Transforming the Library vision and strategy

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Transforming the Library
Vision and Strategy

June 2019
Vision for a Changing University Library

1. As we approach the third decade of the twenty-first century, universities find themselves reshaped by several significant forces, including social and educational cultures transformed by technology, globalisation in higher education and intense competition for students. In this environment our vision at the University of St Andrews is of a changing University Library retaining its central place in the learning and research lives of students and academics.

2. Our strategy will be underpinned by the following four core principles:

   - Embracing Digital
   - Focused Collecting
   - Empowered Research
   - High Quality Study Space

3. To meet the changing needs of our users over the next five years, the University Library must itself progress and change. At the heart of our academic library services is the provision of research resources and the ambition to provide these to users as efficiently as possible. While the University Library continues its important role in housing and providing books, it also acts as a supplier of research content and material in multiple formats. Much of this is now digital, and the potential for digital collections to transform the way we work and benefit our research community is clear. The University Library is poised to take advantage of the full possibilities of modern content formats and tools, and is transitioning to embrace digital. This means that we will as far as possible privilege content in its digital form.

4. Embracing Digital is a practical goal, and expresses the Library’s contribution to the Digital Strategy which will underpin the new University Strategy. We want to understand the settled role of digital content and its tools in the service offer of a modern research library. The transformation to digital affords greater versatility and flexibility for users of much of the content we provide. With attention to the varied needs of different academic disciplines, for students on many taught courses we will provide ebooks and digitised readings as a priority. For researchers who seek to make use of our special collections of unique and distinctive materials, we will provide both enhanced physical access in St Andrews and digital proxies to widen access to our collections to scholars working anywhere in the world without restriction. For researchers who contribute to the new open access environment, together with our colleagues in Research & Innovation Services (RIS) the Library offers guidance on digital publishing with maximum impact.

5. We will seek to reach a point of optimal balance for all disciplines between digital and analogue content and collections, and we will continue to provide content in its physical form where there is no alternative or where materiality is important to the user experience. We shall also use digital tools, including social media, to raise awareness of physical collections and encourage visits to our Library spaces. Switching to digital will also be done where it permits us to free up space for inspirational spaces and collections. As our holdings become increasingly digital, we shall embrace the new technologies of digital curation and digital preservation to guard against unintended loss of materials, and to ensure the value of the long-term investment in our collections irrespective of their format.

6. Whether in digital or physical format, the University Library continues to collect. We will refine our collecting strategies with a sharpened focus on the courses being taught and on areas of current and imminent active research in our Schools, centres and institutes. Our research support service will be further developed to help all our researchers – whose work sustains and drives the University’s reputation for excellence – obtain the resources they require, as well as helping to ensure that they make their publications and data openly available in line with the University Strategy’s commitment to Social Responsibility.

7. Today’s University Library estate is strongly focused on study space – for intensive individual study and for group work. We aim to provide students with the environment which is their primary workspace, distinct from
timetabled space (classroom, teaching laboratory or lecture theatre) and residential space. This is an important element of student well-being and of instilling a shared sense of the importance of a strong commitment to study. To provide optimised study space while retaining access to physical books, some lesser used print resources are currently being relocated. This is a trend evidenced in most university research libraries, and although St Andrews has been slower to adopt this approach than sector leaders, since 2011 we have been gradually moving towards a model of prioritising study space provision. The highest-use printed books will, of course, remain in the Main Library building. Lower-use material will be held in the Walter Bower House (WBH) Research Collection, accessible through an easy library search on any chosen device, and openly browsable for borrowing. A ‘scan and deliver’ service will provide digital delivery of journal articles or book chapters, within copyright limits. We will also continue to deliver requested physical items for collection in the Main Library.

