

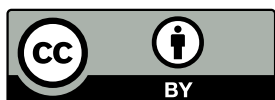
BRITISH  
LIBRARY

Growing Knowledge: The British Library's Strategy

2011–2015

Advancing the world's knowledge

www.bl.uk



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# Foreword

The British Library is one of the greatest libraries in the world. Taken together, 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. The collection – which consists of some 150 million items – is unconstrained by subject, geography, format or language.

As a major international research library, in receipt of the UK legal deposit privilege, we preserve the intellectual memory of the nation, we are a major player in the research ecosystem, we support economic growth and we offer an essential treasure house of the history, technological development and culture of the world.

*We will need to do more with less and we must be clear about our priorities, our responsibilities and our constraints*

The British Library connects with the past, the present and the future. What matters to us is that we preserve the national memory and enable knowledge to be created both now and in the future. Our role is a dynamic one of helping to grow the world's knowledge base through the stimulation of fresh ideas and applied insights.

The creation of the British Library by Act of Parliament, in 1972, followed by the opening of its flagship building at St Pancras in 1998, have proved to be two of the most exciting developments of UK library and information services in the 20th century. We are now reinterpreting our 1970s ideals in a 21st century context in order to remain a leader in the global networked information environment.

As a guarantor of continued public access to both our rich legacy of content and new forms of digital content, it is essential that we take a long-term view. In today's climate of significant financial challenge, we believe it is more important than ever to have a strong sense of our priorities. We believe that this clarity of purpose will ensure that we can continue to innovate and deliver essential public services for the benefit of the economy and society.

We launched our 2020 vision ([www.bl.uk/2020vision](http://www.bl.uk/2020vision)) in September 2010 at a time of severe financial challenge which is likely to persist in the medium term. The consequences of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review are that we will need to do more with less and we must be clear about our priorities, our responsibilities and our constraints. Our ambitious vision for 2020 requires our resources to be allocated in a smart way – effectively and efficiently.

In this context we present our Strategy 2011–2015 which sets out how we intend incrementally to move towards delivering our vision over the next four years. Our strategy is to focus on five clear priorities. We will focus on enabling access to everyone who wants to do research and on enriching the cultural life of the nation.

**Dame Lynne Brindley**  
**Chief Executive**



# Our values

Our values represent the aspirations of our individual and collective behaviour. They guide our day-to-day decision making. In order to achieve the vision we have set out for 2020, we will endeavour to put these values at the heart of everything we do.

## **We inspire**

We aim to inspire people around the world through our content and expertise. We are passionate about sharing information and are inspired by our users and their contributions.

## **We innovate**

We nurture leading-edge innovations and promote an entrepreneurial spirit.

We take measured risk and bring about change through informed and agile decision making.

## **We collaborate**

We work in partnership to achieve more by working together than we could do on our own.

We strive to be an open, responsive and reflective organisation.

## **We enable**

We aim to work with our users to create new insights from our content and to develop world-leading services.

We strive to encourage and empower our staff to seize new opportunities.

## **We respect**

We promote respect for our users and stakeholders and for one another.

We care for the collection and respect legal and institutional frameworks.

## **We learn**

We will continue to learn from others. We integrate the expertise of our users into our networks.

We work to share our ideas and expertise.

# Our mission and vision

**Our mission:** Advancing the world's knowledge.

**Our vision:** In 2020 the British Library will be a leading hub in the global information network, advancing knowledge through our collections, expertise and partnerships, for the benefit of the economy and society and the enrichment of cultural life.

**Our vision is supported by five key themes which set out the strategic priorities for the Library:**

- 1: Guarantee access for future generations.
- 2: Enable access to everyone who wants to do research.
- 3: Support research communities in key areas for social and economic benefit.
- 4: Enrich the cultural life of the nation.
- 5: Lead and collaborate in growing the world's knowledge base.



Images above: St Pancras building exterior © Clive Sherlock.  
British Library Treasures App for iPhone, iPad and Android smartphones.

# Context

We launched our 2020 vision in September 2010, following twelve months of extensive and wide-ranging research and consultation. Our 2020 vision highlights what are likely to be the key trends and opportunities over the next decade and indicates how we will develop as an organisation to take fullest advantage of the opportunities available to increase access to the world's knowledge base. We see enormous opportunities for the future.

