

Learning together: Library strategic plan 2008-2010

Introduction

I am pleased to introduce the University Library's strategic plan for the 2008-2010. It outlines the directions the Library will take in order to support the University's strategy over the next three years.

The plan includes the Library's:

Mission	a statement of fundamental purpose
Vision	an outline of how we see ourselves fulfilling our mission over the next three years
Values	a description of the qualities and values that we seek to embody in all that we do
Strategic themes	the areas of critical importance where we must achieve significant change if we are to fulfil our mission
Objectives	the lines of action that we shall pursue in order to achieve significant change in the areas of critical importance

This plan, following the 2005-2007 strategic plan *Re-placing the Library*, is the outcome of a review of the Library's educational, research and social environment. That review identified the critical changes to which the Library must respond; this plan charts those strategies which the Library needs to follow if it is to provide the services which the UWA community will need over the next three years. It does not describe all that the Library does, much of which will change very little over the next three years.

Re-placing the Library emphasised the importance of repositioning the Library's services securely and centrally in the online environment, realigning perceptions of what a library service today is, and ensuring that the Library's buildings provide the facilities and environment appropriate to the needs of today's students.

While these remain important - and many of the strategies associated with them are continued in this plan - there are three elements in the environment that, we believe, will require major shifts in Library strategy. These are the rapid growth in the use of 'social software', the rise in the availability and use of Web services, and, the consequence of the ready availability of large amounts of information of poor quality, the critical need to distinguish that which is reliable and authoritative.

Libraries are human, social places. People learn there. That has always been true of library buildings (students now constitute over 95% of all those who enter the UWA libraries). Increasingly part at least of student learning is learning with others, in

communities of learning. Research, too, is increasingly collaborative and data-intensive. The Library's thinking about how it can best support learning and research communities in the virtual and well as physical spaces is reflected in this plan.

Web services technologies mean that the Library's online services can be made available in online contexts outside of the Library's own formal web presence. This opens up new possibilities for extending the usefulness of the Library's online services but also poses some technical challenges, requiring a rethinking of the design and structure of those services, and of the technical infrastructure.

The growing need for, and the ability to, provide library and information services to learning and research communities is thus the overarching theme of this plan. In some cases these communities are within the UWA; in a growing number of cases they extend beyond UWA, crossing national boundaries. Whether in the context of collaborative research, or student communities of learners, sharing experience and knowledge, the need for ready access to reliable, authoritative information has never been greater. *Learning together* presents the UWA Library's strategy over the next three years to meet this need.

JOHN ARFIELD
University Librarian
December 2007

The Library's mission

Our mission statement outlines the fundamental purpose of the Library

By delivering excellent information resources and services the Library is integral to the University's mission of advancing, transmitting and sustaining knowledge.

The Library's vision

Our vision statement describes how we see ourselves fulfilling our mission over the next three years

The Library will continue to be at the heart of the University's mission to advance, transmit and sustain knowledge and understanding. We shall respond dynamically and creatively to the educational and research environments, transforming and extending our services to meet changing needs. In order to fulfil our mission:

we shall support the advancement of knowledge and understanding by developing and implementing services that will enable new ways of discovering, sharing and synthesising knowledge, and that will foster the creative conjunction of ideas;

we shall engage in the transmission of knowledge and understanding by creating, maintaining and publishing research resources and by deploying our distinctive skills in the support of new models of collaborative research;

we shall be actively and closely engaged in the University's teaching through managing the University's learning resources; wherever and whenever it is needed we shall provide information resources and assistance to students in using information effectively, so enriching the University's learning environments; and

we shall sustain knowledge and understanding by strengthening and preserving our research collections and by providing online and physical environments that foster communities of learning.

The Library's values

The Library values:

Responsiveness

All our activities are undertaken with the primary objective of anticipating, identifying and meeting the diverse information needs of each Library user

Consideration

All are treated fairly and courteously in an environment that is safe, supportive and welcoming

Excellence

We continually strive to improve all that we do.

Innovation

We seek new and creative ways of serving our users.

Trust

In all our relations we foster mutual trust and support, respect, and a shared sense of purpose.

Collaboration

We cooperate with one another and work with others in the University to realize our vision.

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Strategic themes

Theme 1 Learning with tomorrow's students: supporting learning communities

While the Library has established a programme of University-wide surveys to assist its general understanding of the needs of its users it will need to understand to a greater degree of detail the characteristics of particular learning communities within the University in order to ensure that its services match those various needs.

Advances in technology enable information and services to be placed into learning contexts without requiring a visit to the Library website or the University's formal learning management systems. The greater fluidity that these technologies provide requires the Library to place less emphasis on delivering information into static learning environments and more on providing tools which will enable learners to incorporate information into their own learning environments. The Library will facilitate and encourage such use of its services while ensuring appropriate security and confidentiality.

Increasingly information is sought through search engines and tools other than through the library catalogue. The Library will enable its resources to be discovered and obtained as widely as possible through such channels.