8. The Library will develop its management of learning and research workspaces across multiple venues, with a range of quiet zones for individual study and an increased number of group study locations, aiming to provide each to a high quality, verifiable and monitored standard. Within this provision it will locate a number of neutral meeting spaces that can be used by academic staff for interdisciplinary research seminars, thereby assisting with the University Strategy’s commitment to develop a world-leading interdisciplinary focus in a number of areas. With the campus estate developments that are planned over the next few years, the Library will open and manage new learning hubs across the University estate. In the future, users will be able more quickly to locate the spaces that work best for their needs - whether in the Main Library, the WBH Research Collection, Martyrs Kirk, King James Library, the libraries we operate on the North Haugh, or in one of a range of existing and additional new library spaces (including at Madras South Street), several of which will be open 24 hours.

9. Planning is underway for a Collections Research Centre to provide integrated access to our special collections of rare books, manuscripts, archives and photographs, together with the University’s museum research collections. These collections are unique and bring researchers from across the world to the University in order to study them. We will continue to develop these holdings over the next five years through collecting, cataloguing and digitisation. A dedicated Collections Research Centre will offer an enhanced researcher experience for collections that are a defining feature of the University and offer considerable opportunities for our students, our staff and the wider research community.

10. By 2023, we will understand and be comfortable with the place of digital in our services, our physical collections will represent an important, well-curated and highly valued asset, our research support services will expand, and the design of our spaces will be enhanced to meet and balance the differing needs of our users. With its services and collections central to the lives of taught students and researchers, the Library will be more vital to the University than ever.
Principles and Goals

**Principle 1: Embracing Digital**

Our vision is to provide ebooks, ejournals, online search tools and digitised readings as a priority, and to provide digital proxies of items from our unique and rare collections to better enable worldwide unrestricted online access to our collections.

**Goal 1:** Develop, preserve and promote content which meets the needs of all users, based upon an extended digital collection footprint.

**Goal 2:** Deliver innovative library services which support new pedagogies, modes of delivery and lifelong learning.

**Principle 2: Focused Collecting**

Our vision is to provide a sharpened focus on the courses being taught in our Schools, and the areas of current and imminent active research in our Schools, centres and institutes. We will seek to provide integrated access to our special collections of rare books, manuscripts, archives and photographs, together with the University’s museum research collections, advancing our impressive range of unique and distinctive materials in collecting focus, description and digitisation.

**Goal 1:** Develop and manage our collections and content to act as an enabler of the success of the research priorities of the University, including the interdisciplinary themes prioritised in the University Strategy (‘World-leading St Andrews’).

**Goal 2:** Harness the power of our special collections as a resource for research.

**Goal 3:** Extend the benefits of Library collections and services to local communities as far as possible, and fully embrace our public service responsibilities in alignment with the University Strategy (‘University Social Responsibility’).

**Principle 3: Empowered Research**

Our vision is to provide an excellent research support service in order that our researchers can obtain the resources they require, as well as ensuring that they make their publications and data openly available. In advancing the open knowledge environment for research publishing, we shall work in partnership with colleagues in the Digital Research team in RIS.

**Goal 1:** Support excellent research by meeting our researchers’ needs for scholarly resources at the time and in the forms required.

**Goal 2:** Facilitate the move to an open knowledge environment through the promotion and support of open research and an ‘open by default’ commitment for St Andrews’ research outputs.

**Principle 4: High Quality Study Space**

Our vision is to manage the University’s common study space across multiple venues, with a range of quiet zones for individual study and an increased number of group study locations and learning hubs.

**Goal 1:** Create inspiring physical and digital Library environments which connect users with scholarly resources and services at point of need.

**Goal 2:** Be fully at the heart of our user communities, offering service excellence and a consistent, high quality experience across all Library spaces, services and interactions.

**Goal 3:** Manage and develop the Library’s estate and its collections, physical and digital, as sustainably and efficiently as possible, with full attention to our responsibility to collections that are required by the University for the long term.

**Commitments**

**Embracing Digital**

**Goal 1:** Develop, preserve and promote content which meets the needs of all users, based upon an extended digital collection footprint.

