

A close-up photograph of a young child with dark hair and a blue tank top, looking intently at a stack of old photographs. An adult's hands are visible, pointing at one of the photos. The background is blurred.

ENRICHING THE LIBRARY EXPERIENCE

The FY2019–2023
Strategic Plan
of the Library of Congress

LIBRARY
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

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OPENING MESSAGE

The Library of Congress is the world's largest library, with nearly 170 million items in our collections, and extensive expert services and programs. What does this mean for you?

The Library of Congress has built the largest collection of human knowledge ever assembled. It is an awe-inspiring achievement – a testament to the wisdom of Congresses throughout our history, which have invested national resources in the ideal of a universal collection available to all.

Yet, as Librarian of Congress Herbert Putnam noted more than a century ago, “A book used is fulfilling a higher purpose than a book which is merely preserved.” In other words, it is not enough to collect and preserve. To be successful, collections must be used. This same principle applies to all parts of our agency – services and programs too must be accessible and used.

The Library’s collection and its human expertise hold untold intellectual and inspirational value. I have seen firsthand the spark that results when someone makes a connection with the Library: when a Member of Congress is moved listening to a historian bring to life a founding document of history; when high school music students from Maryland studied the papers of Leonard Bernstein and wrote original music inspired by what they saw; when teachers at our summer institutes have shared with me their innovative strategies for making history come alive using the Library’s collections in the classroom; when Smokey Robinson saw his very first piece of sheet music submitted to the U.S. Copyright Office.

How do we extend those experiences to people across the country?

To meet this challenge, the Library is embarking on an exciting new journey that puts users first. By expanding access and enhancing services, while applying data and optimizing resources, we will build lifelong and meaningful connections with our users of today and of tomorrow.

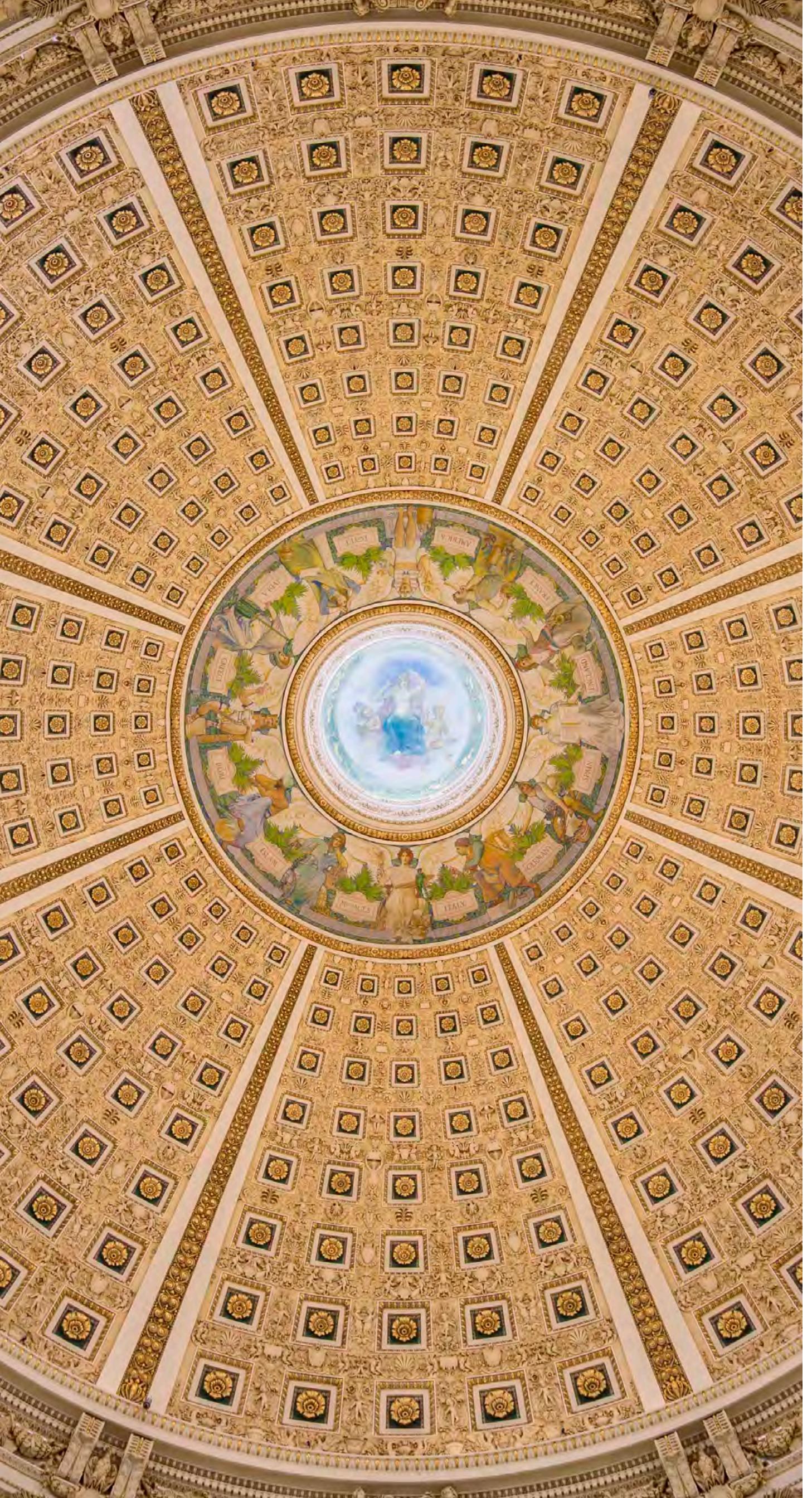
This strategic plan, *Enriching the Library Experience*, is our roadmap to expanding the Library’s reach and deepening our impact, thus fulfilling our mission to engage, inspire, and inform our users.

