



Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru  
The National Library of Wales  
Aberystwyth

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# The Digital Face of the Library

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NLW Digital Media  
Strategy

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2012 - 2015

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Noddir gan  
**Lywodraeth Cymru**  
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# The Digital Face of the Library: NLW Digital Media Strategy 2012-15

## 1. Summary

The aim of this strategy is to build on the progress made in previous strategies, to enable the Library to develop its use of platforms, content and technologies to offer a better overall experience for its users.

This strategy has been written in line with the Library's Corporate Strategy '*The Agile Library: The Library's strategy 2011-12 – 2013-14*' (<http://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=corporateplan>) and other key Library and non-Library strategies (see '*Strategic Alignment*' below) and these approaches complement and support each other, reflecting the core values of the Library:

*'The Library has a duty not merely to 'hold its doors open', but to encourage awareness and use of its collections and services, by all the means at its disposal.'*<sup>1</sup>

This will be a challenging strategy, especially in these tough economic times, but the Library is confident that it can achieve the goals set within the timeframe, and through these build a fuller, more cohesive digital portfolio which reflects the inclusive and open nature of the Library.

## 2. Introduction

The previous Library Web Strategy '*Share, Collaborate, Innovate: a strategy for the web 2009-2011*' concentrated on developing content on the main Library website and enabling the Library to embrace social media in all aspects of its work.

Over the past three years the Library has wholeheartedly adopted the strategy, and has accomplished the main goals it set for itself. For example, the Library's social media presence has been developed, and is now seen as an integral way of reaching users, a general Library blog has been created as a way of sharing more information and more and more time is invested in developing staff skills and knowledge. As a result, the Library's web portfolio is more encompassing than before, and it has reached new users and communities, and immersed itself in their way of communicating and sharing. In many ways this has meant a big change not only in the way the Library communicates with others, but also in the way it sees itself. It is now a much more open and collaborative institution, and seeks to open its resources and share them with the world wherever possible, and the previous strategy played its part in realising this.

This new Digital Media Strategy seeks to go further, and build upon the foundations laid by the previous strategy. We live in an ever changing digital world, where new technologies and developments forever challenge the cultural heritage sector. We hope that this strategy, with its four main themes of Users, Platforms, Content and

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<sup>1</sup> '*The Agile Library: The Library's strategy 2011-12 – 2013 – 14*' p3 .  
<http://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=corporateplan> (Accessed on 24.1.12)

Technology will guide us through this exciting time and allow us to make best use of the resources we have, in order to reach new audiences through new platforms, and to share our collections and knowledge in new and innovative ways.

Unlike before, this strategy will be a Digital Media Strategy, allowing us not only to develop our use of different digital spaces both online and in physical circumstances, but to better align these with our usual 'web' developments, hopefully giving our users a better experience as they traverse our varied portfolio.

### **3. Themes**

The more specific developments of the strategy for the coming three years can be divided into four broad themes; Users, Platforms, Content and Technology.

Discussed below are the main drivers and developments for the four categories, and why these are key to the Library's online portfolio as a whole.

#### **3.1. Users**

Its users are at the heart of the Library's digital provisions, whether they are returning users who regularly visit its sites, or one off users who happen to come across a tweet by the Library. All users are equally important, and the Library strives to develop services that best meet their needs.

Through the life of the last strategy the Library endeavoured to obtain its users opinion on its provisions, and tried to better these in line with responses. However the Library is committed to doing more. It will continue to use quantitative methods to measure the success of services, but it will do more to obtain qualitative information which is often much more useful, though much harder to obtain.

Its users are central to all Library strategies, and this Digital Media Strategy is no different. The Library's digital portfolio is its biggest shop window to the world, and the easiest way for many users to interact with the Library, and therefore users are placed centrally in all key objectives listed below.

#### **3.2. Platforms**

The web is used daily through many different platforms, from desktop web browsers, to the mobile web and apps, from internet enabled television to the latest computer games.

