Technology Vision

Brown University Library creates, develops, promotes, and uses technology to further the Library’s mission and strategic directions in accordance with the University’s 10-year strategic plan, Building on Distinction: A New Plan for Brown -- http://brown.edu/about/administration/strategic-planning/

Library Mission Statement

The Brown University Library, in support of the University's educational and research mission, is the local repository for and the principal gateway to current information and the scholarly record. As such, it is simultaneously collection, connection, and classroom, primarily for the current and future students and faculty of the University, while also serving other colleagues in the University community and our regional, national, and global communities of learning and scholarship.

Strategic Directions and Goals

1) Discovery

Goal: Release a new discovery system that provides comprehensive access to licensed, networked, and locally held collections.

Context/Rationale: The Library's reach has expanded far beyond physical collections and now encompasses millions of licensed articles, digital and multimedia objects, research data, networked data, and content available through partnerships. Users need tools that provide access to content that reflects the changing, multi-modal nature of their work. The Library needs to support a platform that can both handle the variety of content available and be flexible enough to allow the incorporation of unforeseen collections in the future. The platform needs has to handle a variety of MARC and non-MARC metadata formats, and must employ a responsive and user-friendly design.

Outcomes:

● A new, branded discovery tool combines Josiah, BDR, HathiTrust, Summon, and other data sources in a unified and user friendly interface.
● User feedback is solicited and assessed to inform ongoing enhancements to the service.
● Content is kept up to date through the tightly integrated Blacklight/Solr architecture.
2) Library web presence

**Goal:** Initiate a new web strategy that focuses on user-centered design, a more uniform approach to content management and branding, and active engagement with users and library staff.

**Context/Rationale:** As one of the main channels through which users access library collections, services, and projects, the web presence must be current, consistent, and manageable. As the Library changes to play an increasing variety of new roles, the web presence risks becoming a fractured accumulation of content that present problems both for users and for the Library’s efforts to communicate with the community. With the addition of a new web manager, the web presence is poised to be reaffirmed as a vital resource for the University.

**Outcomes:**
- Assess the state of the web presence and define a clear roadmap for near future development.
- Complete an initial public rollout of Drupal for the main Library web site.
- Establish branding and design guidelines for Library web sites.

3) Research services

**Goal:** Enhance the visibility, use, and impact of researcher services, including VIVO, ORCID, EZID, BDR, and data management.

**Context/Rationale:** The Library is fulfilling several new roles on campus relating to the tracking, dissemination, and presentation of Brown research. From VIVO profiles to identifier services and data management consultation, the rapidly growing need for this type of support requires a deliberate development and outreach effort to clarify and expand the Library’s roles in these areas.

**Outcomes:**
- A convenient, online destination for researchers seeking information on services available through the Library and its partners.
- Expanded integration of ORCID with VIVO and other campus systems
- Build awareness throughout the Library about these activities and develop colleagues as advocates in these endeavors.

4) Transformed spaces

**Goal:** Design and open the Digital Studio - a laboratory, workspace, makerspace, and teaching space to support digital scholarship.
Context/Rationale: Expanding upon the success of the Digital Scholarship Lab, the Digital Studio will serve as a physical home for the Library’s efforts to enable scholarship using digital media and visualization, and the exploration of new forms for scholarly expression.

Outcomes:
- Establish a clear and compelling mission, set of programs, and first-year plan for the Digital Studio.
- Design and construct the Digital Studio (est: Summer 2015).
- Locate CDS staff in the Digital Studio to increase direct engagement with students and faculty.

5) Digital scholarship

Goal: Launch a digital scholarship publishing program.

Context/Rationale: The Library seeks to partner to others on campus to promote the pursuit and acceptance of digital projects as standalone and valuable products of scholarship. To this end, the Library will participate in the development of a publishing program that builds upon our traditional strengths in digital project development, content and collection creation, and researcher support.

Outcomes:
- Obtain funding to support the publishing initiative.
- Establish program guidelines and define roles for Library staff.
- Initiate pilot projects

6) Infrastructure

Goal: Review and update plans for existing Library technology infrastructure and software platforms.

Context/Rationale: As the roles for Library Technology change, the infrastructure and software platforms required to fulfill those roles change. In 2014-2015, a review of existing and near-future infrastructure requirements will assist in streamlining current operations and setting budget priorities for coming years.

Outcomes:
- Regular updates on the current and near future needs for library servers, networking, and storage.
- Review and update plans for essential software platforms, including Discovery, reserves, Josiah, CMS, repository, VIVO.
- Rollout of Active Directory for Library staff PCs
- A budgetary plan for fulfilling needs as funding allows over the coming year(s).
7) Leveraging linked data

**Goal:** Create a working prototype of a linked data “hub” that demonstrates the value of collecting assertions about data across projects. Identify opportunities for incorporating the hub into library workflows.

**Context/Rationale:** The Library is creating semantic data in many ways, including VIVO profiles, BDR records, and increasingly in digital scholarship projects. Linked data technology offers opportunities to discover content across silos. In order to demonstrate this potential, data created in various contexts needs to be collocated to allow for queries across the combined data set. This effort will facilitate more mature discussions about the future of linked data in the library.

**Outcomes:**
- A prototype linked data index pulling data from various sources.
- A framework for adding triples to the hub at the points of data entry.
- A paper and/or presentations detailing the project and its outcomes.

8) Digital Preservation

**Goal:** Build a more common understanding of the needs & requirements of digital preservation on campus, and of the Library’s role in this endeavor.

**Context/Rationale:** Digital Preservation underlies many of our longstanding efforts to provide digitization, metadata, DAM, and repository services. However, the actual scope and specifics of digital preservation needs are wide-ranging and poorly defined across campus and nationally. An effort to define the goals and scope of digital preservation activities will help in refining operations to fulfill these needs more effectively.

**Outcomes:**
- Initiate a series of discussions across campus to identify digital preservation requirements.
- Increase Library participation in national and regional preservation initiatives, such as NDSA.

9) Outreach

**Goal:** Develop outreach activities and materials as appropriate for each of these new initiatives.

**Context/Rationale:** Digital Technologies’ activities frequently have a significant impact on users, library staff, and the broader community. In order to ensure that these activities are fully realized successes, they must be supported with a concerted outreach effort.

**Outcomes:**
● Stakeholders receive timely information about new initiatives and significant developments.
● Library staff develop an understanding of and provide actionable feedback on new initiatives.
● Digital Technologies’ contributions to the Library are visible, documented, and developed in conversation with the rest of the library and its users.

10) Assessment

Goal: Update the body of metrics and criteria by which to assess the Library’s growing portfolio of technology initiatives.

Context/Rationale: The rapid growth of Library roles, tools, and online resources requires a thoughtful and thorough approach to assessment. While tools such as Google Analytics provide a wealth of data about web based activity, it is unclear if that data readily answers the questions that might be asked to promote the continuous improvement of the Library’s work.

Outcomes:
● Achievable metric and/or assessment criteria is identified for each major initiative and service provided through the work of Digital Technologies.
● Reports or other appropriate procedures are put in place to retrieve and report on these criteria prior to March 2015.
● Annual reports are shared Library-wide.

Evaluation

The Library’s Operational Planning Group regularly assesses progress toward strategic goals and reports at all-staff meetings twice a year and in a published annual report.

Budget

Funding for library technology comes from the University budget process, library endowment income, grants, and gifts from external donors. The digital scholarship initiative (#5 above) is funded by a Mellon Grant (https://news.brown.edu/articles/2015/01/digital). The Digital Studio (#4 above) also has external funding.