Cambridge University Library

Working together:
a strategic framework
2010–2013
Vision

Cambridge University Library will lay the foundation for a twenty-first-century library service to support the changing needs of teaching, learning and research. We will be a centre of excellence with a focus on exemplar services, collaborative working, delivering innovation and continuous development. During this transformational period we will encompass a wider range of services that will require innovation and careful risk management. This will be led by the University Librarian, who will provide leadership to the University’s valued community of libraries and librarians.

Catalysts for change

The academic community

- The changing needs of scholarly activities in a digital world push boundaries and create new areas for support and development.
- Rapid advances in technology offer exciting opportunities and previously unimaginable ways of working. At the centre is the user, with individual requiring customised support and services.
- ‘Open is the New Normal’ – the academic community increasingly calls for open access to all information to support teaching, learning and research.
- Today’s undergraduates have an expectation of ‘anything, anytime, anywhere’ and mobile technologies will form an essential part of systems that meet their expectations.
- Non-textual information is becoming increasingly commonplace in supporting teaching, learning and research.
- Research across disciplines and institutions will require national and international collaboration and partnerships between libraries to provide resources and support beyond organisational boundaries.

The Cambridge library community

- The General Board Review of Teaching and Learning Support Services (GBRTLSS) report sets out the roadmap for closer integration between the University Library, Faculty and Departmental libraries and other departments to offer a comprehensive and coherent approach to pedagogical support services.
■ Strategic partnerships with key University departments providing infrastructure support will underpin future developments for seamless, consistent and transparent services.

**Sustainability**

■ Government spending cuts to Higher Education Institutions’ budgets will affect libraries, necessitating a review of existing practices and future needs to ensure continued high-quality, yet cost-effective services.

■ The ability to demonstrate value for money will be expected by a variety of stakeholders.

■ Development activities, partnerships and attracting a wide range of external funding opportunities will play an increasingly important role influencing strategic priorities and operational requirements.

■ The urgent need to develop strategies to ensure long-term sustainability of critical resources and services will have to be addressed.

**Assumptions**

■ During the timeline of this strategic framework there will be a phased implementation of the recommendations of the GBRTLSS.

■ Risk assessment and management will continue to play an important part in ensuring the sustainability of our services and resources.

■ We will continue to have formal responsibility to conserve and develop our world class collections of unique and highly specialised material, while at the same time providing wider access, increasingly via digitisation and networking, or by options yet to be developed.

■ There will be reduced central funding for the foreseeable future.

■ We will continue to be a Legal Deposit Library. There will be marked expansion in the amount of material that is accessible in electronic form.

■ Management of printed materials, including deduplication and long term storage, will continue to be a primary activity.

■ Some core library functions will remain consistent while others will need to change in order to respond to the needs of the academic community.

■ The environmental agenda and focus on organisations’ carbon footprints will require energy-saving initiatives and prudent use of physical resources.
Services for teaching, learning and research

Access to information is essential to the academic life of the University. The University is home to a number of unique collections and our role in acquiring, managing and providing scholarly access to many of these collections will continue. The library system at Cambridge provides comprehensive access to printed materials for teaching, learning and research. At the same time there is a growing trend towards electronic information provision and the GBR-TLSS recommended that “the UL should be responsible for providing content: e-Books, electronic Journals, multimedia, interactive learning programmes, etc. to include procuring content from external sources, digitising local content, and promoting the generation of new content within Cambridge”.

At the heart of the report is the recommendation for the University Library to be given a pro-active role in the organisation of Faculty and Departmental libraries and liaising with College libraries with the aim of providing cost-effective high-quality delivery of library and e-information services through the University Librarian acting as Director of Library Services. This creates the opportunity for integrated provision of physical and electronic collections direct to staff and students of the University at their place of study or residence. During the period of this strategic framework, we will seek to lay the foundations for this vision to be realised.

The incorporation of the Centre for Applied Research in Educational Technology (CARET) into the Library will introduce the capacity to support innovation in teaching and learning, including the investigation and development of new technologies under the guidance of the proposed Teaching and Learning Services Steering Group. Furthermore, there is an opportunity for synergy between CARET staff dedicated to “advice on pedagogical issues and engagement with individual academics to develop new teaching” and library staff dedicated to the development of research skills.

The University’s Learning and Teaching Strategy contains a number of initiatives that we could support, including the school–university transition project (TranSkills), the integration of continuing education and the capacity to generate and analyse data are all directly in the remit of our expanded role. Moreover, it is expected that CARET will contribute to meeting the aim of improved dissemination of good practice and the encouragement of enhanced teaching and learning.

Key objectives

- Engage closely with teaching staff, students and library teams throughout Cambridge to develop an integrated, subject-based provision for teaching and learning as well as research and to pilot it within at least one Department.

- Continue to develop our special collections and improve access and support to researchers studying those collections. Create greater efficiency in access to printed materials and ejournals. Work with the Journals Coordination Steering Committee to maximise the value of the University’s subscriptions.
Increase the teaching use of digital resources created or purchased by us.