It is therefore important, that the strategy is developed with this in mind, in order to enable the Library to develop its digital provision in line with what is increasingly seen as a natural form of interaction by end users. It is these users' needs that should drive the changes in platforms that the Library uses. While the last strategy concentrated on developing the Library's provision on its main website and moving into the Web 2.0 world, this new strategy will move further towards realising the potential of the other digital platforms in order to reach new groups of users.

It's important to keep in mind that we can make great use of these within the building itself, not only remotely e.g. developing the use of digital signage and digital elements within exhibitions.

### **3.3. Content**

Content is of course central to the whole of the Library's digital presence, be that as part of the main Library websites, on social media sites or physical screens in exhibitions. This strategy therefore holds the development of content at its heart.

For the purpose of this strategy 'content' encompasses the main Library websites, all Library microsites, content on social media websites and any content developed for physical screens. It does not include resource discovery platforms, the online shop or the People's Collection Wales as these provisions are governed by other strategies.

Digitisation plays an important role in the creation of the Library's digital content, and the main Library website is central to how these digitised collections are shared with users.

This theme also includes all aspects of web statistical analysis. We have access to a wide array of statistical information, and it's vital that we make the most of this information in order to develop and better our provision in line with our present and future users' needs.

### **3.4. Technology**

In a field that is developing and changing so quickly it's imperative that we keep an eye on the latest technologies, and take advantage of these wherever appropriate. The most important technological aspect of this strategy will be assessing our current main content management system, Typo3<sup>2</sup>. The Library has been using Typo3 since 2007 to manage the creation of pages on a number of its main websites, and it's time to assess whether the system continues to fulfil ours and the users' needs.

As all digital media develop using new technologies it's vital that time and resources continue to be available for staff to undertake research into things such as apps, in order to ensure that the Library can take full advantage when appropriate.

The Library is committed to releasing data where possible in order for users to re-use this content, where rights allow, to create their own digital projects. The technology and platforms used to share this data are of course extremely important, and the Library will look at this as more and more of its collections are digitised. This

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<sup>2</sup> Typo3 is an open source content management system software that allows a number of different contributors to contribute to the creation of websites without any prior technical knowledge.

work goes hand in hand with the work outlined in the Library's forthcoming Digitisation Strategy.

Another important aspect of moving to use new technologies is staff training. A vast amount of Library staff now contribute to its online portfolio in some way, and so it's very important that the Library monitor staff training needs and provide appropriate and timely training as needed. Developing staff confidence to contribute online is important, and the best way of doing this is to provide the best training possible and help and support as needed.

## **4. Key Strategic Objectives**

### **4.1. Content**

Content is obviously central to the Library's online presence, and so it is only right that it play a pivotal role in the Library's new Digital Media Strategy. The Library creates a wealth of different kinds of digital content already, from traditional content for its websites to catalogue records and digital images to share on third party sites.

This Digital Media Strategy seeks to build on the content already available, and develop new and better ways of offering access to this content, and bring better cohesion and ease of movement between the different sites and platforms. At present the Library's portfolio is somewhat disjointed with separate developments built in isolation. One of the central aims of this strategy is to build a better relationship between these developments in order to offer a significantly enhanced user experience.

#### *Key deliverables*

- Re-write key areas of the main Library website in order to offer a better structure to the site and to enable central messages such as fundraising and support to be woven through the site
- Bring separate websites and social media outlets together through better content linking and embed this as normal practise for future developments. Look also at ensuring that the data within microsites is federated so that the information can be accessed from other websites
- Experiment with crowdsourcing by earmarking possible projects and creating training material. This would be seen as a way of reaching expertise in specific areas, rather than a means of saving money
- Develop central guidelines detailing high level requirements for project/microsites in order to ensure cohesion across the Library's online presence. Also establish a central group which decides what content should have a microsite, and what should be incorporated into current online provisions
- Review the Library's content management system (Typo3) to assess its continued suitability for the Library's needs

- Overall editorial control for the main Library website will be given to the e-Editor, allowing this position to give the final word on what content should or shouldn't be added
- All online provisions will comply with the W3C WCAG 2.0 guidelines in order to meet the UK Disability Discrimination Act

## **4.2. Social Media and Online Marketing**

Following the completion of the last web strategy the Library now has a strong social media presence. It is the aim of this strategy to build on that presence and enhance how the Library uses its social media presence and how it engages with the community. There is a vast potential to do new and innovative things with social media, and the Library is now in a position to take up this challenge. Currently the social media channels are used solely as ways of sharing information, but it is hoped that over the next three years they will develop more into tools to engage with new audiences and ways of encouraging users to interact with our exhibitions and events.