*What we will do*

The University of St Andrews is a charity registered in Scotland, No: SC013532
• Privilege digital content where appropriate to widen access to Library resources for users, investing in the technical, organisational and skills infrastructure to deliver it and providing dedicated support and communication to Library users and Schools through transformational change.

• Manage and enhance our digital asset and collection metadata to support new digital processes, improve collection analysis and promote discovery and impact internationally.

• Redesign an accessible, responsive Library digital presence which showcases Library collections and services, provides enhanced discovery of internal and external collections, and offers digital alternatives to traditional services. Integrate disparate systems to present a seamless experience for users.

Goal 2: Deliver innovative library services which support new pedagogies, modes of delivery and lifelong learning.

What we will do
• Anticipate and respond to new pedagogical approaches, changes in technology and student expectations, developing innovative, personalised service models across both physical and virtual environments.

• Position library services and resources at point of need by continuous improvement to ensure they are and remain embedded in learning and teaching workflows, platforms, devices and tools.

• Enhance student capabilities and employability by providing support for digital and information literacy.

Focused Collecting

Goal 1: Develop and manage our collections and content to act as an enabler of the success of the research priorities of the University, including the interdisciplinary themes prioritised in the University Strategy (‘World-leading St Andrews’).

What we will do
• Led by the Assistant Vice-Principal (Collections & Digital Content) and in partnership with academics, manage and enhance our collections to stimulate new research possibilities.

• Focus our collection development on the teaching and research strengths of our Schools, research centres and institutes.

• Promote our collections as a resource to support research across disciplinary boundaries.

• Work closely with Schools to support new and emerging subjects and interdisciplinary teaching areas.

• Design and deliver ambitious strategies to embed the use of our collections in learning and teaching, attracting scholars from across the University and beyond.

Goal 2: Harness the power of our special collections as a resource for research.

What we will do
• Stimulate research using our world-leading special collections by making them as openly and widely available as possible through digitisation, discovery, promotion and long-term preservation.

• Develop relationships between the planned Collections Research Centre and Schools, research centres and institutes, exploiting its potential as an integrated cultural materials resource to support scholarship, conservation science, digital humanities and the Visiting Scholars programme.

Goal 3: Extend the benefits of Library collections and services to local communities as far as possible, and fully embrace our public service responsibilities in alignment with the University Strategy (‘University Social Responsibility’).

What we will do
• Partner with other cultural services - Museums, the Byre Theatre, Music Centre and Botanic Gardens - alongside academic staff and students, to engage the public with our collections in programmes and events which are enjoyable, inspiring, experimental and dynamic.

• Partner with RIS to deliver benefits to society, particularly where research is publicly funded, by enabling researchers to manage the research process and results in as open, accessible and reusable a way as possible.
• Make available our most significant material to all who wish to access it, and preserve the University’s digital and physical heritage and research collections for future generations.

• Use existing and new data to better understand and identify our audiences, to inform programming and to help attract new and under-represented audiences.

• Develop a widening access agenda to inspire school and Further Education students to engage with our collections and experience a university library environment.

• Engage in public outreach activities with academic partners to apply digital scholarship tools and techniques to our content and collections.

• Make a difference to the communities in which we operate through supporting local and national charities and not-for-profit organisations, and through encouraging our staff to contribute their expertise to fundraising and voluntary initiatives.

**Empowered Research**

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**What we will do**

• Provide researchers with the materials they need for understanding, inspiration, creative reaction and original thought.

• Support the RIS Digital Research team to provide an excellent scholarly publications support and advice service to researchers, expert in new and emerging scholarly communications models, responsive to different disciplines and career stages, and supporting the University’s research strategy and assessment requirements.

• Take a leading role in national and global initiatives to promote the sharing of research outputs as widely, efficiently and openly as possible for the benefit of all.
Goal 2: Facilitate the move to an open knowledge environment through the promotion and support of open research and an ‘open by default’ commitment for St Andrews’ research outputs.

