



BRITISH LIBRARY

The British Library's Strategy 2008–2011

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96 Euston Road
London
NW1 2DB

British Library Newspapers
Colindale Avenue
London
NW9 5HE

British Library
Boston Spa
Wetherby
West Yorkshire
LS23 7BQ

Cover image
Racking in the Additional
Storage Programme,
Boston Spa

Advancing the world's knowledge
www.bl.uk

Serving our audiences effectively

Every interest can be explored at the British Library. Our users come from diverse backgrounds, span all disciplines and have widely varying needs. We provide access to our unrivalled collection and enable research through a range of innovative services. These underpin UK research competitiveness, support UK business and provide a great service to the UK public.

When we published our 2005–2008 strategy we wanted to develop our specialist curatorial expertise along specifically disciplinary lines, alongside more traditional collection development criteria such as language, geography and format. We therefore began to focus more on the particular characteristics and needs of researchers according to discipline.

We will continue this disciplinary focus by implementing our existing content strategy for Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences researchers, and also by developing a content strategy for Science, Technology and Medicine researchers, consulting key stakeholders as appropriate. Our content strategy focuses on the materials that we collect through purchase and those to which we connect via licence or freely available web links.

To address the growth in research that cuts across disciplines, we want to develop an interdisciplinary focus, which will facilitate research in areas ranging from lifelong wellbeing to migration and population change. We will review the research landscape to identify areas of interdisciplinary growth. We will also support and sustain collaborative cross-disciplinary research by building virtual research communities.

Our new strategy builds on our 2005–2008 strategy and focuses on what we consider to be our most significant priorities going forward over the next three years. Other important activity, such as our innovative and distinctive range of public and learning programmes, our Business & IP Centre and our support for the UK library network will continue to form a part of our rich portfolio of service offerings.

Our purpose

- Advancing the world's knowledge.

Our vision

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

Our aims

In advancing the world's knowledge we aim to:

- Provide researchers with a critical mass of digital content by extending our collecting of UK digital publications.
- Connect researchers with content in our collection and other resources in innovative ways.
- Transform our service for researchers who need access to our unrivalled newspaper collection by implementing our newspaper strategy.
- Support research by developing innovative products and services.
- Secure our e-collection for future researchers by building robust systems to underpin our digital library.
- Preserve our physical collection for future researchers by considering storage, security and preservation holistically.
- Develop our staff to ensure they have the skills they need to deliver the strategy.

The British Library's Strategy 2008–2011

I am delighted to present our strategy for the next three years. As a great national and research library we have responsibility both for our recorded past and access to present day content for researchers and for future generations. The environment in which we operate has arguably changed more in the past two decades than in the preceding two centuries, driven particularly by technological developments. Such change is gradually transforming traditional scholarly dependency on the physical library as a major source for meeting research needs into a complex network of options, with varying levels of accessibility, authoritativeness and depth.

Across disciplines there remain widely differing expectations of the role of the library but research increasingly functions in a world of e-resources, virtual tools and collaborative communities, and choice of where to work physically. The commercial sector and the web shape expectations for rapid service innovation, access and easy processes. But at its core the British Library aims to provide resources, tools, experts and services to inspire creativity and to support a vibrant and diverse research population.

The British Library's strategy for the next three years builds on the foundations we have already established through our strategy for 2005 – 2008. Our new strategy outlines how we will build on existing strengths and seize opportunities to enhance our proposition to researchers and business. We will develop strategic collaborations in those areas of activity likely to benefit most from partnership working. This document identifies our seven strategic priorities and outlines what we aim to do by 2011.

In addition we intend to continue our distinctive public, educational and cultural programmes, delivered both on-site and virtually. We are also laying the groundwork in this period for a new digital research centre and services in support of UK biomedical research.

Over the coming year we will develop a long term strategy for the British Library looking out towards the end of the first quarter of the 21st century to ensure that our potential contribution to research and scholarly enterprise remains vibrant, innovative and relevant for new generations.

By publishing this strategy and by engaging in longer term thinking we hope to refresh the public debate on how a great national and research library contributes to the intellectual, social and economic success of the nation as the digital era enters its third decade.



