

9-8-2022

## University Libraries' Digital Strategic Framework

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### ScholarWorks Citation

Bélanger, Annie; Meyer, Kristin; and Roth, Patrick, "University Libraries' Digital Strategic Framework" (2022). *Library Reports and Communication*. 24.

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# University Libraries' Digital Strategic Framework

Documented by Annie Bélanger, Kristin Meyer, and Patrick Roth

Last edited: Sep 8, 2022

## Purpose

Libraries are inherently intertwined with technology and digital infrastructure. The digital strategic framework articulates and creates a shared understanding of the principles, values, and decision-making criteria that have shaped the Libraries' approach to digital investments, priorities, and initiatives in the recent past and will continue to guide digital strategy development through 2025. The framework is a compass that will guide the Libraries' path through an evolving digital landscape in order to inform efforts within the Libraries' locus of control as well as the interactions and partnerships with external bodies. While the framework will apply to the digital tools, services, and infrastructure within the Libraries' departments and functional teams, it does not highlight specific actions or digital initiatives.

This framework is informed by and in alignment with the campus-wide [Reach Higher 2025 plan](#), the campus-wide [Digital Transformation strategy](#); the [Libraries' recently revised mission, vision, and values](#); and the [Libraries' Programmatic Review Guide](#).

## Guiding Principles

The following principles will be applied through the Libraries' investments, initiatives, and short-term and long-term decision making. We will:

- 1) Enact our commitment to **equity and accessibility** in our digital systems and services.
- 2) Ensure **alignment** with campus directions and strategies.
- 3) Explore, prioritize, and support **open solutions** whenever possible.
- 4) Proactively steward our **digital infrastructure** in order to foster stability.
- 5) Uphold **user privacy** in alignment with professional ethics.
- 6) Meet new challenges creatively and with a **solutions-focused** approach.

# Living Our Values in Digital Efforts

We will apply the Libraries' values in our digital investments, tools, services, and infrastructure by:

- **Learner-centered:** We center the experiences of researchers and learners to lower barriers to access the Libraries' tools. We engage users to understand the lived experience of using these tools and work to improve them. Our content strategies center learning and learner needs. We proactively ask "how will this impact our users?"
- **Equity:** We center web accessibility best practices and Universal Design principles in our systems and virtual services. We acknowledge that systems replicate existing structures of oppression. We engage critically with library systems and practices to advocate for change. We invest in sustainable, open systems.
- **Collaboration:** We partner intentionally to create infrastructure and services to advance access to information and associated skills. We engage in active shared development with campus partners. We partner across the profession to advance open library infrastructure in order to foster a common public good, innovation, and long-term sustainability.
- **Care:** We prioritize time-sensitive troubleshooting before future-focused projects. We identify sustainable, feasible, and targeted solutions. We foster care for the colleagues who make processes appear seamless to our users.
- **Integrity:** We work to promote ethical use of data and enable user privacy. We proactively communicate with stakeholders with possible impacts. We work to acknowledge and dismantle bias in our systems to foster learning, discovery, and knowledge creation and to advance social justice.

## Decision Criteria

Our decision-making is guided by our values-in-action and our strategic principles. Inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) are central to all of the work we do, and in how we approach all decision-making. Decisions about systems, digital tools and infrastructure, and virtual services will:

- Advance demonstrated user needs that align with our purpose as an academic library
- Ensure sustainability and feasibility, both short-term and long-term, financially and operationally by:
  - Balancing available resources with continued innovation
  - Considering if the need is being met elsewhere
  - Considering alternatives with lower resourcing needs

- Considering workload impact to ensure that the result is worth the cost
- Crafting intentionally sustainable workloads to enable exploration and space for emergent needs
- Minimize negative impact and maximize scale by:
  - Considering how our decision will impact internal and campus stakeholders
  - Fostering partnerships to support systems' stability and interoperability
- Advance the inclusion of systematically excluded learners and researchers whenever possible

## Service Support Priorities

Libraries faculty and staff provide support for library systems and services and we apply the following priority order to balance serving users with fostering long-term sustainability:

1. Ensure systems are functional, updated, and secure
2. Support single user access issues
3. Plan and implement high-impact initiatives
4. Proactively anticipate user needs and concerns

## Questions We Ask

- 1) Does this benefit the user?
  - a) How many users? What groups? *The more users impacted or the removal of a significant barrier for a few, the more likely we are to move something forward or make changes.*
  - b) What benefits/negative impacts?
- 2) How is this supported?
  - a) Vendor vs. In-house
    - i) If solely in-house support is required, is this a critical service? Does an alternative vendor solution exist? Why won't the vendor solution work? *We are much less likely to implement something that is solely supported by in-house employees.*
- 3) Is it open source?
  - a) *Open source is preferred, but only if there is vendor support available.*
  - b) *We would need to make significant changes to existing workloads to support any more self hosted in-house open source systems.*
- 4) Is it sustainable?
  - a) Do we have the budget space for this system? Is it a subscription or purchase? Is it a single price or is their tiered pricing based on features?

What is our minimum vs. maximum cost? What is the cost of competitors? *Budgets change annually. We need to consider the cost of implementing, but also if there is a cost to move away.* Does it replace any existing systems or is it a totally new system?

- b) If this is a new system, how will we support it? Can it fit into existing workloads? Do we need to learn any new skills to support this? If it replaces an existing system, how do we move away from that system and have minimal impact on users and staff?

## Campus Documents Used for Alignment

- **Digital Transformation Strategy:**  
<https://www.gvsu.edu/it/vp/digital-roadmap-21.htm>
  - Key area of focus 1: Service excellence and greater university support
  - Key area of focus 2: Modernization of enterprise solutions
  - Key area of focus 3: Accelerating transformation and innovation
- **Reach Higher 2025:**
  - **Commitments:**  
<https://www.gvsu.edu/reachhigher2025/commitments-33.htm>
    - Commitment 1: An empowered educational experience
    - Commitment 2: A lifetime of learning
    - Commitment 3: A culture of educational equity