Georgia Tech Library & Information Center

STRATEGIC PLANNING BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

January 2007

Strategic Planning Task Force

Lori Critz
Joey Fones
Tom Grice
Brian Mathews
Susan Parham
Bonnie Tijerina
Kathy Tomajko
Kent Woynowski
INTRODUCTION

The Library is approaching the end of the planning cycle covered by our Strategic Plan 2002 - 2007 document. It was implicitly understood that, at this juncture, the Library would move forward with setting an overall direction that would translate into viable goals for the future work of the Library staff, and that this new strategic direction would align with the Institute’s current priorities and initiatives.

In June 2006, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, comprised of members of the Library’s senior administration, was formed. The Steering Committee decided that a new strategic planning process was appropriate, with the goal of producing a strategic plan for the next five years. This Committee determined the process that would be utilized in the planning cycle (a modified version of Bryson’s Strategy Change Cycle), and selected Library staff to serve on the Strategic Planning Task Force -- which was then charged to develop the Plan. It was agreed that the planning process would be consultative (externally), inclusive (internally), and iterative.

The developing Strategic Plan will chart the direction of the Georgia Tech Library to Fiscal Year 2011 and will include a wide range of Strategic Initiatives – each encompassing salient goals, objectives, and proposed implementation strategies. These Initiatives may be adjusted over the lifecycle of the Plan to reflect strategy changes, if necessary, but will map the course for programs, resources, and services needed to effectively serve our users as we support the Institute’s educational and research needs.

The Georgia Tech Library must be positioned to meet future challenges, and to also take a leadership role as the Institute strengthens its global responsibilities as a world class research institution. Our challenges will include budgetary issues caused by increasing costs and demands, meeting the ever-evolving information needs of our primary users, responding to major changes in the scholarly communication arena, embracing the dynamic transformations in technology, and cultivating the skills of our talented staff in order to provide the services and resources needed in the 21st century. The 2007 – 2011 Strategic Plan will provide direction as we embrace these challenges, and as we continue to establish an exemplary record of service & leadership for the Institute.

PROCESS

The Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) began its work in late August 2006. Team Building helped us to coalesce from a group of individuals from myriad Library departments into a coherent team tasked to apply our expertise and experience to develop a dynamic Strategic Plan for the Library as a whole. The Task Force reviewed the Mission and Vision of the Library, and then identified our stakeholders (See Appendix I) and the organizational mandates (see Appendix II) under which the Library functions. These mandates included formal mandates that are required by funding or authorizing groups as well as informal mandates such as unwritten expectations of our users or staff.
Analysis of these mandates helped us determine what we as an institution are ‘supposed to do’ or what we are ‘expected to do’, and who requires us to do it.

The SPTF then set out to ‘take stock’ and examine both the internal status of the Library and the external context in which the Library is situated. To do this, we conducted a Current Situation Analysis (CSA). The CSA is the process of collecting, analyzing, and reporting information that describes the current state of the library environment, as well as anticipating changes in the future environment. It consists of an environmental scan (opportunities and threats) and an internal assessment (strengths and weaknesses) --- therefore, input was solicited from internal and external stakeholders, both directly and indirectly. Surveys, questionnaires, and focus groups with Library departments, Georgia Tech students, and faculty were conducted – to invoke ‘conversations’ about our users, our services, our resources, etc. In addition, an extensive amount of documentation was reviewed – ranging from internal (library) documents to institutional (Georgia Tech) documents to external (global) documents deemed relevant to our process. A summary of the information gathered is presented in this Background Document and detailed in the appendices. An analysis of the data gathered ensued, and included a comprehensive SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) Analysis to help identify areas for development/advancement. The SWOT Analysis provided the framework for identifying the critical issues that face the Library in the next 5 years.

This Background Document is a synthesis of the information gathered, along with a high level look at the strategic themes or issues identified. The intent is to use this document as a basis for discussion at an open forum with the Library staff. At this forum, we will solicit input to direct our next step – the selection of those critical issues which will be carried forward to the Strategic Plan. Working groups (comprised of members from across the Library) will then be established to define/refine these critical issues and to help develop goals, objectives, and proposed implementation strategies that will be integral to our final planning document.
MISSION & VISION

In the process of updating our Strategic Plan, we are reaffirming our mission and vision as stated in 2002:

MISSION

*The Georgia Tech Library and Information Center is a creative partner and essential force in the learning community and in the Institute’s instructional, learning and research programs. The Library plans, develops and implements programs to provide expert staff, information, learning resources and information competencies to students, faculty, and staff and selected services to off campus clients. Using appropriate technology, the Library delivers resources to satisfy information needs, promote lifelong learning and create productive connections for the scholarly community.*

VISION

*Creating a better educated graduate for Georgia.*
DATA GATHERED & ANALYZED

Focus Groups - Summary (see Appendix III for a list of questions utilized)

Between September 11 and September 21, 2006, The Task Force conducted focus group sessions with all Library departments (13 in all), two Georgia Tech student groups (one comprised mainly of student leaders; the other was a mixed undergraduate and graduate group) and two faculty groups. A series of prepared questions was used for each session – and different questions were developed for the 3 ‘types’ of groups. With the student groups, an affinity exercise was also conducted. This allowed the students to categorize their responses and develop shared themes.