I can’t wait to see the many thousands of sparks we ignite. Maybe one of them will be yours.


Carla Hayden
14th Librarian of Congress

A photograph of a library interior. In the foreground, a woman with dark hair and red lipstick is smiling and raising her right hand, palm facing up. She is wearing a dark jacket over a light-colored shirt and a pink, textured scarf. Her left hand rests on a dark wooden service counter. Behind her, another person's arm and hand are visible, also raised. In the background, there are bookshelves filled with books, a television screen showing a video conference, and other people in the distance.

**THIS STRATEGIC
PLAN WILL GUIDE
THE LIBRARY
IN EXPANDING
OUR REACH AND
DEEPENING OUR
IMPACT WITH
OUR USERS.**



THE STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

Mission

Engage, inspire, and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.

Expand Access



Make our unique collections, experts, and services available when, where, and how users need them.

Vision

All Americans are connected to the Library of Congress.

- Increase Discoverability and Availability
- Use Connectors to Extend Reach
- Expand Physical Presence

Enhance Services



Create valuable experiences for every user to foster lifelong connections to the Library.

- Elevate Digital Experiences
- Transform In-Person Experiences
- Develop User-Centered Content

Optimize Resources



Modernize, strengthen, and streamline our operational capabilities.

- Align Core Library Activities
- Modernize Operations
- Invest in Talent for the Future
- Diversify and Expand Funding



Measure Impact

Use data to measure our impact on the world around us and share a powerful story.

- Understand Our Users
- Communicate Impact
- Promote a Culture of Continuous Improvement

A Unified Role

Memory
Knowledge
Imagination

Direction Forward

User Centered
Digitally Enabled
Data Driven

OUR MISSION

Engage, inspire, and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.

Service to Congress has been and remains at the core of our mission. We will continue to engage, inspire, and inform Congress through our collections and our diverse service and experience offerings, including policy consultations, on-demand analysis, briefings, events, programs, and constituent engagement.

As the steward of a unique, universal, and ever-growing collection that belongs to the American people, the Library of Congress also has a mandate to inspire, inform, and serve all Americans by engaging their cultural and intellectual curiosity and creativity.

Our mission in action takes many forms:

Engage

Researchers and authors turn to the Library for source material not available anywhere else. With access to original manuscripts, ancient maps, rare books, photographs, films, and sound recordings, these authors create new works that help interpret history for future generations. The process of copyright registration and deposit completes a virtuous cycle that may result in the addition of these new works to the Library's collections.

The Library helps ensure that millions of Americans with blindness and other disabilities continue to experience the joy of reading through a national network of libraries that distribute the latest contemporary literature in a variety of accessible formats.

Inspire

With 1.6 million annual visitors, the Library's Thomas Jefferson Building has become a landmark destination, renowned for its architectural beauty and celebration of knowledge and creativity.

Programs, exhibitions, centers, and marquee events such as the Veterans History Project, National Book Festival, and Digital Learning Labs expand the Library's reach and inspire learners of all ages.

