Making ‘Everything Available’. British Library Research Services and Research Data Strategy

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Libraries in a changing environment

- Research is digital, are we?
- Are we still needed for discovery?
- With shrinking budgets, can and should we fund ‘just in case’ content procurement?
- In an open world, do we still have a role for access to digital content?
- Will print content become invisible?
- Global content grows so fast, our collections are shrinking (relatively)
Research Services and ‘Everything Available’

- Living Knowledge articulates the vision of the British Library as the most open, creative and innovative institution of its kind in the world.
- **Research Services** is a new department set up to lead the transformation of the Library’s services and contemporary collections in support of research, on-site and on-line.
- Everything Available is a **strategic change management portfolio** designed to deliver the (emerging) strategy for the Library’s services to researchers and research organisations.
Elements of the research services strategy

- Contribute to a sustainable global knowledge environment that benefits all
- Local to global collections: everything we can make discoverable and accessible
- Procurement: from just-in-case to just-in-time tailored delivery
- Assist users in not just finding content but in extracting useful information from it
- Bring the content to the users and their favourite tools (even if it means or ‘immediate’ users are machines – APIs)
- Manage and preserve third party content relevant for research
- Provide shared collection management services to other organisations
Helping to open up collections
Research Data Strategy
Vision

Our vision for the British Library is that research data are as integrated into our collections, research and services as text is today.

The British Library's users will be able to consume research data online through tools that enable it to be analysed, visualised and understood by non-specialists.
Four Themes

- Data Management
- Data Creation
- Data Archiving and Preservation
- Data Discovery, Access and Reuse
Jo, BL staff member

I was working on a grant proposal for ESRC. They require a data management plan, so when I was given an outline plan that set out the Library’s processes for data management, I was able to reuse that and save myself days of extra work!
Sonja, Epidemiologist

I was able to use the British Library web archive as a dataset, correlating positive and negative messages about statin use with NHS prescription data. The subset of data I extracted is really useful to others, so I offered it to the Library who now make it available alongside their other datasets.
Volumes of portraits and biographies of officers in the South African wars collected by John Malcolm Bulloch. 1900 - 1902.

The dataset comprises six digitised volumes (in PDF) of a collection of portraits and biographical details of some officers distinguished in the South African War (1900 - 1902) (with OCR-derived text).

The collection was formed by John Malcolm Bulloch...
Robin, Consultant

We produce valuable reports and data on the political environment of emerging market economies. Now that the British Library is archiving that data, we can ensure others get to use it even if our consultancy closes down. We can also give them DOIs, and track the impact of the work we produce.
Rosslyn, Social Historian

My research on perceptions of gender involves looking at if and how gender-specific words evolve into derogatory terms. The British Library gave me great advice on which collections I could use, and how to connect tools to them. This allowed me to automate analysis and visualisation of the data, finding things I didn’t expect.

Discovery for Library data
Third-party data discovery
New models of data access
Tools and skills for data exploration
Alice, Post-Graduate Researcher

Being able to persistently identify my data with a DOI means I can make my research reproducible. It also means that I can track when my data is cited, which is really helpful when it comes to looking at my research impact.
Conclusion

- No single institution can crack this: it needs cooperation and creativity
- Time for more coordination at a national level and beyond
- Collect jointly, preserve nationally, discover internationally
- Invitation to join forces for developing and sustaining global open knowledge infrastructure
Thank you

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