

REDEFINING THE LIBRARY

The British Library's strategy 2005 – 2008

library_ n. (pl. libraries) 1. a building or room containing a collection of books and periodicals for use by the public or the members of an institution. • a collection of books held in a library. • an organized collection of films, recorded music, etc., kept for research or borrowing: a record library.

This traditional definition of a library is from the Concise Oxford English Dictionary. Our challenge is to redefine the role and purpose of the British Library in the information revolution of the 21st century.

The British Library is one of the greatest libraries in the world. Founded in 1972 by an Act of Parliament which brought together eight institutions including the British Museum Library and the National Lending Library for Science and Technology, the British Library has a 250-year history of collecting. The scope of our remit, the scale of our operations, the range of our services and the international importance of our collections are without equal. We'll continue to focus our resources and the considerable expertise of our staff on ensuring that we make a major contribution to the national economy and to the social and cultural enrichment of Britain's citizens.

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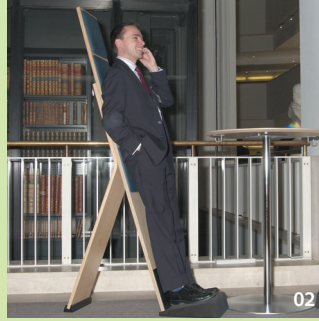
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01 Masked Chinese players entertain the lunchtime crowds with a performance from the Silk Road.

02 An exhibition of specially designed WiFi furniture gave users a new angle on the future.

Redefining a great library in the 21st century

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: 500 million web pages are just a keystroke away. Their content mutates constantly, and is subject to no structure. 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?

The challenges for libraries in the digital age are particularly acute for the British Library, which has achieved its reputation because of the scale and scope of its collection, its celebrated Reading Rooms, and its international Document Supply services. Clearly, we'll continue to collect print, manuscripts and other traditional material on a large scale. However, in today's world that is not sufficient: there are new challenges we must address.

We serve an unusually broad range of audiences with researchers, businesses, education, the general public and the library network all benefiting from our services and collection. The value we bring is essentially three-fold: we are a critical resource for UK research; we underpin business and enterprise through our contribution to knowledge transfer, creativity and innovation; and we are a world-class cultural institution with a vital role as a holder of the national memory. Given the breadth of our agenda, identifying our priorities is essential – and challenging. What steps must we take to ensure our vitality in the digital age?

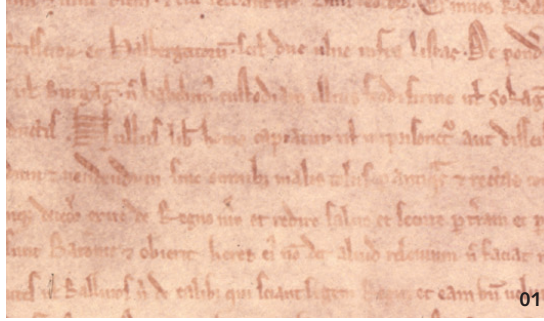
In setting our strategy for 2005 – 2008, our first step was to speak directly to our main users – people who are doing research for academic, personal or commercial purposes – and the organisations and institutions that support and benefit from their work. We also assessed the technological, economic and social pressures that we anticipate will have an impact on their way of working and on ours. Pages 4 to 11 summarise the findings from this research. The mission, vision and six strategic priorities that we've developed as a result are detailed on pages 12 to 19.

Throughout our review, the key factor driving change was the impact of the web and Internet technologies. The increased take-up of the Internet across society and the importance of e-service provision has been reflected in our own accelerated migration of services to the web over the past five years. That programme will continue, and we'll extend our web services and resources, making them as easy to use as possible. Our collection offers something for everyone, and we'll continue to develop new ways to support learning and personal enrichment as well as research.

In light of the impact of technology, the UK must develop a digital research information infrastructure. This infrastructure, including content, hardware and applications, is needed to support the research process within a digital environment. The British Library has an important role to play, and we are collaborating with others to scope what's needed. It's vital that we work together to develop a sustainable framework with consistent standards that will meet the needs of researchers both today and in the future.

Partnerships and collaboration are critical to every aspect of our strategic agenda. Our partners, from the public, private and non-profit sectors, are too numerous to name individually but their contribution is essential. We hope that publishing this strategy will stimulate a dialogue about how we move forward together. Developing strategy is a continuous process and there are always further questions to consider. Over the next year we'll be taking forward important work on our collection development and expertise strategies. We'll also be refining our cultural and international strategies and our approach to the Home Countries and English Regions. We're working with libraries in this country and overseas to provide leadership and to sustain the British Library as a great national library.

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'.



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'To all free men of our Kingdom we have also granted, for us and our heirs forever, all the liberties written out below...'
Magna Carta, 1215.

Overview of the Library

OUR AUDIENCES

Every interest can be explored at the British Library. Our users come from diverse backgrounds, span all disciplines and have varied needs. We define broad audience communities according to their use of our resources.

RESEARCHERS

- Teaching staff and research staff in higher and further education
- Postgraduates
- High R&D industries
- Writers and scholars
- Individuals pursuing personal study
- Government researchers
- Undergraduates researching projects

BUSINESS PEOPLE

- Inventors and entrepreneurs
- Professional services firms
- SMEs
- Science parks
- Creative and media industries

THE LIBRARY NETWORK

- Libraries in further and higher education
- UK legal deposit libraries
- International research libraries
- Public and school libraries
- Corporate, professional and government libraries
- National and regional archives and museums

SCHOOLS & YOUNG PEOPLE

- Schools, sixth form and further education colleges
- Teachers
- Out-of-school groups and holiday schemes

THE GENERAL PUBLIC

- Our local communities
- Lifelong learners
- Groups and societies
- Families
- UK and overseas tourists

OUR SERVICES

We promote ready access to the British Library's collection and information experts through a range of free and priced services which are becoming increasingly integrated.