## Our changing context

- The digital revolution is fundamentally changing the Library's business, allowing wider access than has ever before been possible and enabling increases in the efficiency of service provision.
- The Government has an expressed commitment to supporting research, underpinning economic development and encouraging lifelong learning, an aspiration the Library shares.
- The continuing acceleration in the move towards an information society places the Library at the centre of the UK's cultural, scientific and economic development.
- The growing desire in Government for greater collaboration in the provision of public services matches the Library's goals of developing its approach for collecting, access and preservation in the context of shared stewardship arrangements with other major research libraries.
- The increase in collaborative working within the research community and elsewhere makes the Library receptive to opportunities to participate in external partnerships in cases where other players are able to provide the funding.
- Given the drive for universities and businesses to work together, the Library has an important role to play by bringing a closer alignment to our business and higher education marketing functions, engaging more with those academics who go on to join and/or create businesses, and supporting new entrants to get their business models right.
- In response to the Government's Public Sector Information Initiative, we can work with innovative developers of applications to build new and valuable services, based on our content, that can help the information economy to grow.

- There is rising demand from users for innovative, mobile services which are easy and fun to use. As we develop new products and services, the Library will be cognisant of these requirements and, in so doing, assess the extent to which we bridge the digital divide.
- The Library will increasingly support interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research as a means of enabling the UK to respond to global challenges and societal needs.

These opportunities arise at a time when the Library will have to respond to financial reductions:

- a 15% reduction in resource Grant in Aid by 2014/15
- a halving of our baseline capital budget over the next four years, 2011/12 to 2014/15.

We are therefore entering into a financial environment which will be fundamentally different from the one we have known. We will have to deliver spending reductions at an unprecedented level and, by 2014, our Grant in Aid will be at the lowest level, in real terms, since the Library's inception in 1973.

## Our strategic priorities

**We have developed our Strategy 2011–2015, covering the four years of our Grant in Aid settlement. The Strategy contains five strategic priorities, based on our five 2020 vision themes. Those five strategic priorities are as follows:**

- 1: Guarantee access for future generations
- 2: Enable access to everyone who wants to do research
- 3: Support research communities in key areas for social and economic benefit
- 4: Enrich the cultural life of the nation
- 5: Lead and collaborate in growing the world's knowledge base

All five strategic priorities are valuable in that they enable us to support a wide range of users, with varied needs. However, in a period of constraint, we will need to focus our efforts on essential activities:

- We attach greatest weight to those activities which represent our statutory remit to make accessible the nation's and the world's store house of recorded knowledge, both now and in the future. We will use Grant in Aid first and foremost in support of those activities.
- We will provide tailored services for researchers in focused areas to the extent to which we are able to work in partnership and obtain external funding.
- We will use Grant in Aid to help us maintain our programme of public engagement and support for learners, but we will endeavour to supplement Grant in Aid support as far as possible by other funding sources for this.
- We will look to develop our leadership and collaborative approaches to enhance our offerings.

Within the context of the constrained resources available to us, our key implementation priorities are to:

- Achieve regulations enabling implementation of the Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003
- Manage the ingest and storage of voluntary and legal deposit content
- Develop the Library's digital infrastructure
- Open a state-of-the-art facility for storage of physical newspapers
- Develop selective collaborative stewardship arrangements to collect and connect to content
- Digitise up to 20 million pages from the Library's newspaper collection in partnership with **brightsolid**
- Establish, in partnership, at least one major new large-scale digitisation initiative in addition to our newspaper digitisation initiative
- Obtain agreements from publishers to provide access to licensed materials offsite through a range of models.

## Cultural change

In order to pave the way towards achieving our 2020 vision, we will continue to reinforce our programme of cultural change to embed our values across the organisation. These represent the aspirations of our individual and collective behaviours. In addition, we

will continue to develop the skills and agility of our staff to enable continuous improvements to be made to our services at a time of diminishing resources. We will focus on the development of:

- Leadership capability (including creativity and innovation, encouraging experimentation and embracing change)
- Professional skills (digital skills in particular)
- Core skills around project management and delivery.

## Financial challenges

To address the severe funding shortfall, we will accelerate initiatives to make cost reductions and pursue opportunities available to us to diversify income streams. We will maximise our ability to deliver in the more challenging financial environment we face by:

- Moving towards a smaller, highly skilled, permanent core workforce, facilitated by a range of service delivery models
- Maintaining a culture of continuous improvement, and identifying opportunities for efficiencies, increased effectiveness and invest-to-save initiatives.

We will develop and grow revenue streams and contribution by:

- Reviewing existing revenue-generating services and seeking opportunities to develop new services
- Developing and rolling out our brand licensing proposition
- Improving our e-commerce offering and leveraging customer relationship management capability to drive up-sell and cross-sell.

We will develop and grow philanthropic giving by:

- Refreshing the 'Campaign for the British Library'
- Continuing to develop and build our relations with current and potential future donors and, specifically, developing ongoing partnerships with a small number of corporates.

