Libraries & Museums

University of St Andrews

Transforming the University Libraries

Strategic plan 2019-2023

Strategic plan, 2019-2023

The University of St Andrews is Scotland's first university, founded in 1413. Its Library was founded in 1612 by a royal gift of books from the family of King James VI and I and now holds more than 2.9 million items in print, audio-visual and digital formats, along with over 5000 linear shelf-metres of manuscript and archival collections, more than 210,000 rare books, and around 1 million photographs.

Our vision is for a changing University Library retaining its central place in the learning and research lives of students and academics. At the heart of our academic library services is the provision of research resources and the ambition to provide these to users as efficiently as possible.

The plan recognises and builds on the potential for digital tools and collections to transform the way we work and benefit our users. The University Libraries are transitioning to embrace digital, seeking to reach a balance for all disciplines between digital and physical content and collections. Our ambition is to exploit digital tools to extend the impact and reach of our collections and services, as we continue to curate and preserve physical collections for the future.

Whether in digital or physical format, the University Libraries will continue to collect, but with a sharper focus on areas of current and imminent active research and teaching.

We will extend our management of learning and research workspaces across campus, tailoring our provision to local requirements and opening and managing new learning hubs in line with University estate developments. In partnership with Museums, we will plan for a dedicated Collections Research Centre which will offer an enhanced researcher experience for those using the Special Collections that are a defining feature of the University and which offer exciting opportunities for our students, our staff and the wider research community.

Strategic framework and planning context

The plan supports the University strategy and ambition – aligned to the five core ideas of social responsibility, being world-leading, diverse, global and entrepreneurial; demonstrating a determination to move forward with purpose, integrity, and success: Ever to Excel.

This University's strategy, 2018-2023 and its Enabling Strategies (along with other relevant policies, procedures, and guidance documents) can be found in the University's Governance Zone.

Principles and Goals
Our strategy is underpinned by four core principles:

1. Embracing Digital
We will provide e-books, e-journals, online search tools and digitised readings as a priority, and provide digital proxies of items from our unique and rare collections to better enable worldwide unrestricted online access to our collections.

2. Focused Collecting
We will provide a sharpened focus on the courses being taught in our Schools, and the areas of current and imminent active research in our Schools, centres and institutes. We will provide integrated access to our special collections of manuscripts, archives, rare books, and photographs, together with the University's museum collections, advancing our impressive range of unique and distinctive materials in collecting focus, description and digitisation.

3. Empowered Research
We will provide an excellent research support service so that our researchers can access the resources they need, as well as ensuring that they make their publications and data openly available. In advancing the open knowledge environment for research publishing, we shall work in partnership with colleagues in the Digital Research team in Research and Innovation Services.

4. High Quality Spaces and Services
We will manage the University's common study space across multiple venues, with a range of quiet zones for individual study and an increased number of group study locations and learning hubs.

These principles are linked to high level goals which provide a framework to guide and prioritise the day to day work of the Library over the period of the plan and are reflected in the annual operational plan.