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

- Online catalogue that resolves 15 million searches a year
- Reading Rooms and Document Supply services that deliver 5 million items to researchers
- Imaging services: copying in digital and film formats
- Reference and Research consultancy and enquiry services

SUPPORTING LIFELONG LEARNING

- Treasures exhibition
- Temporary exhibitions throughout the building
- Workshops and tours
- Outreach projects
- Award-winning web space at www.bl.uk/learning

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- Collaboration with information professionals in the management of their collections
- Digitisation services
- Metadata licensing

PUBLIC SPACES

- A culturally rich and exciting destination in the heart of King's Cross
- Concerts, performances, talks and events
- Cafes and restaurants
- Bookshop and retail services

PUBLISHING

- Books, sound and images
- Licensing content to online and print publishers

OUR COLLECTION

We reflect the world's knowledge and hold iconic treasures from many cultures. Our historic collection embodies the nation's memory: Magna Carta is considered the foundation of liberty; Chaucer the foundation of our literacy and literature.

HOLDINGS

Our collection is vast – around 150 million items – and extends over 600 kilometres. It is without parallel for its breadth and depth. It covers every written language and every information format from bones to bytes.

The collection includes:

- 13 million books
- 7 million manuscripts
- 4.5 million maps
- 56 million patents
- 3.5 million sound recordings
- 8 million stamps
- 58 million newspaper issues, serial parts, microfilms and other formats.

Our active stewardship of works from other traditions fosters international cultural diplomacy and promotes comparative studies and interdisciplinary research.

INTAKE

Through Legal Deposit we receive 600,000 new items a year – an entitlement that dates back to 1662.

In 2003 Parliament passed framework legislation to extend legal deposit to electronic materials, including websites.

We spend some £16 million on new acquisitions each year. The majority of this is spent on current overseas publications, including printed and e-materials from science and technology sources.



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02 Watching the world music events on the Library's piazza, summer 2004.

03 British Library Direct, our new integrated online order and delivery service.

OUR PEOPLE

The expertise of our people is recognised throughout the world. We blend the best of traditional library and curatorial skills with the new competencies needed in today's rapidly changing and increasingly digital environment.

NUMBERS

Our total staff complement is over 2,300, evenly split between London and Boston Spa in Yorkshire.

EXPERTISE

Our people are specialists in many fields, including scientific, social science and humanities disciplines, sound engineering, systems architecture, business analysis, marketing, web technologies, cataloguing, conservation and the display and interpretation of the collection to provide inspiration for all our audiences.

MODERNISATION

We have incorporated modern management practices and techniques in our working life.

- Embedded competency-based performance management.
- Actively developed our existing skills base.
- Complemented our strengths by recruiting change management and strategic skills from the private, public and not-for-profit sectors.
- Put respect for diversity at the heart of our HR practices.

OUR RESOURCES

Our financial resources, our buildings and our electronic systems are all directed to the efficient fulfilment of our responsibilities.

INCOME

Our Grant in Aid from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport was £91.6 million in 2004/05.

Our trading income from our priced services was £23 million in 2004/05.

Grants, legacies, sponsorship and donations provided £4.9 million for our work in 2004/05.

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Our St Pancras headquarters opened in 1998. It is the largest public building to be constructed in the UK for 50 years.

Our 42 acre Boston Spa site includes 61,500 m² of purpose-built storage and despatch buildings.

The national newspaper collection is housed in a 1930s building in Colindale, north London.

We have two major outoused storage areas in Woolwich and Micawber St, London, both 8,500 m².

ELECTRONIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Our digital infrastructure is as important as our physical estate. In the past year we launched our Integrated Library System, bringing together 29 million bibliographic records and replacing 14 legacy systems. The new system provides the basis for re-engineering many collection management processes.

OUR GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS

Our remit is broad and our user groups diverse. As a result we fulfil the objectives of a number of government departments.

DEPARTMENT FOR CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

We contribute to the Department's cultural enrichment, lifelong learning and social inclusion objectives. Our regional projects and support for the creative industries also align with the Department's priorities.

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS

We support the higher education objectives of the Department for Education and Skills by supporting academic research across all subjects. We also work to develop research skills among school students and lifelong learners.

OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

As a central resource in the national research infrastructure we support the Department for Trade and Industry and the Office of Science and Technology. In particular, we help to sustain leadership in world-class research and innovation and thereby promote the UK in the competitive global economy.

HM TREASURY

Our Economic Impact Assessment study (2003) indicated that the Library delivered £4.40 of direct and indirect value to the UK economy for every £1 of public investment.

World-class research and innovation are critical to society for the economic, social, cultural and intellectual benefits they bring. Every stage of the research and innovation process depends upon the efficient and effective flow of information. New technologies are transforming the ways in which information is created, disseminated, stored, and

Redefining the British Library's role in the research information

HELPING PEOPLE ACCESS INFORMATION

Trends

Although the Google generation expects swift and easy online access to all the information it wants, researchers are clear that there will always be some fields of study where they will continue to need access to the real documents in traditional Reading Rooms.

The British Library

We're well placed to support both, with an international reputation for our Document Supply and Reading Room services. Now we're joining these onsite and online services together to give our different user groups effective access to the full range of resources during the different phases of their research. Our collection and services increasingly support interdisciplinary work. Operating within the copyright framework and licensed by the publishers, we deliver documents globally, direct to the desktops of academic, commercial and personal researchers. We've digitised thousands of primary source texts, and bulk digitisation programmes are in preparation. We continue to develop the responsiveness of our teams of collection experts, who are able to guide and advise researchers in their integrated use of the print and digital collection.

CREATING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH RESEARCH

Trends

Research is carried out in many ways, from the physicist analysing vast quantities of data using grid computing to the medieval historian poring over the fine details of a fragile manuscript. New technologies have generated new techniques, prompted interdisciplinary research, and transformed fields of investigation by enabling access to massive online datasets. Two factors have remained common across all subjects. One is the need to access information sources throughout the research process; the other is the need to synthesise findings into a form that can be shared.