Inform

Congress, the judiciary, and other federal agencies have reliable, round-the-clock access to reliable knowledge in print, online, and via consultation with scholars and experts from the Congressional Research Service, the U.S. Copyright Office, the Law Library, and the Kluge Center.

Families seeking to research their heritage can rely on subject experts in our reading rooms, tap into the StoryCorps Archive, or take advantage of the vast digital collections of early American newspapers, manuscripts, maps, photographs, and prints.

OUR VISION

All Americans are connected to the Library of Congress.

The Library's vision is aspirational and speaks to the tangible and intangible connections that are possible with the nation we serve. Through our unequalled collections, services, events, and products, users can connect with the Library in meaningful ways throughout their life journey.

This vision reinforces the agency's focus on users—visitors, researchers, and patrons from a variety of locations, circumstances, and walks of life—by expanding our efforts to make the nation's universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity more discoverable, accessible, relevant, and useful.

Connectedness has many forms for the Library:

Informing lawmakers, policy-makers, and their constituents requires us to be connected **intellectually**.

Engaging and sharing knowledge with users worldwide, and quickly and easily copyrighting creative works requires us to be connected **digitally**.

Creating strong ties that move partners, organizations, and individuals to donate their time, resources, stories, and creative works requires us to be connected **societally**.

Being a unified organization requires being connected to our **workforce** with support, training, and a sustained commitment to recruit the next generation of Library experts and leaders.

The goals and objectives in this *Strategic Plan* help us get closer to this vision. Enhancing awareness of the Library's offerings, improving discoverability of and access to those resources, and increasing usage through a suite of services that meet diverse needs will connect more people to the agency in more meaningful ways.

Additionally, with a strong emphasis on digital enablement, the *Strategic Plan* will further the Library's worldwide influence.

IN EXECUTING THIS STRATEGIC PLAN OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, THE AGENCY WILL MAKE A DECISIVE SHIFT TO BE MORE USER CENTERED, DIGITALLY ENABLED, AND DATA DRIVEN.



The Library's more than 3,000 dedicated staff work every day to provide authoritative and objective information to Congress.

Library staff build, steward, describe, and share the world's largest and most comprehensive collection of knowledge; examine and register hundreds of thousands of copyright claims for works of original authorship every year; interpret complex, dynamic legal issues for Congress, the judiciary, and executive agencies; provide primary source-based curricula; design and host events and programs across a broad spectrum of creative and intellectual interests; distribute accessible versions of the latest books to people who are blind or have other print or learning disabilities; and demonstrate leadership in their professional fields.

The Library's rich and diverse body of work can be framed in terms largely inspired by Thomas Jefferson's organizing construct for his personal library—the core from which the Library's collection developed:

Memory

Acquire, sustain, and provide access to a universal collection;

Knowledge

Provide authoritative and objective research, analysis, and information;

Imagination

Inspire and encourage creativity, promote and support the work of American creators.

Developed by and applied to all parts of the agency, these concepts transcend our organizational boundaries and inform the goals and objectives which comprise this *Strategic Plan*.

The unifying themes of Memory/Knowledge/Imagination ground the strategy; the direction forward guides it.

In executing this *Strategic Plan* over the next five years, the agency is making a decisive shift to be more user centered, digitally enabled, and data driven.

User Centered

We are a user-centered organization. Therefore, our strategic decisions consider what users want and expect from their national library. Improving user experience is not a one-time event; rather, it represents a fundamentally new way of operating. As such, it requires our leadership to build the capabilities and infrastructure that will enable this transformation.

Our staff are some of the Library's best ambassadors. The new strategy seeks to harness staff insight and their contributions to elevate the user experience. All staff, including those in internal-facing roles, have a part to play in this effort.

Digitally Enabled

As much as we desire to have every American come to Washington, D.C., to visit the Library, that is not possible. This is why being digitally enabled is paramount to our success.

Realizing a digitally enabled Library of Congress is an ongoing process. As technology advances, new business models emerge and user expectations evolve. We will take a long view, developing strategies that account for what is on the horizon. Our Digital Strategy will be closely aligned with the *Strategic Plan*.

Data Driven

A data-driven organization is one that embeds analysis, data, and reasoning into the decision-making process. Efforts to embed analytics have begun in pockets throughout the Library. Becoming a data-driven organization, however, means determining how best to scale these projects across the Library to drive greater business impact.