Dame Lynne Brindley
Chief Executive

Catalysts for change

Research and knowledge transfer

- Growth in research that spans a range of disciplines (e.g. studies on climate change that encompass oceanography, glaciology and marine biology).
- Large-scale scientific research increasingly pursued through international collaborations by partners based in many different locations (e.g. through virtual worlds).
- Adoption, by Government and the higher education funding councils, of measurements of research impact as a key driver for distribution of funding.
- Growing research outputs from booming economies such as Russia, India and China.
- Government demand for evidence-based research encouraging development in the non-academic research sector (e.g. think-tanks and research by practitioners).
- New research techniques needing new kinds of physical and virtual workspace.
- Deepening engagement between the private, voluntary and public sectors and higher education research, yielding substantial benefits to the UK economy and society.

Higher education and internationalisation

- Demand for higher education in the UK expected to continue to grow, in spite of the decline in the number of 18-year-olds, through raising attainment and participation rates and the urgent need to raise achievements at all levels of skills.
- Patterns of demand in higher education are also changing:
 - Many more overseas students in UK institutions;
 - UK institutions expanding their presence abroad;
 - Overseas institutions increasingly moving into the UK;
 - Growth of distance learning.
- Increasing international dimension to all library and information management activities, including professional and cultural collaboration, fundraising and revenue-generating services.
- Developing role of cultural diplomacy through initiatives such as the World Collections Programme which aims to share British cultural and curatorial expertise with institutions in Africa and Asia.

Demand and expectations

- Increasingly researchers expect everything to be available on the web immediately, permanently and preferably free of charge at the point of use.
- Authors increasingly expecting to monetise content through digital distribution.
- Large quantities of research data available in digital form and there is a recognition that this valuable resource should be preserved and made publicly available.
- Increasing demand for digital access to non-text information – images and sound – as part of a multi-media research process.
- The creative industries critical to the UK's future competitiveness – by 2020 they will generate over 11% of GVA, employing some 2.6m people.
- Entrepreneurs consider networking an increasingly important means of supporting the growth and success of their business.
- Micro-businesses and SMEs (small- and medium-sized enterprises) increasingly integral to the UK economy; they provide 35% of jobs in London and 36% of the capital's annual turnover.
- Growing demand among all users for information services to be consistent with the Internet experience (e.g. through wikis, blogs, podcasts, social networks).
- Becoming apparent that although the Google Generation (those born or brought up in the Internet age) demonstrate ease and familiarity with computers, they lack essential research skills and are far from fully information literate or Intellectual Property literate.

Publishing and information provision

- An increasing proportion of published material being created electronically rather than in print – for instance by 2020 an estimated 80% of UK serial output will be digital only.
- Growing support among authors, teachers, libraries and publishers for the open access movement in order to maximise research impact.
- Continuing consolidation in the Science, Technology and Medicine publishing sector with the top five publishers already generating more than half of industry revenues.
- The Internet search industry growing at a faster rate than the news and publishing industry with an estimated growth of 23% over the next three years.
- Use of e-books growing. In a recent survey more than 30% of participants said that use of e-books in Science, Technology and Medicine was “quite extensive” and another 26% noted “significant use”.
- The web revolutionising the way researchers work, allowing them to store, personalise, manipulate, repurpose and share information with their peers through social, professional and enterprise networks.
- In the digital world the roles of publisher, library, aggregator and author converging in information creation and dissemination.

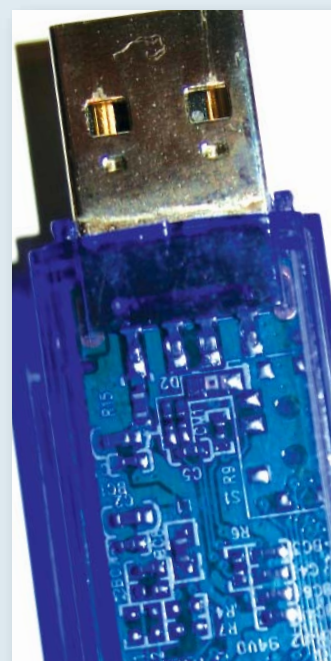
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Capture extensively and store UK digital publications

The need to secure the UK's published digital output is urgent and challenging. Primary legislation extending legal deposit to electronic publications has been in place since 2003, but progress towards the secondary legislation necessary to enable the deposit process has been slow – and there is evidence that valuable research material is already being lost.

