COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
LIBRARIES

Strategic Plan

2006-2009

October 2006

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INTRODUCTION

The Libraries Strategic Plan identifies priorities and allocates resources for the next three years, 2006–2009. What are the drivers for change in this plan? What is different in 2006, and what external forces are stronger now than at the start of our last plan in 2003? What exciting opportunities and interesting challenges do we face?

Our primary goal continues to be to support the research and teaching mission of the university by developing, preserving and making accessible the scholarly resources that the Libraries has been collecting since the early nineteenth century. There are some key university drivers for change: these include a new focus on physical expansion (Manhattanville and Morningside) and an emphasis on Columbia's relationship to the City of New York, plus a renewed commitment to Columbia's international strengths, with a programmatic focus on globalization. The university also has a new Information Technology organization that is still defining its agenda. The libraries now form part of a separate, reconceived Information Services organization that includes the Columbia Center for New Media Teaching and Learning (CCNMTL), Digital Knowledge Ventures (DKV), the Electronic Publishing Initiative at Columbia (EPIC), and a newly created Copyright Advisory Office.

We also write this plan at a time of extraordinary technological and social change. These external drivers include:

- changing user behaviors and expectations in light of the "Amazoogle" factor—the enormous impact of the information giants on the way faculty and students find and use information;

- the expansion of digital publishing and the large scale availability of journal backfiles and major electronic collections;

- a volatile academic publishing environment—open access versus bundling by fewer, larger, commercial publishers;

- an even more complex and rapidly shifting world of intellectual property;

- a library automation market in which consolidation vies with fragmentation, as new and unproven product lines are demanded and tested;

- the potential breakdown of a shared cataloging model that has served U. S. libraries well for thirty years, as economic pressures place strains on common library standards and practices;

- new technologies offering opportunities for more effective and efficient acquisition, description, and management of collections; and

- the development of an increasingly robust shared resources environment, further enabled by technological advances.

Understanding Change

As user behaviors and the information environment change, it is important for us to listen to our users, to understand their information needs, to observe what they do, and to study the use data available to us. Assessment and user-focused design must become integral to the way we think and plan. Furthermore, we must learn how to market information about our growing collections and changing services to busy faculty and students.

We will work in collaboration with others. Interdependence is a strength, and we can do more in concert than in isolation. We begin with mature and effective resource sharing partnerships—with the Ivy League BorrowDirect group (books), with our RAPID partners (journal articles), and with our partners in ReCAP (offsite collections currently total more than 6 million items). The reliable accessibility of other research collections will significantly impact the way we build and sustain the Columbia collections, so that we use our financial resources in the most responsible and effective ways to deepen the collections available to our faculty and students. In cataloging and preserving our collections, our future success will depend less on local action, or even collective action within libraries, and more on developing new service models and organizations. Here we have an opportunity to shape the future by playing a leadership role, working with peer institutions and vendors to ensure that we find scalable, affordable solutions.

"Scalable" and "affordable"—these will be important characteristics of the way we work going forward. "Mediated" and "unmediated"—these will be important concepts in finding ways to achieve these ends. We will do more of our work behind the scenes, developing interactive services that function without staff mediation, while we make better use of staff expertise through in-person, value added services.

Implementing Change

Working effectively in this environment and implementing the strategic goals identified in this plan will require that the libraries work differently. We will need to test and challenge assumptions and practices when these stand in the way of needed change—to change our response from, "We must continue to …" to, "We must now …". We will need to recognize that getting 90 percent right is sometimes 100 percent of the solution, and that scalable solutions often have rough edges.

The speed of technological change demands a flexible, responsive organization that encourages experimentation and risk-taking, that learns by doing and iteration. In order to take advantage of the promise of new technology, and to stay abreast of changing faculty and student work practices, the Libraries must invest in IT support—staff who can work with librarians to implement new technologies, develop tools, and provide experimental "sandboxes" for collaborative development work. We must create more positions that combine an understanding of technology with the traditional skills of

librarianship, and we must develop effective and responsive technology training for all staff. Above all we must develop a culture that rewards creativity and initiative.

