

Alkek Library, Texas State University

Collection and Digital Services Strategic Assessment and Preliminary Plan

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Collection and Digital Services (What is the Current Situation?)

This strategic assessment and plan surveys the current state of Texas State University Division of Collection and Digital Services and makes recommendations for future needs: development, administration, IT and human resources. It is written in light of Texas State University status as an emerging research university and comparatively with other designated Texas emerging research institutions and the library's long term ARL aspirations. This document identifies mandates, assesses internal/external factors influencing the present Collection and Digital Services Division and focuses on strategies for further discussion regarding possible future directions.

The focus of an assessment on the current state of the departments of Cataloging and Metadata, Acquisitions and Digital Services (CDS) cuts to concepts at the heart of strategic planning: pro-activity, the ability to assess external forces shaping the larger division's development and the recognition that the need for collaborative and progressive change surfaces challenging structural questions confronting the paradigm shift academic libraries are experiencing in the 21st century.

This document outlines parameters and challenges for bringing the Division of Collections and Digital Services to the next stage of academic library development while taking into account internal and external factors currently framing the present infrastructure. This assessment includes the departments of Cataloging and Acquisitions but predominately focuses on Digital Services with the recognition that many recommendations forwarded in a previous 2012 TXU consulting report focused on these areas still hold true.ⁱ

This document is written as an organic working paper and also finds impetus from the Texas State University and Alkek Library Strategic Plans (2012-2017)ⁱⁱ. Key within these strategic documents are the mission statements.

The identified **TXU mission** states:

*Texas State University is a public, student-centered, **Emerging Research University** dedicated to excellence in serving the educational needs of the diverse population of Texas and the world beyond.*

The Texas State University Library Mission states:

*The University Library advances the teaching and **research** mission of the University and supports students, faculty, and other researchers by providing user-centered services, comprehensive and diverse collections, individual and collaborative learning environments, and opportunities to learn, create, and discover.*

Relatively recent for Texas State is the emphasis on **emerging research institution** and goal as “**Emerging Research University**”. This is a new goal for the university. The shift for the library in the longer term is toward the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), an umbrella organization of designated academic research libraries.

The challenge for the Division of Collections and Digital Services is to operationalize the stated aforesaid missions. Currently, the Division of Collections and Digital Services has top-level purview over the library’s activities of Cataloging and Metadata, Acquisitions and Digital and Web Services and for coordinating these operations for the university’s main Alkek Library and Round Rock campuses. Many of the libraries IT operations are centralized through the department of Digital and Web Services, activities which will be outlined in more detail below.

Collections and Digital Services Renewed Vision Statement

A new vision statement for the newly formed Division of Collection and Digital Services in a 3-5 year timeline will be:

The Division of Collection and Digital Services will be the leading-edge emerging research university CDS library division in the Southwest. It will be reorganized towards innovative metadata, acquisitions and digital services strategies and a leading-edge high quality digital services program. The division will function with customer/patron service in the foreground serving students and faculty, Wittliff Special collections, University Archives, university departments, divisions and centers through high quality creative digitization programs and services. A robust digital services production service environment will enable and market the library and university globally.

The CDS division will provide relevant cutting edge collections and hybrid library/software programs to learners at the university and undergraduate and graduate levels. It will form strong partnerships with university IT and other faculty/student support services to leverage mutual strengths and build towards the university's research level aspirations. In pursuing this vision, the Collection and Development Services Division will:

- Create interactive leading edge multimedia digital libraries and archives for faculty and university departments and divisions including archives and the Wittliff Special collections with an emphasis on the Wittliff's strengths (image and media) and with attention to multimedia and research level contextualization currently possible for digital library production.
- Provide digital library and archives, metadata and technological infrastructure support for the university research faculty including departments, divisions and special centers enabling their online professional development and curricular needs.
- Provide access to innovative new hybrid collection possibilities engaging the learner and researcher by enabling them with robust content and new generation library/software tools which leverage library and technological strengths and empower faculty and students through course content and research directions.