To ensure the continuing growth and relevance of our collection, we are exploring a number of collecting options. A voluntary scheme for UK e-journals was launched in July 2007 with a small number of publishers. An agreement with Ordnance Survey ensures that digital mapping data are collected and we have collected over 2,500 UK scholarly, cultural and scientific websites through the UK Web Archiving Consortium (UKWAC). UKWAC is seeking to align itself and collaborate with the Digital Preservation Coalition. This collaboration will play a significant advisory role in shaping the legal deposit legislation framework for web resources.

Such practical efforts to capture digital publications help us build our expertise and capability to collect, preserve and provide access to this critical part of the nation's intellectual heritage. They also help us prepare for when secondary legislation makes more extensive e-legal deposit a reality.



Key Objectives

Continue to collect offline digital items, e-journals and publicly available web content through e-legal deposit and voluntary schemes. Work with the Legal Deposit Advisory Panel, the national libraries of Scotland and Wales and the other legal deposit libraries to make this happen in a coherent way.

Extend collecting to other digital formats (newspapers, maps, e-books, protected websites, audio) through legal deposit and voluntary means, working in partnership with publishers.

Benchmark our progress against international peers, learning from the ways in which e-legal deposit has been implemented abroad and putting lessons learned into action.

By 2011 we aim to:

- Have arrangements in place for collecting, storing and preserving public websites and handheld e-publications.
- Have worked through the Legal Deposit Advisory Panel to provide the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport with the best information to reach a decision on how to collect digital publications.
- Put voluntary schemes in place where regulation is inappropriate or not yet achieved.
- Establish best practice for e-collecting, tracked against developments in other countries.
- Integrate operational processes for ingest, storage and access.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Connect our users with content

Today's researchers want to be able to access the best research material wherever they start from and wherever the material lies. They expect extensive coverage and a seamless interface between search and delivery. Researchers who use search engines daily may find any barrier to instant access – log-in requirements, separate databases, hard copy – off-putting, and information behind such barriers may increasingly be ignored.

Our Integrated Catalogue details over 14.5 million items in our collection, but information on many more print and digital resources cannot currently be discovered through a single search. Meanwhile, social networking features such as tagging, reviews and subject-specific communities are blurring the boundaries between information producers and information consumers.

We need to look beyond the traditional library catalogue, exposing our collection to wider audiences, taking account of the interests of rights holders, and allowing users to shape and personalise their research, connecting users with content, content with content and, ultimately, users with other users.



Key Objectives

Acquire and implement a new state of the art resource discovery system to improve searching of our catalogues, enhance access to digital items and enable Web 2.0 features and user-generated content.

Roll out the Integrated Archives and Manuscripts System, which will make the catalogue records from 40 legacy systems available through a single online resource.

Explore digitisation and full-text searching as alternatives to traditional cataloguing.

Connect national discovery and delivery services more effectively in partnership with the Joint Information Systems Committee and Research Libraries UK.

Participate in the Joint Information Systems Committee's Libraries of the Future campaign, a series of events, printed resources, interactive Web 2.0 services and podcast interviews, aimed at encouraging debate and discussion about the future role of libraries and librarians over the next decade.

Step up work to enhance our catalogues.

By 2011 we aim to:

- Have our new resource discovery system in place, offering enhanced access to our major collections.
- Have integrated Web 2.0 services into our website and online discovery tools.
- Integrate discovery for more of our digital content.
- Provide better search results for users and greater digital access to material held both within and beyond the Library.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Transform access and preservation for newspapers

Our newspaper collection is the world's finest. We receive a copy of almost every issue of every newspaper and magazine published in the UK, and we collect around 200 overseas titles. With titles dating back to 1513, the collection receives over 30,000 visits annually.

