

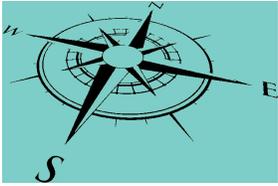
ENRICHING THE LIBRARY EXPERIENCE: The FY2019-2023 Strategic Plan of the Library of Congress

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Library of Congress (LOC)

Description:

The Library of Congress is the world's largest library, with nearly 170 million items in our collections, and extensive expert services and programs.

Stakeholder(s):

Carla Hayden :

14th Librarian of Congress

Library of Congress Users :

The Library has a rich history of serving a diverse group of users. Dating back to the mid-19th century, Librarian of Congress Ainsworth Rand Spofford managed the transition of the Library from an entity whose role was exclusively in service to Congress to one also serving a more general audience as an institution of knowledge. Today, we continue this pursuit. Being user centered means thinking about the Library in the life of the user instead of the more traditional model of thinking about the user in the life of the Library. The agency's strategy centers around four user groups: Congress, Creators, Learners, and Connectors.

Congress :

First and foremost, supporting access to authoritative information and the democratic exchange of ideas — Service to Congress has been and remains at the core of our mission. We will continue to engage, inspire, and inform Congress through our collections and our diverse service and experience offerings, including policy consultations, on-demand analysis, briefings, events, programs, and constituent engagement.

Creators :

Researchers, originators of new knowledge and scholarship, builders of cultural capacity, and copyright users and stakeholders

Learners :

Those of any age who seek understanding and knowledge through the Library's digital and physical collections and services

Connectors :

External communities such as libraries, schools, and other groups and institutions that ultimately connect users with the Library

Library of Congress Experts :

These groups are not mutually exclusive. Users can assume different personas to interact with the Library in multiple capacities in a single day or over the course of their life. They can do so from different locations, using different platforms and devices. Understanding these factors are part of designing an optimized user experience. Improving our understanding of the

myriad ways users interact with the Library's collections, experts, and services is fundamental to delivering our mission. Each interaction is an opportunity to move people along a path, from awareness to discovery, then to use, and finally, to connection with the Library—a continuum that renews itself over time.

Americans :

As the steward of a unique, universal, and ever-growing collection that belongs to the American people, the Library of Congress also has a mandate to inspire, inform, and serve all Americans by engaging their cultural and intellectual curiosity and creativity.

Vision

All Americans are connected to the Library of Congress.

Mission

Engage, inspire, and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.

Values

Engagement: Researchers and authors turn to the Library for source material not available anywhere else. With access to original manuscripts, ancient maps, rare books, photographs, films, and sound recordings, these authors create new works that help interpret history for future generations. The process of copyright registration and deposit completes a virtuous cycle that may result in the addition of these new works to the Library's collections. The Library helps ensure that millions of Americans with blindness and other disabilities continue to experience the joy of reading through a national network of libraries that distribute the latest contemporary literature in a variety of accessible formats.

Inspiration: With 1.6 million annual visitors, the Library's Thomas Jefferson Building has become a landmark destination, renowned for its architectural beauty and celebration of knowledge and creativity. Programs, exhibitions, centers, and marquee events such as the Veterans History Project, National Book Festival, and Digital Learning Labs expand the Library's reach and inspire learners of all ages.

Knowledge: Congress, the judiciary, and other federal agencies have reliable, round-the-clock access to reliable knowledge in print, online, and via consultation with scholars and experts from the Congressional Research Service, the U.S. Copyright Office, the Law Library, and the Kluge Center. Families seeking to research their heritage can rely on subject experts in our reading rooms, tap into the StoryCorps Archive, or take advantage of the vast digital collections of early American newspapers, manuscripts, maps, photographs, and prints.

Aspiration: The Library's vision is aspirational and speaks to the tangible and intangible connections that are possible with the nation we serve. Through our unequaled collections, services, events, and products, users can connect with the Library in meaningful ways throughout their life journey. This vision reinforces the agency's focus on users—visitors, researchers, and patrons from a variety of locations, circumstances, and walks of life—by expanding our efforts to make the nation's universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity more discoverable, accessible, relevant, and useful. Connectedness has many forms for the Library: Informing lawmakers, policy-makers, and their constituents requires us to be connected intellectually. Engaging and sharing knowledge with users worldwide, and quickly and easily copyrighting creative works requires us to be connected digitally. Creating strong ties that move partners, organizations, and individuals to donate their time, resources, stories, and creative works requires us to be connected societally. Being a unified organization requires being connected to our workforce with support, training, and a sustained commitment to recruit the next generation of Library experts and leaders. The goals and objectives in this Strategic Plan help us get closer to this vision. Enhancing awareness of the Library's offerings, improving discoverability of and access to those resources, and increasing usage through a suite of services that meet diverse needs will connect more people to the agency in more meaningful ways. Additionally, with a strong emphasis on digital enablement, the Strategic Plan will further the Library's worldwide influence.

