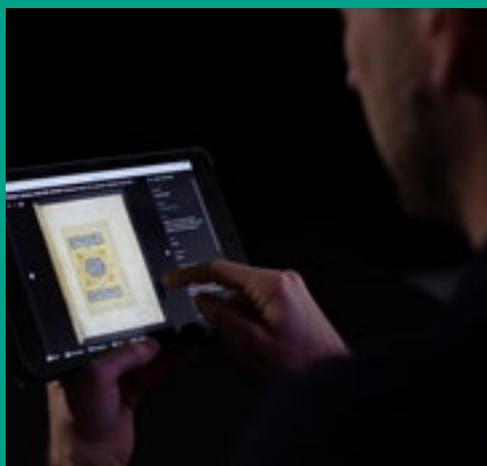


Full version

BRITISH LIBRARY

Enabling access for everyone

The British Library's content
strategy 2020–2023



The British Library

The British Library is one of the greatest libraries in the world, with vast collections that we make accessible to everyone, for research, inspiration and enjoyment. We build, curate and preserve the UK's national collection of published written and digital content, and we contribute to the global advancement of knowledge through our collections, by partnering with others and connecting people with information wherever it is held.

This document sets out the Library's strategy for how we continue to build our collection of contemporary published content, defined as printed and digital content published from 1945 onwards. Heritage Acquisitions are out of scope. They are governed by the [Heritage Acquisitions Policy](#).

As the national library we have a central role to play in the knowledge economy of the United Kingdom – supporting research and innovation in business, industry and universities – and in generating public good for wider society by encouraging individual learning, wellbeing, growth and mutual understanding.

Legal Deposit continues to be the foundation of our collection-building activity, ensuring that the UK's published output is collected systematically, available for use in our Reading Rooms and preserved for future generations. In addition to UK Legal Deposit, the British Library continues to collect and connect to content internationally.

The Content Strategy guides decisions about what contemporary published content we acquire, why and how. It operates in the context of [Living Knowledge](#), the vision statement which sets out our purposes and ambitions to 2023. Core to [Living Knowledge](#) is openness and inclusion, from collecting and connecting all the way through to discovery and access. The Content Strategy supports all of the Library's *Living Knowledge* purposes: custodianship, research, business, culture, learning and international, plus the new priorities identified in [Living Knowledge – For Everyone: The British Library's Role in National Renewal \(PDF\)](#) published in October 2020. To align with *Living Knowledge*, our Content Strategy covers the period 2020-2023.

The Purpose of the Content Strategy

Content underpins everything the British Library does, from Reading Room services, document supply, and the network of Business & IP Centres around the UK, to exhibitions and learning.

The Content Strategy¹ aims to ensure the Library is collecting and providing access to content that is needed by researchers of all kinds – including academics, businesses, policymakers, practitioners and the wider public. It provides transparency by explaining the thinking behind what we acquire, and the principles that will inform selection in future.

The purpose of the Content Strategy is to give staff, users and the public a clear sense of how the Library is taking forward its acquisitions activity.

It sets out the key principles and practices by which we continue to build the UK's national collection of published content. It determines:

- What contemporary content the British Library collects or connects to, why and for whom
- How that content is acquired and stored or how it is linked to

- How that content is made available to our users in the short and long term.

It is concerned with contemporary content published in the UK and globally across all formats, disciplines, subjects and languages. It covers all channels through which the content can be acquired, including Legal Deposit, voluntary deposit, purchase, donation and exchange. It also covers content held by other organisations to which the British Library connects, either permanently or for a fixed period.

The Library acquires material [legally, ethically and with due diligence](#). We ensure that everything we do respects and protects copyright and other intellectual property rights. We work in partnership with authors and publishers, and with the other Legal Deposit Libraries², to provide access to information in line with UK Copyright law.

Heritage Acquisitions are out of scope. They are governed by our [Heritage Acquisitions Policy](#).

¹ The British Library in 2006 chose the term Content Strategy – rather than Collection Development Policy – to recognise the importance of digital content and the internet in our strategic response.

² The Legal Deposit Libraries are the British Library, the National Library of Scotland, the National Library of Wales, the Bodleian Libraries University of Oxford, Cambridge University Library, and the Library of Trinity College Dublin.

Reflecting and responding to external changes

Massive changes in technology, user behaviour and expectations, and publishing, mean the Library has to continually adapt and update the way it performs its role. Users expect to access the information they need quickly and easily from any location on any device. They expect our content and services to match their tasks-to-be done and provide them with quick and easy access to relevant content. They expect great quality and great customer service. They expect the Library's services to be easy to use and open to everyone, whatever their background, characteristics, location or needs. At the same time, the volume and

complexity of published content has increased and the number and variety of our competitors expanded. Our content and services need to provide a good user experience and keep pace with changing user needs to remain relevant.

This challenge hasn't changed in the years since the last content strategy was published in 2013³, but the pace of change has quickened. The Covid-19 lockdown has meant the challenge of providing access to content beyond the Library's premises via remote access is more keenly felt.

Approach

The Library is realistic about what we can achieve in this environment. It is not achievable, affordable or appropriate to collect everything – with the exception of Legal Deposit, we do not aim to collect comprehensively.

We aim to have coherent collections that are capable of supporting research, not to collect everything.