The British Library

Our collection experts contribute to knowledge creation in their interactions with external researchers, and also in the research they undertake on the collection. However, primary research is not a core function of the Library and we don't traditionally generate a large amount of intellectual property; instead our focus is on supporting others' research.

ENABLING SEARCH AND NAVIGATION

Trends

The growing volume of information published is causing many researchers to complain of information overload. Helping people find what they need when they need it is critical, whilst the ability to link different types of information (e.g. journal articles and the datasets that underpin them) is increasingly important.

The British Library

The traditional approach to resource discovery (helping researchers find the materials they need) focuses on producing catalogue records (or metadata for digital information). We have a strong history here of underpinning the national

production of catalogue data through the British National Bibliography, and in the provision of free online access to our catalogues. Some 13 million items are recorded in our Integrated Catalogue and we continue to improve its effectiveness and extend its coverage. New approaches to search and navigation explore relationships between text-based materials. These have a huge potential to open up new fields of scholarship and research, and to this end we're currently testing developments with academic and commercial partners who are responsible for major advances in search engine and text mining technology.

accessed. Our challenge as the national library and a key component in the UK's research infrastructure is to strengthen the close ties we have with others in the knowledge network so that we can continue to underpin the UK's contribution to world-class scholarship, creativity and business innovation. By working with others we can guarantee that everyone doing research – today and in the future – has access to the full range of information they need, wherever and whenever they need it.

cycle

PUBLISHING AND DISSEMINATING RESEARCH OUTPUTS

Trends

Researchers put their new ideas into circulation. This may be by the formal process of publishing a monograph or peer-reviewed article, giving a paper at a conference, submitting data to a central database, or informally exchanging findings with colleagues. Changes taking place in the ways in which researchers are disseminating their work include Open Access publishing and subject-based or institutional repositories.

The British Library

The Library's role is to support varied forms of research output, working with publishers and other information providers. We're participating in a number of collaborative projects with higher education to establish digital repositories and create the tools that will underpin them. An example is our involvement in the development of a national e-thesis service. Such projects enable us to extend our dissemination activity beyond our traditional publishing programme.

AGGREGATING RESEARCH INFORMATION

Trends

Bringing information together has always been important to enable researchers to survey the full range of thought that exists in their field. If critical material is unavailable, their results may be flawed – and no researcher wants to reinvent the wheel.

The British Library

Selecting and collecting the range of material required for current and future research is core to our purpose. We're refining our approach in order to meet the needs of current and future researchers in the hybrid world where print and digital information mix so freely. We're defining policies for handling electronic resources, in partnership with the legal deposit libraries, publishers and the Research Libraries Network. With other stakeholders, we're looking at the practicalities of harvesting the UK web domain, testing the appropriate technology, frequency and selection criteria. We're working on a pilot scheme to test the infrastructure for deposit of e-journals, under the aegis of the Joint Committee on Legal Deposit.

STORING AND PRESERVING RESEARCH INFORMATION

Trends

Society progresses by building on the record of ideas, and libraries play a central role in preserving our intellectual memory. Where the record is on paper, the task is understood, the solutions generally agreed. It's a more complex challenge when the record is digital.

The British Library

We continue to develop expertise and technological applications to improve our paper conservation methods. Meanwhile, success in the digital environment will be the result of national and international collaboration, and we are working with the core research base, including the Digital Preservation Coalition, Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), the National

Archives and the UK Research Councils to solve the substantial technical challenges associated with long-term storage of the electronic record. We're building the National Digital Library with help from Microsoft and other partners, and with input from an international technical advisory panel comprising public and private sector experts. UK web activity is one element of the digital record, and the Library is a lead member of the UK Web Archiving Consortium, and of its international counterpart. On an experimental basis we've been archiving selected sites to build experience and test storage, security and fail-safe mechanisms that guarantee the long term integrity of the stored material.

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AGENCY
WORKING FOR THE MAYOR OF LONDON



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Artist's impression of the Library's Business and Intellectual Property Centre, a new partnership with the London Development Agency.

Responding to the needs of our core research base

We investigated changing patterns of research, speaking to people across the range of subjects, and to a wide cross-section of researchers, including individual academics, post-graduates and corporate R&D workers. We worked with representatives of organisations that fund research, and that benefit from it. Our findings identified the different trends in the main disciplinary divisions – science, technology and medicine; social sciences; arts and humanities. We have matched the Library's resources used by each sector, outlined the trends in resource use, then set out our proposition for the ways in which we would serve each sector in the coming years.

Research in science, technology and medicine [STM]

in higher education and industry

THE STRENGTHS WE'RE BUILDING ON

Our world-class collection of STM resources is updated by some 9,000 new articles every day.

We source new material from every significant international STM publisher.

Our Document Supply service has a 40 year reputation for delivering STM information.

Our Secure Electronic Delivery service digitises and delivers any STM article or paper – from a choice of 100 million items.

We provide dedicated Reading Rooms with access to a range and value of hybrid resources unequalled by any other UK provider.

Our customer base includes every higher education library, most corporate R&D units, and many SMEs, enabling us to promote knowledge transfer between sectors.

We have a reputation for scope and authority, and recognition of our role as a not-for-profit broker linking publishers and researchers.

TRENDS IN THE SECTOR

The government's Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004 – 14 confirms the value of UK science research as a key economic driver, and commits to supporting and growing it.

Research output continues to grow at 3-4% a year. Researchers' needs are changing more rapidly than in other fields.

STM is the most digitally advanced sector. This can lead users to assume that all STM information is digitally accessible.

Researchers often rely on journals rather than monographs and increasingly focus on digital information formats such as datasets.

There is increasing integration of text-based information with the underlying data.

Harnessing the power of unstructured web data is a focus of development, with new search technologies and new uses of the Internet to provide computing and data resources on a massive scale.

There is growing awareness in government that the fruits of publicly-funded research should be available for public consultation quickly and easily.



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Mandy Haberman, entrepreneur, at the Library's business forum 'Mothers of Invention'.