Unification: A Unified Role -- * Memory * Knowledge * Imagination

Information: The Library's more than 3,000 dedicated staff work every day to provide authoritative and objective information to Congress. Library staff build, steward, describe, and share the world's largest and most comprehensive collection of knowledge; examine and register hundreds of thousands of copyright claims for works of original authorship every year; interpret complex, dynamic legal issues for Congress, the judiciary, and executive agencies; provide primary source-based curricula; design and host events and programs across a broad spectrum of creative and intellectual interests; distribute accessible versions of the latest books to people who are blind or have other print or learning disabilities; and demonstrate leadership in their professional fields. The Library's rich and diverse body of work can be framed in terms largely inspired by Thomas Jefferson's organizing construct for his personal library—the core from which the Library's collection developed:

Memory: Acquire, sustain, and provide access to a universal collection;

Research: Provide authoritative and objective research, analysis, and information;

Imagination: Inspire and encourage creativity, promote and support the work of American creators. Developed by and applied to all parts of the agency, these concepts transcend our organizational boundaries and inform the goals and objectives which comprise this Strategic Plan.

Direction: Direction Forward -- * User Centered * Digitally Enabled * Data Driven -- The unifying themes of Memory/ Knowledge/ Imagination ground the strategy; the direction forward guides it. In executing this Strategic Plan over the next five years, the agency is making a decisive shift to be more user centered, digitally enabled, and data driven.

User Centricity: User Centered -- We are a user-centered organization. Therefore, our strategic decisions consider what users want and expect from their national library. Improving user experience is not a one-time event; rather, it represents a fundamentally new way of operating. As such, it requires our leadership to build the capabilities and infrastructure that will enable this transformation. Our staff are some of the Library's best ambassadors. The new strategy seeks to harness staff insight and their contributions to elevate the user experience. All staff, including those in internal-facing roles, have a part to play in this effort.

Digital Enablement: Digitally Enabled -- As much as we desire to have every American come to Washington, D.C., to visit the Library, that is not possible. This is why being digitally enabled is paramount to our success. Realizing a digitally enabled Library of Congress is an ongoing process. As technology advances, new business models emerge and user expectations evolve. We will take a long view, developing strategies that account for what is on the horizon. Our Digital Strategy will be closely aligned with the Strategic Plan.

Data Focus: Data Driven -- A data-driven organization is one that embeds analysis, data, and reasoning into the decision-making process. Efforts to embed analytics have begun in pockets throughout the Library. Becoming a data-driven organization, however, means determining how best to scale these projects across the Library to drive greater business impact. Moving forward, we will increase our investment to take advantage of the tremendous amount of data associated with our vast collections. We are also building upon previous efforts to learn more about our users in order to tailor our services. Data will help to improve the speed and quality of performance measurement and decision making. Through this evidencebased approach, the Library will provide a more productive experience and improve our opportunity to create a lifelong connection with each of our users.

Experience: The User Experience Continuum:

Awareness: Many people describe the Library as a beautiful museum or a resource for Congress and scholars, but that is not the full story. We want to broaden awareness and ensure people know even more about what the Library offers—and specifically what it can uniquely offer each person. We also want to learn more about those who do not know that the Library is a resource available for them. We will use this knowledge to target our outreach efforts.

Discovery: Our users should be able to find what they are looking for easily and as intuitively as possible. Current user experiences—shaped via search engines, social media platforms, available metadata, and always-connected devices—have led to an expectation that relevant information will rise to the top and in many cases present itself to a user even without asking. While this is a challenging expectation for any organization to meet, in some ways this is where libraries excel. Because of our expert staff, we are well-suited to expose interesting relationships, enable “serendipitous discovery,” and facilitate creativity.

Usage: Once an item from our collections, a particular expert, or a service we offer has been found, it needs to be useful and delivered in a way that engenders a positive experience. While the primary function of the agency is to serve Congress, many other organizations and individuals use the Library. Given the diverse needs and global dispersion of these groups, we will improve our existing offerings while seeking innovative ways for people to interact with the Library.

Connection: The user experience continuum culminates with connection. A connection happens when the user interacts with an item or service and leaves feeling that the experience was personally relevant and valuable. This

continuum is renewed as we inform people of reasons to return to the Library and share new ways to engage with and explore our offerings, thus inspiring a connection that strengthens over time.

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1. Access

Make our unique collections, experts, and services available when, where, and how users need them.

