POWERING SCHOLARSHIP

RLUK Research Libraries UK
STRATEGY 2014 -17
RLUK MEMBERS

The Sir Duncan Rice Library, University of Aberdeen
University of Birmingham
University of Bristol
British Library
University of Cambridge
Cardiff University
Durham University
University of Edinburgh
University of Exeter
University of Glasgow
Imperial College London
King’s College London
University of Leeds
University of Leicester
University of Liverpool
University of London, Senate House Libraries
LSE
University of Manchester
National Library of Scotland
National Library of Wales
Newcastle University
University of Nottingham
University of Oxford
Queen Mary, University of London
Queen’s University Belfast
University of Reading
Royal Holloway, University of London
SOAS, University of London
University of Sheffield
University of Southampton
University of St Andrews
University of Sussex
Trinity College Library Dublin
University College London
Victoria and Albert Museum National Art Library
University of Warwick
Wellcome Library
University of York

Executive

Executive Director: David Prosser
Executive Assistant: Melanie Cheung
RLUK’s strategy ‘Powering Scholarship’ outlines our ambitions and objectives for the next three years. The consortium will be focused on developing our libraries to drive forward research and innovation in all disciplines, responding to changes in the information landscape while building on our rich heritage of collections of rare books, manuscripts and archives. Although the format of the strategy differs from its predecessor, there is much continuity between the two. Increasing the value delivered by Special Collections features strongly alongside research data management, an ethical market for published materials, digitisation and more effective resource discovery. There is undoubtedly more emphasis on open access scholarly communications, both gold and green as you would expect in this post-Finch world. And for the first time we have focused on researcher training, recognising that, with research-based undergraduate learning increasing in importance, all students need to be able to exploit fully the research potential of our collections, both print and digital. Workforce development also gets more prominence reflecting the success of the Associate Directors Network in nurturing talent.

I am grateful to all who have contributed to the development of this strategy. Board colleagues have played an important role, both kicking off with debates last December and commenting on successive drafts. The Executive team have shaped and refined the early ideas which have benefited enormously from discussions during member library visits. The Associate Directors Network, many of whom have already made significant contributions to the strategy itself, will play an important role in turning ideas into reality. We are fortunate in the strength of this group and their commitment to leadership development, innovation and service improvement.

Libraries have been supporting the pursuit of new knowledge for centuries. Although the traditional print formats are giving way to digital and new services are gaining in prominence, libraries and their collections nevertheless remain at the very heart of scholarship. This strategy is intended to shape the future of our libraries ensuring they deliver maximum value to the research community both within the UK and on the international stage.

Stella Butler
RLUK Chair
August 2014
VISION
Our network of distinctive research libraries will be recognised as influential leaders in and valued contributors to the advancement of research and scholarship through their outstanding collections and services

MISSION
RLUK is a consortium of major research libraries in the UK and Ireland, whose purpose is to shape the research library agenda and contribute to the wider knowledge economy through innovative projects and services that add value and impact to the process of research and researcher-training
A Collective Approach: Re-shaping the modern research library collection
• Work towards a shared approach to the management of print, manuscript and archive collections across RLUK
• Campaign for an ethical and effective market for subscribed and purchased material
• Coordinate and rationalise digital collections across RLUK

Open Scholarship: Creating a new environment for the communication of research outputs
• Promote innovative models for open access journals, monographs and textbooks
• Explore new forms of scholarly communication
• Encourage innovation in research data management (RDM)

Nothing Hidden, Nothing Lost: Exposing and exploiting our collections
• Uncover hidden collections
• Develop and support services to facilitate seamless and frictionless resource discovery
• Encourage greater engagement of RLUK libraries in the wider cultural landscape

Mapping a Changing Research Landscape: The role of libraries in research and researcher training
• Map trends in research processes and researcher behaviour
• Identify key areas where libraries can add value
• Promote the role of libraries to contribute more actively to research training

A Creative Community: Nurturing leadership, innovation and skills throughout our libraries
• Provide thought leadership through debate and discussion, promoting ‘best-practice’, creative thinking and innovation in all aspects of research library activity
• Engage RLUK members in measuring and demonstrating the value of their libraries
• Nurture new skills and competences within member libraries
The Challenge: We are living in a complex environment in which information is delivered in both physical and digital formats. Traditional materials co-exist and interrelate with virtual resources. As researchers and students adopt new methods, their expectations of libraries are changing. New formats bring new challenges around collecting, ownership, usage and lending rights, and preservation. The increasing ubiquity of electronic versions raises questions about the need for extensive, duplicate print collections. Users expect born-physical collections spanning millennia to have the same functionality as born-digital materials (and vice versa) as libraries seek to integrate their digital collections with a rationalised physical estate to serve researchers and students more effectively.