The Library has also started to do more in terms of online marketing over the life of the last strategy, but it is felt that there is much more that needs to be done. Due to the geographical isolation of the Library online marketing allows the Library to reach users that it could never hope to connect with using traditional marketing tools. It is imperative that the Library embraces this form of marketing, not only to showcase its online offerings, but to sell the brand of the Library to new users who may not have heard of it before.

### *Key deliverables*

- The Library will develop the use of its e-Newsletters and other online marketing tools such as hash tags and QR codes
- Developing the use of social networking sites in exhibitions and events will be a priority for the Library, allowing remote users to share in the experience
- Develop blogging within the Library and continue to assess the blogging provision in order to ensure it fulfils the current need of the Library. In order to reach new audiences, use new and innovative online marketing tools to raise the profile of the blogging provision

## **4.3. Design and Brand Cohesion**

Continuity of brand and design elements is particularly important to the Library because of the vast breadth of different online provisions we offer. The portfolio ranges from large websites and resource discovery services to social media presences to digital signage and much more. While the Library acknowledges that an element of flexibility is needed between the designs of these different provisions, it is imperative that the core brand is clearly identifiable across every platform.

As part of this strategy and others, the Library will seek to clearly define its brand, and work across our current provisions as part of a general online redesign exercise and bring all of these in line with the general Library brand and design elements. It is

hoped that this will ensure that users who visit any of our portfolio will be able to clearly ascertain its ownership, and identify the Library's core brand values.

#### *Key deliverables*

- Redesign of current NLW web interfaces, and following this all future microsites will use a 'sub-design' of the main NLW web design
- Retrospective conversion of current provisions to reflect new NLW design
- NLW brand to be key across all the Library's online provision

#### **4.4. Mobile and Apps**

The Library recognises that there has been a significant change during the life of the previous strategy in terms of how users access the web. Mobile access to the web is increasing rapidly and it is the Library's responsibility to respond to this. The Library's web portfolio is currently viewable on mobile handsets and tablets etc., but specific mobile versions haven't yet been created for most sites. There is of course a significant overhead in creating specific mobile versions of sites, especially if different ones are created for smaller mobile handsets and tablets, nevertheless the Library must investigate what its users require.

Currently, the Library doesn't offer any apps of its own. It does contribute to external apps, e.g. People's Collection Wales, but has not developed any specific apps. This is certainly a field the Library is interested in, as more and more users interact with cultural heritage institutions via apps.

#### *Key deliverables*

- Based on thorough research the Library will look at the possibility of creating a specific mobile version of its main website in the first instance. This complements the commitment to mobile described in point 6.1.2.3 of the Library's '*Resource Description and Discovery Strategy*'
- A group will be set up to look at the possibility of creating apps, their nature, technologies and audience
- The Library will look at external apps that could be utilised to create new and innovative ways of accessing the Library's content e.g. Layar

#### **4.5. Amplifying Events**

Physical events play an important role in the Library's provision. From exhibitions and events within the building, to attendance at festivals and outreach programmes, the Library holds a full programme of various events aimed at bringing our collections to a wide variety of audiences.

Until now these events have been, in the main, physical events, with only accompanying promotional information online. This Digital Media Strategy however aims to amplify these events by creating online dimensions, through various platforms, to complement the physical events. The Library's geographical location

makes attendance at events within the building difficult for many who would wish to visit, and this is why amplifying events is becoming so important.