Expand Access — Shortly after being sworn in as the 14th Librarian of Congress, Dr. Carla Hayden noted that, “The biggest opportunity for the Library is to make its wonderful treasures available to people...make people aware that it is part of their national heritage and that everyone can find something in the Library that relates to them, their classroom curriculum, or where they want to go in life.” This statement aptly describes our aspirations of being not only the world’s largest, but also the world’s most-used library. In addition to our expert staff and collections, we have many tools at hand to realize this aspiration. Technology provides an opportunity to democratize the Library’s collections and services like never before. Strategic partnerships and collaborations can multiply our user base. And when people cannot come to Washington, D.C., we can bring some of the magic of experiencing the Library to them. Given the diverse needs and geographic dispersion of our users, we will continue to improve our existing offerings while seeking new and innovative ways for people to interact with the Library.

1.1. Discoverability & Availability

Increase Discoverability and Availability

We will make our collections, experts, and services more readily discoverable and available for users, whether visiting Washington, D.C., or accessing the Library remotely.

1.2. Reach

Use Connectors to Extend Reach

We will work with partners to promote our collections, experts, and services to their networks.

Stakeholder(s):

Connectors

1.3. Presence

Expand Physical Presence

We will proactively bring elements of the Library to the American people and enable broader use of our collections, experts, and services.

2. Experiences & Connections

Create valuable experiences for every user to foster lifelong connections to the Library

Stakeholder(s)

Members of Congress

Visually Impaired Visitors

Lifelong Learners

Library Contributors

Enhance Services — Meeting a user’s needs has always been context-dependent, but this is more so in today’s complex environment when people are using so many powerful new tools to discover, access, and use information. In other words, users have options. Whether providing policy consultations with Members of Congress via Skype, launching a crowdsourcing project inviting users to create a database of historic newspaper images, providing online access to copyright regulations and cases, or debuting “touch history” tours that allow visually impaired visitors to experience the magnificence of the Thomas Jefferson Building, the Library will continue to innovate and rethink the way we do business. Delivering superior services and valuable experiences is the way to encourage users to return regularly and become lifelong learners and Library contributors.

2.1. Digital

Elevate Digital Experiences

We will invest in an end-to-end digital experience that improves online services, enhances discoverability, and facilitates the online curation of content to help all users derive more value.

2.2. In-Person

Transform In-Person Experiences

We will focus on exhibitions, learning spaces, educational materials, and cultural programming to transform visitors into users of our services and contributors to our mission.

2.3. Content

Develop User-Centered Content

We will develop content in a variety of formats and media to enhance the usability and accessibility of the Library’s collections.

3. Capabilities

Modernize, strengthen, and streamline our operational capabilities.

Optimize Resources — The agency's financial and human resources, physical and digital capacities, and rate of technological advancement have struggled to keep pace with the growth of its collections and the needs of its users. The confluence of these factors has made our current operating model untenable without a shift in approach. Our approach moving forward will focus on two fundamental opportunities. The first is to identify, synergize, and leverage capabilities, processes, and talent dispersed across organizational units as a single enterprise. The second opportunity goes beyond the common adage of doing more with less, and seeks instead to proactively find more, so the agency can do even more.

3.1. Activities

Align Core Library Activities

We will align and strengthen capabilities across the Library to achieve optimum operational efficiencies while providing enhanced user services.

3.2. Operations

Modernize Operations

We will share information, apply best practices, and use data across the Library to drive user-centered enhancements that will deliver the highest returns while balancing staff workloads.

3.3. Talent

Invest in Talent for the Future

We will uncover and address capability gaps; train and retain our experts; and recruit new talent to augment our knowledge, skills, and abilities.

3.4. Funding

Diversify and Expand Funding

We will more effectively articulate the Library's value to attract additional resources from Congress, private donors, and others.

4. Impact

Use data to measure our impact on the world around us and share a powerful story

Measure Impact — The Library of Congress is the world’s largest library with nearly 170 million items; yet what ultimately makes the Library successful is usage. There is no doubt the Library’s collections and its human expertise hold untold intellectual value. But we must go beyond the volume of collections or number of research requests from Congress when speaking to our value, and focus on increasing usage, and perhaps more importantly, measuring the impact of our collections, services, and experts. We will use data to measure how effectively we deliver services to our users. Having access to better quality aggregate data about our users—while appropriately disclosing how the information is being collected and used, and safeguarding user privacy—will allow the agency to gain insights to operate more efficiently and effectively. To enhance our services, staff will be empowered by this data to turn what they learn into principled action, working with users and with each other to address issues as they emerge and make timely improvements. For an institution as large as the Library to be effective, our approach to achieving the goals and objectives outlined in this Strategic Plan must be integrated across the organization. This means promoting shared outcomes and resource planning to enable our organizational units to fulfill their mission-specific goals.

4.1. Users

Understand Our Users

We will use data to better understand our users and their needs and measure how effectively we deliver services, while appropriately safeguarding user privacy.

4.2. Communication

Communicate Impact

We will measure impact in order to demonstrate value to all stakeholders and share our story in compelling, creative ways.

4.3. Culture

Promote a Culture of Continuous Improvement

We will become an insight-driven organization, using data to plan, set goals and targets, and strengthen performance management.

Administrative Information

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