However, newspaper storage at our Colindale site in north London is nearing capacity and storage facilities are far from ideal: 15% of the collection is now so fragile that it cannot be used by researchers and a further 19% is at high risk unless storage conditions are improved.

In 2007 we announced our Newspaper Strategy which, subject to funding, will involve moving the collection to purpose-built facilities at our Boston Spa and St Pancras sites, and providing access to microfilmed and digitised copies via a dedicated reading room at St Pancras. We intend to provide access in this way to satisfy 80% of demand. Through the strategy we aim to strike a balance between our duty to care for the national newspaper collection and our core responsibility of providing the best possible access for researchers.



Key Objectives

Plan construction of a purpose-built facility at Boston Spa to store hard copy newspaper collection in archival conditions, including growth space for 25 years.

Begin collection moves of 150km of newspapers to Boston Spa and serials to St Pancras where we will provide microfilm and digital access.

Develop a strategy to digitise the most highly used and important parts of the newspaper collection, continuing to work closely with the newspaper industry.

Collect contemporary digital newspapers by establishing voluntary deposit arrangements with publishers – create copies on archival microfilm to ensure long-term preservation.

During this interim phase access to the collection will be curtailed:

- Researchers will begin to access some surrogate newspaper copies from St Pancras;
- We will maintain hard copy access at Boston Spa until we have a critical mass of newspaper content available at St Pancras;
- Hard copy and microfilm access at Colindale will be phased out from 2010.

By 2011 we aim to:

- Have the migration of newspapers from Colindale to Boston Spa well under way.
- Have moved many high use magazines and periodicals to St Pancras.
- Make a growing volume of microfilm and digitised content available at St Pancras and, where appropriate, online.
- Have transferred legal deposit operations to Boston Spa.
- Store the first phase of newspapers at Boston Spa in archival conditions.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

Support UK research with innovative services and integrated processes

To remain relevant we have to invest in our portfolio of services and develop innovative offerings to meet the needs of our audiences.

Our document supply service continues to perform an essential role providing researchers with breadth of access to journal articles not available online, particularly articles from smaller publishers and older material.

There is increasing demand for the datasets that underlie published research – but access to this data is currently underdeveloped. Publishers are making more titles available as e-books, offering print on demand, and shifting their focus from undergraduate textbooks to a wider choice of titles. We need to consider the implications of such trends and work with higher education and publishers to develop new models for both on-site and document delivery services.

Digitisation is one way of opening up content to the world. Digitised content is more visible and discoverable, and facilitates research internationally. We have been digitising parts of our collection over the past decade, generating a corpus of resources totalling some 42 million digitised images.



Key Objectives

Offer shared, integrated storage and access for library services in higher education, working with the higher education funding councils and the higher education community, generating efficiencies for the UK research network.

Determine how we will contribute to continuing work to provide an e-infrastructure to support UK research.

Further develop UK PubMed Central for the UK biomedical research community.

Work in partnership with the research councils on interdisciplinary themes in Social Sciences and Science, Technology and Medicine.

Beta test the Research Information Centre virtual research environment with biomedical researchers and develop the concept for other disciplines.

Determine, in collaboration with the research councils and the higher education community, our role in facilitating discovery and access to datasets and, in the case of Science, Technology and Medicine, the potential for archiving and preserving Science, Technology and Medicine datasets.

Investigate and develop service models for shared library services to corporate libraries, and pilot the offering with major customers such as the pharmaceutical sector.

Develop and implement digital archiving services for e-legal deposit and explore whether such solutions could be provided as a commercial offering to publishers and other content holders.

Create a step change in the development of a critical mass of digital content by exploring a range of sustainable business models, which will involve commercial and public sector partners.

By 2011 we aim to:

- Deliver a central repository that underpins UK higher education research by offering improved and streamlined access to information resources.
- Develop new services for commercial users to enhance our future sustainability.
- Offer a critical mass of digital content.
- Develop new products and services to support UK research.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

Build our digital infrastructure

Digital content and data are at serious risk of loss because of the rapid pace of change in technology. As hardware and software become obsolete, the digital content and data reliant on this technology become increasingly hard to find, view, search and re-use.