Theme 2 Learning with tomorrow's teachers: supporting flexibility

The University is entering a phase in which its education becomes more flexible in its review of course structures, in its accommodation of a greater variety of student backgrounds and learning styles, in its use of the tools which are available to meet those needs, and in its broader conception of the total student learning experience. Working with academic colleagues, the Library must provide a range of services that will provide as much freedom as possible to teachers who wish to incorporate library resources, services and teaching materials into their own 'learning spaces' It must also support and assist the innovative use of information in teaching and learning.

Theme 3 Learning with tomorrow's researchers: supporting collaboration

While most researchers are rare visitors to Library buildings they rely very heavily on the digital resources which are provided through the Library. Use of the Library from the desktop, lab bench or field station requires that a continued high priority be given to the acquisition of digital research resources, both current and retrospective.

The exposure on the internet of a university's research activity through the use of a central digital repository is regarded as becoming increasingly important, and the Library will provide, promote and maintain this at UWA. At the same time it will support digital

repositories that serve the particular needs of particular discipline-based communities of researchers.

Arising from the rapid development of e-Research there is a growing understanding of the major issues which are presented by the need to manage and preserve the large amounts of digital information which are being generated by researchers in universities. The Library will engage in, and promote, discussion of such issues at UWA.

4 Learning together: keeping one step ahead

The fluid environment facing the University in the next three years requires a fluid response from the Library. Library structures will continue to evolve to meet new needs; staff across the Library will need to work together across the organisation in order to achieve strategic objectives. Old skills will need to be used in new ways; new skills will need to be acquired. Resources will more than ever need to be used efficiently; above all the working environment will need to enable and support confident collaboration.

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Objectives

Theme 1 Learning with tomorrow's students: supporting learning communities

While the Library has established a programme of University-wide surveys to assist its general understanding of the needs of its users it will need to understand to a greater degree of detail the characteristics of particular learning communities within the University in order to ensure that its services match those various needs.

Advances in technology enable information and services to be placed into learning contexts without requiring a visit to the Library website or the University's formal learning management systems. The greater fluidity that these technologies provide requires the Library to place less emphasis on delivering information into static learning environments and more on providing tools which will enable learners to incorporate information into their own learning environments. The Library will facilitate and encourage such use of its services while ensuring appropriate security and confidentiality.

Increasingly information is sought through search engines and tools other than through the library catalogue. The Library will enable its resources to be discovered and obtained as widely as possible through such channels.

- 1.1 To have a good understanding of the characteristics of particular learning communities and the various ways in which learning takes place in the University
- 1.2 To extend access to library resources and services for alumni and other members of the wider University community
- 1.3 To provide digital library services to meet the specific needs of individuals, groups and communities at the time required, exploiting popular and emerging technologies
- 1.4 To develop library resources and tools that may be used by students within their own collaborative online environments
- 1.5 To provide physical learning environments that support a full range of student learning styles and preferences, collaborative and informal as well as individual and formal
- 1.6 To increase the ease with which library resources may be found and obtained

2. Learning with tomorrow's teachers: supporting flexibility

The University is entering a phase in which its education becomes more flexible in its review of course structures, in its accommodation of a greater variety of student backgrounds and learning styles, in its use of the tools which are available to meet those needs, and in its broader conception of the total student learning experience. Working with academic colleagues, the Library must provide a range of services that will provide as much freedom as possible to teachers who wish to incorporate library resources, services and teaching materials into their own 'learning spaces' It must also support and assist the innovative use of information in teaching and learning.

- 2.1 To develop digital services which support the University's educational objectives and which are available for use by teachers in a variety of learning contexts
- 2.2 To support and collaborate with teachers in the innovative use of information
- 2.3 To provide resources for training in the effective use of information, particularly in identifying reliable and authoritative information

3. Learning with tomorrow's researchers: supporting collaboration

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Arising from the rapid development of e-Research there is a growing understanding of the major issues which are presented by the need to manage and preserve the large amounts of digital information which are being generated by researchers in universities. The Library will engage in, and promote, discussion of such issues at UWA.

- 3.1 To increase the availability of electronic journals and other forms of high-quality research information to the UWA community
- 3.2 To increase the profile and availability of the University's research through promoting and managing a University digital repository of research output
- 3.3 To engage in discussions of research data management policy and to make the Library's skills in information management available in support of the University's e-Research activity

- 3.4 To take a leading role in collecting, organizing and preserving the University's unique research assets
- 3.5 To assist in creating and maintaining scholarly databases and other research resources

4 Learning together: keeping one step ahead

The fluid environment facing the University in the next three years requires a fluid response from the Library. Library structures will continue to evolve to meet new needs; staff across the Library will need to work together across the organisation in order to achieve strategic objectives. Old skills will need to be used in new ways; new skills will need to be acquired. Resources will more than ever need to be used efficiently; above all the working environment will need to enable and support confident collaboration.

- 4.1 To align organisational structures and processes with the Library's strategic priorities
- 4.2 To select, develop and train staff with the skills necessary to achieve the Library's strategic priorities
- 4.3 To promote a culture of flexibility which readily embraces fluidity and change, and where decisions are based on evidence
- 4.4 To create a collaborative environment where staff members are supportive of each other and feel confident to take decisions and actions at the appropriate level
- 4.5 To collaborate with other University services in providing coordinated information-related support services