Moving forward, we will increase our investment to take advantage of the tremendous amount of data associated with our vast collections. We are also building upon previous efforts to learn more about our users in order to tailor our services.

Data will help to improve the speed and quality of performance measurement and decision making. Through this evidence-based approach, the Library will provide a more productive experience and improve our opportunity to create a lifelong connection with each of our users.

A photograph showing a group of people in a library or archive setting, looking at historical documents. In the foreground, a woman in a red dress is leaning over a large open book. Behind her, several other people are looking at documents on a table. The background features large, colorful tapestries depicting scenes from classical mythology.

**BEING USER
CENTERED MEANS
THINKING ABOUT
THE LIBRARY
IN THE LIFE OF
THE USER.**

The Library has a rich history of serving a diverse group of users.

Dating back to the mid-19th century, Librarian of Congress Ainsworth Rand Spofford managed the transition of the Library from an entity whose role was exclusively in service to Congress to one also serving a more general audience as an institution of knowledge. Today, we continue this pursuit. Being user centered means thinking about the Library in the life of the user instead of the more traditional model of thinking about the user in the life of the Library.

The agency's strategy centers around four user groups: Congress, Creators, Learners, and Connectors.

Congress

First and foremost, supporting access to authoritative information and the democratic exchange of ideas

Creators

Researchers, originators of new knowledge and scholarship, builders of cultural capacity, and copyright users and stakeholders

Learners

Those of any age who seek understanding and knowledge through the Library's digital and physical collections and services

Connectors

External communities such as libraries, schools, and other groups and institutions that ultimately connect users with the Library

These groups are not mutually exclusive. Users can assume different personas to interact with the Library in multiple capacities in a single day or over the course of their life. They can do so from different locations, using different platforms and devices. Understanding these factors are part of designing an optimized user experience.

Improving our understanding of the myriad ways users interact with the Library's collections, experts, and services is fundamental to delivering our mission. Each interaction is an opportunity to move people along a path, from **awareness** to **discovery**, then to **use**, and finally, to **connection** with the Library—a continuum that renews itself over time.

The User Experience Continuum

Awareness

Many people describe the Library as a beautiful museum or a resource for Congress and scholars, but that is not the full story. We want to broaden awareness and ensure people know even more about what the Library offers—and specifically what it can uniquely offer each person. We also want to learn more about those who do not know that the Library is a resource available for them. We will use this knowledge to target our outreach efforts.

Discovery

Our users should be able to find what they are looking for easily and as intuitively as possible. Current user experiences—shaped via search engines, social media platforms, available metadata, and always-connected devices—have led to an expectation that relevant information will rise to the top and in many cases present itself to a user even without asking. While this is a challenging expectation for any organization to meet, in some ways this is where libraries excel. Because of our expert staff, we are well-suited to expose interesting relationships, enable “serendipitous discovery,” and facilitate creativity.

Use

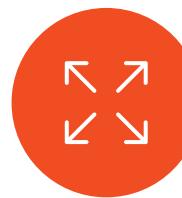
Once an item from our collections, a particular expert, or a service we offer has been found, it needs to be useful and delivered in a way that engenders a positive experience. While the primary function of the agency is to serve Congress, many other organizations and individuals use the Library. Given the diverse needs and global dispersion of these groups, we will improve our existing offerings while seeking innovative ways for people to interact with the Library.

Connection

The user experience continuum culminates with connection. A connection happens when the user interacts with an item or service and leaves feeling that the experience was personally relevant and valuable.

This continuum is renewed as we inform people of reasons to return to the Library and share new ways to engage with and explore our offerings, thus inspiring a connection that strengthens over time.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES



GOAL 1 EXPAND ACCESS

Make our unique collections, experts, and services available when, where, and how users need them.

Shortly after being sworn in as the 14th Librarian of Congress, Dr. Carla Hayden noted that, “The biggest opportunity for the Library is to make its wonderful treasures available to people...make people aware that it is part of their national heritage and that everyone can find something in the Library that relates to them, their classroom curriculum, or where they want to go in life.”

This statement aptly describes our aspirations of being not only the world’s largest, but also the world’s most-used library. In addition to our expert staff and collections, we have many tools at hand to realize this aspiration. Technology provides an opportunity to democratize the Library’s collections and services like never before. Strategic partnerships and collaborations can multiply our user base. And when people cannot come to Washington, D.C., we can bring some of the magic of experiencing the Library to them.