We have a well-defined set of strategic priorities and a clear programme in place to optimise organisational capacity and capability in the light of the funding environment. We will report progress each year in our Annual Report and will do everything we can to protect the Library's key priorities.

# Strategic Priority 1: Guarantee access for future generations

Our ambition is to preserve digital content for the long term in order to safeguard our intellectual heritage so that it can be used by future generations of researchers. At the same time, inter-operability of library systems and automated processing open up the potential for a re-think of traditional stewardship and collecting. We will continue to develop our world-class stewardship skills in conservation and preservation of traditional content.

Objectives	Actions
<b>Implement voluntary and statutory deposit arrangements for born digital content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Achieve regulations enabling implementation of the Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003, through working with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), publishers, the legal deposit libraries and other stakeholders</li> <li>■ Collect the free UK web domain on a regular and agreed basis</li> <li>■ Implement operational and technical solutions to collect content which is priced or subject to public access restrictions, as covered by the regulations.</li> </ul>
<b>Review our content strategy to ensure our content meets the needs of researchers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Refresh our content strategy based on a range of factors including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ the needs of researchers</li> <li>■ global trends</li> <li>■ relevance to the UK</li> <li>■ UK research priorities</li> <li>■ historic strengths of the Library's collection</li> <li>■ the continuing digital transition.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Develop models for the integration of user generated content into the Library's collection to enrich the Library's resources</li> <li>■ Optimise the value for money of our acquisition spend in light of researcher and publisher trends and our long-term strategy.</li> </ul>
<b>Develop and utilise our digital library infrastructure for storing and preserving digital materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Manage the ingest and storage of voluntary and legal deposit content by enabling the interoperability of systems in the British Library, the National Library of Wales and the National Library of Scotland</li> <li>■ Develop technical, operational and cost models to enable other legal deposit libraries to benefit from access to the digital library infrastructure</li> <li>■ Lead and be involved in active alliances within the field of digital preservation to share and increase our knowledge in this area</li> <li>■ Develop the Library's digital library infrastructure in line with the latest developments.</li> </ul>
<b>Transform preservation of the newspaper collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Open a state-of-the-art facility for storage of physical newspapers at Boston Spa, Yorkshire, in 2013.</li> </ul>



Objectives	Actions
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**Continue to provide long-term stewardship of our rich print collections**

**Develop selective collaborative stewardship arrangements to collect and connect to content in line with our refreshed content strategy**

- Provide good quality storage concentrated in three buildings – two high density stores at Boston Spa and our St Pancras building in London
- Achieve fit for purpose, environmentally controlled conditions for the storage of two-thirds of our collections.
- Achieve economies of scale among major national and research libraries through shared collection stewardship arrangements
- Model the cost profile of collecting, storing and preserving digital versus physical materials.



Images above: Image taken from *Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer. Published and produced by William Caxton. London, 1485.  
Image taken from *Collected Works of Christine de Pisan*. Published and produced in France 1410–1411.  
Inside our *Evolving English* exhibition, image by Dave Dubuisson.  
Image of the Additional Storage Building (ASB) in Boston Spa © Stuart Rayner.

# Strategic Priority 2: Enable access to everyone who wants to do research

Our ambition is for users to be able to discover, access, download, share and re-use our public domain digital content for the benefit of the economy and society. In enabling digital access, there are many competing factors at play, such as: striking the appropriate balance between the needs of users and the rights of creators; determining the role of public services; and bridging the 'digital divide'. We believe the key role we can play in enabling access to public-domain content is to digitise content through a mix of public service and commercial activities. We recognise that much of our content will not be digitised by 2020 and our support to researchers will inevitably be provided through a blend of onsite and online services offered both through the Library's Reading Rooms and remotely.

Objectives	Actions
<b>Transform access to newspapers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Digitise up to 20 million pages from the Library's newspaper collection in partnership with <b>brightsolid</b></li><li>Include the format and location details for the whole of the newspaper collection in our catalogue.</li></ul>
<b>Provide British Library Readers with multimedia content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Deliver a step-change in digital, multimedia access to news content in our St Pancras Reading Rooms</li><li>Work with key content partners such as the BBC to make relevant material from their archives accessible and discoverable to British Library Readers onsite</li><li>Integrate resource discovery across the different media channels and content providers.</li></ul>
<b>Encourage others to integrate our materials into their services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Establish a number of agreements with third parties to make our metadata and out-of-copyright content available through a range of access channels.</li></ul>
<b>Devise and implement an updated plan for digitisation of our collections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop our digitisation plan, prioritising our content for digitisation purposes against a set of agreed criteria</li><li>Further develop and implement sustainable digitisation models in conjunction with potential technology and funding partners</li><li>Establish, in partnership, at least one major mass digitisation initiative in addition to our newspaper digitisation initiative, to improve accessibility of our collection.</li></ul>
<b>Provide better search results for users and greater access to material</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify and deliver key improvements for researchers in our resource discovery and access services</li><li>Develop beyond prototype an access interface to our digital content so that content can be obtained easily in Reading Rooms and/or online (subject to copyright restrictions).</li></ul>