There are many other libraries and organisations that collect, store and preserve information, much of it available digitally online. We work in the context of this global network, which is why our 2013 content strategy included the principle that connecting to content held by others will become more important. This principle continues.

Aim

The content strategy aims to ensure the Library is collecting and providing access to content that is needed by researchers of all kinds. In addition to UK Legal Deposit, we selectively collect or connect to contemporary content published internationally to meet user needs.

The key priority – our guiding policy – is to provide access to content using the most cost-effective means to help users access the information they need, now and in the future.

The British Library holds in trust an extraordinary collection for the nation. Contemporary published content includes everything from printed books to dynamic databases, multimedia websites and broadcast news. It is our responsibility to ensure this collection is available to anyone who wishes to access it. This includes making discovery⁴ and access as easy

as possible, making information about the collection easy to understand and engaging, and supporting people with a wide range of access issues and disabilities. It is also about ensuring that our collection reflects the full diversity of life and experience in the UK, and that our international collecting reflects the spectrum of views that make up the contemporary politics, society and culture of the countries from which we purchase material, including material that represents the voices of groups who are or have been marginalised in mainstream publishing.

It is important that our collecting and connecting activity – which includes our permanent collection but goes beyond it – supports the needs of science, innovation and research in all disciplines, as well as practical applications such as supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs and helping people to learn and develop new skills.

The content strategy is underpinned by the role of the British Library as stated in the British Library Act and as a publicly-funded organisation that exists to help create public value.⁵

We want to create more public value by increasing the use of our content – to have a real and positive impact on users, libraries and wider society. We also want to provide more transparency about what we spend public money on and accountability for the value it generates.

To this end, we have developed a definition of value and are developing ways of measuring value and the contribution content makes to our *Living Knowledge Purposes*.

We have also developed Guiding Principles which place value to the research community at the heart of how we allocate resources.

³ From *Stored Knowledge to Smart Knowledge: the British Library's Content Strategy 2013-15*. London, 2013.

⁴ A key dependency is implementation of the *Discovery Strategy*, British Library, 2020 (unpublished).

⁵ See Moore, M. H. *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*. Harvard University Press, 1995.

Guiding Principles

These principles guide our decision-making that apply across all Collection Areas for contemporary published content. They aim to be flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances and events, any such changes or exceptions will be governed by the Content Strategy Steering Group.

- 1** There is one British Library collection, not separate collections denoted by shelfmarks or source (e.g. DSC, Hmnts); and content strategy decisions apply across all parts of the single collection for contemporary published content.
- 2** Legal Deposit (print and digital) will continue to be the foundation of our collection building activity. We collect from all UK sources, representing the voices of the broad national spectrum. *The Collecting Framework for Legal Deposit* will guide our work in this area.
- 3** We will allocate our acquisitions budget going forwards to support our collecting and connecting priorities, which will be based on evidence of demand and value to researchers and which will change over time. By researchers we mean people conducting research for academic, business, professional development or personal reasons. Continuity of collecting will be taken into account where the value to researchers continues but must be balanced and evaluated against new collecting priorities, availability and resource levels.
- 4** We will develop more flexible and cost-effective ways of accessing content. Examples include but are not limited to: 'on-demand' access models, backfile purchase, and connecting to content held externally.
- 5** The decision to connect rather than collect will reflect the primary decision about archival intent (i.e. does the British Library need to ingest and preserve this content in the long term) and the permanency of access required (using agreed criteria). Archival intent will be based on considerations of collections held elsewhere and their intentions to retain and preserve, persistence, sustainability and Life Cycle Costs.
- 6** Beyond Legal Deposit, the primary decision is whether the content will be of value to the research community. This selection decision is followed by consideration of format, so that where digital format is available, we will prefer digital content over print as the format of choice, where our purposes are met. These include:
 - a** stability of access
 - b** preservation (archival intent)
 - c** content being the same/no loss of content between print and digital versions
 - d** accessibility (i.e. access for people with disabilities)
 - e** evidence of user preferences, within our limited resources.
- 7** We will avoid duplication within the Library's collections and connecting activity, unless there is a clear and measurable benefit (for example, to preserve the Legal Deposit copy of high-use texts, or to enable us to offer a service we could not offer otherwise), and good return on investment (ROI). For example, we buy content to support services that add value for their users. Some of these services are priced (e.g. ETOC, AMED) and here the revenue-generating aspect is key to our decision-making. But revenue is not the only factor: Zetoc, the abstracting and indexing service, is provided free to UK universities and academics because it generates public value by underpinning UK higher education research.

Note on Legal Deposit: Where a UK publication is available with the same content in print and digital form, the Library will, by default, collect the print version unless transition to digital deposit has been agreed with the publisher. Transition from print to digital deposit is by mutual agreement between the publisher and the Legal Deposit Libraries⁶ collectively. Once a publisher who produces both print and digital content has transitioned to digital deposit the Library only continues to collect print copies where print is the only format available. We will in some instances prefer to collect in print where the significance of a print copy has been identified. This may be due to the physical structure of a book⁷. In a limited number of cases, we will acquire a print copy of a book received under Legal Deposit in digital form, where the significance of the content indicates that this is appropriate.