03
Many household names rely on the Library's electronic information services to keep abreast of new international R&D.

Models of scholarly communication are changing.

- Publishers are linking directly to end-users.
- Deals between university libraries and e-publishers give access to a wider range of journals.
- Digitised backruns of journals are being made available.
- New journal business models – such as 'author pays' – are being developed within some subject fields.
- Some funding bodies are beginning to require research results to be made more openly available.
- Institutions are starting to create archival repositories of the research they support.
- Long-term sustainability of all the evolving models is not yet clear.
- Potential changes to the peer-review publishing paradigm are giving rise to concerns about quality assurance.
- Concerns are being raised about defining standards and ensuring interoperability between different repositories and archives.
- The ownership, protection and vulnerability to abuse of Intellectual Property Rights in the web environment are issues of concern.

OUR PROPOSITION

We're collaborating on the development of the national e-infrastructure, under the aegis of the Office of Science and Technology. Our partners include the Cabinet Office, DCMS, DfES, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), JISC, the Research Libraries Network, RCUK and the individual Research Councils.

We're working with partners to develop the National Digital Library. STM researchers need to be confident of long-term access to a stable and consistent record of research, which they can identify, access and develop. Our partners in the programme include the Research Libraries Network, the legal deposit libraries, technology players and STM publishers.

We continue to build on our credentials as a trusted information supplier, offering a quality assurance that adds value in a volatile web environment.

We'll collaborate to develop navigation tools that allow researchers access to deep web resources.

We'll integrate access to digital research and database materials, and enable researchers to move seamlessly between our holdings and those in other repositories.

We've launched an integrated service offering, British Library Direct, that will better support the needs of STM researchers.

We'll strengthen our skills base so we have expertise across the range of STM disciplines.

We're working with the London Development Agency to develop our onsite Business and Intellectual Property Centre to answer the needs of business researchers and innovators.

In our exhibitions and events, and in collaboration with partners such as the Wellcome Trust, we'll promote public engagement with science and help to broaden understanding and inspire young learners.



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The joy of text - 26 pairs of the best graphic designers and business writers worked with the Library to create artworks based on the alphabet: X by Thomas Manns and Mike Reed.

Research in social sciences in higher education and the practitioner communities

THE STRENGTHS WE'RE BUILDING ON

A significant and underexploited international collection of books, journals and other resources covering the spectrum of social science disciplines.

A unique collection of publications not available through normal bookselling channels – known as grey literature – which are of special interest to practitioners and theoreticians in the social sciences:

- International conference proceedings
- UK and US theses
- International reports from government agencies and Non-Government Organisations
- World's strongest United Nations collection
- International standards legislation
- EU and UK official publications.

A small number of expert staff with an unequalled knowledge of international grey literature and official publications.

A dedicated Social Sciences Reading Room.

Co-operation agreement with the British Library of Political and Economic Science at the London School of Economics.

TRENDS IN THE SECTOR

Researchers are identifying themselves by discipline or job, for example economist or urban planner, rather than as social scientists. They work across all disciplines using a range of theories and methods to examine substantive issues.

Information provision in the UK is dominated by a small number of players, including the British Library of Political and Economic Science at the London School of Economics and the Economic and Social Data Service.

Research methods in some fields resemble those in science; others share characteristics with humanities.

This leads to disparities in provision and take-up of digital resources between disciplines in the social sciences.

Research needs encompass the full repertoire of big datasets, journals and traditional monographs.

The use of specialised applications to analyse datasets is increasing.

OUR PROPOSITION

We'll work with key partners, including the Economic and Social Data Service, the Economic and Social Research Council, the Research Libraries Network, professional bodies and the major economic and social science libraries to ensure the best provision of social science research information for future researchers. Collaboration will focus on three main topics:

- Collection development
- Access to resources
- Research skills training.

The scope of our collection and our range of expertise enable the Library to promote and enrich the cross-disciplinary exchange both within and beyond the social science disciplines.

We'll strengthen our resource discovery tools in the social sciences to bring to prominence collections which have hitherto been less accessible.

We'll identify those disciplines in which we must strengthen our skills base so that we can provide an appropriate level of expertise to meet researchers' needs.

“In the digital age, traditional tools for research are being transformed, and new ways of working are changing subjects and disciplines themselves. Ensuring that the UK’s researchers can get the information resources and management tools they need is challenging and complex, and cannot be achieved without collaboration between the national institutions.”

Professor Karen Sparck Jones, Chair of the British Academy’s Policy Review on E-resources for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences, published April 2005.

Research in arts and humanities in higher education and the creative industries

THE STRENGTHS WE’RE BUILDING ON

The collection has developed over 250 years and the earliest materials date back to 3000BC. It is the greatest research collection of its kind in the world.

The collection includes books, manuscripts, newspapers, recordings, photographs, and 20 other information media.

Copies of UK publications have been deposited since 1662.

There are seven humanities Reading Rooms which cater for different types of materials, including manuscripts, maps, newspapers and music.

We provide world-class curatorial expertise by subject, medium and geographical area.

We have been developing world-leading e-innovations in humanities research for the past decade, including Electronic Beowulf and the International Dunhuang Project.

A huge corpus of digitised texts from our collection is available online, either via our own website or through partnerships.

TRENDS IN THE SECTOR

The importance of electronic resources varies between subjects. Formerly less pervasive in arts and humanities than in STM and social sciences, digital content is increasingly essential, a change driven in part by the expectations of the new generation of technology-literate scholars, and in part by the mass of primary source material being digitised.

New subjects of research, new methods and new interdisciplinary approaches are developing as a result of the impact of technology.

There is a marked increase in team-based research.

Boundaries between taught and research-based postgraduate courses are now more fluid.

Fewer researchers are literate in foreign or classical languages.

The number of part-time researchers is growing.

There is continuous growth in the economic impact of UK creative industries, and in their use of Library services.

There is a greater diversity of researchers from outside higher education, including lifelong learners, family and local historians who undertake research for personal enrichment.