Members of the Task Force served as both facilitators and recorders for these sessions, in order to maintain confidentiality. The information from these sessions will not be disseminated. However, within the Task Force internal “transcripts” were prepared and shared. Information gleaned from these sessions was incorporated into the SWOT Analysis.

Surveys – Summary (see Appendix IV for detailed summaries)

As part of data collections and analysis for the Library Strategic Planning process, information gathered from print surveys and message boards distributed in the Library East Commons has been used. The original surveys and feedback boards were distributed during the Celebration Week events of September 2006. Two poster boards were placed in the space with a statement at the top asking for feedback. Approximately 200 of the 5 question surveys were distributed at random times throughout the LEC (of which about 50 were returned), and results from both sources were compiled daily (though inappropriate responses were immediately discarded). The overwhelming majority of respondents were self-identified as undergraduates.

Documents - Summary (see Appendix V for item-level summaries)

A. Internal Documents

Summary:
The internal documents studied by the Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) serve mainly to elucidate the decisions and actions of the past that have made the Library what it is today.

It is important to note that the mission of the Library, as stated in the 2002 Strategic Plan will remain the same in the 2006 Strategic Plan. In addition, the specific goals stated in the 2002 Strategic Plan will inform our decisions of the Library’s new goals.

Of particular importance in this group of documents is the Strategic Development of the Library’s Scholarly Communications Agenda, written in 2006. This report introduces the necessary staff positions that will be needed to meet the challenges of new trends and developments in scholarly communication, a theme that has come up quite often in the
other background documents studied by the SPTF. These positions include, but aren’t limited to, a Preservation Officer and a Licensing and Rights Management Officer.

Documents examined include:
Library and Information Center Strategic Plan, 2002-2007
http://smartech.gatech.edu/handle/1853/4758
Technical Services Division Review Team Report, 2003
Strategic Development of the Library’s Scholarly Communications Agenda, 2007-2011
Annual Report, 2005-2006
A New Model for Public Services: Vision for Consolidating Library Services, 2001

B. Internal Institutional Documents

Summary:
Overall there is very little specific assessment of the Library by the GT Office of Assessment, the office on campus that manages institution-wide surveys, assessment, and program review issues.

The Georgia Tech Strategic Plan (no date given) barely mentions the library with the only comment, which is under Goal 7: Facilities Improvement and Expansion, stating “Enhance the educational environment through the transformation of the library and other appropriate facilities into interactive learning centers employing the latest technologies.”

Other assessment surveys indicate that our alumni are ‘prepared up to well-prepared’ as it relates to “The ability to conduct an information search using catalogs, indexes, bibliographies, internet, etc.” These skills are important to alumni employers. However, almost 40% of undergraduates judged their satisfaction with the Library facility as less than satisfactory in 1998-2001 survey instruments. 26% of graduate students weren’t satisfied with the Library overall during the same time period. 1990-95 graduate alumni surveyed in 1998-99 by college indicated the following:

- College of Management: 39% not satisfied with the Library (79 respondents).
- College of Engineering: 18% not satisfied with the Library (734 respondents).
- College of Sciences: 22% not satisfied with the Library (77 respondents).
- College of Computing: 34% not satisfied with the Library (33 respondents).
- College of Architecture: 61% not satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the Library resources (20 respondents).

In the Fall 1999 HEDS Graduate Student Survey, the following satisfaction levels were indicated:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Satisfied/Very Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library services</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library hours</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library facilities</td>
<td>61.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library resources/holdings</td>
<td>58.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to the 2002 *Your First College Year Survey (February 2003)*, 62.2% were satisfied or very satisfied with Library facilities and services compared to 85.7% “Consortium Total.” The Consortium is comprised of five similar institutions and so when benchmarked with five similar institutions, we didn’t fare well.

C. **External Documents**

i. **Trends & Organizational Change**

**Summary:**

*The Academic Library User*

The changing demographics in higher education will create a big shift towards non-traditional populations including minority students, first generation college students, distant learners and international students. More students see themselves as consumers and institutions of higher education as a product. Services and the user experience will help shape a student’s experience on a college campus.

Institutions with a focus on engineering are adjusting to the changing world around them. Libraries must be able to shift with the entire institute to help shape future engineers who are “broadly educated, who see themselves as global citizens, who can be leaders in business and public service, and who are ethically grounded.” These future graduates will have strong analytical skills, creativity, communication skills, flexibility, leadership skills, the ability to work in teams, and an interest in lifelong learning.

The information-seeker has many options to choose from in regards to where to go to access information. The academic library user today respects the library and believes in the quality of information made accessible, but the library is not seen as the most convenient place to access electronic material when and where they want it. On the web search engines, especially Google.com, are where information-seekers go.

Users want information 24/7, immediately and in as granular a piece as they can get. They see content as not format-dependent and they want to buy, access, and take in information in these granular pieces. For libraries, that means how we buy, organize and deliver content must change to accommodate the expectations of our communities.