The UK's intellectual and cultural output is increasingly published in digital form: by 2020 an estimated 80% of research serials and 50% of monographs will be available in electronic formats only. At the same time, mass digitisation projects are creating digital versions of items ranging from newspapers to illuminated manuscripts – all of which need to be stored alongside our other digital assets.

A robust and scalable digital infrastructure is essential to support the collection and management of such items, and to ensure we can store, preserve and provide access to them in the long term.

Electronic publications we receive through voluntary deposit arrangements and digitised items from our collection are already being ingested into our digital library system and made available in our reading rooms, but this infrastructure needs to be fully developed to cope with a wide range of formats and a huge – and increasing – volume of material.



Key Objectives

Continue to build our digital library system for storing and preserving many kinds of e-materials – prioritising e-journals, digital newspapers and archived websites. Develop means of storing and preserving other digital content such as sound, maps and e-theses.

Work with the other legal deposit libraries to share legal deposit content with them through our digital library system.

Consolidate our IT architecture to reduce the number and complexity of legacy systems. Roll out new systems to manage description, ingest, preservation, search and access across the full range of our collections.

Manage Intellectual Property rights effectively by developing a digital Data Rights and Policy Management service, ensuring authenticated access to digital collections by legitimate users.

Enable long-term preservation of digital items through our continuing leadership of the EU-funded Planets (Preservation and Long-term Access through Networked Services) programme.

By 2011 we aim to:

- Have a more robust, fully functioning infrastructure in place for acquiring, storing, preserving and providing access to digital items.
- Be using systems able to recognise both unique items and different versions of the same item (e.g. blogs) and preserve them appropriately.
- Have metadata incorporating rights information to authorise users and protect content.
- Promote Planets outputs, including the long-term preservation framework, preservation toolkit and testbed facility, to the wider community. Adopt Planets outputs within the British Library.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6

Integrate storage and preservation of physical collections

Stewardship of the national collection combines the twin responsibilities of minimising the risk of damage and maximising the lifespan of every item, ensuring the nation's cultural and intellectual memory remains available forever.

For our collection of 150 million physical items this involves assessing the lifespan of each item and associated risks, providing the highest quality of storage and security, producing copies for preservation or access where needed, and undertaking conservation work. It also means managing storage capacity appropriately and ensuring the collection is made accessible to researchers in the most effective way.

When our new storage building at Boston Spa opens the proportion of our physical collections stored in archival standard conditions will rise from 44% to around 66%. Our recently-opened Centre for Conservation provides us with a world-leading facility for book conservation and sound archiving techniques. Building on these achievements will require ever closer integration of our property, preservation and conservation strategies.



Key Objectives

Complete the new storage building at Boston Spa, which will provide state of the art, low-oxygen storage for millions of collection items. Migrate items into the new building, vacating offsite facilities in London by December 2010.

Update our property strategy, taking into account our growth and storage needs over the next 25 years. Develop a master plan for the Boston Spa site.

Conduct a wide-ranging risk assessment of physical collections and plan to mitigate risks identified, subject to costs, timescales and funding.

Further enhance the security of the collection using the latest technology as it becomes available.

Investigate digital copying as an alternative to microfilm for long-term preservation and review our preservation policy to determine the timing of the switch-over from microfilm to digital surrogacy.

By 2011 we aim to:

- Have made significant progress towards becoming a two-site operation (we currently occupy six sites) with associated efficiencies.
- Establish fully the Centre for Conservation as a national centre of excellence.
- Align models for stewardship of digital and physical collections, enabling integrated management of storage and preservation of our entire collection.
- Understand properly the benefits of digital files as a preservation medium, paving the way for a future switch from microfilm copying.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 7 Develop as an organisation

It is essential that the skills and expertise of our staff match the needs of new and emerging roles in the digital age, as well as the many existing roles within a great research library.