Given the diverse needs and geographic dispersion of our users, we will continue to improve our existing offerings while seeking new and innovative ways for people to interact with the Library.

Objective 1

Increase Discoverability and Availability

We will make our collections, experts, and services more readily discoverable and available for users, whether visiting Washington, D.C., or accessing the Library remotely.

Objective 2

Use Connectors to Extend Reach

We will work with partners to promote our collections, experts, and services to their networks.

Objective 3

Expand Physical Presence

We will proactively bring elements of the Library to the American people and enable broader use of our collections, experts, and services.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES



GOAL 2 ENHANCE SERVICES

Create valuable experiences for every user to foster lifelong connections to the Library.

Meeting a user's needs has always been context-dependent, but this is more so in today's complex environment when people are using so many powerful new tools to discover, access, and use information.

In other words, users have options. Whether providing policy consultations with Members of Congress via Skype, launching a crowdsourcing project inviting users to create a database of historic newspaper images, providing online access to copyright regulations and cases, or debuting "touch history" tours that allow visually impaired visitors to experience the magnificence of the Thomas Jefferson Building, the Library will continue to innovate and rethink the way we do business. Delivering superior services and valuable experiences is the way to encourage users to return regularly and become lifelong learners and Library contributors.

Objective 4

Elevate Digital Experiences

We will invest in an end-to-end digital experience that improves online services, enhances discoverability, and facilitates the online curation of content to help all users derive more value.

Objective 5

Transform In-Person Experiences

We will focus on exhibitions, learning spaces, educational materials, and cultural programming to transform visitors into users of our services and contributors to our mission.

Objective 6

Develop User-Centered Content

We will develop content in a variety of formats and media to enhance the usability and accessibility of the Library's collections.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES



GOAL 3 OPTIMIZE RESOURCES

Modernize, strengthen, and streamline our operational capabilities.

The agency's financial and human resources, physical and digital capacities, and rate of technological advancement have struggled to keep pace with the growth of its collections and the needs of its users. The confluence of these factors has made our current operating model untenable without a shift in approach.

Our approach moving forward will focus on two fundamental opportunities. The first is to identify, synergize, and leverage capabilities, processes, and talent dispersed across organizational units as a single enterprise. The second opportunity goes beyond the common adage of doing more with less, and seeks instead to proactively find more, so the agency can do even more.

Objective 7

Align Core Library Activities

We will align and strengthen capabilities across the Library to achieve optimum operational efficiencies while providing enhanced user services.

Objective 8

Modernize Operations

We will share information, apply best practices, and use data across the Library to drive user-centered enhancements that will deliver the highest returns while balancing staff workloads.

Objective 9

Invest in Talent for the Future

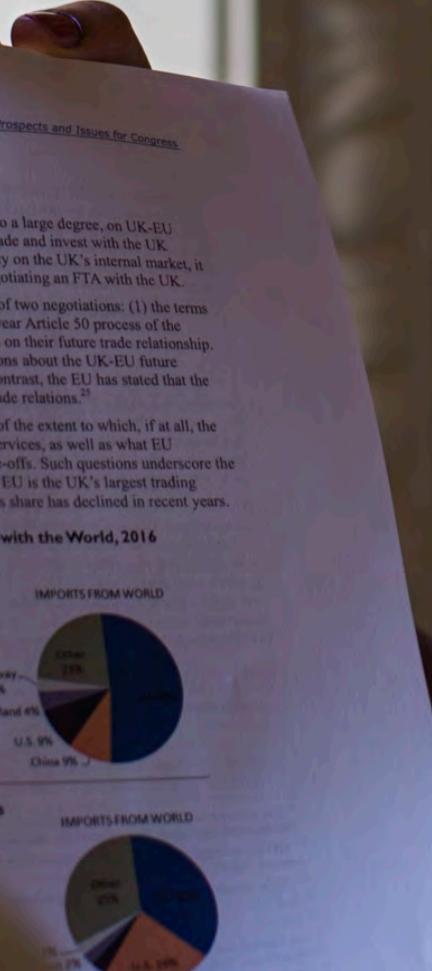
We will uncover and address capability gaps; train and retain our experts; and recruit new talent to augment our knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Objective 10

Diversify and Expand Funding

We will more effectively articulate the Library's value to attract additional resources from Congress, private donors, and others.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES



GOAL 4 MEASURE IMPACT

Use data to measure our impact on the world around us and share a powerful story.