The challenge of contextualizing information should be in our minds as we think about future services and job descriptions. This work requires skilled and service-oriented staff to give meaningful context to raw information users now have easy access to. To have a unique role in the world of contextualizing, libraries should work on digitizing and utilizing their unique collections within the contexts of their communities.

*Services and Content*

With a focus on the user’s experience, academic libraries will see that the changing academic library user will require more content to be available online and more refinement of the online services we provide to fit with the varied learning styles and experiences. Libraries need to think about what it will take to bring web users to library resources. This may require making sure web material is easily accessible through search engines. They need to see themselves not only as housing information but as broadcasting information to get it out to users. Broadcasting can be done through blog feeds, wikis and other new technologies.
The attention then turns to what that means for content delivery. Libraries need to look into just-in-time models, shifting from a just-in-case model for acquiring material. Material needs to be delivered not just to PCs and laptops, but to smaller and more mobile devices such as smartphones, PDAs and web-enable cell phones.

Academic libraries can play a critical role in helping shape the future library users through partnerships with faculty, creating a group-based study environment, and through providing a wide collection of resources for students and researchers with varied, multidisciplinary interests in a timely manner. In addition, digitizing locally produced material will showcase what is unique to their institution and their collections to show their value to the larger community.

Investment in Library Staff

The aforementioned work will require a skilled, service-oriented staff willing to try new things and push boundaries just as our users and competitors do. Like our users, we are in an environment of continual learning and must remain active in our training and development.

Marketing and advocacy are critical in a time when information-seekers look elsewhere for answers. In addition, libraries of the future have the opportunity to be seen as the place to find context for all the information users are being fed. These areas will require highly-skilled, specialized staff that may not necessarily have professional library degrees, but bring critical skills to the library and the community. Examples include other degreed professionals with skills in marketing, library development, and academic subject specialties.

The library must make a concerted effort towards staff development and training as well as keep a critical eye on future skills, positions and job descriptions.

ii. Student Users/Millennials

Summary:
In order to understand the culture, needs, and expectations of our primary user group (students), we reviewed three documents which provided insight on the mindset and habits of the millennial generation. An analysis of the generation’s cultural references was provided in the “Beloit College Mindset List 2006”; an examination of their use and comfort with information technology (software and hardware of all genres) was supplied in the “ECAR Study of Students and Information Technology, 2006”; and author Richard T. Sweeney (“Reinventing Library Buildings and Services for the Millennial Generation’) gave us a glimpse into the ‘uniqueness’ of our 18 – 25 year old customers and also gave numerous suggestions for needed changes in services, facilities and resources for libraries serving this population.

iii. Faculty/Researchers’ Changing Needs

Summary:
This section focused on a 2004 Journal of Academic Librarianship article about a web-based survey of faculty usage of information and communications technologies at
University of Idaho and a 2003 CLIR (Council on Library and Information Resources) report on whether the new-model scholarship will survive.

The article discussed survey results that confirm that faculty has a lack of awareness of the range of databases; they lack knowledge about electronic resources; and their lack of time and training are critical obstacles to effective use of electronic resources and services. It recommends that marketing of library resources and e-services is a critical component of an academic library’s activities. Faculty considers the improvement of the collection of research and teaching materials as the highest priority for the library’s future. Their second priority is better implementation of existing e-resources and e-services, including improving the clarity and speed of the library web site.

The CLIR report: New-Model Scholarship (http://www.clir.org/PUBS/reports/pub114/pub114.pdf) focuses on digital preservation and repositories. It discusses the challenges faced by preservationists, the importance of creators of digital products/objects to work with libraries, and the lack of infrastructure to do so. University, college administrators, and governors must play a visible role. A critical challenge to digital preservation in the near term is technical, due to the rapid rate at which hardware and software become obsolete. It concludes by discussing four commonly understood technical approaches to digital preservation: 1) migration; 2) technology preservation; 3) emulation; and 4) persistent object preservation (POP). There are no final conclusions or solutions identified in the report, but many talking points and questions that need to be considered by decision-makers concerning preservation of digital products.

iv. The Future of the Digital Library

Summary:
These articles outline the current state and envisioned future of digital repositories in academic institutions. They consist of two surveys and a “roadmap” (similar to a strategic plan). The authors of the ARL survey state that “ARL libraries have demonstrated a strong preliminary commitment to institutional repositories.” The IMLS survey found that in the previous 12 months (survey in 2004) 54.4% of the academic libraries surveyed created digital images.

The Digital Repositories Roadmap focuses on the future of digital repositories. The authors present a vision of 2010 when repositories support a richer world of open access scholarly communication. However, the authors feel that some changes in policy, culture, technology and the legal environment must change to match that potential. They suggest a mandate that publicly-funded research be made open-access; that the tenure structure recognize open access publication as valuable; that repositories be “well integrated into institutional and national access management approaches;” that we support complex object models; and that we review our licensing to protect the intellectual property of institutions, academics and third-parties.
v. **Library As Place**

**Summary:**
Libraries have long been thought of as quiet places to escape and study. Vast buildings filled with books, journals, and other resources. The emergence of the Internet has undoubtedly made it easier to identify, locate, store, and deliver information, and has greatly impacted perceptions, usage, and expectations of patrons. Over the past decade, academic libraries have implemented changes in an attempt to modernize and expand services, and to remain relevant to users. The following examples are some of the major trends:

- **Cafes**
  In the late 1990’s, academic libraries began adopting the successful Barnes & Noble model, merging books with coffee. Libraries also began loosening up food and drink policies, creating a more relaxed and inviting environment.

