

Library Annual Report 2015/16

Overview

The key developments of the year, underpinning activities for the period to 2020, were the publication of the **Library strategy document**, [The Journey to 2020](#), and the **reorganisation of staffing** into five new teams. The strategy recognises changes in user behaviour and expectations, sets out a new agenda, and provides a framework for annual operational plans over the next five years, based on six priorities:

- Expert staff, skilled to help in person or online
- A compelling place for academic engagement
- Access to excellent and relevant collections
- Connectivity through partnership, communication and community
- Graduates who think critically and have lifelong academic skills
- High-impact publication of research, data and digital content

The publication of the strategy marked the culmination of an extensive consultation, both within the Library and beyond, including individual meetings by the University Librarian with each College Dean and Head of School towards the end of 2015. The organisational shift involved is radical, with more than half of the Library staff changing role or line manager and all joining a new team. The teams are:

- *Operations*: aligning Library space and staffing with changing needs
- *Collections*: integrating management and development of, and access to, information resources
- *Marketing and Engagement*: promoting the Library and understanding user needs
- *Research and Learning*: enabling research and developing academic skills
- *Digital Publishing and Innovation*: creating digital collections for innovative research

The new strategy and team structure are focused on adding new value towards realising the University strategy, *Vision 2020*. They take full account too of significant cuts in resourcing sustained since 2008, amounting to 20% of staffing and budget. Incremental change is no longer effective when the range of user expectations is broadening and requiring a higher level of skills from Library staff. Areas of increased activity in recent years include digitisation, open access publishing, exhibitions, significant archives growth and alternative space configuration. A fundamental change has been to organise staffing by function rather than subject, taking a more generic approach in some areas of provision, including information skills, while extending coverage of emerging areas such as digital scholarship or enabling Library-led development of collections.

The issue of **resourcing** remains a major challenge. A reduction of €150K was applied specifically to Library non-pay budgets, with consequences in terms of subscription cancellations and reading list coverage, and no realistic prospect of meeting demand for new journals or other resources in newer areas of research. Our dependence on the national IReL consortium is only increasing, especially as the cut, which had been signalled as specific to 2015/16, has extended into the following year. The operations budget absorbed €30K of that cut, leaving very little flexibility to address emerging needs as most of the budget is now spent on essential maintenance of IT and other systems. A lack of recruitment activity in recent times means that only one staff appointment from outside the University has been made since 2012. This is a serious issue in terms of realising the ambitions of the University and Library strategies and it will be vital to maximise all recruitment opportunities in the coming years. For now, it is vital to credit the huge flexibility

shown by all staff in embracing new roles and team memberships. They have committed generously to creating a new vision for the Library and delivering early progress across all of the six priority areas identified.

In devising and enacting the new agenda, the Library has greatly valued the **guidance** of two new Committees and the feedback obtained from the annual user **survey**. The Library Strategy Committee and Archives Strategy Committee held their first meetings late in the previous year. Each has been generous in its support for, and advice to, the Library during their first full year of operation. They provide a valuable forum for commentary on recent and prospective changes, valuably supplementing the annual LibQual survey. This year's survey showed improved ratings for the fifth year in a row, with the overall perception of the Library by survey participants up to 6.88 from a starting point of 6.38 in late 2010. Ratings for all but three of the 22 criteria increased and the gap between our scores and those aggregated for all participating libraries in the UK and Ireland has closed noticeably from 0.32 in 2010 to 0.15 now. That gap would be somewhat narrower or non-existent if the Library building was improved; Library as Place is the heading under which we lag others most and advocacy will continue towards the kind of transformation project envisaged in the building feasibility study completed in October 2014. The access control system recorded **993,001 visits to the building**; that figure will be higher and the large campus population involved more satisfied with their overall experience of the University when the building development project happens. On a more positive note, the survey highlighted the **quality of service provided by Library staff**, generating a rating of 7.17, with the highest score in the whole survey, at 7.38, directed towards consistent courtesy by staff.

A major effort was invested in the procurement process for a new Library Services Platform. Detailed engagement with the tendering and evaluation stages resulted in the selection of a **next-generation IT system** geared towards the predominantly digital library model to which we have been evolving for some years. Its implementation will enable new workflows and efficiencies across a range of essential functions, including the management of collections in all formats and its cloud-based model will reduce local systems administration appreciably. Following the selection of the system the focus turned to the funding model for its purchase and negotiations with the supplier regarding the contract, prior to establishing a timetable for implementation.

Archives and special collections continued to grow in physical terms, digital access and strategic importance for the University. A project to digitise the archive of the Gate Theatre commenced in February and its expected completion date is the end of July 2017. This represents a very significant extension to the digital archive coverage, accessible only at NUI Galway, of Ireland's theatre history, complementing the Abbey Theatre Digital Archive. Work on an oral history of the Druid Theatre, again published on one of the Library's platforms, was ongoing in collaboration with the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance. Other digital archive projects included the publication of the Brendan Duddy Digital Archive and the townlands index in the Tim Robinson Collection, representing strong early achievements by the **Digital Publishing and Innovation Team**.