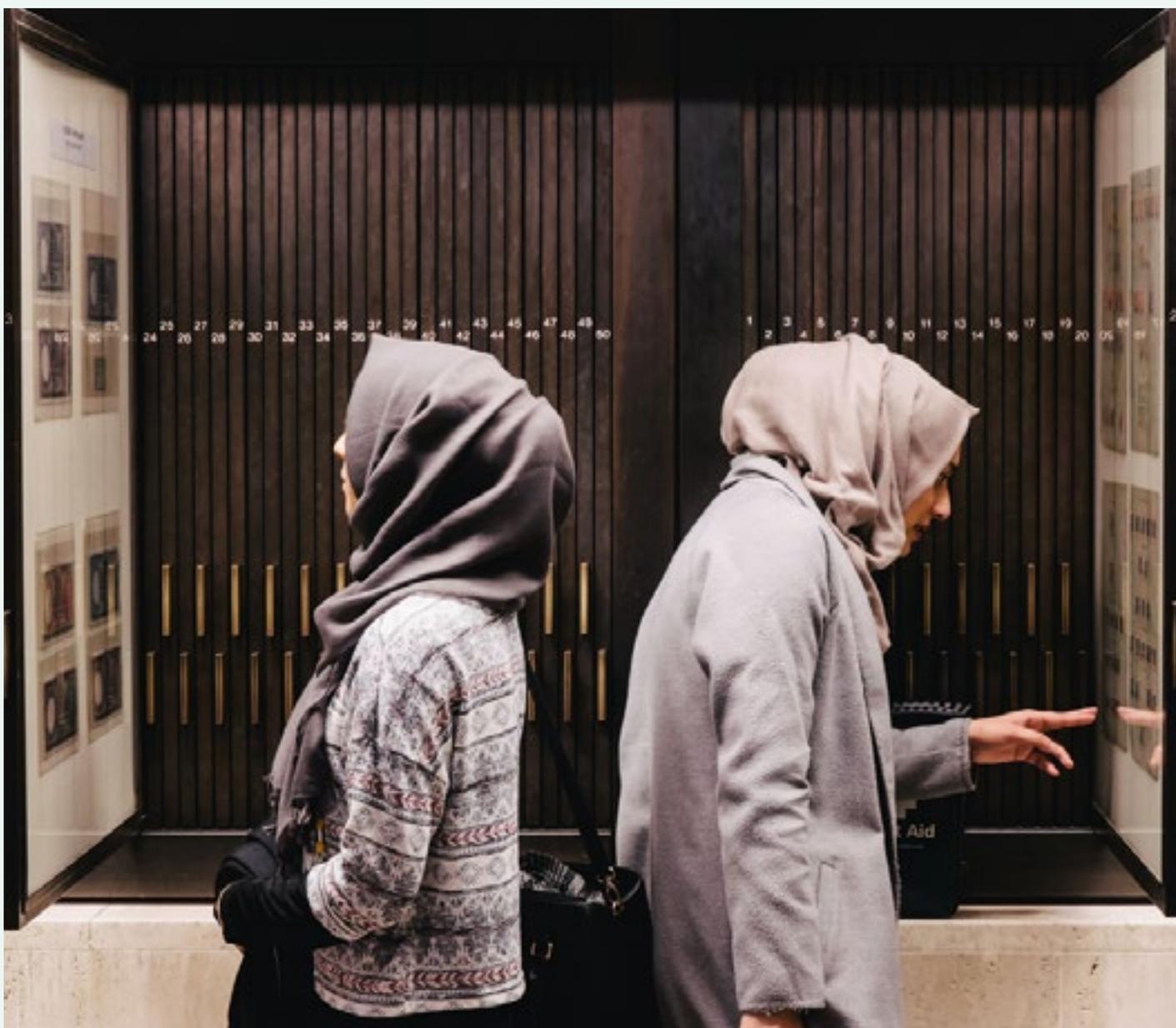
⁶ The Legal Deposit Libraries are the British Library, the National Library of Scotland, the National Library of Wales, the Bodleian Libraries University of Oxford, Cambridge University Library, and the Library of Trinity College Dublin.

⁷ For example a book with moving parts or containing other elements that cannot be adequately presented to a reader in digital form.

- 8** We will take account of the collections held elsewhere that can be readily accessed by our users, and changes to such access and collections over time, in our decisions about what we will collect and how.
- 9** For licensed-in content we will prefer the instance/format which gives the widest possible access/permissions, where it is affordable.
- 10** Where the British Library has no preservation responsibility and where connecting will provide persistent access which can be maintained effectively, we will prefer to connect rather than collect. There will be exceptions, for instance where the content is unstable or where access cannot be provided in a persistent way.
- 11** We will improve and maintain the discovery of Open Access content⁸ in ways that will provide persistent access which can be maintained effectively over a reasonable time period. For instance, by use of Persistent Identifiers (PIDs), where these exist.

These Guiding Principles apply to all contemporary published content. (Heritage Acquisitions are out of scope and governed by the [Heritage Acquisitions Policy](#).) Where collecting is based on a subscription model, there will be regular review against these Guiding Principles.

We have developed statements of intent that relate to each one, please see the Appendix.



⁸ Open Access content is defined as content that has an explicit open license or license terms that at least allow sharing for non-commercial purposes.

Legal Deposit - Facts & Figures

Legal Deposit requires publishers to provide a copy of every work they publish in the UK to the British Library. It has existed in English law since 1662. Since 2013, Legal Deposit regulations have expanded to include digital as well as print publications.

There are six Legal Deposit Libraries, and we work together to ensure that UK publications are preserved, made discoverable through our catalogues, and can be read at our libraries.