The Library of Congress is the world's largest library with nearly 170 million items; yet what ultimately makes the Library successful is usage. There is no doubt the Library's collections and its human expertise hold untold intellectual value. But we must go beyond the volume of collections or number of research requests from Congress when speaking to our value, and focus on increasing usage, and perhaps more importantly, measuring the impact of our collections, services, and experts.

We will use data to measure how effectively we deliver services to our users. Having access to better quality aggregate data about our users—while appropriately disclosing how the information is being collected and used, and safeguarding user privacy—will allow the agency to gain insights to operate more efficiently and effectively. To enhance our services, staff will be empowered by this data to turn what they learn into principled action, working with users and with each other to address issues as they emerge and make timely improvements. For an institution as large as the Library to be effective, our approach to achieving the goals and objectives outlined in this *Strategic Plan* must be integrated across the organization. This means promoting shared outcomes and resource planning to enable our organizational units to fulfill their mission-specific goals.

Objective 11

Understand Our Users

We will use data to better understand our users and their needs and measure how effectively we deliver services, while appropriately safeguarding user privacy.

Objective 12

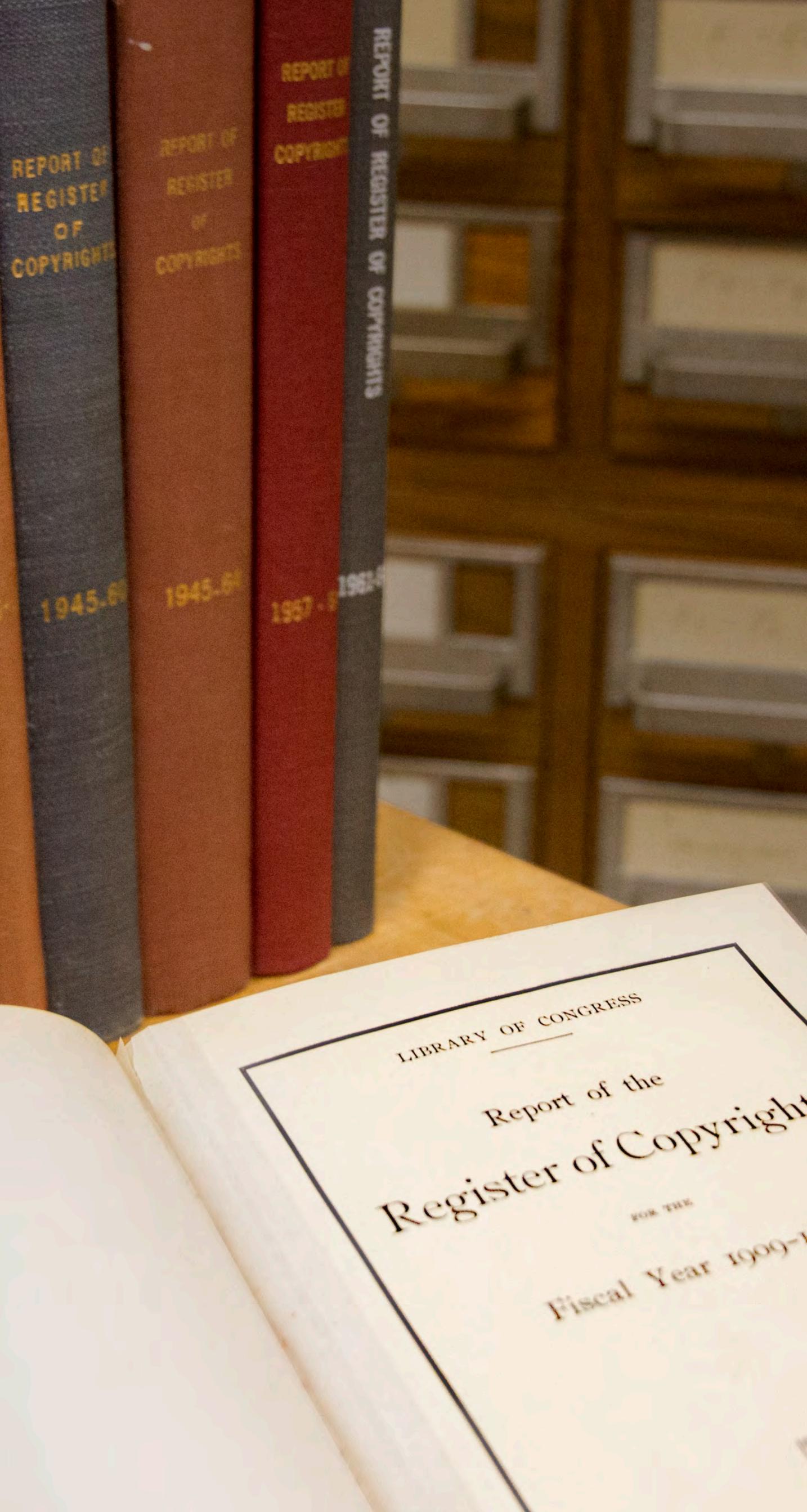
Communicate Impact

We will measure impact in order to demonstrate value to all stakeholders and share our story in compelling, creative ways.

Objective 13

Promote a Culture of Continuous Improvement

We will become an insight-driven organization, using data to plan, set goals and targets, and strengthen performance management.



IMPLEMENTATION & METRICS

Performance measures will be established, reported, and assessed annually.

Implementation Timeline

The Library of Congress will implement our strategic goals and objectives through a phased, five-year plan from FY 2019–FY 2023.

The agency's strategy will come to life in the *Directional Plans* that organizational units will develop to identify and prioritize key initiatives. The *Directional Plans* will identify office direction and operational priorities and be aligned to the *Strategic Plan*. They will speak to what each unit is doing to track progress to and ultimately realize the agency's strategy.

As the *Directional Plans* are developed, the Library will develop one enterprise *Implementation Roadmap* to capture the aggregated priority initiatives, timeline, and targeted success for the entire organization.

Performance Measurement

Regular evaluation and improvement are critical components to a successful strategic plan implementation. When developing the *Implementation Roadmap*, leadership will also develop a strong performance management plan to track success to the goals. A set of performance measures will accompany each

