Cornell University Library
Digital Futures Plan

July 2000 to June 2002

Over the next two years, Cornell University Library (CUL) will position itself for the introductory decade of the 21st century. In an age characterized by burgeoning digital technology, CUL will provide its faculty, students, and staff with expanded access to an increasingly rich array of electronic information resources. The result will be a superior library service offering a knowledge base suited to supporting the mission of a world-class university. To achieve this goal, the library has designed an ambitious strategic plan.

Vision: Leadership through excellent, innovative library service.

Cornell University Library Goals

I. Content

   Ensuring the Future of Library Resources and Enduring Access to Information

II. Services

   Offering Enriched Access via a State-of-the-art Infrastructure and Assistance from Expert Staff

III. Outreach

   Tailoring Our Priorities to the Needs and Expectations of Current and Future Communities

I. Content: Ensuring the Future of Library Resources and Enduring Access to Information

   We will enhance our learning and research environment by harnessing the power of new electronic resources for knowledge discovery and archiving, building on our outstanding traditional collections.

A. Substantially increase the electronic materials available to Cornell Library users, carefully weighing the balance between digital and traditional formats as CUL strives to meet the changing needs of its patrons.

   A1. Identify appropriate new resources by consulting with faculty and graduate students, drawing on selectors' knowledge of the disciplines, and reviewing peer-group accessions at other ARL institutions.

   A2. Develop and implement a plan to reallocate resources to electronic materials beginning in 2000/01.

   A3. Collaborate with consortia, such as the North East Regional Library Consortium (NERL), to make possible joint licensing agreements for cost containment and to achieve economies of scale.

A4. Rank in the top ten of ARL libraries by 2002 in total dollars expended on electronic materials.

A4a. Identify methods and criteria for improving evaluation of electronic materials and for ensuring that we are purchasing those most appropriate to the community's needs.

A4b. Review our methods for gathering information and reporting on the use of electronic materials; establish that these methods are consistent with those of peer institutions.

B. Steadily increase resources for electronic publishing activity and the creation of digital collections.

B1. Create, enhance, aggregate, disseminate, and promote the use of materials created in digital format.

B2. Convert materials at Cornell and elsewhere to digital form.

B2a. Inventory Cornell's digital files.

B2b. Define criteria to identify Cornell collections suitable for digital conversion and inventory collections that meet those criteria.

B2c. Prioritize materials for conversion.

B3. Determine the relative priorities of acquiring digital resources and converting traditional materials to digital form.

B4. Work with faculty and publishers to become a provider of choice for electronic publication in specific academic areas (e.g., Project Euclid, which will deliver economical access to the journals of small and independent mathematics publishers) to ensure better access at lower cost.

B5. Implement methods to maintain and ensure access to digital collections for the long term.

B5a. Implement a plan for the archival retention of University records and data created in electronic form.

B5b. Collaborate with CIT and other partners on strategies to create and manage repositories with long-term integrity.

C. Participate in transforming the process of scholarly communication, collaborating with scholars as they modify the methods used for scholarly information exchange.

C1. Inform faculty, staff, and University administrators of changing intellectual property issues in the electronic environment.

C2. Encourage faculty to take copyright and journal-pricing practices into account as they select publishers for their work, agree to review manuscripts or edit journals, and become involved with new publication ventures.

C3. Partner with faculty to create alternative models of scholarly communication so that their involvement can positively shape the new system for the benefit of both libraries and scholars.

C4. Develop and implement a program for the Library to serve as the online repository for gray literature produced by the Cornell faculty.

C5. Develop and implement a pilot project for the Library to capture and archive the informal or unpublished exchange of information in digital form on specified subjects.

D. Foster expertise in the Library on intellectual property rights in the digital environment.

D1. Hire or designate a staff member to be the digital copyright expert.

D2. Create professional development programs to inform staff about copyright issues; ensure that knowledge of intellectual property rights is shared within CUL.

D3. Obtain information from peer institutions about their efforts to provide information on intellectual property issues to their communities.

D4. Encourage staff to negotiate with copyright owners.

    D4a. Negotiate with vendors to create more-favorable copyright conditions for purchased digital materials.

    D4b. Work with copyright owners to obtain permission to digitize needed information currently covered by copyright.

II. Services: Offering Enriched Access via a State-of-the-art Infrastructure and Assistance from Expert Staff

We will improve and expand the Library's technology infrastructure for patrons who are becoming ever more sophisticated in the use of electronic tools for scholarship. Information professionals who are keeping pace with the service needs of their clientele will meet the challenge of increasing expectations for access, connectivity, ease of use, and support.