A publication can refer to any form of communication that is created in print or digital form, and made available to the public in multiple copies. The exceptions to this are publications that exist solely as recorded sound (for which we rely on the generous support of record labels, distributors and individuals who voluntarily deposit recordings) or sound and moving image.

For printed materials, publications can be books, journals (including newspapers), single printed sheets, music notation, maps, plans, charts or tables. Digital publications are so varied that it is difficult to write a complete list.

Every year, we collect from some of the largest publishers in the world, and from thousands of independent publishers, authors and artists. Here are

some snapshots from our Legal Deposit collecting in recent years:

- In April 2018- March 2019 we collected 290,000 printed items
- At the start of 2020, we had collected more than 5 million digital journal articles, and more than 500,000 digital books
- Our UK Web Archive contains a special collection of websites for every UK General Election since 2005
- Our Legal Deposit map viewer contains an annual snapshot of Great Britain's and Northern Ireland's Ordnance Survey large-scale products, that provide detailed mapping for all regions of the UK
- Our research into changing reading and publishing practice includes collaborative PhD topics on the impact of mobile technology, social media, and web comics
- Each year, we celebrate independent publishing in poetry with the Michael Marks Awards for Poetry Pamphlets. Our winners have included Richard Scott, Carol Rumens, Gill McEvoy and James McGonigal.



Priorities

We have developed three types of priority – **overarching priorities**, **subject priorities**, and **areas of focus**. These are explained below.

Overarching priorities

The key priority is to provide access to content using the most cost-effective means to help users access the information they need, now and in the future.

Core to *Living Knowledge*, our corporate strategy 2015-2023, is openness and inclusion. This is about:

“..(making our) collections and activities open and accessible to everyone across the UK, whatever their social background or geographical location.” (*Living Knowledge*, 2nd ed. p.7)

Living Knowledge – For Everyone emphasizes and accelerates particular *Living Knowledge* themes. We set out the main priorities for the content strategy that follow from each theme below. The overarching priorities involve all Collection Areas.

1 Economic growth and innovation

a We will support UK entrepreneurs and small businesses by:

- Prioritising the content that is essential to running our Business & IP Centre service, namely practical business information and intellectual property information.
- Providing remote access to more of the content UK entrepreneurs, businesses and managers need, so that registered users can use it anywhere, 24/7, via our website or our British Library On Demand service.
- Providing access to information about sustainable business and the implications of individual behaviour on climate change.

b We will support economic growth and employment more generally by:

- Prioritising information to support skills development, learning, remote working, productivity and management – particularly for people who are currently under-served.

c We will support UK science, research and innovation by:

- Continuing to provide access to research-level content that delivers value to the research communities we serve, in all disciplines and using the most cost-effective means.
- Making more Open Access⁹ content available from our discovery systems for everyone to use.
- Continuing to provide content quickly and efficiently via our document supply service, British Library On Demand, which underpins the research infrastructure of the UK and beyond – as explained on the next page:

⁹ Open Access content is defined as content that has an explicit open license or license terms that at least allow sharing for non-commercial purposes.

On Demand: underpinning global information services

At a time of global medical emergency, the task of providing access to research has never been more vital. When the Library's buildings were closed, our British Library On Demand team continued to supply vital research to the NHS, Public Health England, NICE, pharma companies, research universities and other health organisations, fulfilling over 5,000 requests from digital collections on topics either directly related to Covid-19 itself or to its indirect effects, such as cyber-bullying, care of the elderly and mental health.

With access to the latest scientific journals and other digital content from around 100 publishers, and by deploying the extensive knowledge and expertise of our dedicated team, we were able to support this critically important work, as reflected in the comments from customers below:

Anne Brice, Head of Knowledge Management, Public Health England:

Thank you very much for your response, and we really appreciate your support. We are due to start more work on rapid reviews in the next few weeks, so this is very timely - from our side we will make sure that we are processing high priority requests that are required for evidence synthesis supporting our incident cells and guidance.

Marion Spring, Associate Director, NHS NICE:

Thank you to you and the team for you resolving this so quickly – it is very much appreciated. We too are focused on Covid-related topics so our requests over the foreseeable future will be related to this.

For UK Higher Education Institutions and their students, we provide the rights-cleared content they need for online teaching and reading lists.

Our Enhanced Higher Education Supply Service (EHSS) provides rights-cleared digital content

quickly and seamlessly to over 170 Higher Education Institutions and Further Education colleges in the UK for inclusion in course packs and required reading lists. This service is provided in partnership with the Copyright Licencing Agency (CLA).

This service is likely to increase as universities look to provide hybrid tuition comprising both face to face and online learning.

Kip Darling, Library Supervisor, Birmingham City University:

I'm very grateful for the 'scan from print' documents that have been supplied since you have reopened that aspect of the service. Some of our researchers who were waiting for documents (through my failed attempts to get them from anywhere else) have been really delighted to see them come through. It's times like these that we realise what a wonderful institution the British Library really is.

For other document delivery services around the world, we provide access to information that other libraries could not supply.

Not all content is digital – we have vast collections of print holdings (books and journals) that we are able to copy and supply digitally to libraries who are locked out of their physical collections or who need information that they don't have in their libraries.