The Development of the Plan
This plan is the result of a series of exercises, conversations and studies that took place in the fall of 2005 and the spring of 2006. A Strategic Planning Group,* appointed by James Neal, Vice President for Information Services and University Librarian, guided the development of the plan.
  Steps included:
- divisional and cross-divisional discussions and summaries of key goals for the next three-year period, plus an analysis of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities;
- the development of a new needs budget request submitted to the Provost for FY07 and FY08 (new funding was received for FY07 for four new positions—a second GIS Librarian, a Processing Archivist, a Web Developer/Designer and a Database Applications Developer, plus funding for graduate student assistantships in the RBML and funding for a technology assessment and network analysis upgrade);
- an environmental scan of current issues at Columbia, in research libraries, in the information market, and in higher education;
- a series of focus groups with undergraduate and graduate students, and individual interviews with faculty throughout the university to find out what works and doesn't work, what people want and need; and
- discussion of a number of "New Directions" white papers, focusing on what had changed since the last plan was written, and identifying new opportunities.

Resourcing the Plan
The Libraries will apply its operating budget to meet the goals of this plan, defining action agendas according to priorities identified here. In addition, the new needs funding received following the Spring '06 budget submission will play a key role in providing increased technology support for Systems and Digital Library operations, in expanding the Libraries' GIS program, in processing Avery's collections, and developing graduate student interest in special collections work. The Spring '07 budget submission will include requests for additional positions to further support the expansion of new initiatives and technological infrastructure and increase capacity in the special collections areas. During the next three years the Libraries will continue to actively pursue grant opportunities, building on its successful track record with national funding agencies and private foundations. In addition, the Libraries will be participating energetically in Columbia's new campaign, with the goal of raising new funding for the support of collections, programs and library spaces.

Staff throughout the libraries contributed to these discussions and conversations, and helped clarify goals and priorities for the Libraries. The resulting plan focuses on the following themes:

- Designing Services for a Self-Service Age
- Supporting Teaching and Learning
- Developing Library Space for Changing Needs
- Creating Opportunities for Primary Research
- Describing Collections: New Approaches to Cataloging Resources in the 'Amazoogle' Context
- Building, Maintaining and Preserving the Libraries Research Collections
- Developing New Electronic Initiatives: Supporting University Research
- The Libraries as Workplace

DESIGNING SERVICES FOR A SELF-SERVICE AGE

Recent surveys of our users tell us that they want easy, fast and reliable delivery of information resources, regardless of the physical or electronic location of materials. They want to be able to search for and locate information 24/7, and to be able to function effectively and independently in easy-to-use virtual and physical spaces. Often staff mediation may represent the failure of a service that should work seamlessly and effectively without intervention. At the same time, the information needs of a research university community vary widely: scholars need to discuss the acquisition (by purchase or loan) of hard-to-locate resources with librarians who are familiar with specialized literature; students working on research papers and dissertations continue to seek the guidance and advice of subject librarians; faculty and students look for expert assistance in tracking down important but obscure citations. In the 2006–9 timeframe, most new services will be designed for unmediated online use and much on-site assistance will be provided by well-trained Access Services staff, while librarians will be available for deeper levels of assistance.

- Develop and maintain a strong customer-service ethic throughout the libraries.

- Market library services to faculty, staff, and students.

Delivering Documents
- Provide desktop delivery for on-campus serials and book chapters.

- Deliver books between campus libraries and to academic departments.

- Continue to improve the Interlibrary Loan, BorrowDirect, ReCAP and RAPID (expedited journal article delivery) services and work toward an integrated user presentation of these services. Implement a unified "My Library" feature that allows customers to monitor all their requests, regardless of the transaction (ILL, Borrow Direct, On-Campus Paging, Circulation).

- Play a lead role with the New York Public Library and Princeton University in developing a common interface and request service for the ReCAP collections.

Assisting Users

- Establish and articulate a two-tiered "brief" and "deep" reference service model. "Brief services" will be designed for one-time, factual, quick assistance, that is mostly asynchronous or "virtual" (e.g., Business 24/7 HELP); "deep services" will be designed to meet the needs of faculty research and to help students with research papers and dissertation research. Promote these in-depth consultation services.

- Further develop tools (such as online FAQs and customized "database finders") to provide easy navigation and access to online resources.