A. Provide the human and technical support needed to enable users to discover, navigate, critically evaluate, and effectively use digital collections and electronic resources.

A1. Convert finding aids to digital form.

A2. Add tables of contents to records for monographs in the online public catalog.

A3. Eliminate the remaining nonworking cataloging backlogs so that complete records are available to the public in the online catalog.

A4. Reduce significantly the number of catalog records that remain to be converted to machine-readable form so that users have increasingly only one stop to make—the online catalog—when searching for library holdings.

A5. Develop methods, including metadata (i.e, systems for identifying the structure of digitized documents to facilitate finding information within those documents), to improve the visibility and accessibility of library materials in all formats.

B. Add new technologies and services to increase the value and encourage the use of digital collections and electronic resources.

B1. Take steps to maintain interaction between Library staff and users despite increasing use of remote access.

B2. Continue to increase and enhance digital document delivery services.

B3. Progress toward making services (e.g., shared reference) available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

B4. Partner with other information service providers on campus; for example, create a CUL/CIT task force to work on instructional technology support services, which would (a) review and evaluate users' needs for instruction; (b) educate users to locate, retrieve, and evaluate new resources; and (c) collaborate with faculty in developing electronic course materials.

B5. Implement a more sophisticated and powerful library management system to take full advantage of dramatic improvements such as Web-based screen displays, image-serving capabilities, self check-out, e-reserves, media booking, serials claiming and check-in, and electronic data interchange.

B6. Collaborate effectively in our partnership with Sun Microsystems, the Sun Center of Excellence for Digital Libraries, to establish an enhanced level of innovation in the design and implementation of new library services.

B7. Improve the metrics of electronic resources and service; participate in the ARL project on usage measures for electronic resources.

C. Strengthen the technology infrastructure throughout the Library system by supporting its two essential components: the systems themselves and the human resources to operate and maintain them.

C1. Define minimally acceptable, good, and outstanding levels of technology infrastructure for the CUL system.

C1a. Achieve an outstanding level of technology infrastructure by 2002.

C1b. Create a plan for maintaining that level, which assumes an ongoing assessment of the infrastructure through a combination of user input and self-evaluation.

C2. Substantially increase connectivity throughout the Library and consider the advantages of universal access via wireless technology, as well as providing full access to multimedia information.

C3. Assign each cluster of libraries the responsibility to (a) develop a plan to increase connectivity in its libraries and (b) recommend a budget to achieve a level of cutting-edge technology.

C4. Significantly increase the number of staff responsible for programming and systems development and support.

D. Integrate digital and traditional services.

D1. Review all current and proposed services and processes to make certain that digital and traditional operations are effectively integrated.

D2. Ensure that all staff attain appropriate levels of proficiency in the selection, acquisition, organization, and use of electronic resources.

D3. Review and adjust procedures to ensure that all staff are supportive participants in the Library's digital programs.

E. Identify resources—by reallocation and by obtaining additional funding—to accommodate significantly increased electronic resources and services.

III. Outreach: Tailoring Our Priorities to the Needs and Expectations of Current and Future Communities

We will move to satisfy the heightened expectations of our patrons for convenient and ubiquitous access, at the same time that we reach out to enlarge our sphere of service to new communities.

A. Expand the use of digital resources and services by our core community (i.e., current CU students, faculty, staff, and participants in Cornell Extension and distance learning programs) and by our extended community (i.e., SUNY, the citizens of New York State).

A1. Create access policies that define Library responsibilities in a digital environment to our core and extended communities.

A2. Involve staff from all functional areas in working with key user groups to increase the use of digital resources and services and to plan for future services.

A3. Create a program for the regular assessment of user needs in order to, among other things, plan for the digital information needs of future users; select an outside consultant to assist in this project.

A4. Design and create a program that will provide library services for distance learning; consider the potential for providing library services for other institutions planning to offer distance learning programs.

B. Expand our services to new categories of users, possibly including alumni, scholars at other institutions, K-12, and the general public.

B1. Design and create services specifically for alumni.

B2. Investigate the potential for offering fee-based services to the general public.

C. Increase the extent of strategic collaborations with other cultural repositories, academic professional societies,

research universities, and corporate partners to—

C1. Leverage funding to enhance access.

C2. Share responsibilities for the archiving of digital material.

C3. Share responsibilities for 24/7 services.

C4. Participate actively in the Digital Library Federation (DLF) and the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI).

D. Publicize Cornell's digital activities through presentations and publications; ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibility to publicize Library activities and achievements.

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marked up by yes, 06/09/00