- **Noise**
  Renowned for being quiet buildings, most academic libraries now permit noise in designated areas.

- **Group Work**
  As the college curriculum has evolved to include more team-based learning, academic libraries have responded by offering workspaces to accommodate groups.

- **Information Commons**
  The information commons concept strives to provide the space, technology, and expertise to support the scholarly use of information resources.

- **Consolidated & Bundled Services**
  Libraries have consolidated service points aiming to make it easier for patrons to get help. They have also begun partnering with other units on campus to offer additional services, such as tutoring, advising, writing, and technical assistance.

- **Events and atmosphere**
  Libraries have placed an increased emphasis on creating a social atmosphere, and becoming a central location, rather than just a place to study or do research. By hosting events and activities, and providing interactive spaces, libraries are designed to educate and entertain.

Libraries are transforming into campus destinations: a place where students spend a large amount of time, ranging from solitude to socialization. This process however, goes beyond simply providing an attractive environment and abolishing strict rules, it requires giving more control over to the patrons. Just as the classroom typically underscores the authority of the professor, library space reinforces the authority of staff. In order to be genuinely user-centered, patrons need to have larger influence on decisions and control of the environment they inhabit.

As the Library as Place evolves, it is becoming a powerful active learning space, encouraging students to devote more time to studying and productivity, and contributing
to academic success and retention. Libraries are also becoming a place to relax and to celebrate achievements, and an environment that is engaging intellectually and socially.

**SWOT Analysis (see Appendix VI for detailed summary)**

**Summary:**
Subsequent to the collection, examination & analysis of relevant documentation and data, a SWOT Analysis was utilized as an environmental scan of the external environment and as an internal assessment of the Library itself. SWOT Analysis is a powerful technique for understanding Strengths and Weaknesses, and for looking at the Opportunities and Threats an organization faces. Strengths and weaknesses are internal to the organization. Opportunities and threats relate to external factors. The completed Analysis served as the springboard for identifying the strategic themes -- critical to the course of the Library over the next 5 years -- which merit further examination.

**STRATEGIC THEMES/ISSUES**

In pursuing our vision and mission, we are guided by core commitments to:

- Support the goals of the Institute and share in its commitment to teaching, research, and service

- Further the Institute’s curricular, research and professional pursuits by providing effective access to information and responsible stewardship of resources

- Create, acquire & organize, preserve and distribute information and knowledge

- Enrich the academic community through effective partnerships

- Expand and strengthen the library as a place of learning, and provide lifelong learning services

- Respect, support and empower a diverse library staff and user community

- Provide excellence in professional service to users

These core commitments serve as major governing principles that guide us as an organization. Within the context set by these commitments, and after the thorough environmental scan & analysis performed, the Task Force has identified the following planning themes/issues. These themes are broad areas within which action must be taken in order to ensure the Library's mission and vision.
Our proposed planning themes/issues for 2007 – 2011 are below. After reviewing input from the Open Forum, the Strategic Planning Task Force will determine which themes/issues move forward to the Working Groups. These Working Groups will then help us refine the issues, and help us determine goals and objectives for the Strategic Plan.

1. Empowering and Developing Library Staff

In an environment of constant change, increasing demands, and limited resources, it’s essential for the Library to be strategic in the development and empowerment of its faculty and staff. Employee development is beneficial to the Library, enhancing the quality of work, productivity, flexibility, commitment, professionalism, and good management as well as supporting the recruitment and retention of well qualified staff, career progression, cultivating new leaders, and succession planning.

The Library’s faculty and staff are talented, expert, responsive, and rated highly for customer service in library surveys, focus groups, etc. In addition, they are able to multi-task, are flexible and willing to share responsibility. However, the faculty and staff want additional opportunities and resources. Their interests lie in enhancing their skills through professional development and cross-training. They prefer to work in an environment where creativity, taking risks, front-line empowerment, involvement in decision-making, and embracing new information technologies are important. The Library needs to play a central role in educating faculty, students, and staff in all aspects of new information technologies encompassing knowledge of and training in a digital environment.

This strategic issue would focus on a Library culture and environment that supports innovative projects and initiatives through funding, release time, moral support, and mentoring. Risk-taking and creativity would be encouraged. A model in industry is Skunk Works:

http://www.computerworld.com/managementtopics/management/story/0,10801,109149,00.html, which is the name given a group within an organization that is tasked with advanced/special projects but given a high degree of autonomy and unhampered by bureaucracy (Lockheed originated the name). More recently “Skunk Works are small research and development groups formed to produce a technology or product.” Another name for this concept is “Creative Audits.”

