

Redefining the Library

Overview of the British Library's strategy 2005 – 2008

Libraries have traditionally existed to collect and organise information, make access to knowledge more democratic, and preserve the record of ideas for future generations. Now, information is ubiquitous: billions of web pages are just a keystroke away. Google and other search engines have revolutionised the way people expect to access information. How do we redefine the role of the Library in such a rapidly changing context?

We have studied the challenges of this new world, spoken to our users, assessed the technological, economic and social pressures that will impact on

the way we all work – and identified our mission, vision and priorities for the coming years.

To fulfil our goals we need the same foresight and determination that the Library's founders had when they brought together the original collections in 1753 to be 'preserved therein for public use, to all posterity', providing access to the world's knowledge for 'all studious and curious persons'. Working with others, we are redefining what it means to be a great national library – creating public and economic value, underpinning research and helping people advance knowledge to enrich lives.

Action Plan for 2008/09

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Enrich the user's experience

- Develop a case for the creation of a digital centre, based upon the needs of the new generation of researchers. This centre will facilitate the presentation of materials in ways that will involve the written word, sound, film footage and imagery.
- Develop a detailed implementation plan for a dedicated newspaper storage building at Boston Spa and state of the art access to newspapers at our St Pancras site.
- Continue to generate awareness and increased usage of the Library's Business & IP Centre which opened in 2006. The Centre receives funding from the London Development Agency.
- Hold two major exhibitions. *Ramayana*, one of the greatest Indian epic tales, will tell the love story of Rama and Sita. *Taking Liberties* will uncover the struggle for British freedoms and rights by both celebrated and little-known heroes.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Transform search and navigation

- Improve accessibility of our collection items by extending the records of print materials and of archival and manuscript records listed in our catalogues.
- Transform searching across the Library's online catalogues by implementing PRIMO, an enhancement to our current integrated library system.
- Create an integrated system for the provision of access to the Library's archives and manuscripts records currently held in 40 legacy systems. The first phase, in 2008/09, will provide a system to catalogue new records. Through subsequent phases we will migrate data from the current systems, provide public access and give opportunities to share data with other organisations.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Build the digital research environment

- Continue to develop the digital library system to provide storage, preservation and long-term access to the digital output of the nation. Develop a full production service for e-journal ingest and develop the capability to ingest additional content streams, starting with newspapers.
- Continue to lead development of the European Commission funded PLANETS project in which national libraries and other bodies are developing a framework to support the long-term preservation of digital text, images, audio and datasets. Deliver the first release of preservation services which will diagnose and treat problems with digital material.
- Continue to work through the Legal Deposit Advisory Panel and with publishers and the other UK legal deposit libraries to collect offline electronic content, e-journals and public web content through voluntary schemes. Move towards regulations for public web content via the Government's impact assessment process.
- Continue the digitisation of content from out-of-copyright printed books as part of a strategic partnership with Microsoft. Promote ready access to these items.
- Digitise one million pages of 19th century British newspapers to add to the existing two million pages which are being made available on the web. Add 4,200 hours of audio content to the existing 3,900 hours of audio recordings already available online. These digitisation projects are funded by JISC – the Joint Information Systems Committee.

Delivering our Strategy

Action Plan for 2008/09

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

Grow and manage the national collection

- Complete the development of the fully automated, high-density book storage facility at Boston Spa. The new building will store c 260 km of materials in controlled environmental conditions and will enable the Library to rationalise the location of high- and low-use materials. It will also allow the Library to relinquish leasehold storage buildings.
- Continue to implement the Library's content strategy for Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences. Implement the transition from print to e-journals for a) overseas materials, b) duplicates of legal deposit materials and c) newspapers. Develop the Library's proposition for e-books. Determine the Library's proposition for publications from China and India. Develop an implementation plan for providing access to datasets. Take forward the connecting part of the content strategy by developing further the criteria for selecting partners, reviewing existing partnerships and determining new ones in support of collaborative collecting, access and preservation.
- Develop an engagement plan to work more closely with the Science, Technology and Medicine (STM) community. Develop a content strategy for STM researchers and undertake stakeholder consultation. Develop products and services based upon research needs and the relevance and accessibility of content, focusing upon biosciences and energy/environment.
- Contribute to the foreign cultural diplomacy agenda led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Extend programmes with overseas libraries and archives, including the national libraries of South Africa, China, Iraq and Iran.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

Develop our people

- Continue to develop and implement an integrated Talent Development and Succession Planning strategy.
- In line with the Government's Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy, design and implement a framework which develops the Library's ongoing support for quality of life of the workforce and which impacts positively on the community, wider society and the environment.
- Continue to develop and implement the Library's diversity strategy to build a diverse workforce and increase engagement with wider communities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6

Guarantee financial sustainability

- Complete the first phase of the collaborative storage project funded by the Higher Education Funding Councils. This is addressing the growing shortage of storage space in UK research libraries. The prototype service focuses on a collaborative approach to collection management which aims to improve and guarantee future research access. Commence the second phase if funding is approved.

We have an innovative and exciting programme to deliver. We will report progress and achievements in our Annual Report for 2008/09.

Our purpose:

- Advancing the world's knowledge

Our vision:

- We are central to the world of research, a trusted source of content that opens minds, solves problems and creates opportunities.
- We provide services to anyone who wants to do research. We aim to provide both physical and digital access to world-class information where and when people need it.
- We inspire people around the world with our outstanding content and expertise and we complement this by engaging the knowledge and expertise of others where it adds to the quality of experience for our users.
- By providing these services effectively, the British Library fulfils a vital role in society and the economy, both today and for future generations.