



The Library of
Trinity College Dublin

Continuity and Development of the Library Strategy — 2026



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin



The Library Manifesto

- Moral** – *We have a moral responsibility to the future generations of Ireland to develop students' full potential and advance research that benefits Ireland and the world*
- Intellectual** – *We have an intellectual responsibility to create the current and future library in this revolutionary and disruptive time of educational, technological and information change*
- Cultural** – *We have a cultural responsibility to steward world-heritage items entrusted to our care*
- Social** – *We have a social responsibility to make the library spaces welcoming, safe, individual and community places that reflect different and changing styles of learning, teaching and research*
- Statutory** – *We have a statutory responsibility for legal deposit on behalf of Ireland*
- Financial** – *We have a financial responsibility to contribute to the knowledge economy, nationally and globally*
- Professional** – *We have a professional responsibility to develop our own skills and talents to be able to achieve the above*

The Library Strategy 2015-2020¹ was created following very wide consultation across the Trinity community and lays out a far-reaching and ambitious programme.

Message from Provost :



The Library of Trinity College Dublin is at the heart of this university. And as Trinity evolves so too does its Library.

The Library Strategy 2015-2020 is a far-reaching document and it is great to see it mature further with this "Continuity and Development of the Library Strategy 2026". I welcome the incorporation of several new cross-cutting developments which reflect a strong awareness of the rapidly changing landscape affecting the world of education and learning.

The prioritisation of sustainability demonstrates a strong commitment to addressing our responsibilities in the face of climate change and biodiversity loss, while also providing scope to embrace the opportunities associated with this increasingly urgent situation.

¹ Library Strategy 2015-2020
<https://www.tcd.ie/library/assets/pdf/strategy/library-strategy-2015-2020.pdf>

Similarly, the identification of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as a lens through which to view all activities mirrors the broader thrust in Trinity towards establishing a strong social foundation from which our College community has a basis to flourish.

The significant changes to education heralded by developments such as generative Artificial Intelligence demand that we equip our students and staff with appropriate skills and resources. The Library of Trinity College Dublin is at the heart of our response to this ever-changing world, and this continuity strategy outlines an ambitious path forward.

Provost Linda Doyle

Context of the Library Strategy

Provost Patrick Prendergast wrote in his forward to The Library Strategy 2015-2020 :

Libraries are fundamental to successful universities. Fundamentally redefining libraries in the digital age is critical for the future success of universities. The Library of Trinity College Dublin is renowned throughout the world for its unique buildings and for the strength and distinctiveness of its collections. Trinity College has always combined innovation and tradition. So it is with the Library, and the need for evolution and innovation has never been more pressing than now. Trinity College Dublin is taking explicit steps to define the nature of a major research library in the 21st century. Trinity is asking the essential question "What sort of University will we be, and with what sort of Library?"

This Strategy takes the Library in a new direction by setting about addressing these questions. It is bold and ambitious, as befits Trinity's bold ambitions. Given the universal reach of the Library — whether physical or virtual — and its impact on undergraduates, researchers, academics, and visitors alike, it is one of the most important documents in defining Trinity's future.

In the Introduction, Librarian & College Archivist Helen Shenton wrote;

'given the nature of the challenges and opportunities, it will take longer than five years to achieve; this is essentially a 15-year strategy' ...and ...'given that this is a longer-term strategy, the sequencing and pacing of specific projects will be determined by a number of internal and external factors.'

And so it has proven — although a full blown, global pandemic for two years was not one of the anticipated external factors.

The Library produces an Annual Report² each year outlining progress with the Pillars of the Strategy and is presented at Council, the academic body of Trinity College Dublin. There are five Pillars, namely Integrated Space, Integrated Digital, Teaching, Learning & Research, Prioritised Funding, and Policies. Underpinning the Pillars are Communications, Operations, and Training & Development.

In March 2022 at the end of discussing the 2020/21 Annual Report³, the Council of Trinity College Dublin recognised that it;

*'would take 15 years to deliver on the Library Strategy 2015-20'.*⁴

We are halfway through the 15 years.

Each year the Library reassesses the external landscape to recalibrate its overall direction. Every year there has been a different, new, substantial risk or existential threat, ranging from Brexit, the radically changing publisher model, the undermining of truth and democracy, the COVID pandemic to the global climate crisis, war in Europe, energy

crisis, spiraling construction inflation and the acceleration of generative AI, necessitating degrees of course correction (see Figure 1). It is anticipated that unforeseen and unpredictable political and socio-economic events will continue and that while the overall direction of the Library progresses, each strategic iteration is a snapshot in time.