Martyrs Kirk
Taken by Andrew Lee

Commitments

1. Embracing Digital

Develop, preserve and promote content which meets the needs of all users, based upon an extended digital collection footprint.
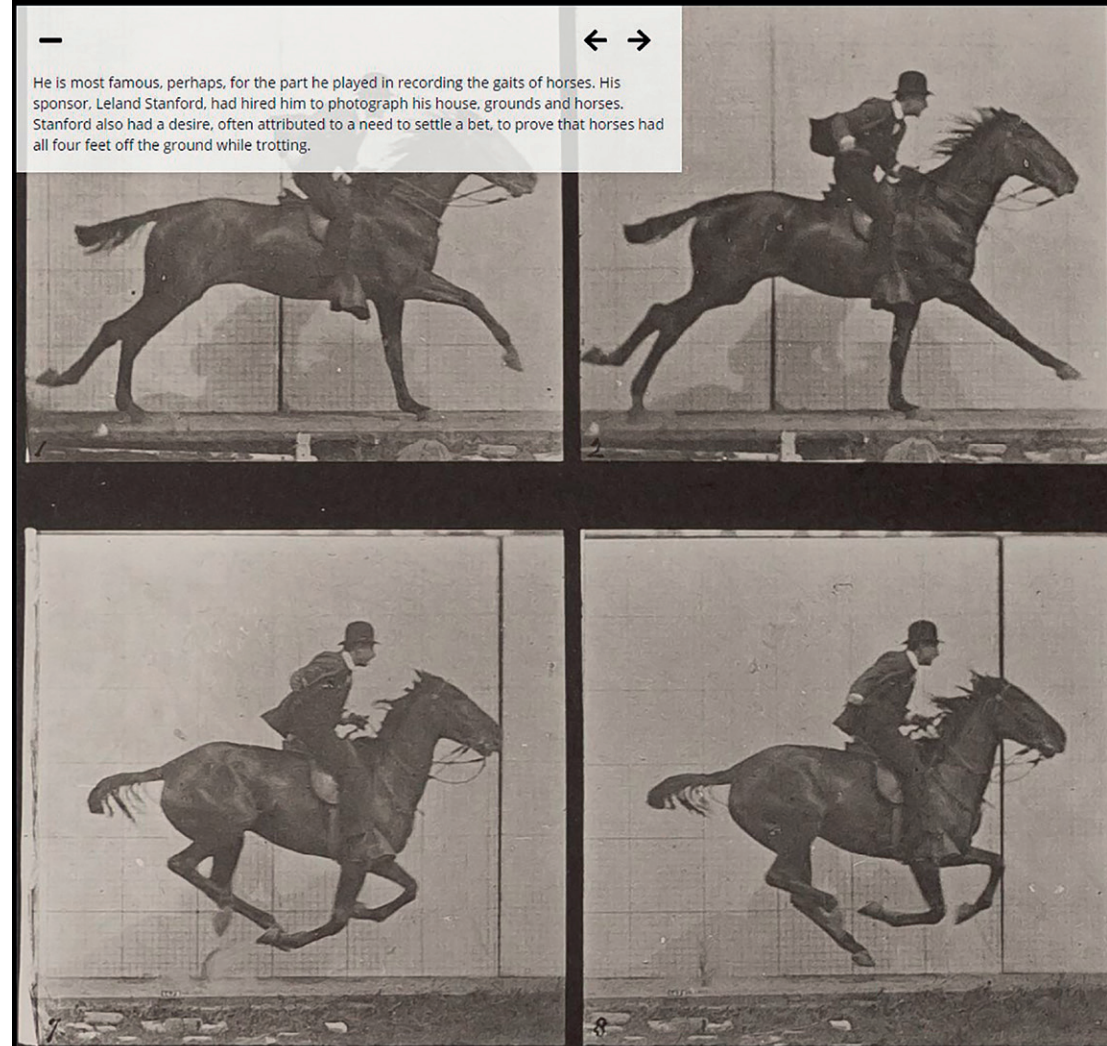
We will
- Privilege digital content where appropriate to widen access to Library resources for users, investing in the technical, organisational and skills infrastructure to deliver it and providing dedicated support and communication to Library users and Schools through transformational change.

- Manage and enhance our digital asset and collection metadata to support new digital processes, improve collection analysis and promote discovery and impact internationally.

- Redesign an accessible, responsive Library digital presence which showcases Library collections and services, provides enhanced discovery of internal and external collections, and offers digital alternatives to traditional services. Integrate disparate systems to present a seamless experience for users.

Deliver innovative library services which support new pedagogies, modes of delivery and lifelong learning.

We will
- Anticipate and respond to new pedagogical approaches, changes in technology and student expectations, developing innovative, personalised service models across both physical and virtual environments.

- Position library services and resources at point of need by continuous improvement to ensure they are and remain embedded in learning and teaching workflows, platforms, devices and tools.

- Enhance student capabilities and employability by providing support for digital and information literacy.

He is most famous, perhaps, for the part he played in recording the gaits of horses. His sponsor, Leland Stanford, had hired him to photograph his house, grounds and horses. Stanford also had a desire, often attributed to a need to settle a bet, to prove that horses had all four feet off the ground while trotting.

This is a screen shot showing Plate 624 "Gallop; saddle; Bay horse" by Eadweard Muybridge taken between 1872 – 1885, ID: EJM-AL-48. Showcased using our *Exhibit* digital storytelling tool: https://exhibit.so

2. Focused Collecting

Develop and manage our collections and content to act as an enabler of the success of the research priorities of the University, including the interdisciplinary themes prioritised in the University strategy ('World leading St Andrews').

We will
- Led by the Vice-Principal (Collections, Music and Digital Content) and in partnership with academics, manage and enhance our collections to stimulate new research possibilities.
- Focus our collection development on the teaching and research strengths of our Schools, research centres and institutes.
- Promote our collections as a resource to support research across disciplinary boundaries.
- Work closely with Schools to support new and emerging subjects and interdisciplinary teaching areas.
- Design and deliver ambitious strategies to embed the use of our collections in learning and teaching, attracting scholars from across the University and beyond.

Harness the power of our special collections as a resource for research.

We will
- Stimulate research using our world-leading special collections by making them as openly and widely available as possible through digitisation, discovery, promotion, and long-term preservation.
- Develop relationships between the planned Collections Research Centre and Schools, research centres and institutes, exploiting its potential as an integrated cultural materials resource to support scholarship, conservation science, digital humanities, and visiting researchers.

Extend the benefits of Library collections and services to local communities as far as possible, and fully embrace our public service responsibilities in alignment with the University strategy ('University Social Responsibility').