Collection and Digital Services Mission Statement Rearticulated 2014-2019

The Division of Digital and Collection Services will provide high quality library digital content and infrastructure with emphasis on the continuing academic library paradigm shift towards technology and production of information, hybrid online content possibilities and new orientation of research university to enable a faculty and student research agenda. This mission augments the original library mission of providing user-centered literacy services, comprehensive and diverse collections, individual and collaborative learning environments, and opportunities to learn, create, and discover through enabling research. The focus particularly expands towards the university's research agenda and ARL library aspirations while continuing to provide relevant and student focused content and services. Collection and Digital Services will empower university faculty, students other university divisions and internal library units with both digital infrastructure services and content within the recognition of a diverse and technological global society.

Values

- Research Level Quality Content
- Quality Metadata and Digital Services Infrastructures
- Organizational Integrity
- Adaptive Innovation

Background and Environmental Scan (Present Conditions)

Essentially, the division of Collection and Digital Services (32 FTE) currently consists of an amalgam of two long-term traditional library departments, Cataloging and Metadata (12 FTE) and Acquisitions (16 FTE) and a smaller new unit, Digital and Web Services (6 FTE). The relatively recently formed, Digital and Web Services is an amalgam of staff previously working in Cataloging and Acquisitions, a Dept. head from a former Library systems department and a relatively new hire (Digital Media Specialist). This is the library's newest department and the smallest of the three CDS divisional departments (6 FTE).

Cataloging and Acquisitions are the divisions' oldest and largest departments, (Acquisitions, 16 staff; Cataloging, 12 staff). While Cataloging and Acquisitions have seen relative declines in workload in recent years because of the transition to electronic online resources and new copy cataloging possibilities, Digital and Web Services has seen a technological paradigm shift. This increase in possibilities for Digital and Web Services and decline in workload for Cataloging and Acquisitions is not directly reflected in the present library human resource organizational structure or production output. In this sense, Alkek library CDS presents a traditional org structure and orientation not overly reflective of the technological paradigm shift occurring.

In terms of activities, Digital and Web Services handles core library applications infrastructure (Library Systems, E-Resources Technology, The Library Website,) and nascent Digital Services unit (Digital Collections, Digital Media). The bulk of the department (4 FTE) handles traditional core library systems and Web (e-Resources) administrative technology responsibilities.

Unfortunately, the human resources, planning and policy infrastructure allocated to maintain a growing digital service orientation in line with larger directions has not progressively grown over the past 15 years. In a pragmatic comparison with Texas State's comparative emerging research institutions, the human resources and infrastructure to accompany wider Digital Services infrastructures is low (see Appendix A). To note, the present wider Collection and Digital Services human resources infrastructure is also strongly weighted towards a traditional book warehouse type content and access infrastructure both for physical and digital information. Compare, for instance UT Arlington's Library large IT HR allocation and orientation: Digital Creation Units (10) and Library Systems and Technology (11) or University of North Texas Libraries Digital Libraries Unit: 19 FTE: Digital Libraries (2), Digital Curation (1), Digital Newspapers (4), Digital Projects Lab (4), Software Development (2), User Interfaces (4). (See Appendix A for further link examples). In terms of production capacity in enabling faculty, students and departments with regards to digital library services, these avenues remain minimal. While digital libraries or more extensive outreach services with regards to digital preservation and archiving have begun, these infrastructures

are not developed.

In terms of Digital Services specific product output, this is currently limited to a single Institutional repository – D-Space. Currently, the application is utilized for thesis and dissertation ingest, more sparsely faculty research input and, on a sporadic level, a scattered history of University Archives and Special Collections digitization (Wittliff). Though largely a text-based institutional repository tool, D-Space currently fills a role as a one size fits all application for the institution. As an application for media or visual image-centered collections, this is a loose rather than thought out application of visual metaphor, graphic innovation, and style sheets. The presentation layer is largely missing and usability, interface design and contextualization remain questions on both departmental staffing and application levels.