Increased value is put on cultural interchange and diversity.

OUR PROPOSITION

We’re working with the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the British Academy and other key national institutions to ensure our traditional strengths are complemented by new skills and services necessary for 21st century scholarship and research.

In collaboration with international partners we’re redefining the role of the curator in the 21st century. We’re pioneering new ways of engaging with researchers and explaining the relevance of the collection.

We’re examining collaborative approaches to collection development that reflect emerging lines of research.

We continue to digitise extensive collections of primary source material, adding functionality and interpretation that gives them relevance to academic, personal and commercial researchers at every level.

We have an ambitious programme of bulk digitisation of newspapers that will provide fully-searchable access to the ‘first draft of history’.

We’re developing services that help users with different levels of research skills to take full advantage of our collection and expertise, particularly in our Reading Rooms.

We’re augmenting our holdings of manuscripts and archives (including those in e-forms) and leading a national initiative to collect literary papers.



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Our St Pancras Reading Rooms offer the UK's most comprehensive range of resources and are open to all researchers.

Defining our strategy 2005 – 2008

OUR MISSION

Helping people advance knowledge to enrich lives



OUR VISION

We play a leading role in the changing world of research information.

We exist for everyone who wants to do research – for academic, personal, or commercial purposes.

We promote ready access to the British Library's collection and expertise through integrated services which are increasingly time and space independent.

We also connect with the collections and expertise of others, and work in partnership to fulfil our users' needs.



OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Enrich the user's experience

Build the digital research environment

Transform search and navigation

Grow and manage the national collection

Develop our people

Guarantee financial sustainability



OUR ORGANISATIONAL VALUES

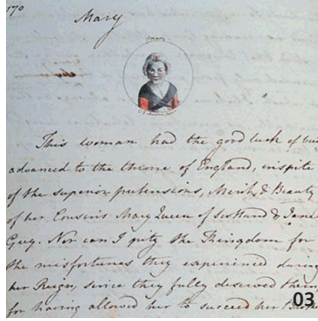
Open consultative organisation

Empowered, flexible and diverse workforce

Non-hierarchical, agile decision making

Staff who feel recognised and valued

Strong performance management



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Young learners take part in our 'Journeys of Discovery' programme.

03
'Turn the Pages' of the teenage Jane Austen's wryly humorous 'History of England' on our website.

Explaining our mission and vision

MISSION

Helping people advance knowledge to enrich lives

- We believe in the power and value of knowledge: it brings cultural, social, intellectual and economic benefits to society.
- It is not enough just to preserve knowledge; our task is to enable it to be used now and in the future. When knowledge is used, it adds to the sum of human understanding.
- We bring direct benefits to those who use our collections and services because we help them advance their own knowledge, and the whole body of knowledge, through their research. We bring indirect benefits to all UK citizens whose lives are enriched through the fruits of the work we have enabled.

VISION

We play a leading role in the changing world of research information

- As the national library, we're a central resource in the UK research infrastructure, and underpin world-class UK research across all disciplines.
- The research information environment is undergoing rapid transformation. As a great library our evolution must keep pace, not only so we remain able to fulfil our users' needs, but also to demonstrate the vision, innovation and leadership that helps the library network in the UK and overseas adapt in order to remain relevant to the new generation of digital adepts.

We exist for everyone who wants to do research – for academic, personal or commercial purposes

- Our collection and expertise can help researchers answer an infinite number of questions. We support the research chemist in a multinational drug company, the postgraduate completing a PhD in musicology, the entrepreneur wanting to expand the family business, the journalist filling in the background to a story, and the local historian researching medieval land use.
- Different types of research require different resources, with access provided in different ways. We tailor our services to support varied approaches.

We promote ready access to our collection and expertise through integrated services which are increasingly time and space independent

- We're a hybrid library – that is, our collection includes print, digital and other media – and we strive to provide access to all information formats seamlessly, through interconnecting services.
- The expectations of the Google generation require that we give people access to information wherever they are, whenever they need it. This is a tough requirement but an important goal to focus on.

We also connect with the collections and expertise of others, and work in partnership to fulfil our users' needs

- In a world so rich in information, it's not appropriate or possible for us to hold everything. Much better for us to harness our strengths to others' capabilities and co-ordinate joint approaches that serve the gamut of researchers' needs.
- Where we're not best placed to help a researcher, we'll connect them to the relevant resource.
- We collaborate with new and established organisations in the information environment, across the public and private sectors, with the goal of enhancing the research process and advancing knowledge.

We have established six strategic priorities for 2005 – 2008. These are critical to our mission and we must achieve them if we're to continue to support UK research needs effectively. We'll monitor our progress rigorously as part of our business planning cycle and publish the results in our Annual Report.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Enrich the user's experience

We underpin UK research across all disciplines, providing a crucial range of services to businesses and individuals. We continue to broaden access to our collection and develop services that engage new audiences. We strive to make our services accessible to disabled people through the web, the provision of alternative formats, and around our physical

sites. People increasingly need to use the same range of services offsite and onsite during different phases of their work, and we are integrating services to support their working methods. Making the Library easier to use adds value to the research process, saving time and enabling researchers to work more effectively and have confidence in their outputs.

KEY AREA

Enhance the Reading Room experience

ACTIONS AND BENEFITS

- Reshape our St Pancras Reading Room services to suit the needs of people researching in different ways; for example, to support collaborative projects and team work in spaces adjacent to Reading Rooms.
- Increase flexibility in our Reading Rooms, for example by allowing more of the collection to be accessible from any desk to support and encourage interdisciplinary research.
- Launch innovative services for entrepreneurs, innovators and the creative industries in our new Business and Intellectual Property Centre, providing a model for future initiatives with the London Development Agency.

Open up the Library through the power of the web

- Launch a new online interface to our document and image delivery services – British Library Direct – a portal that will enable pay-as-you-go as well as subscription payment, so that users can seamlessly search, locate and receive the material of their choice.
- Extend the usability testing of our website, www.bl.uk, and also implement monitoring software to track how visitors move around it. Upgrade site navigability in response to both these initiatives.
- Monitor the accessibility of our website for disabled people, and continue to improve the site in line with results, so that disabled people can make the most of our services.