Additionally, this strategic issue would focus on the Library’s provision of training in job-related skills and knowledge, enabling faculty and staff to carry out their duties efficiently and effectively while providing the best possible service. It would focus on the provision of broader development opportunities, which may not be job-specific, in order to keep staff informed and aware of their external environment and what’s possible. The Library’s goal would be to develop a learning culture amongst all its employees in which training and development is an integral part of their daily working life, and skills/knowledge are readily shared between colleagues. It would also involve more opportunities for Library staff to participate on internal and external committees, work groups, and task forces, as there is a keen interest on their part to do so.
2. **Incorporating Information Literacy into the Curriculum**

Information literacy is critical to the development of lifelong learning skills essential for living and working in today’s knowledge-based environments. Therefore, if Georgia Tech graduates are to be lifelong learners, as articulated in the mission statement of “The Strategic Plan of Georgia Tech” ([http://www.gatech.edu/president/strategic-plan.html](http://www.gatech.edu/president/strategic-plan.html)), the Institute must work to incorporate information literacy into its curriculum.

As articulated by the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education ([http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/informationliteracycompetency.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/informationliteracycompetency.htm)), from the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), an information-literate individual understands the need for information, as well as how to find it, evaluate it, and use it effectively, ethically and legally. Information Literacy (IL) has traditionally fallen into the purview of the library, however, it can not be taught in a vacuum; collaboration with teaching faculty is essential.

This issue will focus on the central role the Georgia Tech Library has to play in the preparation of our students for life in an information society. If we are to contribute to the educational environment and develop global citizens who are culturally literate, technologically savvy, and productive, the Library will have to promote students’ participation in inquiry and critical thinking through a multidisciplinary, multifaceted approach to IL.

Currently, library instruction ranges from stand-alone introductory workshops to highly technical Information Literacy classes integrated into individual departmental curricula. However, to meet the goal of preparing information literate, life-long learners as defined in the ACRL Standards, a wider, overarching vision of information literacy instruction is needed. Our existing librarian/faculty partnerships, when coupled with the framework provided by the ACRL Standards, can become the foundation of a solid, curriculum-embedded, IL program. Over time, existing instructional efforts and new, collaborative instructional initiatives will be brought together in a cohesive design that will promote our students’ Information Literacy skills from their first freshman day to graduation, and beyond. With this design, Information Literacy and research skills can be taught (by both academic faculty and librarians) in such a way as to improve the quality of the educational experience and promote self-directed and life-long learning. We will need to determine how to, as a Library, move forward with this vision.

3. **Promoting Internal Communication & Collaboration**

Most experts on organizations, management and leadership assert that effective communications provides a solid and informed foundation for any kind of organizational activity. With increasing competition and a constant influx of technology, the ability of an organization to communicate clearly and effectively both with their customers and internally is paramount to the ongoing success of the organization. They assert there can’t be too much communication. This is no less true for the Library than it is for a corporate entity.
A common thread arising from discussions with Library staff indicates that, although we are functioning well, there is room to further engage employees and achieve greater success from instituting a truly integrated communication strategy. Universally, we have expressed the need to enhance communications channels between departments and within the Library as a whole. Although there are many fine examples of cross-departmental collaborations in effect currently, the call for more collaboration, and better defined relationships within these collaborations, was resounding. Suggestions were made to establish a process wherein shared decision making and across-the-board involvement becomes the norm in these collaborative internal relationships. How and where and when technology is employed within the Library, for example, is a key issue. Library staff expressed a strong preference for a Library-wide process to communicate, discuss and advise on technology related issues, and saw this as integral to a two-way partnership.

A working group tasked to explore this issue would examine the potential for instituting an integrated communication strategy, and, after examining successful strategies within and beyond the library arena, would determine specific goals and objectives that we, as an institution, would need to implement to successfully address this issue.

4. Encouraging Transparency in Budget Utilization

Asset transparency can be considered an improvement in organizational communication. It can be described as letting everyone on the team in on the financial plans or fiscal efforts being made to achieve the mission of the Library. When the amount and allocation of resources is publicly known within the organization, everyone on the team is aware of the emphasis of the efforts of the team, and of the priorities of the organization in general.

This issue will examine the advantages and disadvantages of having fiscal decisions known to all team members. The working group will also examine the development of a more systemized approach to making funding requests and to providing justifications for such areas as the allocation of the book budget, the distribution of travel money, decisions on how new computers are purchased and distributed, space allocation decisions, human resource allocation (as far as privacy concerns will allow) and decisions about whether new furniture and equipment are purchased.

Ultimately, open communication about the use of assets and organizational values will foster improved decision making throughout the Library.

5. Expanding and Promoting Digital Repositories & Services

As more scholarly output is created and published in digital format, academic institutions are forced to more effectively manage their digital assets. This knowledge must be gathered, organized, preserved, made accessible and made usable. One way libraries can provide these services is through their digital repositories.
The Georgia Tech institutional repository, SMARTech, provides access to over 10,000 digital objects, most in the form of PDF documents. Institutional repositories are beginning to expand their collections to include different media types, such as learning objects, research data sets and multimedia. The Library is moving in this direction to further diversify content: SMARTech supports video services, and the Library is currently hiring a librarian to lead the development of a learning objects repository.