- Plan for self-service checkout in the new Science Library and consider piloting this at another site within the time frame of the plan.

- Develop and implement training programs for front line staff and build online tools, such as staff-oriented FAQs, to assist them in providing a consistent level of service to users.

SUPPORTING TEACHING AND LEARNING

Support for faculty teaching and student learning has traditionally been one of the most important functions of the Libraries. We begin this new strategic plan with a solid program of instruction at all levels and in most subject areas. During the next three years we will further develop these programs. The growing adoption of course management software (currently CUIT's CourseWorks) by faculty members provides new opportunities for the Libraries to be present in student workspaces. Students currently depend on the Libraries' extensive electronic reserves service to provide links to readings from course websites. The opportunity now is to work with faculty and with colleagues in CUIT and CCNMTL to integrate the Libraries further into the classroom—for example, by using the course web pages to provide students with relevant research resources for a specific course, with links to librarian expertise and online services.

- Work with faculty to revise, expand, and continuously improve instructional programs with the goal of ensuring that upper-level undergraduate, graduate, and professional students are familiar with library services and can integrate key resources into their creative work. Continue to work with the Core Curriculum to provide incoming undergraduates with an effective introduction to the Libraries.

- Work collaboratively with CUIT and the Center for New Media Teaching & Learning to explore and experiment with new technologies and digital resources that can be used to support teaching and learning, especially in relation to the university's course management systems. Pay particular attention to new, more efficient, and scalable ways to deliver instructional and informational services. Develop ongoing assessment of all initiatives.

- Provide staff training programs that effectively address the need for CUL staff to acquire and maintain essential competencies, including teaching skills and familiarity with emerging technologies.

DEVELOPING LIBRARY SPACE FOR CHANGING NEEDS

The quality and quantity of library space continues to be of critical importance to the life of the university. Students want to work and study in the Libraries, within reach of print resources, with reliable internet connectivity, with high-end workstations equipped with specialized software, with excellent printing and copying services, and with expert staff nearby for consultation and assistance. At the same time, space at Columbia is at a premium, and we can expect to need to justify the retention of on-campus space for the storage of print collections. As we begin work on this strategic plan, all Columbia libraries have wireless connectivity and all new and renovated spaces have hard-wired internet connectivity. The public spaces in Butler have been fully renovated and a new Social Work Library occupies the central space in the School's facility at 122nd and Amsterdam. Seating in the Libraries has increased 23 percent during the past five years. The specific goals listed here represent the Libraries' continuing commitment to create and maintain spaces that meet the needs of today's and tomorrow's faculty, staff and students and to develop high quality staff work spaces adaptable to new patterns of activity and work-group interdependence.

Creating New Spaces
- In collaboration with CUIT, create three Information Commons facilities, focusing on the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Sciences, and located in Butler, Lehman, and the new Sciences Library, respectively. These spaces, equipped with high-end equipment and specialized software, will support collaborative work.

- Plan and build the combined Sciences Library in the NW Corner Science Building to consolidate the Biology, Chemistry, Physics & Astronomy, and Psychology libraries. The new library will include reduced print collections, sophisticated hardware and specialized software for science applications, a browsing collection of core journals, group study rooms along with other comfortable study areas, and spaces for Library and IT staff.

Renovating to Improve Reader and Staff Space
- Complete the renovation of Butler Library (Phase V). Redesign and relocate the Butler Reference Desk and reconceive the Catalog Room. Develop solutions for the severe space problems in Butler's Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

- Develop and implement a phased plan for the renovation of the Lehman Library to include improved study space, reduced on-site collections, more visible offices

for Area Studies and Social Sciences librarians, a Center for Social Science Primary Research, and an Information Commons.

- Complete schematic plans for the renovation of Avery Library (Phase II), to redesign and make more efficient the main service points, reader spaces, stacks, and rare book areas of the Library, and raise funds for this critical renovation.

- Renovate and reorganize the Starr Library Reading Room to provide effective lookup areas, a central service point, and electrical and internet connections.

- Upgrade and renovate the Mathematics & Science Library to make it a pleasant and effective space for study.

Improving all Libraries
- Improve and maintain the core infrastructure in all libraries: photocopying, printing, wireless and wired ports, and the physical conditions of spaces. Install new access security checkpoints in selected libraries.