In terms of **technology**, the IR is well-suited for text heavy articles and PDFs. In terms of newer **multimedia technologies** (images, video or a combination thereof) or academic research centered contextualization and design of digital libraries, the application is lacking. In part because of this, bridges currently with either Special Collections or University Archives are not well defined nor is there stronger active programs of outreach with external university departments needing digitization work. Externally, the library is not yet perceived as a possible university source or center of excellence for digitization expertise. Digital library creation, digital preservation and dark archive creation have not yet been widely enabled but has begun.

With the hire of a digital media specialist, essentially allowing foundational scanning/OCR of images text to occur, back end preservation/dark archiving capacity is beginning to appear. To note, previous projects have occurred over the past fifteen years but because of a lack of a dedicated allocation of attention most of these early projects have not been updated in terms of design or technologies (Robert Lee, Panther Hall, Ashes of Waco, Cabeza de Vaca etc.) It is now time that this infrastructure be examined and investigated strategically for undertaking the next level of focused, user-oriented information architecture, technology refresh and development.

Preliminary Steps

Keeping these preliminary considerations in mind, a series of initial Digital Services meetings with Specific External departments has been initiated (i.e. Special Collections Photography, University Archives). The purpose is brainstorming and inter-department conversations to surface challenges and possibilities, acquaint stakeholders with regards to the customer-service orientation of Digital Services, reinstate bridges and begin to conduct a needs assessment. In this initial phase, parallel library website development and forward-looking technology directions of larger website prototypes will be explored to test

external university ITS bridges (i.e. Web Development). As the university follows a centralized ITS support model, this support is theoretically present but these more complex bridges have not yet been tested or worked out on larger levels. This beginning may be supplemented by working reports from various initial Library Digital Services stakeholders regarding requests for future development. Preliminary digitization (scanning) initiatives may also be implemented on the micrological level keeping ideas of organic growth, innovation, active change and forward technology perspectives in mind.

External Analysis (Looking Around)

Currently, many factors in the Library's external environment influence the Division of Collection and Digital and Collection Services ability to transform towards a twenty-first century emerging academic research library model comparative with other Texas State emerging research universities or tier 1 Texas best practice models (Appendix A).

Primary factors impinging on future growth and development regard the '**social**' – library faculty, staff, institutional and user needs. Because of their long term historically entrenched role, Acquisitions and Cataloging staff have entrenched models strongly socially embedded within staff culture. There has not been large history of staff change on paradigm shift levels and socio-cultural norms for Digital Services have also largely been taken from Acquisitions/Cataloging (former employee transfers).

In terms of institutional social culture, while the library is part of the Information Technology Division, because of **centralization**, much of library core IT capacity is not transparent or only present on a more complex partner support level. In a certain sense, the library has become a service client on a large university IT list. Currently the library houses no internal web developer, database administrator, multimedia lab for staff projects or general systems middleware programmers. In terms of advanced basic or more complex digital library projects, the library must rely on working on a case by case basis of outsourcing, currently regarding institutional repository customization requests (D-Space, @Mire). Because of this, development of cross-functional institutional digital capacity languishes or is hampered. Larger multi-application agile models for digital services become prohibitive.

'Economic' and budgetary constraints. **Budget wise**, the library currently does not have budget lines or historical mandate worked out for various digital services programs either on production or worked out R&D level. Up to 2014 human resources allocated to work on a Library Digital Services program have been divided between traditional core library systems staff (i.e. Catalog, Library Website, EZProxy Service and Database connections) and time constraints on establishing digital preservation and digital library programs. Similarly, the collections budget for Acquisitions has not yet adopted a "Digital Initiatives" line for more hybrid library/application formats (i.e. Artstor SharedShelf, Browzine, Datazoa etc).