Make the Library's collection and services easier to use

- Rationalise our services to ensure that they form a single coherent service offering that meets users' needs.
- Reduce the existing number of customer contact points. Offer a single customer services operation that can help people identify and use the services they need.
- Engage with public libraries to ensure that all citizens can benefit from their national library.

Become one of London's most distinctive and important cultural venues

- Deliver a first-class programme of public exhibitions and events aimed at engaging diverse audiences and promoting learning. We'll create the unique sense of discovery that promotes strong word of mouth recommendation.
- Upgrade our services to visitors, including catering, signage, facilities, activities and interpretation so that experience of the St Pancras building fulfils the expectations of a broader range of people.



01
An illustration from our Hans Christian Andersen exhibition – also one of 14,000 pictures available from our digital image service.

02
The cross-disciplinary inventiveness of a Renaissance master: Leonardo's notebook is online for all to explore.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Build the digital research environment

We have the vision and the acknowledged expertise to play a leading role in defining and creating with others the UK's electronic research infrastructure. We've established the critical national and international partnerships we need, and are working to address the complex challenges inherent in actively managing digital information in the long term.

Guaranteed access to digital material in the long term is vital for the successful future of UK research programmes. Digital resources also present new opportunities for people to undertake research for personal enrichment and self-development, and allow disabled people to engage with previously inaccessible sources.

KEY AREA

Develop the National Digital Library as a key part of the UK's research e-infrastructure

ACTIONS AND BENEFITS

- Pioneer development of the Digital Library to provide sophisticated storage, preservation and access to the nation's digital content.
- The Digital Library will initially ingest material that is born digital such as websites and e-journals that have been collected as part of our voluntary deposit programme.
- The Digital Library will hold the e-versions of all our collection items that have been digitised.
- The Digital Library will be the central element of our approach to digital collection management.

Work with others to shape the national research e-infrastructure

- Collaborate across the research community to guarantee that both text-based and data-based research outputs are preserved and available for the researchers of tomorrow.
- Work with partners developing digital information repositories (both subject-based and institution-based) to ensure these are robust and cross-searchable within a framework of common standards.
- In partnership with JISC, create Virtual Research Environments and provide information services to facilitate the research process using these new tools.
- Link the content of our collections to external digital resources to support the research process.

Continue our innovative digitisation programmes

- Further increase the significant range of collection material available for desktop delivery to users by on-demand digitisation.
- Work with partners on bulk digitisation of significant collections that open up new possibilities for investigation and enrich research and learning opportunities.
- Digitise a substantial proportion of our early British newspaper collection so that this primary resource is easily accessible and usable. This will build on our pioneering work with JISC which will give searchable online access to two million sheets of our 19th century newspaper collection by September 2006.
- Digitise significant sections of our Sound Archive, following on from the digitisation of over 3,000 hours of sound as part of a JISC-supported programme to improve access to sound for researchers, and our work with DfES to give schools access to interpreted online sound resources.
- Provide interpretation of digitised content suitable for diverse audiences, making use of European policy and funding frameworks.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Transform search and navigation

We're investing to open up access to the collection. We'll accelerate the modernisation and improvement of the ways in which users find what they need in our collection and in linked resources held by partner organisations. We'll enrich our catalogues and make incoming items available as quickly and

efficiently as possible. We'll use new information retrieval technologies to enhance the search possibilities offered to our users, so they can trawl our online resources at the deepest level. Users will benefit from faster, targeted results, which are comprehensive in their breadth and depth.

KEY AREA**Adopt new resource discovery technologies****ACTIONS AND BENEFITS**

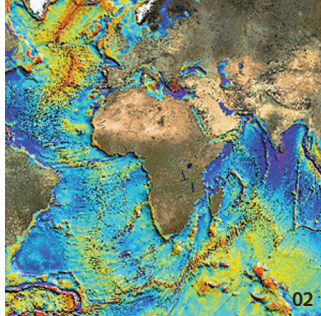
- Play a leading role in developing new resource discovery tools tailored to researchers' needs.
- Harness the traffic and capabilities of popular search engines to help researchers discover Library content.
- Use information retrieval technologies, including search engines, content classification and text mining, to create rich navigation and access at levels unavailable through traditional catalogues. We'll create the technical infrastructure to help users link between the Library's traditional and electronic collections.

Aim for best practice in our catalogues

- Progress towards an integrated online catalogue for all our holdings. The Integrated Catalogue will incorporate, for example, our archives, manuscripts, sound resources and all our early printed books.
- Define clear standards for the type and quality of cataloguing information needed to find and manage collection items, including those in new and emerging digital formats.
- Improve the quality and consistency of metadata in our catalogues.

Embed efficiencies in our handling of incoming materials

- Exploit the opportunities generated by our new integrated processing system to streamline our procedures for ordering, acquiring, cataloguing and shelving material.
- Implement a new approach to metadata sourcing and quality control using the most effective elements of automated and manual techniques, for example by improving links with publishers and the information supply chain to capture metadata as items are acquired.



01
Archival material from the Dunhuang caves. We conserve world heritage materials to the highest technical standards.

02
Accurate navigation through the ages: the Library now collects satellite and digital mapping.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

Grow and manage the national collection

Our collection is a combination of traditional and digital materials. It's fundamental to the future of UK research, which in turn furthers the innovation and enterprise that drive the UK economy. We'll continue to collect to

meet the needs of researchers, and will provide expert stewardship to ensure the nation's cultural and intellectual memory is sustained and accessible forever.

KEY AREA

Implement electronic legal deposit

ACTIONS AND BENEFITS

- Work with other stakeholders (including other legal deposit libraries, publishers and government) to progress the necessary secondary legislation.
- Focus on voluntary deposit of e-journals as a pilot area for scoping and testing processes in 2005/06.
- Develop a shared, secure digital infrastructure between the legal deposit libraries, beginning with a pilot to test and validate the approach.
- Collaborate with our national and international partners to further our innovative web archiving strategy.