#### *Key deliverables*

- Look at developing online exhibitions to complement selected physical exhibitions within the building
- Make better use of digital signage both within the building and at external events. These will be run from the Library's central content management system, which will allow them to be reused online and ensure continuity of brand
- Make use of technologies such as QR codes, apps and hash tags to add new dimensions to physical events
- Ensure presentations and lectures at the DRWM are shared online where rights allow

### **4.6. Development Based on Statistical Analysis and User Feedback**

The Library collects a host of different kinds of statistical information, both quantitative data from statistical packages and qualitative information from user feedback. This information is vitally important to the Library in order to develop new provisions, but also to monitor the success of current services, and ensure that these continue to fulfil users' needs.

The Library is also keen to better tie these online statistics with other general statistics that the Library collects. It is important to remember that physical factors affect how online services are used, and so it's imperative that both sets of data are analysed in tandem, rather than as separate entities.

#### *Key deliverables*

- Wherever possible Google Analytics will be added to new websites as a matter of course
- Continue to monitor online statistics (both quantitative and qualitative) to develop new services and enhance current provisions
- Keep abreast of new statistical packages to ensure that the most appropriate packages are used
- Monitor online statistics in conjunction with other general statistics that the Library collects in order to build a full picture of user needs and behaviours
- Monitor and change the web Service Performance Indicators in line with general trend of statistical reporting in the cultural heritage sector

### **4.7. Training and Sharing with the Community**

The Library has always invested in its staff, and creating an agile workforce is central to its ethos. Staff who contribute to its online presence in anyway are no exception. Building on the important part training played in the previous strategy, this strategy



aims to do more to train and equip staff to deal with the changing nature of our online provision, enabling them to face new challenges with confidence.

As a national, bilingual institution that has much experience in developing online content, the Library strives to give back to the community through sharing experiences and knowledge. This is a very important part of the strategy, and one that should develop over the life of the strategy. The Library is especially experienced in dealing with bilingual content online, being a wholly bilingual institution.

#### *Key deliverables*

- The Library will continue to invest in staff training, ensuring that it is relevant and timely in order to create an agile and confident workforce
- Staff will be supported and encouraged as they learn to use new services, and the Web Team will always remain open and approachable to all staff who need assistance and support during their online journey
- The Library will do more to share knowledge and expertise with the community, by sharing access to guidelines and policies where possible and engaging in more conferences, seminars and writing academic papers

## **5. Skills and Resources**

### **5.1. Key Skills**

The delivery of this strategy not only relies on key web staff within the Digital Media Unit of the ICT Section, but also on a wide array of staff across the Library. The time and expertise of these staff will be needed in order to deliver this strategy. This work needs to be timetabled into these sections' operational plans in order to ensure adequate resources are available.

### **5.2 Developing Skills and Knowledge**

The new strategy calls for developing staff skills in different areas, for example learning how to best utilise social media to amplify Library events and exhibitions and how to get the most from online advertising.

This will be very important in ensuring the success of the strategy. The previous strategy gave grounding for staff, but this strategy calls for the development and honing of these skills in order to deliver.

### **5.3 External Services**

A large proportion of this strategy relies on taking advantage of external services e.g. social media websites. The Library is therefore dependant on the skills and the resources of these services in order to provide our content. While there is an

element of risk in this, it does mean that the Library saves a considerable amount of money in that we do not have to develop in house services, and allocate resources to maintain these.

## **6. Risks**

### **6.1 Not Adopting the Strategy**

The main risk in the Library not adopting this digital media strategy is that this of course would leave this aspect of the Library's work without a steer for the coming three years, and mean that the Library's digital provision stagnates.

The digital world is a fast moving place, and it's imperative that the Library keep pace with this, and as importantly with other cultural heritage organisations. As other organisations create new and exciting services, so users expect other large institutions to do the same. This strategy will allow the Library to do this, and be seen as a current and forward thinking institution.