Work with the Teaching and Learning Services Steering Group to develop and deliver services as referred to in the Learning and Teaching Strategy and the GBRTLSS.

Work with other partners in the University to implement and maintain the most acceptable, useful and mutually beneficial way of delivering the highest quality services to meet academic requirements. This will include partnership arrangements for the delivery of CamTools production services.

Provide responsive and informative reference and enquiry services, offering relevant user education, information and material in the format required by the user, taking into account their individual needs and media preferences.

Encourage the fullest exploitation of education technology and the continued development of e-research and e-learning, investigating the use of new information media.

Content development and delivery

Our world-class collections underpin the University’s mission to pursue education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence. Maintaining excellence in collections in a federated environment will require an infrastructure to support University-wide decision-making in collection development, especially digital collections. This will include the provision of funding models and management of appropriate deduplication of collections that build on, and refine, the experiences gained and lessons learned in coordinating journal and ebook acquisition.

The dissemination and delivery of information resources are rapidly being transformed in an era of technological change. Users increasingly expect seamless discovery, the ability to connect to full text online without barriers and the right to reuse content in their own workspaces. Collection description in a networked world will require the adoption of standards encompassing the full range of library collections, supporting new approaches to resource discovery, interoperability and content aggregation.

The shifting balance of preferences between print and digital, already seen in journal use, the opportunities to support remote and mobile working and potential avoidance of duplication in adopting electronic formats will affect collection development priorities. At the same time, different types of user require content in different forms – from digital or print to original manuscripts, maps and photographs. Our Collection Development Policy will be developed to reflect changing needs.
The Library is a significant creator of content, particularly through our digitisation projects, and we have taken a key role in the collection, storage and preservation of digital content created by the scholarly community and University administration. We will continue to develop this role through the management of the University’s institutional repository (DSpace@Cambridge) and a programme of digital preservation. We will exploit opportunities for the creation of content through a digitisation programme that encompasses both our special collections and material to support teaching and learning.

**Key objectives**

- Review collection development policies to ensure the best possible match with the needs of teaching, learning and research.
- Develop models to support University-wide decision-making in collection development, including the provision of funding models and the management of appropriate deduplication of collections.
- Continue to develop electronic collections to meet the needs of teaching, learning and research in a federated library environment, including ejournals through the Journals Coordination Scheme; manage and expand a University-wide ebook collection, building upon the success of the ebooks@cambridge joint initiative between the University and College libraries; and provide other forms of electronic full text.
- Implement our digitisation strategy, seeking grant and donor funding opportunities and pursuing appropriate collaborations, both internal and external. Include the creation of content in support of teaching and learning such as examination papers, out-of-copyright books, and electronic theses.
- Affirm the importance of legal deposit as one of the principal foundations on which our collections have been built and work with publishers and other legal deposit libraries to support the extension of legal deposit to digital publications through secondary legislation and its implementation.
- Develop, enhance access to and promote our special collections in both physical and digital forms to support teaching, learning and research; ensure the history and provenance of special collections in their physical form are widely accessible and the significance of this properly understood; affirm our important role in the preservation and sharing of our cultural heritage.
- Promote the discoverability and use of library collections in all formats through the selection and consistent use of suitable metadata standards and the provision of appropriate innovative technologies.
- Develop procedures and skills for managing the IPR of content which we own or host in order to facilitate its use.
Digital infrastructure

Our digital infrastructure provides a set of services and systems to support access to, and management of, library content and curation of scholarly digital content for the University. During the next three years we will continue to build a wider role in supporting the growing demand from users for mobile working, accessing library content at any time and from any place, greater personalisation of services and a more interactive experience.

Implementation of a user-friendly search and discovery tool for library materials (resource discovery platform) will provide a new-generation interface to the Library catalogues and greater opportunities to develop seamless services for users around it. The Library and CARET will work together to exploit the capabilities of systems and the virtual learning and research environment, in support of teaching, learning and research.

The University’s repository service, DSpace@Cambridge, will occupy a central place in the digital library, facilitating the deposit and reuse of content from a wide variety of sources, and the preservation and dissemination of content, while ASpace@Cambridge will manage the University’s digital archives.

Non-textual content – images, sound and video – are increasingly important to users. The creation, management and exploitation of such content will play an important role in making our collections more widely accessible but will require investment in equipment and support systems.

Key objectives

- Exploit mobile and Web 2.0 technologies and provide flexible, user-friendly access to library content and services, embedding them where appropriate within users’ and University workspaces.
- Explore opportunities for interaction and function between library systems and those of CARET, the Management Information Services Division and the University Computing Service to optimise and personalise information services in support of teaching, learning and research.
- Develop our digitisation capacity along with a sustainable business model for digitisation services, and scalable, interoperable and standards-based systems to manage and disseminate digitised content.
- Develop and implement a digital preservation strategy, to include research data management support.
- Continue to build the institutional repository as a central University service for the collection, secure storage and dissemination of digital material.
- Develop and implement a framework for ICT which is effective in providing services for library users and staff, makes appropriate use of innovative technologies, provides value for money, and meets the University’s business continuity, disaster recovery and environmental requirements.
The Library as place

The Library is a virtual as well as physical space, and an increasing amount of content will be delivered digitally to our users working remotely. We are also conscious that the way we use space will need to change and to that end we will continue to explore improvements of the physical environment designed to enhance the user experience. The physical environment will continue to have an important role as a welcoming and inspiring place for users, staff and visitors to meet and work, alone or in groups, and as a repository for the physical collections, to which access will still be required. The size and scope of these collections distinguishes the University Library, and we are committed to preserving and securing this unique cultural heritage for future generations, and to its effective and efficient management.