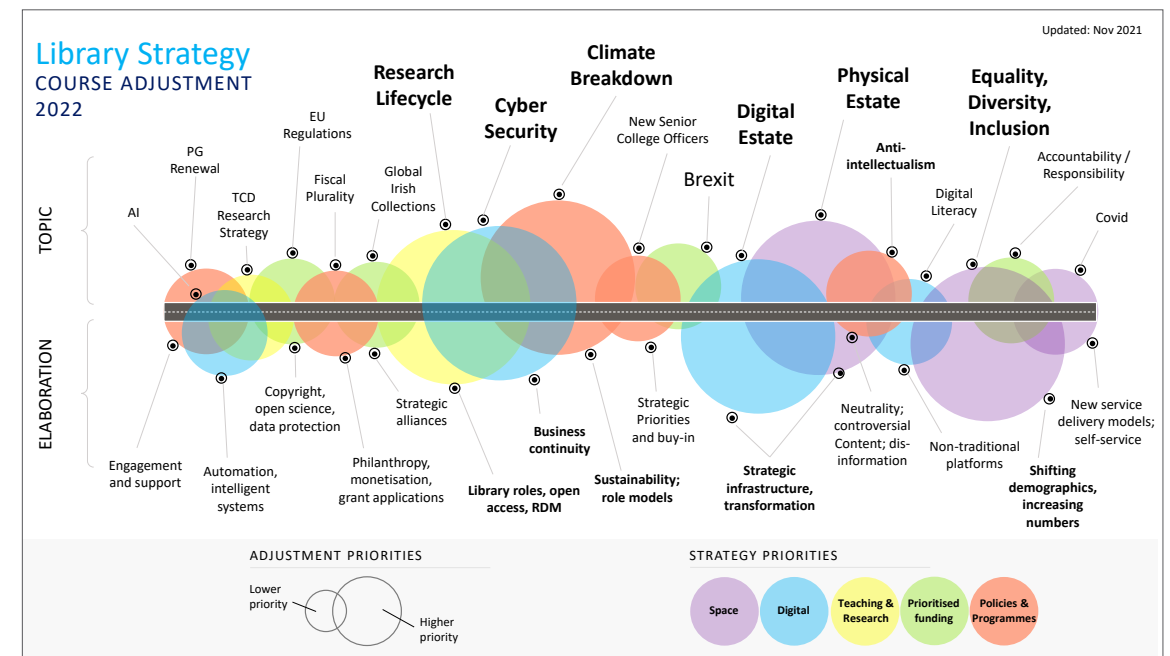


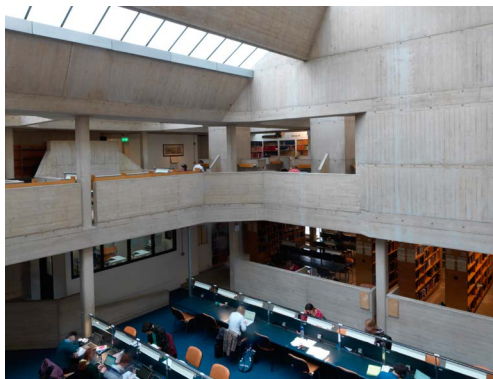
Fig. 1 Library Strategy Course Adjustment Diagram

Progress to date



The Library has made remarkable progress on the two very ambitious programmes, namely the *Old Library Redevelopment Project*⁵ and the *Virtual Trinity Library*⁶, **Pillars One** and **Two** of the Library Strategy respectively. The Old Library Redevelopment Project is a once in a century undertaking to conserve and reconfigure a national protected structure and preserve cultural heritage collections of national and international importance. It encompasses a new inspirational Research Collections Study Centre and the reimagining of the displays of the Library's Treasures. The Virtual Trinity Library is a major programme to make the extensive unique and distinct collections at Trinity freely accessible online to everyone around the world and entails major developments in research, curation, conservation, technology, and digital infrastructure. These have been [extensively reported internally](#) and [externally](#).⁷

In parallel with the above, the Library embarked on a multi-faceted programme to improve contemporary spaces and services (**Pillar 1**). This included the design and implementation of 3D Mapping software to help navigate Library spaces and the installation of a Radio Frequency ID (RFID) system to improve the security of collections and expand the range of self-service options for readers.



There was also a major overhaul and simplification of borrowing entitlements and the roll-out of several new services such as 'Click & Collect', 'Scan on Demand' and 'LibChat' (a live online chat service) in response to the Covid crisis.