As repositories expand to include more content, they will need even greater interoperability with other systems: learning management systems, and other repositories both inside and outside the institution. Collaboration will play a key role in the expansion of scholarly communication. As this interoperability grows, the services that we provide will become most important, not the spaces where the digital objects reside during their lifecycle. Repositories support services such as online journals, videotaped lectures and conferences.

In addition to supporting born-digital content, an increased emphasis on digitizing collections and preserving digital collections/archives is suggested. Methods for improving data management, storage and retrieval should be reviewed as well. Preservation of digital assets deserves special attention, and requires funding support. All departments of the Library should become more aware of the repository and more involved in building digital collections and services. Subject librarians are encouraged to make their constituents aware of SMARTech and its tangential services.

It is essential that the Library obtain faculty and campus support for the repositories. Repositories increase global visibility and dissemination of institution scholarship, and provide open and timely access to that scholarship. Thus, they assist in the process of scholarly communication. The Library should further educate and engage faculty and the administration. An institutional mandate that research be included in SMARTech is needed.

It is also important for the Library to be part of the larger, networked environment of information resources. SMARTech is harvested by systems such as OAIster and the MetaArchive. Its contents can also be found via Google Scholar. The GALILEO Knowledge Repository is an un-funded initiative for a statewide repository that members from several institutions across Georgia have been pursuing for some time. It is a feasible, collaborative service which should be supported.

6. Preserving Library Materials for the Long Term

In recent years, the Library and Information Center has seen an expansive growth in unique archival materials in two areas: the institutional repository SMARTech and the paper-based manuscript collections of the Archives & Records Management Department. SMARTech has become a key strategic focus of the Library, and its exponential growth shows no signs of slowing. New conference and publishing services added to the repository will ensure the continued expansion of its materials. The Archives Department has been diligently fulfilling its mission to collect and preserve the history of Georgia Tech as well as to support teaching and learning on campus through its primary
resource collections. The Archives’ collection of textile mill manuscript collections and architectural drawings will support the Institute’s educational mission for years to come, as well as raise the stature of the Archives and the Library in the library professional world.

As Georgia Tech and the Library move towards an increasingly digital environment, preservation becomes a more and more pressing issue. Digital files, particularly born-digital files, require a plan for their preservation to ensure that their content is not lost as technology changes. Today's Microsoft Word documents have the very real possibility of becoming yesterday's WordStar or Wang word processor documents: unreadable and unusable in a relatively short time. Traditionally, preservation has been a long term ideal, ensuring that books and paper are useful for possibly hundreds of years. Now, the lifespan of a digital object has been considerably shortened while the quality of the content it may contain has not decreased in value.

In addition, the unique manuscript collections of the Library face similar preservation challenges. As more and more Library resources move to an electronic format and the print versions go away, the paper materials that do remain have a highly increased value. These materials are completely unique, and once they are lost to the ravages of use and time, they will be lost forever. They must be effectively preserved with the necessary controlled environmental conditions, adequate space, specialized handling techniques, and professionally accepted preservation methods.

Librarians, archivists, publishers, content creators, and information systems administrators must all partner together to find a solution to the ever growing problem of information loss due to inaccessible formats, corrupted storage media, and incompatible hardware. The Library, as the traditional protector of knowledge and information, must position itself to stay involved in planning for future preservation of all forms of media. By ensuring free and open access to materials, insisting on non-proprietary formats for storage, including self-archiving rights clauses such as those provided in the SPARC Author Addendum in publishing agreements, as well as other possible strategies, the Library can ensure that today's knowledge is not lost to future generations. In addition, the traditional importance of the preservation of paper formats should not be lost in the new problem of the preservation of digital formats. Preservation is an issue to be considered for all permanent Library materials, regardless of their format.

The strategic issue of preservation should focus on the development of preservation policies and programs that will ensure an active approach to the long-term preservation of all Library materials, whether their format is paper or digital. The working group dedicated to the strategic issue of preservation should address the preservation challenges the Library will face in the near future with the investigation and development of an institution-wide policy, dedicated staff, and proper resources and space for the preservation and conservation of its paper materials as well as its digital resources.
7. Developing, Managing and Making Accessible Library Collections

Offering contextual and efficient access to the world of information for our users is a fundamental part of the job of a library, but what that involves has changed tremendously in the digital environment. We know our faculty and students want access to information online, at their desktop, or wherever they may be. The library must be capable of managing electronic content (for example, through SFX and the catalog) and using or creating digital services (such as FindIt!) in order to fulfill this institutional role of access and accuracy. The Library should be poised to manage and make accessible the increasingly complex and varied forms of content.

As Georgia Tech grows by developing new departments, increasing the size of existing programs and expanding into a global education market, the demand for relevant and timely library collections will increase. We must explore how to focus and grow collections for our new scholars as well as maintain a research-level collection in our core areas.