We will
- Partner with other cultural services – Museums, the Byre Theatre, Music Centre and Botanic Gardens – alongside academic staff and students, to engage the public with our collections in programmes and events which are enjoyable, inspiring, experimental and dynamic.
- Partner with Research and Innovation Services to deliver benefits to society, particularly where research is publicly funded, by enabling researchers to manage the research process and results in as open, accessible, and reusable a way as possible.
- Make available our most significant material to all who wish to access it and preserve the University's digital and physical heritage and research collections for future generations.
- Use existing and new data to better understand and identify our audiences, to inform programming and to help attract new and under-represented audiences.
- Develop a widening access agenda to inspire school and Further Education students to engage with our collections and experience a university library environment.
- Engage in public outreach activities with academic partners to apply digital scholarship tools and techniques to our content and collections.
- Make a difference to the communities in which we operate through supporting local and national charities and not-for-profit organisations, and through encouraging our staff to contribute their expertise to fundraising and voluntary initiatives.

3.   Empowered Research

Support excellent research by meeting our researchers' needs for scholarly resources at the time and in the forms required.

We will
- Provide researchers with the materials they need for understanding, inspiration, creative reaction, and original thought.

- Take a leading role in national and global initiatives to promote the sharing of research outputs as widely, efficiently, and openly as possible for the benefit of all.

Facilitate the move to an open knowledge environment through the promotion and support of open research and an 'open by default' commitment for St Andrews' research outputs.

We will
- In partnership with Research and Innovation Services, develop the knowledge and skills of Library staff and University researchers to maximise the impact of our research activities and outputs through open scholarship. Lead and embed best practice in academic Schools.

- Embed the discovery and reuse of open content across all Library services.

- Working with Research and Innovation Services Digital Research team, anticipate and actively respond to changing models in scholarly publishing. Identify and exploit new resource formats and delivery models which offer opportunities for more effective or efficient service delivery.

- Promote research integrity as part of a broader University commitment to open research, as presented in the University strategy ('University Social Responsibility' and 'World-leading St Andrews'), working closely with Research and Innovation Services Digital Research team and the Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation).

Napier Reading Room
Taken by Oli Walker

4. High Quality Spaces and Services

Create inspiring physical and digital Library environments which connect users with scholarly resources and services at point of need.

We will
- Partner with students and staff in the development of new Library spaces and services.
- Develop and manage innovative new study environments adapted to the pedagogic needs of taught students working individually or in groups, and to the needs of researchers, including provision for collaborative engagement and of 'neutral' space to host interdisciplinary meetings on behalf of academic colleagues.
- Present plans for a fit-for-purpose Collections Research Centre which stimulated use of rare books, manuscripts, archives, photographic and museum collections in research, and teaching and learning, breaking down barriers to access while ensuring their long-term preservation.
- Extend the Library presence across the University campus through a network of Library spaces and learning hubs which offer engaging learning environments tailored to local needs and catering for different learning styles.
- Engage with Schools and Units to understand and influence the wider estate strategy and ensure Library spaces are developed in alignment with the University strategy's objectives for planned growth in student numbers, lifelong learning, new audiences, and modes of delivery.
- Work in partnership with Development colleagues to grow philanthropic support for improvements to the Library estate and collections.

Be fully at the heart of our user communities, offering service excellence and a consistent, high quality experience across all Library spaces, services and interactions.

We will
- Create a comprehensive evidence-base of analytics data, user observation and feedback to support management and leadership decision-making, ensuring the delivery of fully informed services based on user and collection knowledge.
- Review and restructure Library governance and representation on University bodies in order to position the Library at the heart of the University so that we are aligned with the University strategy, and are agile and responsive to changing requirements.
- Maintain service excellence during staff and collection moves to the new campus facility in Walter Bower House and the next phase of Main Library Redevelopment.

Manage and develop the Library's estate and its collections, physical and digital, as sustainably and efficiently as possible, with full attention to our responsibility to collections that are required by the University for the long term.

We will
- Ensure we have the right physical collections in the right place, the correct format and available at the right time across our distributed estate, with high-use material in the Main Library, research material at Walter Bower House, and unique and rare material in the planned Centre for Research Collections.
- In partnership with Estates, develop a state-of-the-art energy-efficient approach across the entire Library estate to achieve a sustainable environment while meeting all standards for collections care and user comfort.
- Ensure constant evaluation of the usage of all Library environments to assess and maximise space and efficiency.
- Engage with students and other users to enable decisions to be made which reflect both service expectations and an understanding of our environmental impact.
- Utilise green transport initiatives for movement of Library staff and collections across a distributed Library and University estate and beyond.

- Move to paperless processes to increase efficiency and reduce our environmental impact.

- Continue to participate and lead in consortia and national site-licensing initiatives, open access promotion and practice, and agreements to share resources nationally and internationally.

- Actively engage with Scottish and UK initiatives in collaborative collections management to rationalise print collections, ensuring their long-term preservation and continued access for users. Engage in national discussions on the potential for shared storage to release space locally while maintaining access to low-use collections.

- In partnership with Research and Innovation Services and IT Services, provide a trusted, sustainable and scalable digital preservation service to all University stakeholders to protect the investment in the move to digital scholarly collections, paperless processes and critical digital assets such as University records, research data and e-theses.

King James Library
Taken by Oli Walker

J F Allen Library
Taken by Gayle McIntyre

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