Liz Bilodeau, Senior Manager Global Alliances Copyright Clearance Center (CCC):

We've been very impressed by the hard work your team has done to ramp up operations over the past several weeks. This has not been an easy situation for anyone to navigate but your team has been spectacular and we are grateful. We truly appreciate your support and for working together as a team while we make our way through this unusual time.

2 Social and cultural renewal

a We will bring people together through libraries by:

- Continuing to provide the content that underpins our cultural events, exhibitions and other offerings in public libraries.
- Developing content that supports learning programmes and enhances the curriculum, for example by developing online courses in information literacy and critical evaluation of online sources.
- Reflecting diverse and under-represented voices in our collecting by engaging with authors, community groups and small publishers to ensure the content they produce is collected, made available and preserved for the future.
- Continuing our rapid response collecting on urgent topical issues, working with a range of partners and aiming to represent the experience of many different parts of society. This additional in-depth collecting tries to capture the spirit of the times during significant moments in history, for example during general elections, the Brexit referendum and most recently, the Covid-19 pandemic. Find more details on the following page.

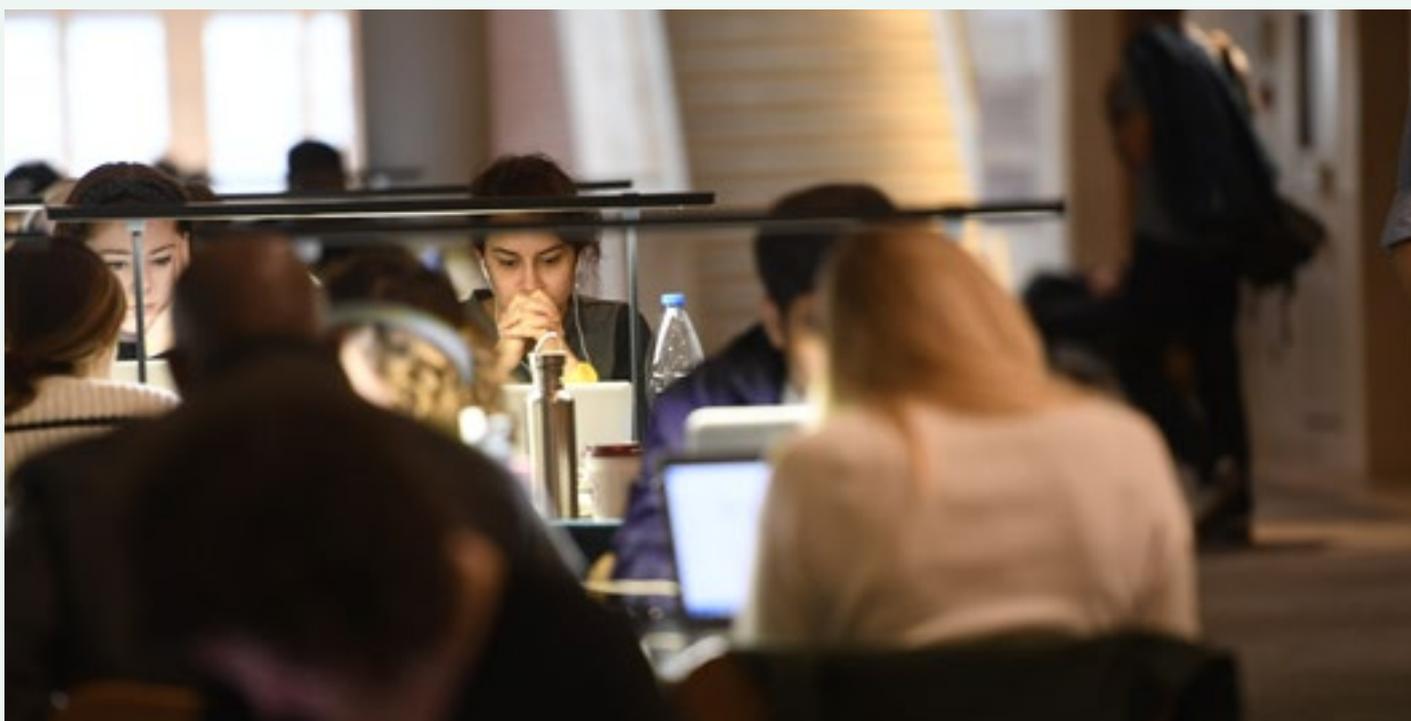
b We will increase access, engagement and diversity by:

- Engaging with a wide variety of people in forming our plans.
- Explaining our content and service offering in clear, simple words.

- Actively promoting our content and services to everyone who might want to use them, and using a variety of channels to reach people effectively.
- Making it easier and less intimidating for people of all kinds to use the Library onsite and online.
- Making more content available remotely, beyond the premises of the Library for registered users via agreements with publishers and using secure authentication technology, so that it can be accessed by our users from anywhere, 24/7.
- Making more Open Access¹⁰ content available from our discovery systems for everyone to use.
- Ensuring our website provides strong onward journeys into our contemporary content.
- Building collections that reflect diversity in all its forms, and that are relevant to people of all kinds. We acknowledge that there is a long way to go to achieve this aspiration.

c We will contribute to the UK's international impact by:

- Continuing to support UK science, research and innovation with the content they need.
- Supplying content internationally via British Library On Demand.
- Continuing to develop international and touring exhibitions and events based on our content.
- Working collaboratively with other national libraries in the UK and globally.



