Bodleian Libraries Public engagement strategy 2016-2018

Vision
Working in partnership with academics, students, the museums and the botanic gardens, the Bodleian Libraries will engage the public with their collections and with the research of the University. This engagement will be two-way, enjoyable, inspiring, experimental and dynamic.

Strategic objectives
1.   Work with researchers to bring their research to a wider audience and give that audience opportunities to contribute, using our resources to facilitate and enrich this

2.   Expose the Bodleian collections and provide opportunities for the public to contribute their knowledge

3.   Use existing spaces and develop new ones to welcome the local community and host visitors and tourists from around the world

4.   Experiment with digital technologies such as crowd-sourcing and data visualization to engage interested and knowledgeable members of the public

5.   Attract new audiences, particularly those in the 11-30 age-group and Oxfordshire communities which do not currently engage with the Bodleian or which would not traditionally visit University spaces

6.   Introduce an education programme with a particular focus on secondary and Oxfordshire schools and provide training for existing staff where necessary

7.   Communicate and demonstrate what we do as professionals to develop greater public understanding and support of our aims and activities

8.   Partner – with University academics, researchers, students, museums, botanic gardens, local, national and international organizations as appropriate, sponsors and donors. Adopt the policies and practices of others rather than starting from scratch, and use existing resources rather than duplicating. Work with the four academic divisions and the Department of Continuing Education

9.   Map workflows for current public engagement activities and make changes where necessary to make the organizational structure for public engagement more coherent; integrate subject librarians and reading room staff into PE activities and governance; create clear governance structures for PE

10.   Clarify policies and procedures and document where necessary; create and maintain a unified list of events

11.   Agree and put in place an annual budget for PE activities

12.   Develop a system for measuring impact and the success of our programme

Background

Strategic context
This strategy is informed by, and complements, the following:
- University of Oxford strategic plan
  http://www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/strategic-plan
- University of Oxford strategy for public engagement with research (in draft)
- Academic Services and University Collections strategy (in draft)
- Bodleian Libraries strategic plan
  http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/156788/Strategic-Plan-2013-2016.pdf

The Bodleian Libraries' programme contributes to research, teaching and widening engagement throughout the University by
- Supporting the impact of research undertaken in the University, for example through supporting impact case studies submitted by the academic community within the Research Excellence Framework
- Ensuring that grant requirements are met, where they require public engagement
- Supporting widening participation work for undergraduate admissions such as the UNIQ summer schools
- Supporting diversity agendas
- Fulfilling researchers' obligations to funders to make the publications and data resulting from their research openly available on the web.

Current public engagement activities
- Physical exhibitions in Oxford
- Travelling exhibitions
- Exhibition loans
- Tours of library spaces
- Publicly accessible lectures, talks and seminars
- Activities, including printing
- Collaborations with other organisations, including the Oxford Literary Festival
- Special events
- Publications and creation of commercial products which feature the Bodleian's collections
- Digital initiatives, including major engagement with Google, Wikipedia and social media
- Provision of open access repository for research publications, and research data

On-site engagement
A significant amount of engagement activity is predicated upon the Bodleian's Special Collections, for whose care, study and interpretation the new Weston Library, with its exhibition galleries, public spaces, auditorium and seminar rooms, has been specifically designed.

The Bodleian Library, Weston Library and Radcliffe Camera offer visitors a concentrated insight into the operations and history of the University through organised tours, events and a shop.

While there is a natural concentration of activities around the Libraries' Special Collections, many other events and initiatives also take place across other libraries, including small exhibitions, lectures and special events.

Virtual and off-site engagement

In the digital sphere, the Bodleian Libraries are able to extend their physical engagement to worldwide audiences. Digital.Bodleian, a platform for digitized images of items from the collections, is 'an effort to make portions of the Bodleian's extraordinary library collections open to a wide variety of users from around the world for learning, teaching and research' and key to digital public engagement. The Bodleian serves 30 million digital requests for content a year via its websites, online catalogues and digital spaces and every second someone interacts with our electronic collections. Physical exhibitions are complemented by virtual exhibitions and collections and curatorial expertise are shared through digital initiatives and social media. Collaborations with other organisations allow for the enjoyment of our collections internationally, through exhibition loans, travelling exhibitions and joint events. A lively publications programme reaches a wide international audience.

Social media activities provide another avenue for public engagement, and this is a sphere where the Bodleian has been particularly active.

The Bodleian Libraries provide open access on the web to publications and data by Oxford authors through its institutional repository, the Oxford Research Archive. As well as bringing Oxford research to the widest possible community, this allows researchers to comply with funder requirements.

Approved by the Curators of the University Libraries, Michaelmas Term 2015