Work towards a shared approach to the management of print, manuscript and archive collections across RLUK

- Compile a comprehensive and accurate view of collections held by RLUK members through further development of collection and item-level metadata
- Determine a collaborative programme for the joint stewardship of a rationalised and distributed print collection across RLUK members
- Identify issues around intellectual property rights that impact on the use and re-use of materials for scholarly use
- Agree best-practice to allow further collecting collaboration between archives and establish a coordinated strategy for preservation and access to research resources of high value

Campaign for an ethical and effective market for subscribed and purchased material

- Ensure robust negotiating processes for the purchase of subscribed material to secure best value for the higher education community
- Establish clarity of ownership and usage rights for licensed content
- Advance seamless and sustainable national document supply systems
- Promote good practice in standards-based statistics demonstrating the use of electronic materials

Coordinate and rationalise digital collections across RLUK

- Work with national and international partners to minimise redundancy in digitisation
- Develop new business models for digitisation, establish criteria for defining digitisation priorities and identify new funding streams
- Develop a sustainable model for a coordinated infrastructure to allow for the curation, integration, discovery, presentation and preservation of digital collections
- Promote the integration of both born-digital collections and digitised material into research and learning
- Explore the role of digitisation in stewardship
The Challenge: Scholarly communications is changing - readers want access to a wide variety of formats delivered to a range of devices, at their own convenience – ‘anytime, anywhere’. In an increasingly open world they want to reuse, mix, annotate and share information. The boundaries between formats and type of content (articles, monographs, data, etc.) are blurring and new forms of peer review and quality assessment are developing. Authors want to disseminate ideas more quickly and more widely to achieve greater impact for their work. Research funders are increasingly focusing on the dissemination of the research they fund. Our institutions are looking to new ways of showcasing the range and breadth of the intellectual outputs produced by their researchers and students.

Promote innovative models for open access journals, monographs, and textbooks

- Support collective models for the production of open access monographs
- Secure competitive and transparent markets in article processing charges and support efficient payment mechanisms
- Advocate permissive licensing terms for content
- Improve the discoverability of open access materials

Explore new forms of scholarly communication

- Help researchers explore a variety of ways to communicate their findings, including through social media
- Investigate the consequences of different forms of peer review on the scholarly output
- Support the integration of institutional repositories within the research life-cycle

Encourage innovation in research data management (RDM)

- Work with partner organisations to develop collaborative strategies for RDM
- Create a service environment for research data that increases re-use and openness
- Promote a collaborative approach to training in RDM for staff at RLUK member libraries
- Influence stakeholders to recognise the role of research libraries in managing research data
The Challenge: RLUK member libraries hold some of the world’s richest and most comprehensive research resources. But there still remain many barriers that hinder researchers and students from making the maximum use of those collections. Not all items we hold are discoverable. Users need to be certain that they can find every item that might be of interest to them or which may trigger new insights and discoveries. As user behaviours and expectations are changing, so too are mechanisms by which we expose our collections to maximise their impact.

Uncover hidden collections

- Drive the development of tools to accelerate cataloguing for collections with little or no metadata and encourage the use of those tools
- Promote the benefits of standardised metadata for all formats to enhance discoverability and achieve efficiencies
- Encourage the use of collection-level descriptions for rapid profiling of unrecorded collections

Develop and support services to facilitate seamless and frictionless resource discovery

- Release the RLUK database records as linked open data and promote the use of linked data and other open metadata to enhance discoverability and the use of materials
- Encourage the incorporation of rights data in bibliographic records and digital content to provide greater clarity regarding use and reuse
- Promote a discovery infrastructure that incorporates higher education, public, national and independent libraries

Encourage greater engagement of RLUK libraries in the wider cultural landscape

- Work with partner organisations to highlight innovative community engagement
- Develop the Unique and Distinctive Collections Hub into a web-based information exchange
- Articulate the economic and cultural impact of the archives, manuscripts and rare books held in RLUK libraries
The Challenge: The modern research library is being called upon to fulfil an ever-wider range of activities to support the research life-cycle and student experience. By understanding changes in the processes that make up both the research life-cycle and the nature of learning in higher education, we will identify how better to support our users. Our libraries must anticipate the greatly expanded range of expectations and requirements from users and position themselves to meet and exceed these expectations.

Map trends in research processes and researcher behaviour

- Gather evidence of changing trends in the use of libraries and research information
- Engage with the research councils, funding councils and other key national and international stakeholders to understand policy directions for research in all disciplines
- Understand changing trends in research practice and researcher career-paths

Identify key areas where libraries can add value

- Identify and promote best-practice in bibliometric analysis in support of research and research planning
- Engage more closely with researcher and student organisations to build a bigger picture of the information needs of researchers
- Develop services to enable institutions to meet research assessment demands
- Stimulate and encourage the role of the libraries within researcher networks

Promote the role of libraries to contribute more actively to research training

- Promote best-practice in library engagement with Doctoral Training Centres
- Explore the role of libraries in new forms of pedagogy as students and teachers move to more collaborative modes of learning
The Challenge: We know that libraries are changing: the way researchers are communicating their findings is in transition and while collections remain at our core, many researchers and students value our services as much as our books and manuscripts. We therefore need the culture of our libraries to be ever open to change and innovation, and our staff must continue to be willing to embrace new skills and competences. In this way libraries will remain crucial components of the research infrastructure both in higher education and more broadly.

Provide thought leadership through debate and discussion, promoting best-practice, creative thinking and innovation in all aspects of research library activity

- Deliver stimulating programmes for our conferences and member meetings and provide a range of communication channels for debate and discussion
- Commission horizon-scanning research to identify future priorities and scope the shape of future library provision
- Explore new platforms for communication with our members and the wider community

Engage RLUK members in measuring and demonstrating the value of their libraries

- Explore the practicalities of establishing a standard set of metrics to allow national and international benchmarking with peers
- Promote to funders and Government the impact and contribution of RLUK libraries to higher education in the UK

Nurture new skills and competences within member libraries

- Work with Information Science schools to shape both CPD and professional training for students, fitting them for the challenges presented by modern academic libraries and the changing landscape of higher education
- Continue to develop the RLUK Associate Directors Network
- Expand the RLUK mentoring programme