Other considerations surround the rapid pace **'technological' change** and the human resource and technology skills required in order to accomplish and maintain initiatives (i.e. servers, software, hardware). These are limitations extra to the technology and part of a centralized university model for technology services. This is also a fairly new university model (2012) where complex library digital service endeavors have not been tested or where tested, deemed that outsourcing was the best solution (i.e. D-Space: @Mire, Outsourcing Special Collections Website).

Currently, a **marketing valence** to Library Digital Services future directions is not overly apparent. Within the larger university research model context, Library Digital Services has an important intellectual marketing focus for attracting students and research academics. By highlighting the university's research and researchers and enabling their work on digital library and archives levels, this forwards the university's reputation as an emerging research institution. Integrating Collections and Digital library's with the needs of its Southwest Community and **cultural milieu and environment** in which Texas University is located also **acknowledges** TXU as a diverse gateway institution to and from Mexico and Latin America.

Internal Digital Services Analysis (Self Study Processes)

In terms of staff, Digital Services is under or minimally staffed in comparison to other ARL peer institutions (Appendix A) and well below other tier two research universities of lesser size. A single allocated department head/employee is assigned to the library's core systems daily administration, maintenance, coordination, long-term design and development initiatives. Another recently hired position is assigned to foundational scanning and digitization for preservation purposes. A third has Metadata duties for the institutional repository. Three other employees maintain library core systems (Catalog, Serials Database) on application rather than development levels.

In terms of equipment, a foundational digitization lab has been created and funds allocated to purchase initial equipment. With regards to strategies, the current Digitization program works largely without a safety net of established policies. As this area develops, all of this is expected to change.

SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Identifying Attributes (What are Our Major Strengths?)

Strengths

- Current strengths of CDS include longer developed infrastructures of historically established departments of Cataloging and Acquisitions.
- The library possesses a treasure trove of research level academic content both physical and online
- The Wittliff , university archives and external divisions (i.e. Archeology) are rich with foundational content material for future digitization and digital library projects in a variety of media formats (text, images, video)

Identifying Constraints and Weaknesses (What Inhibits Us?)

- Lack of long term programmatic culture of change
- Digital and Web Services possesses a longer term lack of technologically developed human resource infrastructure and lack of well-established bridges with stakeholders (i.e. Wittliff Special Collections, external departments)
- Larger customer service orientation needed within digital services and, because of the small department size, lack of Innovation or R&D function for Digital Services in pursuing digital library projects and outreach-oriented projects with faculty, divisions and university departments.

Opportunities

- The university has pragmatic motivation for enabling CDS with a more research-library orientation because of its emerging research university aspirations.
- As digital services remain largely untapped, there are gains to be had for the library and university in enabling digital services in terms of socio-economic, cultural and information/reputation marketing.
- As CDS is a newly formed division and blank slate it may be positioned with ambitious goals of a technologically progressive or best practices model.

Threats

- Lack of awareness and retrograde perspectives among wider stakeholders for current digital library and archives possibilities
- Lack of communication between library departments.
- Centralized IT model not providing support needed for complex library digital services projects
- Technophobe orientations towards change and experimentation.

Goals and Objectives

What Do We Want Our Future to Be?

Goals

- The service goal of the Division of Collection and Digital Services is to provide a leading edge library digital and collections services infrastructure for stakeholders (faculty, students, Wittliff/University Archives, External Divisions) and users accessing Texas State University Libraries.
- The human resource goal is to develop a progressive staffing model cognizant of the paradigm shift occurring in libraries with a long-term vision of integrating and developing staff from traditional Cataloging and Acquisitions units to new paradigm digital services directions as traditional Cataloging/Acquisitions functions decrease (i.e. shift to electronic resources and shift to copy cataloging).
- The administrative goal is to develop communication bridges and a customer service orientation among units and a budgetary policy structure which allows library digital services to flourish in the library and wider University structure.