Some **notable additions** were made to the archives and special collections, particularly the archive of Muintir na Tire as a major resource for research on rural Ireland in the twentieth century, and an amount of material relating to the career of Michael O'Shaughnessy, a graduate of the University who had an eminent career as City Engineer of San Francisco. Another very generous donation was a comprehensive collection of books about the Battle of Aughrim, received from Colman Morrissey. Agreement was also close with the Dominican College in Taylor's Hill on the transfer of its splendid library of 2,000 books dating from the seventeenth century onwards. The **Research and Learning Team** was creative in promoting strong engagement with the collections through exhibitions, demonstrations at conferences on campus and a new module titled Archives and Special Collections in Research which members delivered to the Single Honours Second Year History Group.

The **availability of space** for further addition of archival and special collections was a growing concern throughout the year. A proposal to increase available space for Library collections through an extensive compact shelving installation was developed but awaits more detailed consideration at University level. The new **Collections Team** initiated a project to audit all archival collections and to rationalise the use of space for their storage in the Hardiman Research Building. This is one of a number of actions being promoted through the development of an archives strategy to 2020 which will cover collection management, digital collections, academic engagement and resourcing. Another important project advanced by the Collections team was the further implementation of the Reading List Management System which has attracted increasing engagement by academic staff, offering welcome functionality in improving access to course material for students. Following a national tender all new books are now acquired via a contracted vendor. Close systems integration with this vendor has allowed significant efficiency gains, which means turnaround time between book request and availability on the shelf is significantly reduced.

Returning to **digital developments**, a significant milestone to note was the adoption by the University in October 2015 of a policy requiring open access to research outputs. This, coupled with enhancements to the ARAN system, improved workflows and extended engagement with the academic community, resulted in a 57% increase in additions to ARAN during the year, a tribute to the commitment of the staff involved. Advice on research data management was also on the increase as research funders specified new demands. Library space is impacted by the expectations of students and others of access to new technologies for digital creativity. A new **maker space**, featuring 3D printing and high-specification workstations with software for design and other applications, proved very popular and enabled innovations in teaching and learning. This facility complemented the Blackstone Launchpad, also new to the University, in enabling entrepreneurial students to develop concepts on screen and as printed objects. Also related to space, the **Operations Team** led a project with the Hardiman Research Building Exhibitions Group to define and develop the exhibitions area in the atrium of the building. Following a tender process the execution of the work involved was commissioned and expected to be carried out in December 2016 and January 2017.

The Library's **information literacy** offerings continued to be valued by all who partook of them and this was reflected in higher user ratings this year with 94.2% of those who gave feedback saying the course they attended met their needs and 93.6% feeling confident that they would be able to apply the skills learned. Also much appreciated was the Academic Writing Centre which, despite budgetary pressures, continued to deliver essential writing support to a large number of students. 94% of the students who used the Centre reported that it met their expectations and 98% believed it to provide a valuable service.

The new **Marketing and Engagement Team** has been instrumental in increasing the use of social media platforms by Library staff. The opportunity to engage with campus and other audiences through public events continues to be important and some highlights included the launches of the CalmView archives search system, the reading list service, and an impressive new guide to Special Collections. A celebration to mark the donation of the Colman Morrissey Collection included a lecture on the Battle of Aughrim by Dr. Pdraig Lenihan, History, which attracted more than 100 attendees, including many members of the public. The Library places great importance on **regional engagement** and examples have included further integration with the Library at Shannon College of Hotel Management, and a new Explore-funded project with the School of Education which opened up the use of archives by Leaving Certificate students at Presentation College in Headford. We were delighted to work with the University in supporting Galway's successful bid to be European Capital of Culture in 2020 and our **European connections** were enhanced through work with the Coimbra Working Group on Heritage and with the European Universities Association. At national level the Library contributed very actively to the development of new strategies by the Consortium of National and University Libraries (CONUL) and the Irish Universities Association Librarians Group (IUALG).

Statistics

Outputs	Metrics	2015/16	2014/15
Metrics			
Total catalogued book stock	No. of books	530576	521,083
Total books loaned / renewed	No. of books	235455	254,330
Books acquired	No. of books	8156	8,530
Books loaned by volume in stock	Percentage	44%	49.40%
Online journal article downloads (total)	No. of journals	1784897	1,644,472
Cost per journal article download	Euro	€0.51	€0.50
Main Library Hours Open	Hours per year	3,550	3,557
Medical Library Hours Open	Hours per year	5,002	2,884
Study places	No. of places	2,016	2,001
Stock utilisation (books reshelfed)	No. of books	254,233	257,006
Information skills: user training hours received	No. of hours	12244	9,486
Research papers published on ARAN	No. of papers	686	426
LibQual Overall Perceived	Standardised score	6.88	6.8
LibQual Overall Desired	Standardised score	7.79	7.8
LIT Desk Closed Tickets	No. of tickets	19,368	18,741
LIT Desk Opened Tickets	No. of tickets	19355	19,903
LIT Desk Quick Tickets	No. of tickets	N/A	11,144
LIT Aleph transactions	No. of transactions	17883	18,269
Information skills: no. of students attending training	No. of students	7249	10,194