¹⁰ Open Access content is defined as content that has an explicit open license or license terms that at least allow sharing for non-commercial purposes.

Rapid Response Covid-19 Collecting

During the Covid-19 pandemic, teams from across the Library have been collecting audio, websites, diaries and testimony to capture experiences of lockdown and protect these resources as part of the national collection.

Our Covid-19 collecting includes:

- Off-air recordings from 17 television channels and up to 60 radio stations, including community radio stations. We have captured all of the daily government updates, regular news programmes, phone-ins, chat shows, documentaries and TV specials. We are also collecting assorted Covid-19 related podcasts.
- Over 5,000 UK websites (and growing) about the pandemic, with an [open call continuing](#). The collection will eventually be freely available on the UK Web Archive [Pandemic Outbreaks Collection](#)
- Contributing to an international collection of websites in partnership with the International Internet Preservation Consortium (IIPC). Contributions have come from over 30 IIPC members as well as public nominations from over 100 individuals/institutions. 3TB and nearly 8,000 seeds have been collected so far.
- As part of our emerging formats work, we are working with the other five Legal Deposit Libraries to consider complex digital objects created in response to the Covid-19 outbreak (such as apps, chatbots, and interactive fiction) and what could be in scope for Legal Deposit Libraries to collect, resulting in a collection matrix. Together with the Library at Cambridge University we have approached the team behind the [Cambridge Covid-19 Sounds app](#), to ask whether they would be interested in depositing a copy of their source code with us. The app collects data to inform the diagnosis of Covid-19 by developing machine learning algorithms, based primarily on the sounds of a person's voice, their breathing and coughing.
- As part of an ongoing collaboration with BBC Radio 4 we are collecting unedited conversations about the pandemic from the [Listening Project](#) which will eventually be made available online in full at sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/The-Listening-Project.
- We will collect the [Covid Chronicles](#): all of the 400-word listener experiences of life during the *Covid-19* pandemic submitted by the public to BBC Radio 4's PM programme.
- We will sample content from BBC Local Radio's [Lockdown upload](#) initiative across the UK.
- Thanks to a large grant from UKRI we are partnering with the 'NHS at 70' oral history project based at Manchester University to archive a national programme of oral histories from patients, staff and the public about the NHS and its response to Covid-19.
- We are also working on partnership projects to collect personal experiences from around the country, and creating a national database of local and community-based Covid-19-related oral history and testimony projects to ensure they have archive arrangements in place locally and/or regionally.
- The Oral History team have been providing [online best practice advice on remote interviewing](#) in times of crisis, and collaborating globally with an international oral history consortium documenting the global pandemic.



Collection Area Priorities

Subject priorities and areas of focus are led by different Collection Areas working with others, as explained below. The following statements are about our priorities for collecting and connecting to contemporary published material (defined as printed and digital content published from 1945 onwards.) They should be read alongside our [Heritage Acquisitions Policy](#).

Subject and interdisciplinary priorities

In 2013 we committed to developing a small number of subject priorities in each Discipline, based on the following criteria:

- The Library can offer particularly rich content and services for the researcher
- There is strong demand for content in the subject
- The subject is a priority of UK research funders
- The researcher is underserved by other providers.

These criteria suit an academic audience – but as the national library of the UK, serving many other audiences, we recognised that we needed to broaden our approach.

We have built upon these criteria by using the concept of public value, which takes account of the value that is generated not only for the user, but other stakeholders too. We have developed a definition of value which takes account of the value generated over the short, medium and long term, and a model of value that looks at the Life Cycle Cost of the content versus the benefits (value) that is generated, to inform decisions about our priorities.

We are using a consistent structured approach to developing our subject priorities and priorities (or 'areas of focus') for each Collection Area, which are sense-checked against the value model and co-ordinated across teams. Our priorities are subjects or

areas where we want to develop our collecting and connecting activity over and above our Legal Deposit commitments. Our initial subject priorities include:

- Rapid-response collecting on Covid-19, to support access to scientific and practical information
- Data science: via connecting to datasets
- History of Medicine & Public Health Communication
- History of Science
- Psychotherapy & Counselling
- Education
- Government & Official Information
- Library & Information Studies
- Social Policy & Social Welfare
- Black Studies
- Business and management, including topical issues like managing teams working remotely.
- Practical business information to support our Business & IP Centres, focusing on market intelligence initially
- Intellectual Property.

Other priorities – such as the history, culture and literature of different countries, regions and peoples and the international perspective our collections can bring – are addressed in the areas of focus.

Areas of focus

Each Collection Area in the Library is developing areas of focus, where we aim to actively develop our contemporary published content in greater depth in the period 2020-2023, based on the same criteria and value model as the subject priorities. Collection Area priorities include the history, literature, culture and socio-political and socio-economic conditions

of countries, regions and peoples, and provide international perspectives on a wide range of subjects and themes. They all include common elements derived from the Guiding Principles, and are subject to the same Guiding Principles overall. They also reflect the Library's International strategy and its Science strategy.

Contemporary British Collections

We focus on the comprehensive collection of UK published communication in print and digital form. Our aim is to build a collection that reflects the full diversity of life and experience in the UK, and to make this available as openly as we are able for research and to support wider public outreach. Our contemporary collections include academic and commercially published books and journals, official publications, news, maps, the UK Web Archive, small and independent press, and artists' books. Our collections cover all subjects, including science, technology and medicine, social sciences and arts and humanities, as well as fiction, poetry, biography, and local and family histories.