Highlights in Teaching, Learning & Research (**Pillar Three**) include investing in expertise to catalyse research, for example, of the Fagel, Davitt and Medieval Manuscripts collections which subsequently fed into the Virtual Trinity Library; e-resource collection development and supporting the national e-book SOS Campaign against prohibitive prices and time-limited licences; extensive development of the collaborative Irish e-Research Library (IReL) and introducing transformative open access publisher agreements; acting on the findings of the Library Pulse surveys and 'walking in the shoes' of users through user experience studies; a root and branch review of Library skills programmes, learning resources and implementation of best pedagogical best practice; and partnering with the Dean of Research on the major developments in Open Scholarship. The Ussher Associate Professorships in partnership with the Library are making noticeable advances, for example, creating MPhils predicated on the Library's collection, as is the joint research agenda with the Trinity Long Room Hub.

Considerable progress has been made with external funding (**Pillar Four**), most notably, €25 million from the Irish government through the Department of Heritage for the Old Library Redevelopment Project and the Library becoming one of the flagships in the first ever university-wide capital campaign *Inspiring Generations*⁸ with subsequent donations and support from individuals, Foundations and international government agencies. Major awards from international Foundations have enabled the Virtual Trinity Library to progress to create 140,000 images through the employment of over 20 conservators, archivists, cataloguers, and digital photographers. This philanthropic funding has enabled the major programmes to advance substantively.

Most of the policies and strategies (**Pillar Five**) have been completed and have fed directly into the major programmes. For example, the 'Visibility and Accessibility' Programme and the 'Digital Content Creation Policy' informed the prioritisation and framing of the Virtual Trinity Library; the findings of the 'Stewardship Strategy' evidenced the urgent need to improve the environmental conditions of the most valuable and vulnerable collections held in the Old Library.

2022/23 onwards

The beginning of the academic year 2022/23 is halfway through the 15-year Strategy. Much has been done, much is underway, much remains to be done.

Pillar 1

In **Pillar One**, the substantive outstanding major capital components (over and above the Old Library Redevelopment Project) are embedded in the [University Strategic Plan 2020–2025](#)⁹, especially the Collections Resource Centre:

7.5 Develop plans for the new collaborative off-site Collections Resource Centre, thereby improving the environment for our collections and enabling the re-imagining/re-configuration of our contemporary library spaces. [ES; LS]

This is a substantial challenge that needs to move to feasibility stage planning, within the context of the Master planning for the Trinity Estate.

Strategic investment for reimagining existing Library spaces, including new learning spaces in the contemporary reading rooms, remains an outstanding development identified as a risk to the Library being appropriate for our users' new ways of learning and researching. The Covid pandemic powerfully demonstrated that the Library spaces are not just safe sanctuaries with environments conducive to study and concentration but are critically important non-clinical support for the academic community.

As to the Old Library Redevelopment Project, approximately 700,000 items will be decanted over the next year from the Old Library to enable construction work to start at the end of 2023. An alternative reading room for Research Collections is being created in the basement of the Ussher Library to enable seamless access to all the 700,000 items for all users during the lifetime of the construction project. All Research Collection staff will move to the new temporary space. The Printing House (another protected structure and third oldest building on campus) is being conserved to house the UNESCO Memory of the World 'Book of Kells', with which the Old Library programme has aligned, together with the creation of a 'Visit Trinity' Interim immersive pavilion exhibition. Space planning for all the libraries will be an essential component of this. There will be a series of events throughout the count-down to closure of the Old Library, such as the unveiling of the new sculptures celebrating the achievement of women scholars planned for St Brigit's Day, 2023.



Pillar 2

In **Pillar two**, the security and sustainability of digital systems and infrastructures are major components in the digital arena. Cyber security is being addressed as part of the wider Emergency Preparedness of the Library. The fundamentals of digital preservation, or more systemically, digital sustainability (including activities to address the climate crisis) remain a risk and major challenge. These urgent, long-term issues are being highlighted as the Virtual Trinity Library evolves, and through the potential acquisition of, increasingly, 'born-digital' objects, especially archives.

The 10th anniversary of the UK legislation enabling UK electronic legal deposit occurs in April 2023 and will be the focus for a strategic review of the remarkable achievement of six libraries in four countries creating a seventh transnational digital library on a massive scale. There are currently 10 million journal articles, 800,000 monographs, 3.3 TB (terabytes) of maps and geo-spatial data and 1,000 TB of archived websites, for on-site use by both the Trinity community and the island of Ireland.