objective from the *Strategic Plan*. They will be tracked, reported, and reassessed or updated yearly, though progress will be measured more frequently, depending on the availability of data. Collectively, these measures will be used as indicators of progress and will:

- Improve decision making and problem solving
- Enable accountability
- Provide early warning signals
- Enable projections and planning
- Facilitate feedback
- Increase objectivity
- Focus attention

Communicating Results

The Library will communicate the progress and results of the *Strategic Plan* implementation on a regular basis. Progress and results will be shared with Congress and external stakeholders through annual reports, and with staff via the intranet, the Gazette, meetings, open staff forums, and other venues.

Beyond 2023

The Library of Congress will reassess our strategic priorities, including goals, objectives, measures, and actions each year. Library leadership will convene to discuss and evaluate the success of the *Strategic Plan* and *Implementation Roadmap* as we determine our planning approach for 2024 and beyond.

THE LIBRARY AT-A-GLANCE

In fiscal year 2017, The Library of Congress...

Responded to more than 1 million reference requests from Congress, the public, and other federal agencies;

Registered more than 450,000 claims to copyright through the U.S. Copyright Office;

Circulated more than 20.9 million copies of braille and audio books and magazines to more than 470,000 blind and physically handicapped reader accounts;

Circulated more than 1 million items for use inside and outside the Library;

Performed nearly 10 million preservation actions on items in the Library's physical collections;

Received over 110 million visits to our website, with over 503 million page views and 2.7 million downloads;

Recorded a total of 167,000,738 items in the collections:

- 24,356,449 cataloged books in the Library of Congress classification system
- 14,933,799 items in the non-classified print collections, including books in large type and raised characters, incunabula (books printed before 1501), monographs and serials, music, bound newspapers, pamphlets, technical reports, and other print material

- 127,710,490 items in the non-classified (special) collections, including:

- 3,696,825 audio materials (discs, tapes, talking books and other recorded formats)
- 72,061,060 manuscripts
- 5,586,836 maps
- 17,219,510 microforms
- 1,826,847 moving images
- 8,195,320 items of sheet music
- 15,683,296 visual materials, as follows:

 - 14,897,266 photographs
 - 108,815 posters
 - 677,215 prints and drawings
 - 3,440,796 other (including machine-readable items)

Welcomed nearly 1.9 million on-site visitors to the Library's three Capitol Hill buildings;

Leveraged the unique knowledge, skill, and expertise of more than 3,000 permanent staff members; and

Operated with a total fiscal 2017 appropriation of \$631.95 million, including the authority to spend \$52.07 million in offsetting receipts.





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