Objectives	Actions
<p><b>Develop an integrated view of our customers and provide increased opportunities and incentives for registration</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Implement a master repository of customer data for our most important services, a self-service registration portal for those services and a single sign-on procedure for customers to access those services</li> <li>■ Increase the amount of information we hold about the behaviours and preferences of our users and leverage this to improve our services and communications (while adhering strictly to data protection legislation).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support customers who are on the move by implementing delivery of content and services through mobile devices</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Give customers online access to 'Search our Catalogue' and to a significant corpus of digital content through mobile devices</li> <li>■ Take this initiative forward through a combination of formal relationships (e.g. through planned upgrades of software from system vendors) and other third party relationships.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Offer wider online access to licensed digital resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Obtain agreements from publishers to provide access to licensed materials offsite through a range of models, including both paid and free access, which balance the interests of copyright holders and user needs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Champion the importance of datasets in scholarly communication across all disciplines</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Working with membership organisations and other institutions such as DataCite, contribute to international standards for dataset citation and storage to encourage re-use and persistence of datasets</li> <li>■ Create a network of national and international organisations who assign persistent identifiers to datasets, so that they can be located and re-used and their impact as a research asset measured.</li> </ul>

Images above: British Library website image © Clive Sherlock. Screen shot of *Timelines: Sources from History*. Screen shot of [www.codexsinaiticus.org](http://www.codexsinaiticus.org) – a four-year collaboration between the British Library, Leipzig University Library, the Monastery of St Catherine (Mount Sinai, Egypt) and the National Library of Russia (St Petersburg).

# Strategic Priority 3: Support research communities in key areas for social and economic benefit

We aim to support research excellence and new forms of creativity and economic benefit through offering tailored research services, informed by a deep understanding of user needs and the research process. In partnership, we will develop different services for a small number of focused areas which fulfil the following criteria:

**Influence:** They support government priorities and provide a major contribution to innovation, economic output or social value.

**Discoveries:** They lead to the generation of new knowledge.

**Public service:** They demonstrate a clear need for public service.

**Funding and partnerships:** They attract external funding and engage external partners. The success of any new propositions will be dependent upon securing external funding and partnerships.

**Competency:** They enable us, together with our partners, to demonstrate significant capability and competency in provision.

Objectives	Actions
<b>Secure the financial future of the Business &amp; IP Centre (BIPC) to ensure continued support to small business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Secure sufficient funding to maintain the core services we currently provide and to develop and launch an enhanced proposition to support growth businesses and job creation</li><li>■ Develop and successfully pilot a regional template for the BIPC</li><li>■ Work with partner organisations to roll out regional business centres using the BIPC template.</li></ul>
<b>Agree the priority audience segments and develop added value propositions to support them</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Market test propositions in support of a range of audience segments including researchers in the biosciences, researchers in the environment, researchers in health and social care, and the creative industries</li><li>■ Benchmark current performance in these segments and set targets for improvement</li><li>■ Test and prioritise a range of new product and service concepts to identify those that best meet the needs of our target segments</li><li>■ Develop and launch new product or service propositions.</li></ul>



Image left: BIPC panel event ,  
'Question Time for Entrepreneurs'  
in 2010.

# Strategic Priority 4: Enrich the cultural life of the nation

We aim to bring to life the vast international heritage held within the British Library through immersive, interactive experiences. We are committed to engaging people with our content and providing them with the personal inspiration and enjoyment which may translate into lifelong learning experiences and research projects of their own. In particular, we will leverage the expertise of our partners in bringing cutting-edge, interactive technologies to our public offering.

