Digitisation Plan
2016-2020

University of Sydney Library
University of Sydney Library Digitisation Plan 2016-2020

Mission

The University of Sydney Library Digitisation Plan 2016-20 sets out the aim and guiding principles for the University Library’s digitisation programs. The University Library will digitise and enable the access to the significant and unique heritage assets that comprise our relevant rare and special research collections. We will foster an environment of knowledge acquisition and cross-disciplinary collaboration through our unique digitisation projects. We will contribute to international research and innovation by unlocking access to uniquely Australian research collections. We will partner with collaborators from across the University community and the publishing industry to make the University’s collections available to the broadest possible audience. The Library’s digitisation program will position the University Library as an information leader in digitisation services by building capacity and infrastructure, and developing and sharing best practices and technologies in digital preservation, dissemination and digital asset management.

Aim

The Library’s digitisation programs aim to provide and maintain unique materials by capturing valuable physical collection items in a digital format. Digitisation preserves the physical integrity of items at risk of degradation and allows the digital derivatives to be pushed to a wider audience, increasing the visibility and reach of the Library. The enhanced ability to access items will add value to the collections and create opportunities for research and collaboration both within the University community and with the wider research community, promoting new forms of material usage and digital scholarship. The Digitisation Plan underpins the Library’s digitisation projects and programs and prescribes the guiding principles of engagement with project collaborators, furthering the Library’s role as a trusted partner in the delivery of the University’s strategic priorities.

Goals

The Library will:

- support and enhance the research and education goals of the University through the creation of and access to digital representations of collection items
- preserve fragile and rare collections by creating digital surrogates
- transform access to significant research collections through digital reproduction
- increase collection visibility, use and impact
- enrich content for new audiences and facilitate the interpretation of material
- inspire new avenues of research and new approaches to education and researcher training
- foster relationships and collaborative opportunities with other academic and cultural memory institutions through contributing to shared digital collections
- grow the University Library’s digital presence
- establish a reputation for technical expertise and knowledge in digitisation and preservation of digital collections and raise the University’s profile on a national and international level
• position the University Library as a leader in the development and implementation of innovative technologies in digitisation and the management of digital collections
• attract support for further digitisation programs

Principles

Easy and open access

User needs: the Library will provide services based on the needs of the University community. We seek to demonstrate our value to users and meet their research and education needs as resources permit. User interaction with collections will be analysed and feedback collected in order to respond to the university community’s expectations of Library services and improve the user experience. Digitisation services will allow the Library to position itself to address the needs of the University in terms of access to Library resources.

Discovery: digital content will be managed and described to enhance searching, discovery, interpretation and re-use, and establish authenticity. The Library will provide a unified search experience across collections, and provide metadata to external services allowing for discovery via Australian and international discipline repositories and registries.

Terms of use: digitised material will be made available under the most generous terms of use possible (e.g. Creative Commons licences), while respecting copyright and other intellectual property requirements and acknowledging permissions and contributors.

Knowledge expertise

Institutional knowledge: the collections management knowledge of Library staff will be harnessed alongside the expertise of academic staff and collaborators from the wider community when assessing content for potential digitisation programs.

Awareness: the Library is committed to providing relevant information resources, training and development to the university community on digitisation, digital preservation issues and asset management. The Library will deploy this knowledge expertise to position the University as a leader in contributing to the international corpus of information in this area.

Collaboration

Partnerships: collection gaps may be identified which can be filled through the digitisation programs of fellow institutions, strengthening partnerships and pushing unique collections to the broadest possible audience. The Library embraces the principle of collaboration and will enter arrangements with other organisations to further the Library’s digitisation goals.

Promotion: the Library will inform the university community of what has been digitised and how those items and collections may be accessed. The Library will promote digitised collection material via the revitalised Library website and social media channels.
Process improvement

Selection: the Library will develop a digitisation assessment matrix to create robust and transparent selection processes. Issues affecting selection include potential for collaboration and engagement with academic staff, availability of funding, copyright considerations, conservation concerns, and uniqueness of the physical item.

Standards: the Library will work to standards and procedures that are sustainable and compatible with accepted national and international practices, to ensure long-term preservation of original items and access to high-quality reproductions.

Innovation

Business models: costing models will be developed to ensure the sustainability of services and collections. These may include open access provided free of charge, and mediated access provided through a fee-based service. The Library will explore and identify the most appropriate digitisation models, including in-house digitisation programs, collaborative partnerships with cultural memory institutions, and outsource work as required to a range of specialist vendors.

Technology: the Library will develop and maintain the required infrastructure, equipment, software, processes and protocols necessary to become a leader in digitisation and ensure long-term preservation and access to digital collection items.

Community: the Library will engage with the University community and other collaborative partners on a range of innovative use cases to enhance research and education outcomes.

Milestones

Development of a digitisation framework

A digitisation framework will be developed to identify projects 2016-20, identify funding to deliver the program, and document standards, procedures, workflows, systems, success measures, capabilities and tools for carrying out the projects. The framework will address the ongoing storage and maintenance of digital assets.

Establishment of a governance body

A governance body comprising Library representatives from relevant functional areas will be established to set the direction of the digitisation program, oversee and endorse digitisation projects, and ensure transparency in decision-making.

Stakeholders

The Library will partner with University ICT, the Research Portfolio, academic and professional staff, University Archives and cultural institutions, students, and specialist vendors to deliver the
aims of the Digitisation Plan. Though consultation, the University Library’s digital collections will be relevant, accessible, sustainable and secure.

**Proposals for digitisation**

The Library will develop digitisation projects with collaborators on and off campus. In formulating a digitisation proposal, the Library will determine the full costs of the project, including the cost of access, delivery and sustainability. All proposals will be assessed in terms of the University and Library’s strategic priorities, business models, technical standards, intellectual property and copyright, and operational viability against a priority matrix.

**Review**

The Digitisation Plan will initially be reviewed in 2018, and then biennially. The Library will monitor the digitisation landscape during the initial implementation and roll-out of the plan and make note of any developments which may require an advance review, such as equipment upgrades and storage requirements.