- Continue to develop effective work environments for staff and address the need for expanded, contiguous space for the Libraries Digital Program and Library Systems.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRIMARY RESEARCH

As the licensed electronic collections of libraries become more and more similar, major research libraries will increasingly be distinguished by their global and special collections. Like many of its peers, Columbia has a legacy of deferred maintenance for its extraordinary global and special collections. During the past five years, the Libraries has focused resources to begin to address these issues. With funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, over 56,000 South Asian and Middle Eastern titles have been converted and added to CLIO. With grants from NEH, a large proportion of our holdings of papyri, clay tablets, and medieval manuscripts, as well as the papers of U. S. Founding Father John Jay, have now been cataloged, digitized, and made available to scholars worldwide. In 2004, the Libraries completed a Mellon grant to survey unprocessed manuscript collections, and followed this with another Mellon grant to process important RBML, Avery, and Starr collections. In 2006, the Libraries has an additional Mellon grant to survey audio collections. With generous support from the Provost, a permanent archival processing position was recently added in the Avery Library. A second position will be requested to support processing of RBML collections. Action items below focus on the goal of continuing to process and disseminate these collections and hence to increase opportunities for primary research.

Processing
- Commit resources to archival processing, with a focus on collections identified for priority treatment by the Mellon Survey of unprocessed materials. Complete

rare books recon, and focus original cataloging resources on special collections materials.

- Scale up efforts to catalog, digitize, and publish to the web unique and distinctive collection holdings that have signifcant value for teaching or research.

- Undertake a project to identify, migrate, and load on appropriate websites those finding aids currently locked in obsolete formats (e.g., Microsoft Works); establish simple procedures to place the management of archive listings and finding aids under curatorial control.

- Test, consolidate, and expand the Special Collections Fellows Program to provide opportunities for graduate students to work with archival collections in their areas of study.

Disseminating
- Develop a consolidated finding aid/collection guide with compatible, cross-searchable content.

- Revive the idea of a Special Collections gateway website aimed at non-affiliated researchers and/or donors. Coordinate and cross-post special collections events, exhibitions, and announcements across those libraries with strong special collections.

- Develop a consistent approach to engaging faculty and scholars in the selection, presentation, and dissemination of information about Columbia's unique collections; make a concerted effort to facilitate research based on our traditional and digital collections, and to document and publicize scholarly articles and publications that have made use of these collections.

DESCRIBING COLLECTIONS: NEW APPROACHES TO CATALOGING RESOURCES

While the library catalog remains an important tool, it is now one of a wide array of online resource discovery environments. Effective access to Columbia's collections, and to those of other research libraries, will increasingly depend on making access available through web search engines, specialized indexes, and course management systems, and on closer integration among these systems. The last few years have seen significant developments along these lines, with the implementation of reference linking (SFX), cross-database searching (MetaLib) and access to Columbia collections through Google Scholar and Open WorldCat. The capabilities of these new discovery tools, together with the need to turn more intensively towards cataloging of scarce and unique materials, are prompting a broad re-examination of the standards and methods libraries apply in providing access to commonly-held publications, leading to greater efficiencies in that area. Better integration of search tools also provides more effective access to other

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research library collections. This in turn provides both an opportunity to rely less on CLIO as the primary resource for meeting user needs, and an obligation to support access for users at peer institutions, as well as for our own patrons.

- Promote the exposure of metadata for library resources in user-focused discovery environments such as search engines, aggregating services, and course management systems, working with and through such organizations as the Digital Library Federation, the Research Library Programs Group of OCLC, and Columbia's next generation course management system, to develop supporting systems and services.

- Aggressively seek out or develop tools that use catalog data to effectively aid resource discovery and access. These include "push" technologies based on user-defined profiles, use-based relevance rankings, cross-platform metadata aggregation, seamless integration with document procurement services, etc.

- Take advantage whenever possible of catalog data available from external sources; work with other libraries and organizations to expand the availability of such data by promoting sustainable business models and cost-efficient standards.

- Maximize the benefit of institutional and organizational collaboration through the current landmark changes in cooperative cataloging; assume a leadership role in adopting new cataloging standards and principles such as FRBR and RDA to repurpose and enrich catalog data for the 21st-century user.

