



**Ryerson University
Library and Archives**

**Building on Success:
Strategic Plan 2009-2013**

Mission

The Ryerson University Library and Archives is integral to learning, teaching, and scholarly, research and creative activities. We collect, organize, preserve, disseminate, and provide access to essential information resources. Our services focus on our users to enable knowledge creation. Through engagement with students, faculty, and the community we collaborate in fostering successful critical thinkers and lifelong learners.

Committed to:

Intellectual freedom and the right to privacy

Equitable access

Information literacy

Honouring our heritage and enhancing our reputation

Service excellence and accountability

Open communication and collaboration

Creating stimulating learning environments

Innovation and flexibility

Continuous improvement

Introduction

This is a transformative era in academic libraries and in the history of Ryerson University Library and Archives (RULA). We have grown through stages of supporting an increasingly diverse undergraduate population, to broadening our scope to serve graduate students in a comprehensive university. We are now expanding our role as a research library underpinning the SRC agenda of the university community.

The following charts show the extent of the growth RULA has embraced in the last five years:

Figure 1

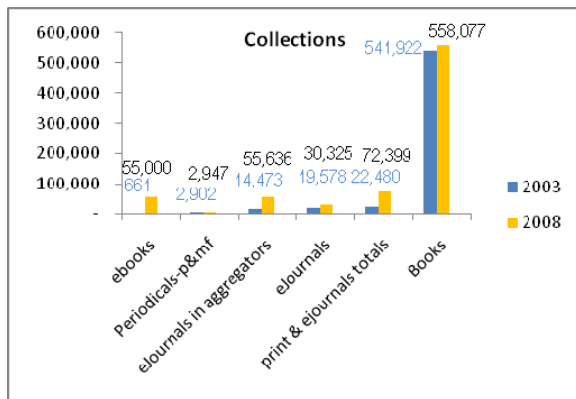
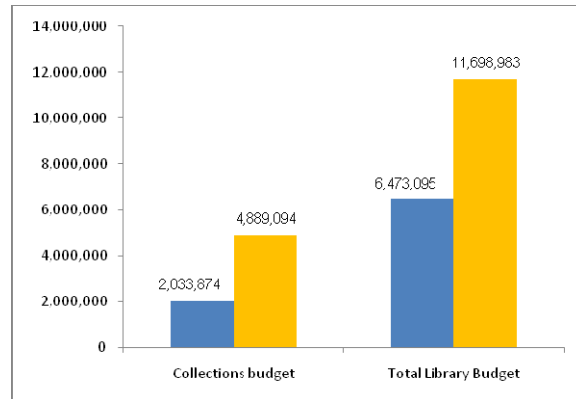


Figure 2



E-books and access to journals and other digital resources has soared. But we have also greatly improved the quality and currency of our current monograph collection while keeping an eye on its footprint. Such progress couldn't have been made without major university support as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 3 shows the rapid growth in interlibrary loan requests since we streamlined the request process with user-initiated applications. Requests are tracked for potential purchase. The doubling of requests to borrow from us suggests that the quality of our collections has also grown. Bucking the trend in most libraries, our reference transactions have doubled. Figure 4 shows growth in in-person check out of materials. While visits to our homepage have virtually doubled, we are very much in demand as a destination: visits to the library are the highest ever recorded at Ryerson. It is clear that our users still need or choose to come to the library in person.

Figure 3

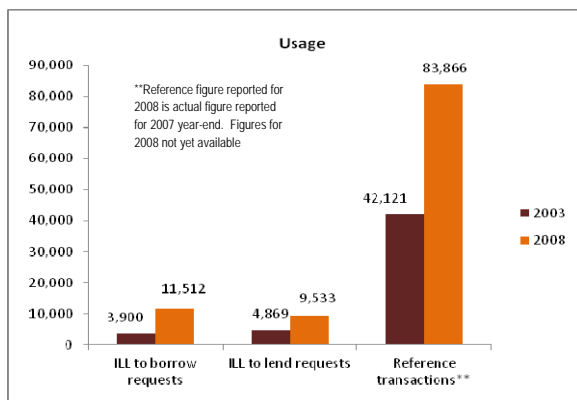
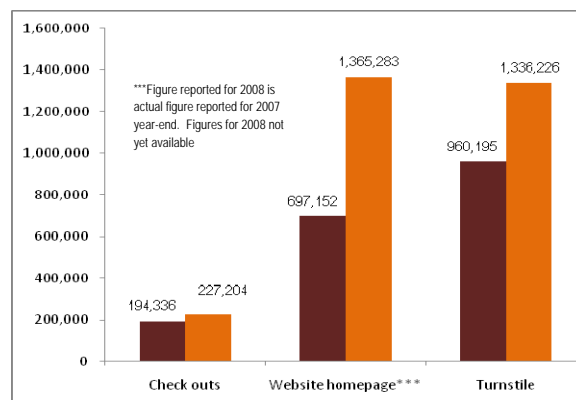


Figure 4



As the Ryerson community has grown, so has the Library to support it (Figure 5). Growth has occurred at all staffing levels, with the most marked growth in professional staffing. Figure 6 shows what strides have been made to improve our current facilities. These four measures speak directly to student engagement and success. We

increased our hours by 38%; public computers including loaner laptops by 99%. By reconfiguring parts of the library, most notably the fourth floor, we have increased available seats by 56%.