### **6.2 Lack of Resources**

In these current economic times delivering new strategies is always a challenge, but as noted in the strategy, the Library is confident that it can achieve the goals set out. Following the key resources identified in the section above (Skills and Resources), the Library is confident that it currently has the provision to complete the strategy.

Utilising third party services also helps the Library to achieve its goals in that they need little or no technical support in house, thus freeing resources within the Library for other things.

### **6.3 Third Party Services**

While freely available third party sites lower the risks associated with the strategy in one way i.e. less resources needed, they also increase the risk in other ways. While utilising these third party sites and services e.g. Twitter and Facebook, the Library is in some cases at the mercy of their provision. Should these services come to an end, or change their provision or start to charge, the Library could find itself in a position where it could lose the content added or the functionality offered.

The Library feels this is a risk worth taking as long as the benefits of the services are great enough. Often the content offered through one third party site is also offered through another, and so the content is still available online. The Library's core content is always offered through our main Library websites, and so it is only additional information or access that is offered through third party sites.

## **6.4 The Changing Digital World**

As noted above, the digital world is forever changing with new and innovative services offered daily. The Library has outlined how it will contribute to this world for the coming three years, but there is a risk that things may have changed considerably by the third year, and that the strategy is no longer as appropriate as it is now.

In order to combat this, the strategy has focused on high level themes that are likely to be relevant to the changing digital world for some years to come. By doing this, it allows the Library to adapt the specifics of the strategy should it need to in order to match any changes.

## **7. Strategic Alignment**

The Digital Media Strategy has been produced in line with other Library and non-Library strategies, which are listed below:

### **7.1 Library Strategies<sup>3</sup>**

- Twenty – twenty: A long view of the National Library of Wales (2010)

This document outlines the current vision of where the Library will be by the year 2020. The Digital Media strategy will play an integral part in helping the Library to adapt and meet the challenges of the changing world outlined in the vision.

- The Agile Library: The Library's strategy 2011-12 – 2013–14

The Agile Library is the Library's corporate strategy and outlines the Library's broad intentions for developments until 2014, and therefore most of the life of the Digital Media Strategy. This strategy places digital media at the heart of many of its Main Developments e.g. Flexibility of Information and Content and Flexibility in our Relationship with our Users.

- Resource Description and Discovery Strategy 2010/11 – 12/13

The aim of this strategy is to improve the way users discover and gain access to the Library's resources, and it covers all the Library's catalogues and access to external resources. The Digital Media Strategy melds with this one in order to give a better experience for users moving from the Library's other online provisions to the catalogues etc.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=policiesstrategies> (Accessed 24.1.12)

- Data Protection Policy

The Digital Media Strategy will adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Data Protection Policy regarding protecting users' personal information, ensuring that the Library fulfils its moral and legal obligations.

- Welsh Language Scheme 2010-2014

Adhering to the Library's Welsh Language Scheme, the Library's online provision will be fully bilingual, with each website provided in both languages, and all social media content available in Welsh and English.

- Information and Communication Technology Strategy 2011-14

As is clearly stated in the Digital Media Strategy technology plays a key role in the development of the Library's online portfolio. These developments will be undertaken in line with the guidelines set out in the Library's Information and Communication Technology Strategy.

- Welcoming Change: Public Services Department Strategy 2011-14

Online provisions permeate through the work of the whole Public Services Department, and this can be seen clearly in their strategy. The Digital Media Strategy therefore complements this, allowing the Department to achieve its goals.

## **7.2 Forthcoming Library Strategies**

- Digitisation Strategy 2011/12 – 14/15

The Library's Digitisation and Digital Media strategies work hand in hand to ensure the best access to its digital content, be that on Library websites or on external third party sites e.g. Flickr Commons.

- Digital Preservation Strategy 2011-2014

The Digital Preservation Strategy is charged with ensuring the long-term preservation of all the Library's digital content. This strategy will support this work through the choice of platforms used and steer given, in order to ensure that copies of key Library digital content is safeguarded to the future.

- Income Generation Strategy

The Library's Income Generation Strategy outlines how the Library intends to generate income for the forthcoming years. This Digital Media Strategy will complement those aims by providing a robust and purposeful online presence for the Library that will allow it to effectively roll out its e-commerce goals.