- Effectively utilize externally- and internally-created catalog data to enable (where possible) discovery and access at the point of acquisition (physical availability) and coordinate these efforts across divisions.

- Focus original cataloging efforts on Columbia's scarce and unique resources (published and unpublished) and on enriching externally supplied cataloging with the data needed to support cross-language discovery, faceted refinement of large search results, and similar user-focused initiatives.

- Refocus catalog maintenance efforts on improving the accuracy of CLIO data needed to support on-site use and document delivery, such as serial holdings information. Where existing collections are not fully represented in CLIO, apply information on past use and on availability in other libraries to set priorities for remedial action.

BUILDING, MAINTAINING & PRESERVING THE LIBRARIES RESEARCH COLLECTIONS

The Libraries will continue to build on its broad and deep print collections, while also making important advances in acquiring access to networked electronic resources. With the realization of speedy and reliable resource sharing via BorrowDirect and RAPID, selectors now have the opportunity to make purchase decisions within a broad regional and national context that promotes effective use of resources. We are also better able to refocus our efforts on acquiring primary research collections that add significant value to the teaching and research environment on campus.

Through the Libraries Digital Program, the creation of local digital collections will accelerate, (as outlined below in the Supporting University Research section). Likewise, the Libraries Preservation Division will increasingly embrace the challenges of ensuring the long-term availability of digital resources.

Building
- Continue to develop the Library's print and electronic collections to support the research and teaching needs of the university and do this in the context of local, regional, and global resource-sharing opportunities and responsibilities.

- Transition to electronic formats for serial publications; when serial publications are available in both print and electronic formats, the default format for subscription will be electronic, and decisions to continue or add print subscriptions will be handled as exceptions.

- Develop the requirements for e-book formats and communicate these criteria to publishers and vendors of e-books, with the goal of influencing product development. Continue to make e-books available and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the various packages and platforms from the user's point of view.

- Review collection development policies across the entire library system with the goal of clarifying and rationalizing those policies, identifying gaps in collecting, and making faculty, students, and colleagues aware of our priorities and practices.

- Purposefully acquire, by gift and purchase, primary source materials and collections that are aligned to Columbia's teaching and research programs and to the Libraries' existing collections.

- Implement tools and processes that make selection more efficient. Examples include: use of the WorldCat Selection tool; further development of the Meridian Electronic Resource Management System; improved approval plans that provide reliable coverage and streamlined communication with acquisitions staff and approval vendors. Identify opportunities to move from approval plans to purchase plans (e.g., all titles from Oxford University Press automatically acquired).

Maintaining

- Print collections in many campus libraries will continue to be reduced as more materials become available online. The Libraries will take advantage of the excellent environmental conditions at ReCAP to shelve and preserve collections, and will redevelop on-campus library space to meet user needs. For each of our campus collections, develop guiding principles that will define and distinguish on-campus collections and ReCAP collections.

- Develop an assessment program for print and electronic collections that supports ongoing evaluation of the Libraries' acquisitions. Initial steps will be to establish assessment priorities and educate ourselves about tools now available – such as ScholarlyStats; COUNTER; OCLC Collection Analysis; etc. Within the time period covered by this plan, apply the most promising tools to those print and electronic collections identified as top assessment priorities.

Preserving

- The Libraries' Preservation Policy states that the highest priority for preservation action shall be given to materials currently in-demand, in order to keep them usable or to convert their content to new forms if the original items cannot be saved. Identify and implement technologies and additional default procedures for in-demand materials to increase efficiency and involve selectors only when specialized subject expertise is required.

- Design and implement a coherent and comprehensive preservation program for ensuring the survival and continued accessibility of the Libraries' digital content. Develop and budget for a long-term digital archiving strategy for content created by the Libraries, whether 'born-digital' or converted from analog formats. Collaborate with other stakeholders to develop affordable cooperative solutions to ensure the long-term preservation of licensed content.

- Develop and implement a preservation program for audio and moving image materials.

- Work with campus partners such as CIESEN, the NASA Socioeconomic Data and Applications Center (SEDAC), and Columbia University IT on strategic and implementation planning for the creation of a Columbia Long-Term Digital Archiving Service.