Refine our collection development strategy for non legal deposit materials

- Review the collection materials we purchase, informed by input from key external experts and stakeholders. In recognition of its importance to our stakeholders we will revisit the intellectual rationale for our collection development strategy and make sure it aligns with evolving research needs and establishes a sound basis for a sustainable future.
- Collaborate with others, particularly the Consortium of Research Libraries in the British Isles and the Research Libraries Network, to meet the anticipated resource needs of UK research.

Develop innovative physical storage to cater for the continuing increase in printed publications

- Build the world's largest collection storage facility in Boston Spa, extending to some 250 linear kilometres.
- Install pioneering low-oxygen, robot-enabled storage and retrieval technologies.

Establish a world-class conservation facility for library materials

- Build the international centre of excellence for conservation next to our St Pancras building.
- Launch the Centre for Conservation as the public and professional focus for the promotion of best practice in collection stewardship and conservation specialisms.
- Develop the Centre as the testbed of new conservation technologies, and the hub of international conservation debate and applied conservation research.
- Create the first Foundation Degree in Book Conservation in partnership with the University of the Arts.
- Develop a programme of unique British Library conservation internships.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

Develop our people

Our staff set a standard for excellence, and are dedicated and creative in the delivery of services. We're immensely proud of the record of achievement that colleagues have set in the 30 years since the British Library's foundation, and their commitment to

meeting the challenges created by the new information environment. We aim to be an employer of choice, attracting and retaining talent; we strive to act as an exemplar in the library community in developing the skills and expertise of our staff.

KEY AREA**Aligning our skills with our strategy****ACTIONS AND BENEFITS**

- Build effective leadership at all levels to help us embrace change. For example, all middle and senior management are taking part in a development programme with this focus.
- Review skill requirements corporately and address gaps by both developing and recruiting appropriate staff.
- Collaborate with other major libraries to redefine the roles of our curators and science information experts, ensuring the right balance of expertise needed to meet the challenges raised by new research techniques and the expectations of new audiences.

Strengthen our culture so we can deliver our strategy

- Reinforce our programme of cultural change to strengthen our organisational values:
 - Improve communication and consultation
 - Empower staff
 - Enable agile decision-making
 - Recognise the importance of everybody's contribution
 - Use strong performance management to consolidate our progress.
- Work in partnership with the Trade Unions to build a sustainable organisation.
- Instil a 'One Library' service culture throughout the organisation, ensuring that all staff in touch with users can guide them to the full range of relevant services and help them derive maximum benefit from their contact with the Library.
- Standardise staff use of our new competency-based performance management system that promotes the corporate and role behaviours needed in an organisation focused on service.
- Monitor the progress of, and responses to, the cultural change in the Library using regular colleague opinion surveys.

Become an employer of choice

- Increase opportunities for career development through initiatives such as secondment, role-shadowing and project work.
- Increase the flexibility of our employment model and modernise the package of terms and conditions we offer to enable us to attract and retain the best people.
- Build a diverse workforce which encourages people from minority groups to choose a career in the Library.



01



02

01
All our managers are taking part in externally-run leadership development courses.

02
Staff increasingly blend scholarship with technical expertise.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6

Guarantee financial sustainability

The pace of delivery of our multi-faceted and challenging strategic agenda is dependent on securing the appropriate level of resources. We shall seek an increase in the level of our Grant in Aid funding from Government.

In addition, we are striving to supplement our public funding through fundraising and trading activities, and by maximising our efficiency to free up resources for our key priorities.

KEY AREA

Maximise our efficiency in line with the Gershon Report

Ensure we have the resources we need to deliver our strategy

Review the business model for Document Supply

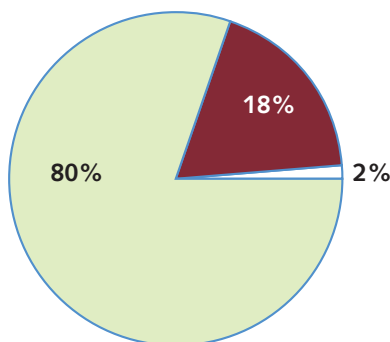
Implement a two-site estates strategy

ACTIONS AND BENEFITS

- Continue to modernise our organisation to free up resources for our strategic priorities. In 2005/06 we will deliver efficiencies of £7.6 million, which includes both new savings and redistribution of resources to our core activities and front-line services.
- Without the right level of resources, we cannot deliver on key parts of our strategy. We will be seeking additional government funding to underpin our priorities through Spending Review 2006.
- Exploit commercial opportunities consistent with our public role by building the right partnerships and services.
- Extend our successful fundraising programme to increase levels of giving and support.
- Work with major stakeholders of Document Supply services to develop a business model that is sustainable in the long-term to underpin UK research competitiveness.
- Rationalise our London estate so that we can house our collections, people and services in the best possible environment, aspiring to leave our Woolwich and Colindale facilities by 2010.

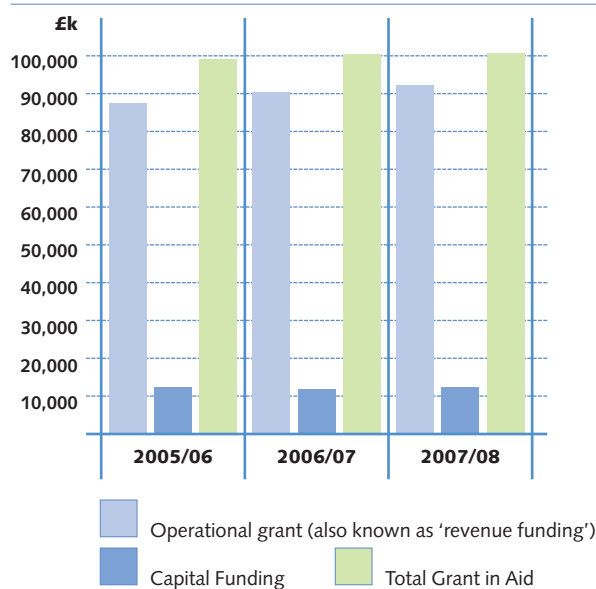
SOURCES OF INCOME

Annual projected average 2005-2008



Total Grant in Aid
 Total Trading Income
 Legacies, donations and other grants

GRANT IN AID FUNDING 2005-2008



CONTACT

For full information about the British Library see www.bl.uk
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FORMATS

Redefining the Library is available in large print, Braille and audio formats.