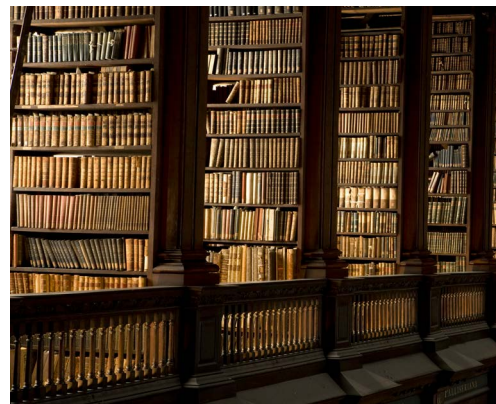
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The Library Services Platform (LSP) is the central nervous system of the Library. It is the time for a fundamental review of the international landscape of systems integration and interoperability, radically rethinking the best options for the Library's collections and services, including potential collaborative systems with other libraries on a sectoral, national, and even international basis.

The evolving layers of the University's Digital Initiatives will be central to advancing Library issues, from generative AI to cybersecurity.

Pillar 3

In **Pillar Three**, the Library's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion principles and values will see a renewed focus on evidence-based research that will provide an improved user experience for the diversity of our readers. Library spaces and services will be further enhanced to ensure students have increased choice in terms of how and where they learn and research. In the immediate future, the commitment to ensure access to Research Collections during the Old Library Redevelopment Project will be a major focus, as an Interim Research Collections Study Centre is established, alongside a retrieval system to provide seamless access. The Teaching and Research Support team will further embrace innovations in pedagogic best practice and ensure information skills are gained at point of need in the curriculum, and as part of the Postgraduate Renewals Programme will co-deliver the Horizon 1 implementation Plan, 'Student Experience'.



Building on the work of the University's *ad-hoc* Taskforce on Open Scholarship (2018-2020), co-chaired by the Librarian and the Dean of Research, the Library will continue to work closely with partners across the University to increasingly embed and promote 'open' principles, practices, and structures. The recent appointment of a Head of Content Management & Open Scholarship, together with the restructuring of the Office of the Dean of Research, signals the emerging transformation. The Library will deepen its engagement with national and international initiatives, both funded and unfunded, such as the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) and the National Action Plan for Open Research 2022-2030, published by the National Open Research Forum (NORF). In doing so, it will advance Open Scholarship on a broad front, from fostering alternative routes for knowledge dissemination, including open educational resources (OERs), to skills development and community building. We will especially work in concert with LERU (League of European Research Universities) INFO Group, LERU Open Science Ambassador network and the [LERU Roadmap to Open Science](#)¹⁰.

Pillar 4

Given the current and foreseeable economic pressures, diversified external funding of Pillar Four will continue to be urgent and important. The Library's expertise in philanthropic skills, award identification and securing grants and awards, will be further expanded. Communications, public affairs, outreach, advocacy, dissemination, and events are all part of the profile raising critical for successful fund raising from diverse funding sources.

Pillar 5

In Pillar Five, the major outstanding piece of work is the fundamentally important Content and Collection Development Strategy. Emerging areas of importance include 'Contested History and Legacies' and contemporary, rapid-response collecting of 'the now'. Groundwork is being done in collecting resources from traditionally underrepresented areas, such as historical archives recording women's experiences, and the archives of writers with complex disabilities. Other groundwork work is being done in terms of a new UK Legal Deposit Collecting Framework and the complex shift to digital and open content.

The forthcoming 10th anniversary of the 2013 Regulation for UK electronic legal deposit is a focus for recalibrating the e-versus print life cycles, which potentially has huge implications for the future shape of our content. Furthermore, international developments in collaborative collections and the potential for closer all-Ireland collaboration under the CONUL (Consortium of National & University Libraries) are potentially significant shifts.

New cross-cutting developments

A Sustainability Strategy has emerged as an urgent priority since the original Library Strategy was published. In 2022, the Library is accepting Mary Robinson's challenge issued at the 87th World Library and Information Congress to '*increase tenfold*' and '*move faster*'¹¹ in playing its part in addressing the climate crisis and in becoming a 'Green Library'. We've done a lot already such as implementing low energy lighting throughout the libraries; access to water fountains to reduce single-use plastics, and reviews of our waste disposal processes. We participate in College initiatives including *Green Labs*, and work with Procurement on ensuring suppliers have sustainability credentials; and through staff training and participation have made strides to improve our carbon footprint. However, there is much more that can be done, and we will strategically, pragmatically, severally, and individually commit to becoming a *Living Library Lab*¹² with an ethos of all learning together.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) is a critical cross-cutting strategic imperative that has emerged as even more vitally important for the University and the Library since the previous strategic cycle. We have made strides in specific Library areas such as redesigned library skills programmes that embody inclusive practices for teaching and learning; research published with students with intellectual disabilities about their library experience; improved

supports for international students; and a successful collaboration with The Disability Service and the TCD Sense Project to improve the sensory environment. The Library is part of the forthcoming Trinity Legacies Review, which will also be an important forum for addressing other significant aspects of these issues. But there remains much more to do systemically across all areas of the Library.

