

# The Power of Knowledge.

The RLUK Strategic Plan 2008 - 2011

# Introduction

*The power of knowledge* is RLUK's first Strategic Plan. We'll be updating it annually, with a rolling three-year forward look. But the plan will also indicate our direction beyond the formal three-year planning period. Building on the quarter-century of experience we've accumulated as CURL, the Consortium of Research Libraries, we hope that the plan will serve to guide our Executive, our Board, and our membership as we help to shape the research libraries of the future.

We also hope that it will enable our external partners to understand the distinctive contribution that the UK's biggest research libraries can make to the economic, technological and cultural success of the UK; and that our members' customers in higher education and other sectors will find it useful in thinking about the ways in which we can support their work.

The plan has a three-part structure. In the first section, we set out our vision, mission and values. These are intended to provide the broad framework around which our programmes are built, and the ways in which we will work with our partners to deliver them. In the second section, we outline our six strategic themes, the priority areas that we will address in the planning period. Finally, the third section contains an outline set of objectives, indicating the actions we will take to move these priority areas forward. RLUK will develop more detailed operational plans to support these.

There has never been a more exciting time for research libraries, as we harness the power of digital content and internet technologies, and combine it with the massive resources of our libraries' print and heritage collections to empower our membership and their customers.

Mark Brown  
Chair, RLUK

# Vision, mission and values

## Vision

That the UK should have the best research library support in the world

## Mission

To work with our members and with our partners, nationally and internationally, to shape and to realise the vision of the modern research library

## Values

We collaborate to achieve more, faster, than we could individually

We listen to our members and represent their views

We maximise our influence and provide value for money for our members

We work with the research community to promote excellence in support of current research and anticipate future needs

We share good practice and build the capacity of our staff to promote change

We value the richness of our collections and work to ensure that researchers can exploit them to the full

We are proud of our past and confident of our future

We will provide leadership in all areas where our contribution can gain most value for the community

# Strategic themes

## **Theme 1** Developing the research library workforce

The fast moving environment in which research libraries operate requires workforces which can understand the changing needs of researchers, and which can embrace the new roles and new skills required to meet those needs. Sharing experience and best practice with each other, and with colleagues outside our membership, is central to this. In this next planning period, RLUK will make a distinctive contribution to workforce development, collaborating with key partners to deliver training in emerging areas such as e-research, setting up new interest groups and work exchange programmes, and planning and delivering new events to extend engagement with RLUK below director and second-tier level in member libraries. Our activities will aim to ensure that a rich crop of new leadership talent is available to take the UK's research libraries into the future.

## **Theme 2** Building the new research information infrastructure

Changes in the way researchers work, with the advent of grid-enabled collaborative research, and the increasing importance of data outputs, clearly point to the need for new information infrastructure. At the same time, growing concern about the sustainability of current scholarly communication models, coupled with pressure for public access to publicly-funded research outputs, will mean that the pioneering work of RLUK members in establishing institutional repositories, raising the awareness of scholarly communications issues among researchers and facilitating institutional awareness of curation and preservation issues must be extended. RLUK expects to be a major player in these areas of work over the next decade, helping to shape the new national information infrastructure for research at a national level, and ensuring that our members are well-placed to maximise their institutional impact

## **Theme 3** Resource discovery and delivery

Our researchers need more effective search and discovery tools, coupled with easy access to print and digital content, in order to exploit fully the richness of collections. Over the next three years RLUK will work with key stakeholders, including JISC and the British Library, to develop the COPAC platform as the basis of an integrated national catalogue, and to enhance its ability to provide seamless access to added-value content and services, such as the full text of digitised documents, born-digital content in multiple formats, and document delivery.

## **Theme 4 Digitisation**

As CURL, RLUK played a key role in identifying the need for a coherent national strategy for the digitisation of research resources. Although we will not fund digitisation directly, RLUK will a strategic approach to digitisation, helping to shape policy, defining requirements and identifying priorities. We expect that partnerships with commercial and not-for-profit bodies will play an important part in the creation of additional research-level digitised content; we also see it as essential that UK priorities are clearly identified and that they drive the future digitisation agenda.

## **Theme 5 Demonstrating value**

Although research libraries are generally highly valued by their customers, the value that they add to their parent institutions and to the wider UK economy is often poorly understood and difficult to measure. RLUK will work with cognate agencies to maximise the use of existing management information, for example in benchmarking, and to develop new tools to enable research libraries to demonstrate more effectively the contribution that they make to institutional success.

## **Theme 6 Increasing our effectiveness**

RLUK is committed to providing value for money for its members, as well as maximising the influence that its members have in the national research arena. During the planning period, RLUK will review its operational procedures, including the way in which it engages with its members and harnesses their expertise and commitment. We will also critically examine the balance between the capacity of the central secretariat, the availability of volunteer effort from members, and the size of RLUK's work programme.