Objectives	Actions
<b>Improve user experience on the British Library website and increase traffic and reach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reduce the amount of content on the Library's website and introduce tighter editorial controls. Implement improvements to the navigation and layout that increase user satisfaction</li> <li>■ Secure external funding to support the development of a new website with significantly improved functionality that will deliver our vision to 're-create the British Library online'</li> <li>■ Enhance public and learning resources and increase audience penetration and engagement in both segments</li> <li>■ Develop our mobile offering so that users can access our most popular and valuable content and services from any location.</li> </ul>
<b>Continue to deliver a stimulating and engaging public programme both onsite and online</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Introduce measures to significantly reduce Grant in Aid investment in delivery of the public programme, potentially including corporate sponsorship and charging for access (e.g. to major temporary exhibitions)</li> <li>■ Deliver two major exhibitions onsite per year that attract visitor numbers in excess of 200k, including a high profile programme of activity to support the 2012 Olympics in London</li> <li>■ Enhance and increase the reach of our online public exhibitions specifically: through the use of rich media (e.g. web casting talks and events), through provision of increased access to our unique and heritage content online and through the introduction of tools to make it easier for users to interact with and re-use our content (copyright permitting).</li> </ul>
<b>Maintain our well-respected onsite learning programme, while further developing and enhancing our on-line resources to increase reach and engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increase awareness and use of our onsite facilities. Leverage our video conferencing capability to increase reach by enabling workshops and curator talks using collection items to be offered to similarly-equipped schools anywhere in the country</li> <li>■ Secure external funding to continue the development of our online learning resources</li> <li>■ Work with partner organisations such as the BBC and Open University to develop rich, online experiences for learners of all ages.</li> </ul>
<b>Deepen user engagement and enrich our content through piloting and embedding digital collaborative initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Test and then pilot a small number of initiatives working with relevant delivery partners. Examples could include collaborative text correction for digitisation and the use of open data initiatives to encourage users to add to and refine the Library's metadata.</li> </ul>

# Strategic Priority 5: Lead and collaborate to grow the world's knowledge base

We aim to be an enabling force in the global networked environment of users, libraries, archives, research institutions and information providers from the public and private sectors. We play a crucial role in bringing others together and leading debates on specific agendas. However, in order to deliver our strategy, we will also need to increase the extent to which we work in partnership with others, leading some initiatives and participating in others.

Objectives	Actions
<b>Develop strategic partnerships and collaborative arrangements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Build on publisher partnerships we already have and develop new partnerships with publishers, aggregators and rights holders in order to digitise significant parts of the collection</li> <li>■ Work with several technology companies who can assist us with a range of digital developments</li> <li>■ Develop new shared services with Higher Education partners to provide access to new resources for research, teaching and learning.</li> </ul>
<b>Develop and embed innovative public-private partnership arrangements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Promote benefits of existing partnerships (innovative services, increased access and content) to help increase awareness of the British Library and generate new users, new funding opportunities and new partners</li> <li>■ Develop more public-private partnerships in a systematic way.</li> </ul>
<b>Work with a range of sectors to generate cost savings through shared service initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Play a key role in shared storage and access provision with Higher Education</li> <li>■ Play a key role in developing shared infrastructures for the management of physical collections</li> <li>■ Open ourselves up to approaches from the research community and other sectors who may approach us with propositions that they are prepared to fund.</li> </ul>
<b>Continue to engage in significant international cultural diplomacy efforts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Through the agreement signed with India in 2010, engage with the Indian Ministry of Culture and other institutions to unlock a critical mass of UK and Indian content in libraries, archives, museums and other cultural bodies, to stimulate new research collaborations based on digitised collections</li> <li>■ Through the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Qatar Foundation in 2010, make thousands of digitised historic documents and ancient manuscripts – relating to centuries of history of the Arabian Gulf – available online to researchers, scholars and the general public across the Gulf region and around the world</li> <li>■ Further develop the Library's strategy for China, one of the areas of the world of high priority to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.</li> </ul>



Objectives	Actions
<p>Continue to provide leadership and be a role model in the national and international library and information network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and establish a series of strategic international partnerships with national libraries and major research libraries in order to deliver transformational change (e.g. in user services, collections strategy and operational practice).</li> </ul>
<p>Lead debates and provide guidance and advocacy to the international information community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to lead the debate to strike an appropriate balance among the rights of copyright holders, creators and the public interest in ensuring access to knowledge</li> <li>Develop sustainable business models for digital service and content provision.</li> </ul>



Images above: Mark Thompson, BBC Director-General, signs the Memorandum of Understanding with Dame Lynne Brindley, Penny Brook, Head of India Office Collection, with Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Missned of Qatar. *Electric Lighting in the City*. The Graphic, 9 April 1881 (p348) from British Library Newspapers, digitisation funded by the JISC and managed by GALE CENGAGE Learning. Illuminated Dunhuang manuscript, 10th century, from the International Dunhuang Project, a collaboration to make items from Dunhuang and the Eastern Silk Road freely available on the Internet.

