

MIT Libraries: Achieving a Desired Future State for 2015

I. Introduction

As the Libraries approach the end of its current strategic plan, we are focusing on what we need to be in the future to assure our continued success. Research libraries face extraordinary challenges, driven by both internal and external forces. These forces and their implications, some of the most significant which are listed below, are catalysts for change, and must be acknowledged appropriately if we are to succeed. A force of a different nature which will impact how we respond to these trends is the fiscal realities of the next several years. As always the Libraries will closely follow the priorities set by The Institute. Our goal is to determine a desired future state and associated strategic directions that will allow us to provide focused collections and services of excellence to the MIT community.

II. Forces Acting as Catalysts for Change

- **Community demands and expectations**
Faculty, students, and staff want and expect content to be digital, easy to discover, accessible 24x7 from anywhere in the world without mediation, and usable with new and emerging technologies, e.g., mobile devices.
- **Search and discovery**
Services such as Google, Amazon, YouTube, Flickr, and WorldCat Local are redefining traditional roles for discovery and metadata provision, and users are gravitating quickly to these systems to search full-text content, images, and video as well as for recommendations from other users.
- **Content management**
The increasing demand to digitize print, video, and other analog content and to capture content already in digital form, including research data, is challenging libraries to develop new strategies for organizing, curating and preserving the scholarly record for both born-digital and digitized collections.
- **Content delivery**
The growing shift to digital books and e-journals; increase in production and sharing of research data; and prevalence of multi-media content and related services, e.g., Print on Demand (POD), custom teaching collections, and rich media production services; requires us to rethink traditional strategies for delivering new and dynamic content.
- **Collaboration**
There is increasing opportunity and necessity for broader collaborations with other service and content providers including units at MIT, other libraries, publishers, commercial entities, and open source communities to leverage limited resources and share specialized expertise.

- **Scholarly communication**
Scholarly publishing is in transition; new models of open access publishing coupled with mandates for authors and universities to retain the rights to their own works are increasing. Effective use of technology, e.g. data mining, coupled with new models of publishing, have the potential to transform communication of research at reduced cost to universities, more flexible reuse, and the ability to provide access to enhanced publications that include the underlying data collections and models.
- **Interdisciplinarity**
The continued trend towards interdisciplinary research demands that we re-examine our current approach to disciplinary support in building and organizing physical and virtual collections and providing research support services at the point of need.
- **Pedagogy**
There is increasing demand for using technology to deliver teaching and course material (e.g., course management systems, interactive teaching materials, and rich media), as well as, for collaborating with faculty to ensure that MIT students graduate with essential lifelong learning skills – the ability to find, evaluate, manage, and use a wide variety of information resources effectively.
- **Space**
There is growing user demand for technology-rich learning and multi-purpose spaces that are functional, comfortable, and aesthetically pleasing; and an imperative to optimally configure collections, services, and staff to meet changing user needs.

III. Desired Future State

Empowering MIT through knowledge

The mission of the MIT Libraries is to create and sustain an intuitive, trusted information environment that enables learning and the advancement of knowledge at MIT. We are committed to developing innovative services, strategies, and systems that promote discovery, preserve knowledge, and improve worldwide scholarly communication. (Adopted 2003, revised February 2009)

Guided by a client-centered approach to service, the Libraries will be an agile, creative, and data-driven organization that:

- Ensures seamless discovery and access to scholarly information sources.
- Manages knowledge, with an emphasis on MIT-created content.
- Provides faculty, students, and staff with expert support and training to find, evaluate, manage, and use resources.
- Creates high-quality spaces for both reflective and collaborative work and study.
- Leads initiatives to inform and shape the future of libraries and scholarly research.

IV. Key Strategic Directions

- **Create the Next Generation Research Library Organization**
In order to be flexible and agile in response to evolving needs of the MIT community, we must re-align our organization and staff to better manage our content, and design and deliver information services that are based on the needs of a broadly networked interdisciplinary, international, and virtual community rather than on the legacy of a 50-year old geographical footprint. We must use sound assessment practices to make strategic choices about where to place our resources in service to the community.
- **Build and Strengthen Relationships with Faculty, Students, and the MIT Community**
Continue to seek community input and build strategic alliances with constituencies we serve to remain relevant and define new services that meet client needs. Our success depends on both broadening and deepening our engagement with faculty, students, and research staff; developing relationships that appropriately integrate library services and collections into the teaching, learning, and research life cycle; embedding services where our users work; maximizing their productivity; and effectively promoting and communicating our services.
- **Advocacy for Information Policy**
Expand and enhance our advocacy for developing and promoting sensible information policies for copyright and intellectual property, and technical policies for identity management. Seek to effect licensing principles and public policy consistent with these policies. Collaborate with faculty on new initiatives for author's rights and scholarly communication.
- **Improve Infrastructure for Content Management and Delivery**
MIT's intellectual output is increasingly produced in digital form; similarly, we increasingly manage digital content that we acquire, license, or digitize. It is essential that we identify, build, and maintain infrastructures to ensure that we acquire, store, preserve, manage, and provide access to our resources for the long term and in the most efficient way possible.
- **Transform Library Space**
Key facets of this transformation include: providing quality spaces for both reflective and collaborative work; providing technology-rich collaborative tools, and expertise and specialist services to support them; and rethinking the role and location of tangible collections to support these realigned spaces and services.
- **Collaborate with Strategic Partners Outside the Libraries**
Expand and extend strategic partnerships with DUE, IS&T, Harvard, MIT research labs, OCW, publishers, commercial companies, and open source communities, as well as enlist new partners, to leverage expertise, maximize

resources, and provide infrastructural support and specialized services to our community.

- **Enhance Staff Capabilities**

Align and develop staff skills with our strategic directions to ensure success. Continue to recruit talented staff with strong and diverse backgrounds. Create mechanisms to ensure necessary professional development in a dynamic environment.