Legal Deposit forms the core and most important part of our collecting for the UK and Ireland. We receive books and serials direct from publishers or via distribution agents, either posted to us at Boston Spa or delivered digitally using a range of agreed methods, including the Publisher Submission Portal (for smaller-sized publishers). The UK Web Archive collects millions of web pages every year. Engagement with UK publishers and creators is a vital part of our work. As a part of this, we want to increase our UK collecting from smaller publishers in all languages, and to engage more with communities in building our collections.

The collections that we build under Legal Deposit are relevant to understanding history and contemporary experience across the globe. They are a core part of how we build our collections to understand the world around us. Publishing is a global industry, and Legal Deposit collects books and serials from publishers with editorial offices around the world.

Legal Deposit has been part of English law since 1662, and our contemporary collecting forms part of this

longer history. Our Legal Deposit collection is central also to our heritage collections, and contemporary Legal Deposit supports understanding and new research across our heritage collections.

Our priorities include extending our capabilities to collect and manage 'emerging formats', reflecting technological and artistic innovation in new digital publications, and supporting creative industries by documenting this innovation. Related to this, we will also adapt and improve the way we collect official publications and grey literature, and respond to rapid change in publishing standards and behavior.

At the same time, we are reviewing our content priorities to support the continued collecting and availability of print publications, in particular where the printed format is significant to user experience and understanding.

We have a news strategy, including building our capacity to collect news in digital form, enabling new forms of discovery for news, and exploring new research and engagement opportunities.

We want to improve user experience for our collections, and understand changing research practices and needs. This includes Open Access publishing, and being able to support computational analysis of collections and/or metadata, within Legal Deposit regulations. Key to this is the AHRC-funded Digital Library Futures project. We are exploring how to take forward the recommendations from this project, which recommended a user-centred framework and user group for Legal Deposit.

Asian & African Collections

We focus on the acquisition of contemporary print and digital content, including independent and less-known works, which are critical to the understanding of the history, culture and society of countries and communities in Asia and Africa, as well as diaspora and migrant communities.

We prioritise academic and research level publications (monographs, journals and e-resources) in Asian and African languages (including minority languages) or published in Asia and Africa in the arts, humanities

and social sciences. In addition to the range of subjects related to these fields, we closely follow the development of scholarly publishing originating from Asia and Africa or related to these regions. We are expanding our offer to enable an understanding of significant political, social and cultural changes, as well as issues of global relevance. We also collect or connect to new material to interpret our historic or existing collections, and in order to fill significant gaps in our holdings. These are complemented by the selective acquisition of primary sources for the

study of Asian and African societies, history, politics and culture in Asian and African languages, via for example: newspapers, periodicals, e-archives, NGO or specialist reports, statistics, political pamphlets and ephemera.

We are expanding the acquisition of independent publications that are not easily available through standard suppliers, and at risk of being overlooked and lost. These include contemporary productions in the creative arts (literature, poetry, visual arts, graphic novels, artists' books) and emerging formats, as well as productions by groups that are under-represented or marginalised in mainstream publishing. These works are in Asian and African languages, published in Asia

and Africa, or produced by diaspora communities in any language.

We intend to collect and/or connect to more digital content in future and to develop our skills in this area. To this end we engage with international partners and stakeholders to identify opportunities for connecting wherever possible.

We are planning to work to ensure that content published in the UK by publishers and communities with links to our areas and in the languages of our areas is acquired by Legal Deposit. We also plan to maximize knowledge about and usage of Legal Deposit material relevant to our areas from UK based publishers.

European, Americas & Oceania Collections

We focus on the acquisition of contemporary print and digital content via purchase and Legal Deposit, format being dependent on availability and user needs. Our content strategy and activities follow the Guiding Principles set out in the Library's overarching Content Strategy.

We prioritise contemporary academic and research level publications (monographs, journals and e-resources) in the arts, humanities and social sciences. Our collecting covers the major international research languages, national languages from our areas, and, selectively, minority and endangered languages, including those which have been subject to suppression at certain times in their history. The key role of North American academic publishing in almost all subject areas means that we collect most widely, though still selectively, from this area.

We aim to reflect the spectrum of views which contribute to the make-up of contemporary politics, society and culture in Europe, the Americas and Oceania, including the voices of groups who are or have been marginalised in mainstream publishing. We also collect material published by diaspora communities. The breadth of our collecting enables users to interpret contemporary themes and issues through varied lenses and adds new research value and context to our historic collections. We remain

flexible in our approach to enable collecting material in new subject areas or relating to specific social or political movements of particular significance at a given time. We also collect material to fill significant gaps in our holdings.

We also collect selectively, or connect to, primary source materials for the study of the history, society, politics and culture of Europe, the Americas and Oceania. These include: newspapers, magazines, statistics, official publications, political pamphlets, ephemera, literary works and newly available digital surrogates of archival materials.

We collect a representative selection of contemporary publications in the creative arts: literature, visual arts, graphic novels, artists' books. This includes the works of small independent publishers, which are not widely available, even in their place of origin.

We intend to collect and/or connect to more digital content in future and develop our skills in this area.

We are planning to work to ensure that content published in the UK by publishers and communities with links to our areas and in the languages of our areas is acquired by Legal Deposit. We also plan to maximize knowledge about and usage of Legal Deposit material relevant to our areas from UK based publishers.