Objectives

1.1 To implement a library digital services program with a strong customer service orientation and forward-looking attention to issues of innovation multimedia, research and design of digital libraries aligned with current best practice models.

2.1 To develop an internal digital services technical team capable of implementing and maintaining a cutting-edge university program and internally training a next tier of student assistants.

3.1 To educate wider library staff on current research library digital service trends and new technologies so that current competencies can be placed in better dialogue with forward perspectives to make discriminating judgments.

4.1 To progressively reconfigure the larger collections budget from a more restrictive faculty allocation formula to a more progressive allocation arrangement to take advantage of interdisciplinary collections, hybrid library/software products and the recognition of collection funds to enable faculty research through produced digital literacy infrastructures.

5.1 To educate and make university library staff, administration and ITS aware of new technological digital library services directions so that proactive infrastructure resources can be garnered for CDS future development.

6.1. To develop the present CDS Division so that it transforms into a coherent synergistic team.

Strategic issues

Adequate and Trained Staff:

Developing and training an in-house customer service oriented Digital Services department to build, maintain and update library digital services while keeping wider university and library staff faculty educated and aware of new possibilities.

Appropriate Technology:

Adopting appropriate leading edge digital services (libraries and archives) that is appropriate to stakeholder needs and congruent with larger current web trends while providing wide usability and accessibility.

Adequate Budgets:

Creating an adequate budget for Collections and Digital Services and the transformation of the collection budget with regard to the allocation formula and library purchasing to gradually shift the library budget from a book warehouse orientation.

Strategic Implementation

- Strategies are the policies that guide decisions. Keeping this in mind, short term project plans should be drawn up to more precisely focus on specific strategies, objectives and issues that can be translated into functional tactics.
- A delineated project management plan with regards to the division should be initiated as new possibilities begin to open and firm.
- Individual departments should be informed and educated about the CDS divisions longer term goals and objectives.

Performance Measurement

- The strategies outlined above should be reviewed by the AVP and other stakeholders to solicit further opinions and review for independent assessments of the proposed draft plan for critique, specific suggestion and improvement.
- Objectives should be reviewed and measured on an annual basis.
- Once larger goals are initiated, timelines and benchmarks should be made explicit and reviewed.
- Digital and Collection Services surveys such as LibQual should be consulted and CDS

usability studies should be undertaken by the Director and CDS department heads and developed through survey, questionnaire and user focus groups so that adequate data can be obtained as to how CDS is actually used.

The Desired Future (Preliminary Conclusions)

Strategic planning assists the university library CDS division initiating a mode of thinking that facilitates projecting the institution into the desired future. Our faculty and student patrons exist in a technologically mediated reality. CDS division staff are currently trained to run a well-tuned book warehouse with this ethos still largely surrounding the division. As universities stretch towards the vanguard of navigation in the new world of information, new models need to be developed. While this journey will not be without challenges, the Alkek library CDS division is large, capable and staff are talented and motivated. Through progressive change, the division possesses the capacity to become a best practices model for the academic libraries transformation and front line beacon to illuminate an emerging research university's future.

Appendix A – Texas Designated Emerging Research Institutions and Texas ARL Peer and Tier 1 Institutions Digital Services Comparison

For this study, a brief survey was conducted July 2014 of Alkek Library's peer Texas emerging research peer institutions and benchmark Texas Tier 1 ARL institutions to make

better comparisons with parallel HR allocations, expenditures and Digital Services Org charts. An effort was made to use similar-sized Texas institutions but both larger and smaller size Texas library institutions were included based on total library expenditures (FY11) and full time student counts. Various Digital Services departments or divisions were examined and org charts links are included below. There is a recognition that further benchmarking/survey work is also possible among Cataloging/Metadata divisions to further examine both possibilities and challenges.