What we will do

- In partnership with RIS, develop the knowledge and skills of Library staff and University researchers to maximise the impact of our research activities and outputs through open scholarship. Lead and embed best practice in academic Schools.
- Embed the discovery and reuse of open content across all library services.
- Working with RIS Digital Research, anticipate and actively respond to changing models in scholarly publishing. Identify and exploit new resource formats and delivery models which offer opportunities for more effective or efficient service delivery.
- Promote research integrity as part of a broader University commitment to open research, as presented in the University Strategy (‘University Social Responsibility’ and ‘World-leading St Andrews’), working closely with RIS Digital Research and the Vice Principal (Research).

High Quality Study Space

Goal 1: Create inspiring physical and digital Library environments which connect users with scholarly resources and services at point of need.

What we will do

- Partner with students and staff in the development of new Library spaces and services.
- Develop and manage innovative new study environments adapted to the pedagogic needs of taught students working individually or in groups, and to the needs of researchers, including provision for collaborative engagement and of ‘neutral’ space to host interdisciplinary meetings on behalf of academic colleagues.
- Present plans for a fit-for-purpose Collections Research Centre which stimulates use of rare books, manuscripts, archives, photographic and museum collections in learning and teaching, breaking down barriers to access while ensuring their long-term preservation.
- Extend the Library presence across the University campus through a network of Library spaces and learning hubs which offer engaging learning environments tailored to local needs and catering for different learning styles.
- Engage with Schools and Units to understand and influence the wider estate strategy and ensure library spaces are developed in alignment with the University Strategy’s objectives for planned growth in student numbers, lifelong learning, new audiences and modes of delivery.
- Work in partnership with Development colleagues to grow philanthropic support for improvements to the Library estate and collections.

Goal 2: Be fully at the heart of our user communities, offering service excellence and a consistent, high quality experience across all Library spaces, services and interactions.

What we will do

- Create a comprehensive evidence-base of analytics data, user observation and feedback to support management and leadership decision-making, ensuring the delivery of fully-informed services based on user and collection knowledge.
- Review and restructure Library governance and representation on University bodies in order to position the Library at the heart of the University so that we are aligned with the University Strategy, and are agile and responsive to changing requirements.
- Maintain service excellence during staff and collection moves to WBH and the next phase of Main Library Redevelopment.

Goal 3: Manage and develop the Library’s estate and its collections, physical and digital, as sustainably and efficiently as possible, with full attention to our responsibility to collections that are required by the University for the long term.

What we will do

The University of St Andrews is a charity registered in Scotland, No: SC013532
• Ensure we have the right physical collections in the right place, the correct format and available at the right time across our distributed estate, with high-use material in the Main Library, research material at WBH, and unique and rare material in the planned Centre for Research Collections.

• In partnership with Estates, develop a state-of-the-art energy-efficient approach across the entire Library estate to achieve a sustainable environment while meeting all standards for collections care and user comfort.

• Ensure constant evaluation of the usage of all Library environments in order to assess and maximise space and efficiency.

• Engage with students and other users to enable decisions to be made which reflect both service expectations and an understanding of our environmental impact.

• Utilise green transport initiatives for movement of Library staff and collections across a distributed Library and University estate and beyond.

• Move to paperless processes in order to increase efficiency and reduce our environmental impact.

• Continue to participate and lead in consortia and national site-licensing initiatives, open access promotion and practice, and agreements to share resources nationally and internationally.

• Actively engage with Scottish and UK initiatives in collaborative collections management to rationalise print collections, ensuring their long-term preservation and continued access for users. Engage in national discussions on the potential for shared storage to release space locally while maintaining access to low-use collections.

• In partnership with RIS and IT Services, provide a trusted, sustainable and scalable digital preservation service to all University stakeholders to protect the investment in the move to digital scholarly collections, paperless processes and critical digital assets such as University records, research data and e-theses.

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