We must identify the skills needed to support new services and new tools (e.g. visualisation, information extraction, data curation and data mining). In this regard we will develop our staff further while continuing to recruit talented people to work for us. Where the skills we need do not exist within the British Library or elsewhere we will work with the research community to develop them.

While our learning and career development strategies will be important to this, so too will our recruitment strategy which aims to communicate our employer brand so that it builds engagement among potential recruits and current staff. We will promote our 'employer value proposition' which captures what makes the Library a great place to work as well as the characteristics that people need to reach their potential and contribute to our success.

Our approach is consistent with our values and with building an engaged and more diverse workforce. We will maintain our commitment to rewarding our staff, through a range of benefits and development opportunities.

To deliver the Library's strategy we will continue our programme of cultural change, which focuses on innovation and continuous improvement, while delivering even higher levels of performance.



Key Objectives

Continue to implement our People Strategy:

- Aligning our skills with our strategy;
- Strengthening our culture;
- Becoming an employer of choice;
- Providing operational support to deliver the Library's strategy.

Develop culture change initiatives to support innovation and creativity and build greater organisational flexibility.

Undertake a review of our Scholarship and Collections Directorate to facilitate the developing role and integration of the work of curators.

Address succession planning through our talent and leadership programmes.

Raise our profile in order to attract and retain current and future staff.

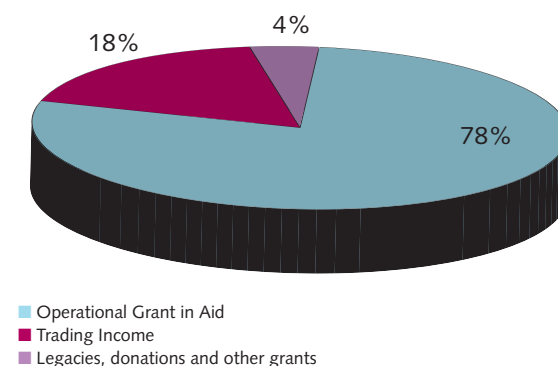
By 2011 we aim to:

- Be a high performing organisation with a focus on delivering innovation, collaborative working and continuous improvement.
- Be recognised as an employer of choice, having diverse staff who are highly motivated, creative and flexible.
- Combine strong employer branding and web-based recruitment to support delivery of services to UK research and innovation.

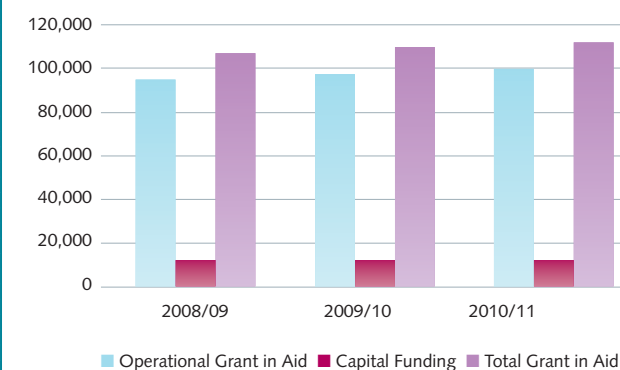
How we will deliver – finances

The pace of delivery of our challenging agenda is dependent on securing the appropriate level of resources. The Government recognised the excellence of the British Library and its contribution to research, culture and the UK economy when it awarded a rise in funding in line with the Treasury definition of 'inflation' for the three-year period 2008 – 2011. We will continue to supplement our public funding through fundraising and trading activities, and we will be contributing to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport *Value For Money Delivery Agreement* with HM Treasury. Legacies, donations and other grants currently account for 4% of the Library's total income. In the period 2008 – 11, we will launch a campaign in which we will seek to double our income from fundraising, in particular for digital developments.