### 7.3 Other Key Strategies

- Libraries Inspire: The Strategic Development Framework for Welsh Libraries 2012-16<sup>4</sup>

The Library's Digital Media Strategy will help the Library to fulfil its role in implementing the Welsh Government's vision for Libraries in Wales, by enabling users from across Wales to access National Library services wherever they live in Wales.

- Delivering a Digital Wales: The Welsh Assembly Government's Outline Framework for Action<sup>5</sup>

The Welsh Government's Framework for a Digital Wales makes clear its goal that all the people of Wales should have access to digital technologies and services. The Library has already embraced the digital, and this Digital Media Strategy is one way that the Library will contribute to this vision, by offering more services and digital content online, enabling more of the Welsh people among others to enjoy its provision.

- Programme for Government, Welsh Government<sup>6</sup>

A key part of the Welsh Government's programme is 'The Culture and Heritage of Wales'. The Library is a key partner in delivering this aim and the Library's online provision will play a role in opening the audience base of the Library to the whole of Wales, and also in strengthening the use of the Welsh language through its fully bilingual provision.

## 8. Measuring Our Success

The delivery of these Strategic Objectives will be measured by more than just the increased delivery of content and services through new digital outlets. In addition we

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<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/cultureandsport/museumsarchiveslibraries/cymal/libraries/librariesinspire/?lang=en> (Accessed 24.1.12)

<sup>5</sup><http://wales.gov.uk/topics/businessandconomy/digitalwales/publications/framework/?skip=1&lang=en> (Accessed 24.1.12)

<sup>6</sup><http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/programmeforgovernment/?skip=1&lang=en> (Accessed 24.1.12)

will continue to measure the success of the Digital Media Strategy by undertaking the analysis below, seeking opportunities to continually improve our approach in the light of changing user needs and technologies. This analysis will be undertaken routinely, and will be reported to the appropriate committees.

- Service Performance Indicators

The Library provides quarterly Service Performance Indicators (SPIs) to the Welsh Government, on key statistical data. During the life of the strategy these indicators will be significantly reviewed and amended, with new, more appropriate data sets to the changing digital world selected for future reporting.

- Quarterly Statistical Reports on Key Goals

Each quarter specific goals will be identified, with tailored reports written to assess the impact of each goal, allowing changes to be made based on statistical evidence. These reports will be sent to the Web Panel for discussion each quarter.

- Quarterly Zeitgeist Reports on Key Trends

Key statistical datasets will be identified (e.g. bounce rates, hits etc) and quarterly statistical reports will prepared based on these. These reports will be circulated to the Web Panel and User's Group quarterly.

- Social Media Active Interactions

In addition to monitoring the number of followers the Library has on social media sites, the number of interactions will also be monitored quarterly. This will include comments, tags and mentions. This report will be sent to the Web Panel and User's Group.

- Physical Visits

The e-Editor will work closely with the Public Services Department in order to measure how many physical visitors to the building have used the Library's online services before coming? As part of this work, the Library will look at new and better ways of collecting this information, allowing for a better picture of user behaviour. This report will be written twice-yearly and sent to the Web Panel.

- Feedback Responses

The main Library website has a mechanism for users to say whether a page was useful or not and to leave comments. Twice-yearly reports will be produced for the

Web Panel, including the level of satisfaction, but also where negative comments were received, what has been changed to better the provision as a result.

- Usability Studies

Where appropriate and resources allow, the Library will undertake usability studies, both before developing new large scale websites, and while researching in order to develop current provisions, especially the main Library website.

- User Questionnaires

User questionnaires will be used on the main Library website especially at periodic intervals in order to glean how well the website is performing. These will also be used specifically when developing any large scale changes to the website.

- Social Media Feedback

The Library's social media followers are continually growing, and the Library will seek to learn from this community's experience to help build a picture of how its web portfolio is performing, both in terms of social media and its more traditional website.