In addition to managing and developing collections, the Library must make content easy to use and readily accessible in varied ways as many students go elsewhere to search and locate scholarly material. The Library must focus more attention on direct user feedback, usability testing and the creation or utilization of user-friendly tools that facilitate access to resources.

This strategic issue focuses on how the Library in the context of collections and services will approach the converging issues of new electronic content types, limited budgets, and cutting edge technologies. This may involve considering different methods for accessing information such as pay-as-you-use models and user-driven purchases. It may also involve utilizing metrics, such as e-resources usage data, ILL data, and hit counts to support or facilitate service and collection decisions. Ultimately the goal is to determine how the Library should manage, maintain, and assess what we have currently and what we need in the future in order to provide accurate and accessible material to our information-seekers.

8. Becoming a Data-driven Library

Decisions in academic libraries are often based on tradition and anecdotal evidence. Organizational structures are typically not set up in ways to facilitate change, and when decisions are made, they are often implemented with a top down approach. In order to become a user-centered organization, the Georgia Tech Library will need to foster a culture of assessment, aiming to guide decisions based upon the rigorous review of data and input from patrons.

Assessment is the structured process of learning about communities and evaluating how well the library supports them. Without good assessment, libraries could lose touch with users’ desires and needs, and even become irrelevant. A barrier however, is the culture itself, which is very stable and resistant to change. In order to maximize effectiveness,
libraries need to adopt an approach that is responsive, inclusive, evidence-based, and solutions-oriented. By collecting, sharing, analyzing, and using data, the Georgia Tech Library can convincingly demonstrate its value and its positive impact on teaching, learning, research, and retention.

Library assessment is often guided by external factors, such as accreditation, ARL statistics, organizational reviews, and intuitional budget planning. Although library departments maintain a wide assortment of statistics, they rarely use them for management or service improvements. By establishing a data-driven environment, the Library could move toward an outcomes-based perspective focusing on performance, rather than simple input/output metrics. An important component of this initiative is to incorporate a continuous and sustainable process of measurement and evaluation, ranging from surveys, focus groups, and interviews, to integrating collections, circulation and interlibrary loan data, usability testing, LibQUAL+ results, and other tools.

By embracing this cultural shift, Library staff would gain access to a vast collection of information and be invited to participate in the dialogue of assessment. Analysis would be ongoing, with an emphasis toward action, accountability, and measurable improvements. This practice would also enable the Library to set standards of excellence in service and customer relationships, and to benchmark and strive for efficiency.

9. Supporting Georgia Tech's Global Expansion

Georgia Tech intends to increase its international reputation by building several branch campuses around the world. Georgia Tech Lorraine, located in France, has already been operational for 15 years, and now the Institute is planning to expand to Beijing, Shanghai, Singapore, Sidney, and Ireland. The purpose of these branch locations is three-fold: 1) to provide study abroad destinations for Main Campus students, 2) to increase international recruitment, and 3) to conduct research and offer degree programs onsite at these various locations.

Distance learners, or students who do not attend classes at the Main campus, will become a significant demographic that the Library will need to support. It is important to think strategically in order to provide appropriate services. Some of the issues include: new licensing agreements with vendors, an increased workload for document delivery services, and challenges to provide research, instruction, and technical assistance.

Undoubtedly, this international expansion will have an impact on the Library and it is critical that we define the relationship between the Main Campus and the branch locations. The Library will need to be an active participant to ensure that computer labs, study space, and access to both print and electronic collections is adequate. It is vital that we understand these unique users’ expectations, and be able to anticipate and provide desired services. Furthermore, the Library should consider investigating agreements enabling borrowing privileges for Tech students and faculty at foreign universities.
Aside from addressing the needs of patrons at branch locations, consideration must also be given to the Institute’s SACS Quality Enhancement Plan: [www.assessment.gatech.edu/SACS/QEP/QEP_Mar21_Georgia_Tech_final_print.pdf#page15](http://www.assessment.gatech.edu/SACS/QEP/QEP_Mar21_Georgia_Tech_final_print.pdf#page15), which calls for 50% of all Main Campus undergraduate students to spend at least one semester abroad by 2010. The Library will need to assess the impact of the Plan to clearly identify expectations, and should anticipate a greater interest in foreign language collections and instructional materials. The International Plan also provides an opportunity for the Library to partner with other units on campus, such as the Language Institute and the School of Modern Languages, to support the growth of this increasing need.

The globalization of Georgia Tech is inevitable, and therefore it is advantageous for the Library to embrace this expansion and develop strategic initiatives in order to be proactive rather than reactive. A working group tasked to explore this issue would examine opportunities for planning the library presence at remote locations, investigating the impact on collections, services, and instruction, and exploring possibilities to prepare Main Campus students for their international experience.

10. **Advancing New Models of Scholarly Communications**

The ways academic research results are shared and used are changing, rapidly, fundamentally, and irreversibly. Faster and wider sharing of journal articles, research data, simulations, syntheses, analyses, and other findings advances knowledge and benefits authors and researchers. The current models for scholarly publishing are no longer economically sustainable. It’s important that universities and libraries work with their partners to influence scholarly communications. The scholarly communication crisis refers to the current and future erosion of access to the scholarly literature resulting from the inability of institutional library budgets to keep pace with the steeply rising cost of library resources and scholar’s loss of rights to their works as a result of signing away copyright. The Georgia Tech Library has made some in-roads in this area of “Scholarly Communications” with the implementation of its institutional repository, SMARTech, and the emergence of epage@Tech, Electronic Press at Georgia Tech. However, there’s still much work to be done.