DEVELOPING NEW ELECTRONIC INITIATIVES: SUPPORTING UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

Significant changes in technology and in the economics of publishing promise to transform the traditional role of libraries as collectors and catalogers of publications based on university research and scholarship. Now the task of collecting and organizing university research issued in electronic form can--with only incremental investment--be transformed into a program of electronic publishing, dissemination, and archiving. Moreover, these same technologies and infrastructures can be leveraged further to build tools that facilitate the editing and publication of peer-reviewed, open-access e-journals, which have become significant publishing vehicles in some disciplines. The Libraries has already initiated pilot projects to demonstrate the feasibility of an institutional repository program at Columbia (DigitalCommons@Columbia) and to test the possibility of supporting a scholarly e-journal publishing system (using Open Journal Software). These are the first steps toward providing the Columbia community with tools for electronic knowledge creation and dissemination that will enhance the university's effectiveness in the next three to five years. Other areas for exploration include partnerships with DKV and CCNMTL to identify innovative ways to adapt and apply these new technology platforms to serve faculty, researchers, and students, and to fulfill the Libraries' continuing responsibility to collect, organize, and preserve access to knowledge.

- Implement a new locally-managed software and hardware system to support Columbia's Institutional Repository Program such that it can: (a) accommodate a variety of different content formats (e.g., grey literature, research data, and master's theses); (b) provide consistent, predictable, and cost-effective access to this data to scholars and researchers worldwide; and (c) act as a transitional platform for the eventual long-term archiving of Columbia's digital content.

- Develop both a collection development strategy and a sustainable business model for expanding the Institutional Repository's scope to include additional academic departments, schools, programs, research centers, and institutes.

- Based on a current pilot project (for the Columbia Undergraduate Science Journal), evaluate the feasibility and desirability of creating a Libraries-supported open access e-journal publication service.

- Review and restructure Columbia's policy and support strategies relating to the publication of scholarly research databases, including those that were originally grant-funded—such as *APIS, The John Jay Papers,* and the *Digital Scriptorium*—as well as other potential Columbia-based projects.

THE LIBRARIES AS WORKPLACE

The Libraries' workforce comprises a large, diverse group of staff members who have varied subject expertise, technology and language skills, and work experiences. These staff members carry out the work of the Libraries by providing customer service at public service points; installing and maintaining equipment; selecting and processing print and electronic research resources; providing research assistance and support for teaching and learning; maintaining study spaces and stacks throughout twenty-five libraries over a wide range of service hours; and planning and implementing information services and programs. In the rapidly changing information technology environment, our staff members must be well-informed about the university's teaching and research needs, the most current trends in information services and technology, and the Libraries' ongoing plans and projects. To contribute to the achievement of organizational goals, staff members should be supported and encouraged to refresh their skills on an on-going basis. Workspaces must be structurally, technologically, and ergonomically designed to support the effective provision of service and efficient work in all areas.

- Excellent customer service is a high priority for all units of the Libraries. The Libraries Staff Training and Development Manager will place a priority on instituting a program to promote customer service throughout the libraries.

- High-level staff skills and knowledge are crucial to the accomplishment of our goals. Building and refreshing staff skills must be a routine process and as such regularly encouraged by supervisors and included as a component of the goals and appraisal processes. Appropriate and effective training programs will be developed and made available to all staff.

- Professional development activities are necessary in order for staff to continue to grow as professionals and for Columbia to retain its status as a leader in the field of information services. Professional development may be accomplished through contributions to the larger arena of information services such as: research and publishing; participation in professional organizations; planning, presenting at, or attending professional conferences or symposia; representing the Libraries on consortial groups; etc. The Libraries will encourage, support, and include these activities as a component of the goals and appraisal processes.

- As libraries are constructed, renovated, or refurbished, the location and functionality of staff workspaces will be a primary consideration, with a goal of creating effective, ergonomic environments.

- Communication across all areas of the libraries is essential to ensure a well-informed productive staff. In addition to existing staff forums, professional staff meetings, and broadcast announcements, the Libraries will explore options for newsletters and other official publications to inform the staff and the university of Libraries' initiatives, projects, staff accomplishments and appointments, and other organizational news.

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