To order, please contact strategy@bl.uk
or call +44 (0) 1937 546884

Cover definition from the Concise Oxford English Dictionary. Ed. Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson. Oxford University Press, 2004. Oxford Reference Online.
www.oxfordreference.com searched 5.5.05.

GLOSSARY

We are redefining the Library to meet the opportunities and responsibilities offered by the upsurge of digital information.

Technological innovation has created new words and given old ones new meaning. Throughout this document we have used words that are part of the new vocabulary of information science and technology. Some of these words haven't yet been captured and defined by the lexicographers – but we're responding to the changes they entail even as they're coined.

aggregator A service that gathers information published by different sources and organises it together under a common search interface. The aggregator may also license access to a collection of journals from many different publishers.

born digital Relating to a document that was created and exists only in a digital format. (www.wordspy.com)

dataset A dataset is any organised collection of data or information that has a common theme. A dataset might be a list of objects, a digital map, records of geological borehole samples, a collection of photographs at a certain location or of a certain subject, a database comprising records of pollution sites, a scientific report, a listing of results from a school project. (www.IndexGeo.com.au)

deep web Also known as 'invisible web'. Refers to a vast repository of underlying content, such as documents in online databases, that general-purpose web crawlers cannot reach. Both qualitative and quantitative in difference, deep web content is estimated at 500 times that of the surface web, yet has remained mostly untapped due to the limitations of traditional search engines. (www.llrx.com)

digital repository An organisation that has responsibility for the long-term maintenance of digital resources, as well as for making them available to communities agreed on by the depositor and the repository. (www.rlg.org)

digitisation The process of converting information into a digital format. In this format, information is organised into discrete units of data (called bits) that can be separately addressed (usually in multiple-bit groups called bytes). This is the binary data that computers and many devices with computing capacity (such as digital cameras and digital hearing aids) can process. (www.whatis.com)

e-legal deposit The UK Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003 extends previous legal deposit legislation passed nearly 100 years ago and enshrines the principle that electronic or e-publications and other non-print materials will be deposited in future under secondary legislation. It ensures that these publications can be saved as part of the published archive – and become an important resource for future generations of researchers and scholars.

grid computing Applying the resources of many computers in a network to a single problem at the same time – usually a scientific or technical problem that requires a great number of computer processing cycles or access to large amounts of data. Grid computing uses software to divide and farm out pieces of a program to as many as several thousand computers. A number of corporations, professional groups and university consortia have developed frameworks and software for managing grid computing projects. (www.whatis.com)

hybrid The hybrid library is one which provides a one stop shop for both hardcopy and electronic resources. Its information systems should provide the end user with a seamless interface that will allow them to locate printed books and journals held locally and at neighbouring sites at the same time as being able to find relevant online resources, electronic publications and digitised material. (www.ariadne.ac.uk)

imaging Imaging is the digital capture, storage, manipulation and delivery of copies of analogue originals, which may be texts, manuscripts, pictures or other information types.

ingest The process by which a digital file is accepted and loaded into a digital store, together with its descriptive information for subsequent retrieval.

Integrated Catalogue The British Library's most ambitious automation project. The project involved the migration of 29 million catalogue entries and related records from 14 legacy systems to a single cost-efficient collection management system. It is freely accessible on the web and in our Reading Rooms, and is the front end of the Integrated Library System which underpins a seamless acquisitions, cataloguing and ordering process.

knowledge transfer Within a modern, knowledge driven economy, knowledge transfer is about transferring good ideas, research results and skills between universities, other research organisations, business and the wider community to enable innovative new products and services to be developed. (www.ost.gov.uk)

metadata Data which describes other data. For example, a description of a database in terms of its structure and the relationship between the entities in it. (www.oxfordreference.com)

Open Access Digital works that are made available often at no cost to the reader on the public Internet for purposes of education and research. (US Association of Research Libraries: www.arl.org)

portal A web site or service that provides access to a number of sources of information and facilities, such as a directory of links to other web sites, search engines, email, online shopping, etc. (OED)

remote services Services supplied to users who are not onsite to take personal delivery. Remote services may be analogue or digital; remote users may be in the next street or across the world.

resource discovery Resource discovery involves the searching, locating and retrieving of information resources on computer-based networks, in response to queries of a human user or an automated mechanism. (www.digicult.info)

SME Small to medium-sized business enterprise; usually plural, SMEs. (OED)

text mining Also known as data mining. Information extraction to discover hidden facts contained in databases. Using a combination of machine learning, statistical analysis, modelling techniques and database technology, data mining finds patterns and subtle relationships in data and infers rules that allow the prediction of future results. (www.twocrows.com). A key element is the linking together of the extracted information to form new facts or new hypotheses to be explored further by more conventional means of experimentation. (www.sims.berkeley.edu)

Virtual Research Environment The purpose of a VRE is to help researchers in all disciplines manage the increasingly complex range of tasks involved in carrying out research. A VRE will provide a framework of applications, services and resources to support the underlying processes of research. (www.jisc.ac.uk)

WiFi Short for 'wireless fidelity'. A term for certain types of wireless local area networks (WLAN) that use specifications conforming to IEEE 802.11b. WiFi has gained acceptance in many environments as an alternative to a wired LAN. Many airports, hotels, and other services offer public access to WiFi networks so people can log onto the Internet and receive emails on the move. These locations are known as hotspots.