The purpose of an institutional repository is to capture the digital-born intellectual output of an academic institution in support of its teaching and research missions. SMARTech aims to support new models of scholarship and not just be a “bin” to capture articles. SMARTech also serves as a repository for videotaped lectures, learning objects, conferences, etc. In addition, the Library can serve as broadcaster, i.e. publisher and producer of content. An example is the Library’s service (in the Digital Initiatives Department) that provides open access journal support for *Information Technologies and International Development* in collaboration with Dr. Michael Best, School of International Affairs.

“Scholarly Communications” has been proposed as one of the Library’s potential strategic issues for many reasons including:
• The Library’s budget is affected by the increasing costs of scholarly publications at rates higher than inflation and resulting in decreased purchasing power overall.
• Reasonable pricing of and open access to scholarly publications supports the free flow of ideas leading to the greater good within the academic community and society in general.
• When faculty and student research/scholarship are affordable, its potential impact is maximized. Research shows an increased impact for scholarly output available freely online in digital repositories and in open access publications.
• The Library needs to serve as an advocate, addressing the changes in scholarly communications and educating faculty and students in these areas.
• A better understanding of copyright and author rights is essential for our faculty and students.

11. Enhancing Building Resources & Fostering the Library as Place

In recent years, the Georgia Tech Library has had considerable success in experimenting with use of Library space. While user counts and user comments testify to the achievements in the West Commons and the East Commons, the question persists – what are you going to do next? That is the major focus of this Strategic Issue.

When the Price Gilbert Library and the Crosland Tower were built, the Library was a place to research literature, read, think and write . . . a traditional library model. That model has changed drastically to a model with ubiquitous access from anywhere in the world. The Library has become more than a place for books and a center of information; it’s become a center of culture – a center of life. Behold the “Library as Place.” It’s a place to work, create, study, collaborate, recharge, exchange ideas, tutor or be tutored, research, listen, learn, hone skills, feel safe, socialize, flirt, eat, and much more. It’s a busy place.

This Strategic Issue will focus on adapting the bricks and mortar of the old model to serve the needs of the new and ever-changing model. Some of the needs to be examined are: 1) providing additional programming for students and other Library users; 2) renovating of the buildings either incrementally or comprehensively, as funding permits; 3) adding shelf capacity and study space; and 4) accommodating Library departments that need more space and cohesiveness. The work group that develops this Strategic Issue will consider how we can accommodate users as they encounter the different “places” listed above and many more as yet to be identified.

12. Developing Partnerships for Joint Ventures

Over the last few years, much of the Library’s growth is due to successful partnerships with campus units. The success of the two Commons areas would not have been possible without OIT, CETL, Georgia Tech students, faculty, and administration. As such, this strategic issue proposes that the Library continue this progress by striving for well-conceived, well-supported, and well-defined collaborations with campus partners as well as non-campus partners (publishers, vendors, other libraries, and consortia).
This strategic issue recommends that the Library endeavor to increase community outreach, addressing the issues of groups such as the disabled, international, and non-traditional students, while still reaching out to traditional students and faculty. Students represent the majority of our core constituency and therefore it’s important that they be fully engaged in Library initiatives and in developing joint ventures. We should continue to consult with the student community (the Library’s Student Advisory Council, SGA, and a broader range of students) to develop and facilitate partnerships which are mutually beneficial. Ideally, the Library must find a way to transfer the feeling of ‘ownership’ of the space to the students.

An example of student involvement would offer students opportunities to participate in solving library and information retrieval problems in senior design or capstone classes. Doing so would further embed ourselves, take advantage of free labor, research, feedback, and expertise. It’s also important to recognize the ever-changing preferences of students. For example, if students are comfortable with federated searches such as Google Scholar, we should look for ways to make it possible for them to search and retrieve Library materials in this way. Simply put, the Library needs to continue to seek and welcome ideas that increase our value to the larger GT community.

In short, the Georgia Tech Library must be mindful of the ever-changing landscape of the institution it serves. We need to increase awareness of the Library on campus through self-promotion and outreach, while incorporating the wishes of the larger GT community. Doing so, we will have a direct impact on the services offered, the public perception of the Library, and the overall student and faculty experience. In addition to thinking of the Library as a resource to meet their research and educational needs, GT students, faculty and other Library users should think of us as an important destination for refreshment of mind and body.

This strategic issue’s challenge is multifaceted. We must find ways to: 1) incorporate the expressed needs of the community; 2) to promote awareness of the Library to the GT community; and 3) to seek and use input from the rapidly changing academic body. The Library must take a proactive stance towards building partnerships by clearly defining expectations, goals, and potential consequences of these ventures, while making sure that all the necessary partners are at the table and involved in the decision-making process.