Most parallel Texas emerging research and Tier 1 Texas academic institutions examined had significantly more internal staff directly involved in library digital services than Texas State, San Marcos. The exception here was the University of Texas at Dallas which was also operating with a small in-house staff and an older org structure (7 staff). For the human resource allocations for library digital services, this varied from large peer library web commitments and initiatives (i.e. Texas Tech (27), University of Houston (28), University of North Texas (24), University of Texas at Austin (27) to more mid-range library IT allocations (i.e. University of Texas, Arlington (19) and UT San Antonio (13)). All libraries surveyed had at least one dedicated position allocated to web services, many to multimedia with in-house labs or entire departments dedicated to digitization, digital libraries and more innovative digital services (i.e. learning technology, information technology management librarian, digital online exhibits and curation. Alkek library ranked in the lowest third for allocation with regards to Digital Services (1-2).

It is also instructive to look at peer state institutions in terms of org charts (see links, Appendix A) and varying structures with regards to other areas. While a few peer library digital services capacities were housed in other departments, most digital services were composed of in-department staff whose duties/skills ranged across a wider berth of online exhibit and 'site development, scanning and digitization, programming and design, digital curation and core library systems. Another trend from the survey was a move towards expansion of Digital Services as a department in itself separate from core library systems with some university libraries examined even dividing Digital Services into several sub-departments (University of North Texas, UT Austin).

University	FT IT Staff	Total Library Exp. & FT Students	Library Website/Org Charts/Digital Services Breakdown

Texas State University – San Marcos	6	\$12,685,686 24, 635 FTS	Library: http://www.library.txstate.edu/ Org Chart: http://www.library.txstate.edu/about/departments/admin-serv/org-charts
Texas Tech University	27	Not Available	Library: http://library.ttu.edu/ Tech Organization: http://library.ttu.edu/about/admin/documents/org_ltms10-16-13_005.pdf 8 Librarians/ 19 Technologists
University of Houston	28	\$20,034,391 27,932 FTS	Library: http://info.lib.uh.edu/ About: http://info.lib.uh.edu/about/staff-directory/department 6 Computer Systems and Networking 17 Metadata and Digitization, 5 Web Services
University of Texas (Arlington)	19	\$12,142,601 18,745 FTS	Library: http://www.uta.edu/library/ Dept: http://www.uta.edu/library/contact/staffdept.php 10 FT Digital Creation 9 FT Library Systems and Technology
University of Texas (Dallas)	7	\$7,244,273 11,710 FTS	Home: http://www.utdallas.edu/library/ Organizational Chart: http://www.utdallas.edu/library/about/contacts/mcdermott.pdf Dept. Staff 7, (No digital services or digitization program)
University of North Texas	24		Home: http://www.library.unt.edu/ Org Chart: http://library.ttu.edu/about/admin/documents/org_ltms10-16-13_005.pdf Digital Libraries Unit 16, (Divided into: Digital Libraries, Curation, Newspapers, Projects, Software Development, User Interfaces 3 Digital Scholarship. 5 Library Core Systems, i.e. Catalog, e-Resources Database Folded into other units
University of Texas San Antonio	13	Not Available	Library Site: http://lib.utsa.edu/ Org Chart: http://lib.utsa.edu/files/default/About/orgchart.pdf Information Technology Management 7, Library Systems 5, 1 Technology Project Management Librarian

University of Texas at Austin	27	\$39,646,788 46,563 FTS	Library Site: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/ Library Org Chart: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/about/directory/phonedir.html Technology Integration Services, 6 Texas Digital Library 1 Digital Curation, 13 Preservation and Digital Services, 7

ⁱ Diedrichs, C.P. and German, L.B. Texas State University – San Marcos Albert B Alkek Library Consulting Report. February 23, 2012.

ⁱⁱ See Alkek Library Strategic Plan <http://www.library.txstate.edu/about/strategic-plan.html> and University Strategic Plan <http://www.txstate.edu/about/mission>