Annual Projected Average Sources of Income 2008 – 2011



Grant in Aid Funding 2008 – 2011



TIMELINE

1961

National Lending Library for Science and Technology established at Boston Spa

1971

The Open University welcomes its first students, laying the foundations for a national distance learning programme

1971

The first networked email using the @ symbol to separate username from host name is sent between two computers

1972

The British Library Act brings together a number of existing libraries and collections, including the British Museum library

1980

Usenet founded. A forerunner of today's discussion forums, the system allows users to read and post messages to newsgroups on specific subjects and themes

1985

The British Library launches the UK's first CD-Rom containing records from the *British National Bibliography* and Whitaker's *British Books in Print*

1989

Tim Berners-Lee invents the World Wide Web, an Internet-based hypermedia initiative for global information sharing



We have delivered an **efficiency programme** in line with Government targets achieving efficiencies of £12.1 million in 2005/06 (5% over target), £15.9 million in 2006/07 (20% over target) and £18.26 million in 2007/08 (31% over target).

We secured London Development Agency (LDA) funding of £2.4 million for our **Business & IP Centre** to cover the period 2007/08 – 2010/11. Footfall in 2007/08 was ahead of target at nearly 32,000.

We have put arrangements in place to advance implementation of **legal deposit infrastructure** for electronic publications, through a node at the National Library of Wales.

We have made substantial progress on our **Additional Storage Programme** at Boston Spa which will:

- deliver 262km of new storage;
- provide growth space for the future;
- enable us to increase the proportion of our collection held in environmentally controlled conditions;
- enable us to rationalise the storage of current material.



We have put in place an integrated **talent development and succession planning** framework for senior staff and continue to develop and implement the Library's diversity strategy for all staff.



WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED IN THE PAST THREE YEARS

Since we published *Redefining the Library: the British Library's strategic plan 2005–2008* the Library has achieved or substantially progressed a host of major objectives

We have increased our focus on **disciplines** in line with researcher needs through the development of the content strategy for Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences. We have also developed a mission statement and broad strategy for Science, Technology and Medicine (STM) and work to implement the STM strategy has begun.

In partnership with the Joint Information Systems Committee we have **digitised** 4,000 hours of **archival sound recordings** and one million pages of historic British **newspapers**, which are available online to higher and further education users.



We opened our state of the art **Centre for Conservation** in spring 2007 following a successful fund raising campaign. The Centre provides the best possible facilities for the conservation of books and sound recordings. Public tours of the Centre have been hugely popular.

Sacred: Discover what we share in 2007 provided our best ever visitor numbers – more than 200,000 for the main St Pancras exhibition and 6,600 for the regional touring exhibition. Our winter exhibition in 2007/08, **Breaking the Rules**, attracted over 123,000 visitors

– 50% above target – and attracted a younger audience to the Library with 53% aged 16–44, 19% of visitors to **Front Page**, featuring 100 years of historic newspapers, and opened by HM the Queen in May 2006 were aged between 16 and 24.



Individual **visitors to our website** have increased from 5.7 million in 2005/06 to 9.7 million in 2007/08.

TIMELINE

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| 1991
The Research Libraries Group releases Ariel, enabling surrogate copies of journal articles to be sent electronically instead of by post | 1993
Electronic copies produced of the manuscript of Beowulf, the most important surviving work of Anglo-Saxon poetry | 1994
The term 'spam' is used for the first time to describe mass mailing of unsolicited emails | 1995
The British Library launches its first website | 1996
Brewster Kahle founds Internet Archive to create a global archive of web resources | 1998
Google is launched, rapidly transforming the experience and expectations of search engine users | 2000
Friends Reunited becomes the first mass social networking site in the UK, gaining three million users in its first year | 2001
Wikipedia launched | 2002
The Blackberry smart phone goes on sale | 2003
Legal deposit legislation is extended to include non-print (electronic) materials | 2003
The Library appoints its first Curator of e-Manuscripts to look after archive materials such as punch cards, magnetic tape and hard drives | 2004
UK Web Archiving Consortium established to explore options for collecting and preserving culturally and intellectually significant websites | 2004
Picture hosting site Flickr is launched | 2005
Video sharing website YouTube is launched. In January 2008, 79 million users watched some three billion video clips | 2007
UK PubMed Central launched, providing free access to a permanent online archive of peer-reviewed research in medicine and the life sciences | 2008
Podcasts, video, blogs and other Web 2.0 facilities now delivered routinely by the Library from www.bl.uk and elsewhere |
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