From Local Collections to Global Services – the British Library’s new Service Strategy

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Why are we here?

Libraries exist to help people to:

• Find information
• Access & use information
• Share their knowledge

M Cheung  https://www.flickr.com/photos/mwacheung/15197798540/ CC BY NC 2.0
What does ‘The Law’ say?

• The British Library’s function is defined by an Act of Parliament, issued in 1972.

• The British Library Act tasks us to
  – “[be] a national centre for reference, study and bibliographical and other information services”
  – and to make our services “available in particular to institutions of education and learning, other libraries and industry” and to contribute “to the efficient management of other libraries and information services”.

• Living Knowledge articulates the vision of the British Library as the most open, creative and innovative institution of its kind.
Service layers

On-site & on-line

(Inter)national infrastructure

Institutions
Arguably, we (libraries) failed our users

Neal Hockley @NealHockley - Jan 4
I now routinely use @Sci_Hub for off-campus access to journals my university pays for, because their websites are so rubbish
#openscience

Neal Hockley @NealHockley - Jan 4
5 minutes failing to get through Elsevier/Science Direct authentication, vs 5 seconds to land straight on the PDF via @Sci_Hub.
Libraries in a changing environment

- Sustainable funding?
- Declining use (in some areas)?
- Research is digital, are we?
- Are we still needed for discovery?
- In an open world, do we still have a role for access to digital content?
- Global content grows so fast, our collections are shrinking (relatively)
Collections aren’t always the answer

We need to rethink the idea of a national collection as just ‘the stuff’ the Library holds. It is now about sustaining the global knowledge environment – open and persistent.
New Service Strategy

Find
- Discover content, regardless of format or location
- Identify relevant information within that content
- Unified discovery workflow

Use
- Unified access workflow
- Just-in-time provision for external content
- Workspaces and tools

Share
- Digital collection unification
- Collection management as a service

https://insights.uksg.org/articles/10.1629/uksg.409/
BL data strategy

‘Our vision for the British Library is that research data are as integrated into our collections, research and services as text is today.’
ATI, AI and data driven library

The Alan Turing Institute is the national institute for data science, headquartered at the British Library.

Five founding universities – Cambridge, Edinburgh, Oxford, UCL and Warwick – and the UK Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council created The Alan Turing Institute in 2015 in order to answer a national need for investment in data science research.

Our mission

Our mission is to make great leaps in data science research in order to change the world for the better.
A Single Digital Presence?

- The British Library is leading a consultation for the Public Libraries Sector to produce a Recommendations Paper on the feasibility and impact of an SDP

- “… a digital platform acting as a catalyst to increase public library use, enable efficiencies and amplify the impact and importance of libraries at local, national and international level.”
Collection Management as a Service

Digitisation
- On (user) demand
- For institutions

Metadata & Preservation
- Enhance content
- Provide identifiers
- Build semantic links
- Licensing
- Preservation across formats

Discovery
- BL & external content
- Feed external discovery platforms (e.g. Google)
- Discovery as a service
- Single Digital Presence
- BL discovery widget

Analysis
- Text and data mining
- Machine interfaces
- Visualisation
- Machine learning

Access
- Shared platform
- Institutional portals
- Machine interfaces
- Push to external platforms

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Example: repository services

- Re-develop national preservation system (>5m items, petabyte-scale) into multi-tenancy service
- Develop access layer with multiple (logical) repositories
- Pilot for a multi-tenancy (4/20 partner organisations) access repository
- Consider (inter?)national OA preservation approach
An ambitious agenda

• Are we focusing on the right things?

• Partnerships – who’s in?

• Does a national focus still make sense?