Therefore, we will continue to implement the five pillars of the Library Strategy with the current cross-cutting imperatives of **Communication, Operations, and Training & Development**; the latter two especially from the perspective of addressing the long tail challenges, and building on the opportunities, of the Covid pandemic in areas such as working patterns, succession-planning, and professional and personal development.

We will also view the developments in the Library through the cross-cutting lens of **Sustainability, Biodiversity & Climate Action**. This will encompass everything from the sustainability components of the Old Library Redevelopment Project to the relative long-term sustainable life cycle of e- and print collections, to the procurement and supply chain of Library services, to people's individual actions.

We will view the developments in the Library through the cross-cutting lens of **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**. This means, for example, as we develop policies, procedures, and practices, we will use a universal design approach that tests whether the needs of all our readers are served; when making decisions, we will ensure fair and transparent procedures; and when producing communications, target a wide range of audiences and show that Trinity welcomes diversity. A specific Library aspect will be ensuring under-represented groups are embraced in the Content and Collection Development work and, where possible, reading lists are representative of the university's diverse community.

A particular role that the Library has, and can increasingly, play within geopolitics is in the soft power of **cultural diplomacy** and **knowledge diplomacy**. Within Ireland, with the UK, with the EU and beyond, the Library can play a strong role, whether explicit or subtle, through **national** and **international collaboration**.

Process

This document is by way of an interim Strategy 'Lite', confirming the continuity of the overall direction of travel outlined in the Library Strategy 2015-2020' with updates in the light of internal and external factors.

It will evolve as the University's thinking evolves, for example, as the Provost fulfils her Manifesto vision and as the Vice-Provost starts her consultative questioning of 'What sort of University does Trinity want to be'.

The intention is to start fundamentally reassessing the Library Strategy in the light of the next University Strategy, due for completion in 2025/26.



Helen Shenton
LIBRARIAN & COLLEGE ARCHIVIST
11TH NOVEMBER 2022



References

- 1** Library Strategy 2015-2020 <https://www.tcd.ie/library/assets/pdf/strategy/library-strategy-2015-2020.pdf>
- 2** Six Annual Reports of Library Strategy at <https://www.tcd.ie/library/about/annual-reports.php>
- 3** Library Annual Report 2020/2021 https://www.tcd.ie/library/assets/pdf/annual-reports/Annual_Report_2020-21.pdf
- 4** *'In response to an observation that the planning cycle is normally a five year one rather than a 15-year strategy, the Librarian and College Archivist explained that the Strategy coincided with her appointment, and a longer-term view of the direction that the Library needed to go in was required. **There was a consensus that it would take 15 years to deliver on the Library Strategy 2015-20.***

Council Minutes of 9 March 2022. Decision: CL/21-22/125.1: Council noted the Library Annual Report 2020/21.8.2022 https://www.tcd.ie/committeepapers/council/download/UniversityCouncil_minutes_20220309.pdf
- 5** Old Library Redevelopment Project <https://www.tcd.ie/old-library-campaign/>
- 6** Virtual Trinity Library <https://www.tcd.ie/virtual-trinity-library/>
- 7** *'Historic Unveiling of New Book of Kells Treasury and Display'* https://www.tcd.ie/news_events/articles/trinity-unveils-new-book-of-kells-treasury-and-display-case/

The Guardian, *'Trinity College Dublin begins €90m project to relocate vulnerable books'* <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/07/trinity-college-dublin-begins-90m-project-to-relocate-vulnerable-books>

New York Times *'An Irish National Treasure Gets Set for a Long-Needed Restoration'* <https://nyti.ms/38OFsYZ>
- 8** Inspiring Generations Campaign <https://www.tcd.ie/alumni/inspiring-generations/about/>

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<https://www.leru.org/publications/open-science-and-its-role-in-universities-a-roadmap-for-cultural-change>

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Mary Robinson keynote address at the Opening Ceremony of 87th World Library and Information Congress, Dublin, 26th July 2022
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YS6yg48pclQ>
(at 52minutes 50 seconds.)

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TCD Sustainability Policy
<https://www.tcd.ie/about/policies/assets/pdf/sustainability-policy-15112017.pdf>

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