Key objectives

- Develop the Library’s web presence to reflect its importance as the gateway to our collections and services.
- Review the configuration of library spaces and their use in light of changing expectations and new ways of working.
- Make the best possible use of open and closed access storage areas so that collections in most demand are kept closest to our users.
- Optimise the security and preservation of the collections using the latest technology.
- Enhance the role of the physical library as a place in which to engage University and other groups with our services and collections through a broad range of outreach activities.

Finance

The changing information landscape brings exciting opportunities to invest in new services and resources. However, the reality of reduced central funding for the foreseeable future means that we must respond proactively in seeking external funding to build our collections and services. Fundraising will be critical to the Library maintaining its world-class status. We will continue to deliver high-quality core services while at the same time exploring new ways of adding value to these services. Reduced funding provides a timely catalyst to examine the cost-effectiveness of existing activities and processes, as we look to leading pedagogical support across the University. A careful programme of consolidation will reduce costs and allow us to provide more efficient and effective services in line with the University’s academic priorities.
Key objectives

- Direct resources to support the emerging needs of the Cambridge scholarly community.
- Harness developments in IT which make delivery of services more cost-effective and efficient.
- Adopt a more entrepreneurial approach to funding opportunities to deliver our key priorities.
- Continue to work closely with the University Development Office in order to increase income from external sources.
- Seek cost savings through collaboration with peer institutions. Further our efforts to work with external partners to share costs and resources.
- Further develop the model which ensures access to, and not always ownership of, scholarly resources when it is more appropriate to do so.
- Continue to demonstrate accountability and transparency in the use of our resources.
- Continue to develop the use of metrics and quality assurance programmes to monitor performance and ensure optimal use of resources.

Partnerships

Partnerships and collaboration are crucial to every aspect of our strategic framework. The economic downturn means that we must now concentrate more than ever on organisational working relationships which make long term economic sense. It will be impossible for us to hold and do everything on our own. We therefore must channel our particular strengths and provide coordinated, sustainable and focused services which support the variety of our users’ needs across the research and undergraduate communities. Collaboration should underpin the Library’s role in the University’s research strategy, providing us with an exciting opportunity to engage more extensively and responsively with researchers. Collaboration will also be a crucial element in developing the library infrastructure that supports teaching and learning. Priority must be given to funding those projects, resources or tools that can be shared or support interoperability.

While issues around the preservation and conservation of digital materials remain a challenge for the global library community, there is a wealth of expertise that Cambridge can contribute in this area. Securing long-term access to scholarly literature is achievable through participation in and/or membership of digital preservation, repository and archiving services, and through the forging of closer relationships with commercial and not-for-profit content providers.
Key objectives

- Develop effective working relationships with the academic community in order to further their scholarly endeavours.
- Develop effective partnerships with librarians across the University and Colleges of Cambridge in order to provide seamless library and information services for the research and undergraduate communities.
- Initiate or participate in innovative collaborative projects which benefit the Cambridge academic community.
- Establish and develop partnerships with institutions of similar mission to deliver ways of sharing costs and resources to sustain and improve high-quality library collections and services for current and future users.
- Develop partnerships with commercial and not-for-profit bodies to develop new services for the benefit of our user community.
- Participate in professional library organisations/bodies in formulating and advocating national and international policies that will support the further development of coordinated library and information services.

Developing as an organisation

At the heart of our ability to provide exemplar services in support of the University’s mission lies the relationship we have with our users and the staff who deliver the resources, services and support. In order to embrace new opportunities in a digital world, we will need to keep abreast of the changing needs of our users, develop effective mechanisms to understand and respond to these changing needs and employ our resources in appropriate ways. In this, our staff is our biggest asset. We are committed to recruiting, developing and retaining highly skilled staff to support the current and future needs of the academic community.

Key objectives

- Promote our services to all our users and harness feedback to provide innovative and responsive solutions to their needs and to improve services.
- Further develop a strong focus on high-quality customer services embedded in a culture of openness and support.
- Demonstrate effectiveness by monitoring performance and benchmarking in relation to peer institutions.
- Demonstrate commitment to supporting the development of library staff at all levels across Cambridge to be able to continue providing exemplar services in the future.
- Increase engagement with University-wide initiatives and outreach activities to raise awareness of the Library, our collections and role.

- Communicate effectively with library staff to improve efficiency, decision-making and team-work.

- Foster an organisational culture which encourages greater flexibility across teams and departments to facilitate collaborative working in support of our strategy.

- Raise the Library’s profile through professional activities and publications, contributing to research and development at national and international levels.