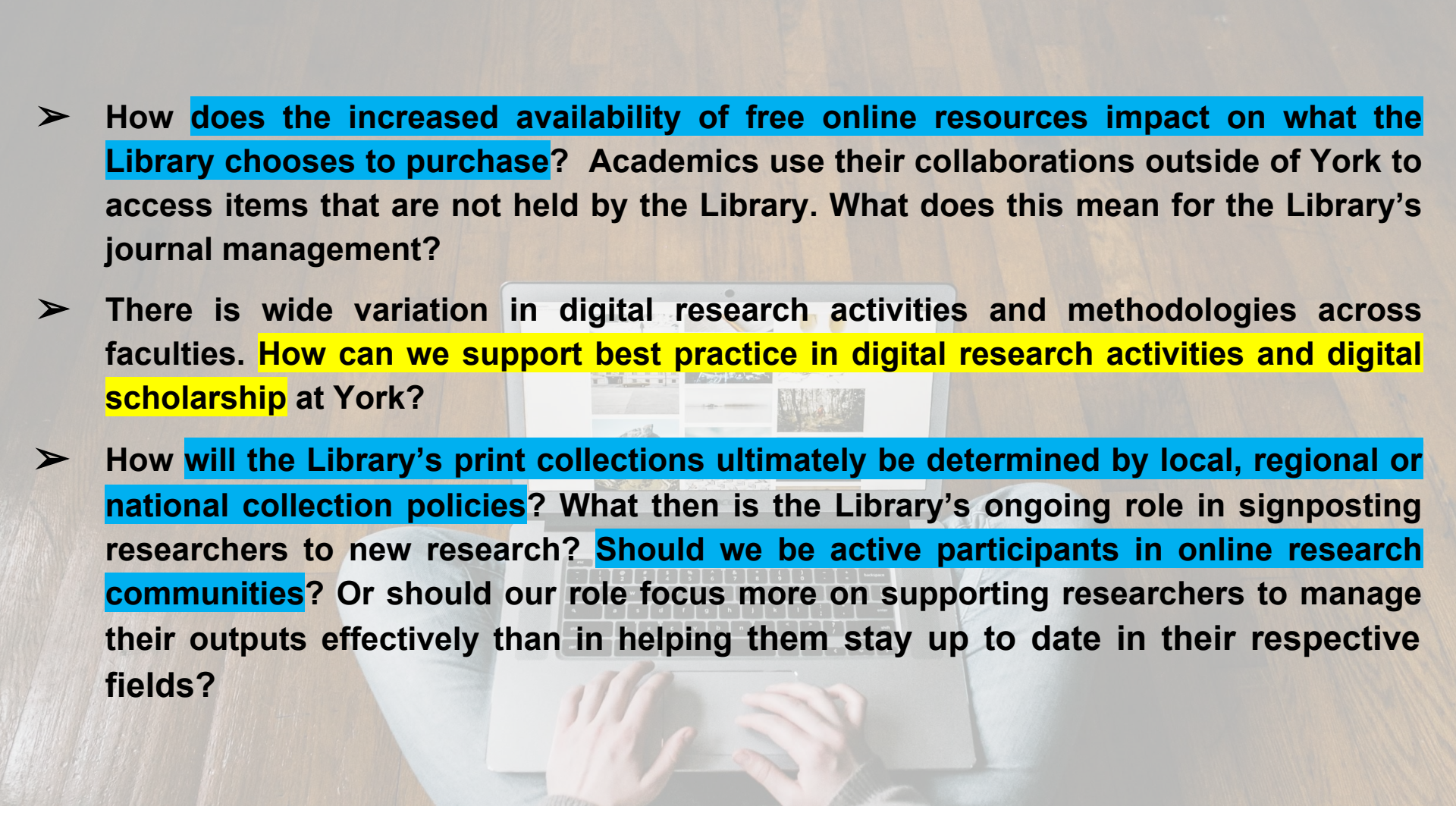
“Writing spaces matter. The environment we write in inevitably shapes the work...The **liberating enormity and evocative presence of the library’s books** make it a place to think and work that, I think, **adds some energy and a bit of fizz** to what I’m doing. It’s a space I tend to turn to when I need a bit of a push to keep writing or to keep editing. Sometimes I fetch those books down from the shelves to inform what I’m doing, but **often they sit there suggesting to me to think more, to be a bit freer and to get on with it.**” *Social Sciences Academic*

- How do we ensure that our virtual services match those we provide in person/physically? Academics often need to work remotely and require access to resources. How do we ensure the best possible experience for them, including seamless access?
- What is the balance between access and physical holdings? Should the Library be funding access to resources such as one-off journal articles that are not then available to the wider community? How can we ensure compliance whilst at the same time acknowledging inter-institutional sharing of resources?
- What is the ongoing role for discoverability tools such as YorSearch and how can these tools be developed in line with changing attitudes and trends in accessing information?
- Can the use of Library space and facilities help academics to collaborate more effectively?

Scholarship



“But then I sometimes, actually when I know a paper has been published in a journal, if the first link I get to is on the arXiv I don't bother to look for the link to the journal and then go through the Library and log myself in to read the final published version, I'm perfectly happy with the arXiv version in most cases. So it's that important really. Some people who have secure positions they have given up on journals, they only read what's in the arXiv, it's available to everybody. If it's good, it will be referenced, and some metrics it might not count but in others it does, especially in the community. A good arXiv publication can be as good as published paper. And only for careers, jobs, do you then need the stamp from the journal.” *Science Researcher*

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- How does the increased availability of free online resources impact on what the Library chooses to purchase? Academics use their collaborations outside of York to access items that are not held by the Library. What does this mean for the Library's journal management?
 - There is wide variation in digital research activities and methodologies across faculties. How can we support best practice in digital research activities and digital scholarship at York?
 - How will the Library's print collections ultimately be determined by local, regional or national collection policies? What then is the Library's ongoing role in signposting researchers to new research? Should we be active participants in online research communities? Or should our role focus more on supporting researchers to manage their outputs effectively than in helping them stay up to date in their respective fields?

Skills



“The problem that **Google** has, as a search engine in general, is that it has this **sort of secret weighting algorithm** that causes some results to drift to the top and others to the bottom, and that’s partly the result of the work that they do to keep things relevant because if the results aren’t relevant their user base will disappear. But it’s **also ripe for various kinds of manipulation and optimization by people who profit** by having that, so there’s an **uneasy truce between those two sides** - as long as neither of them break it, it carries on working for everyone but those forces do not operate if you’re trying to find journal articles.” *Science Researcher*

- If academics are moving away from traditional search techniques (e.g. Boolean logic), what does this mean for **information skills teaching**? With the **proliferation of freely available information** and bearing in mind that information is scattered (rather than contained), what does this mean for their students?
- To what extent **should the Library be at the forefront of learning delivery**, in partnership with departments (rather than as an add on)? How should the Library be involved in the design, delivery and assessment (and feedback) of digital skills?
- How do we understand the **reading habits of current and incoming students** better and how they engage with technology? What will students look like in five years time and what does this mean for the services the Library provides?

An aerial photograph of a winding asphalt road that curves through rolling green hills. The hills are covered in grass and some patches of brown vegetation. In the distance, a valley opens up with a small town and a river. The sky is overcast with soft, grey clouds. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text "What's next?".

What's next?

libinnovation.blogspot.co.uk

Lib-Innovation

creativity + innovation in the library, university of york



<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13614533.2018.1466716>

<http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/132822/>