Conclusion

Through our content strategy for contemporary published content, we aim to generate more public value for individuals, organisations, business and wider society, and to support the research infrastructure of the UK in this time of national recovery and renewal, and beyond.

Our key priority is to provide access to content, using the most cost-effective means to help users access the information they need, now and in the future.

Our content strategy underpins our aim to enable access for everyone to the information they need – reliable information for individuals, organisations, and communities – whatever their background, characteristics or location.



Appendix: Statements of Intent and the related Guiding Principle(s)

Guiding Principle number(s)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | <p>We will ensure that our collecting and connecting activities are coherent and co-ordinated across all parts of the collection for contemporary published content.</p> <p>We will ensure that the content strategy is applied across all parts of the Library's collection of contemporary published content.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Working with the other Legal Deposit Libraries and leveraging our community engagement work and the Living Knowledge Network of public libraries, we will raise awareness of Legal Deposit with users of all kinds, using plain language to explain what it is, the benefits for the nation and how everyone can access and use it. To this end we are developing new pages about Legal Deposit on the British Library website.</p> <p>We will engage with groups and communities producing publications in the UK to ensure that our collection reflects the diversity of life and experience in the UK. We will identify and reach out to these groups as part of our content development plans, and alongside the Library's community engagement activities.</p> |
| 3 | <p>In order to provide up to date evidence of demand and need, we will conduct a quantitative survey with our Readers in winter 2020. Alongside this, we will engage with non-users from specific audience groups to better understand their needs.</p> <p>We will use the definition of value and model we have developed to assess the cost-benefit of each priority or area of focus over the short, medium and long term, and will adapt our plans accordingly.</p> <p>We will refresh our content and services so that they better meet the needs of users and non-users in those subjects/themes which we have defined as priorities.</p> <p>We will do more marketing, outreach and engagement to promote awareness of our contemporary content and services, using accessible channels and leveraging our community engagement work and the Living Knowledge Network of public libraries.</p> <p>We will improve our website and discovery systems to make it easier for a range of people to discover and use our contemporary content.</p> |
| 4 | <p>We will reduce spending on content in some areas and move to 'on demand' access such as Patron-Driven Acquisitions (PDA) for monographs or temporary Just-In-Time access for journals.</p> <p>Where contemporary content is required for the permanent collection in the longer term, we will look to buy material retrospectively, ideally with remote access rights.</p> <p>Within our priorities and in light of evidence of demand and need, we will increase the amount of content which is available remotely (i.e. beyond Library premises on users' own devices). The importance of this has increased in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>We will balance acquisitions with the resource to process them, and look for pragmatic solutions to enable content to be made available as quickly and effectively as possible.</p> |
| 5 | <p>We will focus on balancing collection building for the long term alongside the need to improve discovery of and access to content beyond the Library's permanent collection to support current and emerging research demands. Clear guidance on when to connect to content (rather than collect it) has been developed.</p> |

- 6 The selection decision is based primarily on value to the research community, consideration of format (print or digital) is secondary and is looked at on a case by case basis and in light of the factors described in Guiding Principle 6, rather than being a blanket rule. However, given the shift to digital publishing, we anticipate that our contemporary published collection will be increasingly digital over time.
- 7 Avoiding duplication within the Library's collecting and connecting activity involves co-ordination and checking, which is already an established part of how we work. Duplication is allowed where it offers a clear and measurable benefit, for example we connect to material that is Open Access as well as collecting it under Legal Deposit in order to provide access beyond the Library's premises. A second example of an exception is where we buy content to support services which add value for their users. Some of these services are priced (ETOC, AMED), and here the revenue-generating aspect is key to our decision-making. But revenue is not the only factor: Zetoc, the abstracting and indexing service, is provided free to UK universities and academics because it generates public value by underpinning UK higher education research.
- 8 We will improve our use of tools such as the National Bibliographic Knowledgebase (NBK) to map and compare our collections.
- We will explore the potential for more collaboration with other libraries, via the UK Research Reserve and other national and academic libraries. This will include looking for ways of leveraging content across the network.
- We will work collaboratively with purchasing consortia and professional groups.
- For our international collections, we will make our current collecting approach more transparent and better co-ordinate it with our content strategy priorities and our developing International Strategy.
- 9 We aspire to increase the amount of licensed content available to our users beyond the Library's premises via remote access, over time.
- 10 Principle 10 states that "where the British Library has no preservation responsibility and where connecting will provide persistent access that can be maintained effectively, we will prefer to connect rather than collect." It works together with Principle 6 in the following way: The selection decision is based on value to the research community, then we look at format (print or digital, Principle 6) and thirdly we prefer to connect, where the British Library has no preservation responsibility and where connecting will provide persistent access which can be maintained effectively over a reasonable time period. We have started to implement this Principle by linking to Open Access¹¹ content which has an appropriate archival solution in place. There will be exceptions, for instance where the content is unstable or where access cannot be provided in a persistent way.
- 11 We will increasingly look to leverage access to Open Access¹² content through improved discovery and linking, in ways that provide persistent access that can be maintained effectively over time.

¹¹ Open Access content is defined as content that has an explicit open license or license terms that at least allow sharing for non-commercial purposes.

¹² Open Access content is defined as content that has an explicit open license or license terms that at least allow sharing for non-commercial purposes.