Figure 5

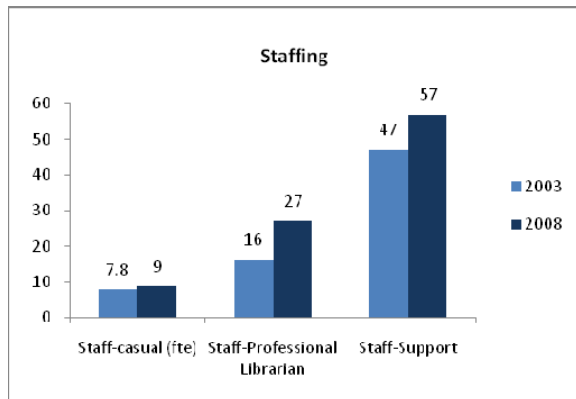
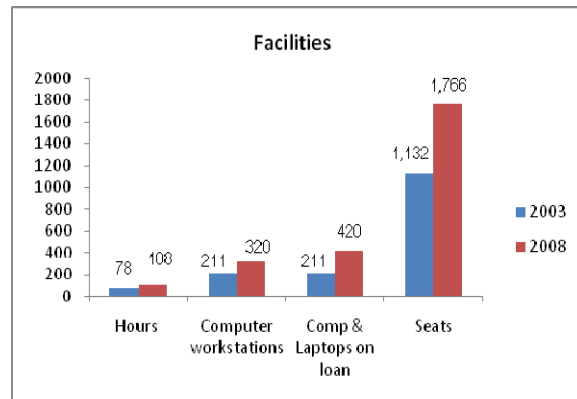


Figure 6



We have been nimble in refining collections, services and space to anticipate and respond to changing needs. But the sheer growth in FTE and comprehensiveness of programs mean that we must take major steps in the next five years to weave RULA into the fabric of the academic agenda. Just as a successful university Library must be aligned with the academic mission of the university, this strategic plan outlines how the Ryerson Library and Archives will be fundamentally engaged in that mission as expressed in Shaping Our Future, our Academic Plan.

A Changing Role for the Library

The role of librarians is changing in large university libraries. Librarians are becoming active participants in course development and sometimes delivery, working closely with teaching faculty as they are freed up from time-consuming duties ably handled by paraprofessionals. Our role as knowledge managers is increasing as we add a focus on access to data and unpublished material.

At Ryerson we have been moving steadily to create a balance of collections, access, and space for human interaction and self reliance, in an approach both physical and virtual, all in support of learning, teaching, and SRC. RULA's continued success is predicated on an integrated approach to place, collections, applied technology and expertise development in a user-focused learning environment, where one can undertake a journey of several destinations in the course of a day, an hour, or an online minute.

We shall focus on developing expertise and experience. We shall take the teaching of information literacy skills to more integrated and comprehensive levels. We shall continue to build collections with a digital focus (which brings its own attendant issue of preservation). We shall develop and maintain our special collections and archival resources in physical and digital formats, building a digital repository of Ryerson research output to support SRC.

We shall seek creative ways to develop some librarian positions as full-time 'lead' liaisons for each faculty. These librarians will become part of faculty teams and may spend much of their time collaborating with faculty and working with students in the teaching departments. As part of this collaboration we shall encourage faculty to have a teaching presence in the Student Learning Centre. To achieve this transformative role for librarians, we must have a mentoring and professional development agenda in place.

Space and Place Making

As we move even further along the digital continuum, we are designing spaces that place the user firmly in the centre. We lend laptops to augment our public workstations; we allow food and drink; with comfortable chairs and modular, mobile furniture we encourage students to create their own environment. We host cultural events and exhibits in the space. The recently repurposed fourth floor embodies this strategy. When we stop thinking of our

students and faculty as users and start to think of them as constituents, we develop the library as an incubator of learning; a place of information, introspection, interaction, inspiration and innovation.

Our high usage and overcrowded facilities mandate that our number one priority for the library over the life of this plan will be the building of new collaborative learning spaces (the new Student Learning Centre), while we manage and repurpose current learning and collections space, all in a safe and congenial environment. We shall develop a comprehensive strategy to manage the growth of our physical collections in the short and long term.

The new Student Learning Centre will be the vehicle by which we take RULA into the next phase as an integral part of the teaching and learning environment. The expanded library/student learning centre will therefore incorporate seminar/teaching space side by side with study, collaborative services and collections space, thus allowing for serendipitous interaction and discovery. The Centre will encourage experimentation and innovation across traditional lines.

We aspire to develop a named Special Collections Research Centre within the Student Learning Centre. Climate-controlled and meeting CCERP (Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board) standards this professionally staffed centre will comprise Special Collections, Archives, seminar/teaching space, and a reading room. Such a centre will provide an active teaching and research environment for our faculty, experiential learning opportunities for students, a destination for visiting researchers, and an attraction for possible donors.

Student and faculty engagement

The 21st century university library blurs the edges between teaching and learning environments by supporting collaborative as well as formal practice. In an increasingly interdisciplinary world we are the nexus where pedagogy, culture and space intersect— neutral space which motivates learning outside of the classroom. Librarians' roles are changing as they partner with faculty in the production of knowledge. The learning commons concept has now matured to the point that it can be viewed as a philosophy underpinning student study and learning space rather than a physical entity. As such it is possible to develop a virtual learning commons framework which facilitates engagement, learning and access to scholarly resources anytime, anywhere.

As our collections expand to include data sets, images and other digital content, RULA offers increased opportunities for faculty to involve students at all levels in teaching and learning. The quality of the undergraduate experience can set the tone for graduate success. We shall work with teaching faculty to embed information literacy development and library resource-based assignments into the curriculum.

Teaching students how to critically evaluate content becomes increasingly important. Our librarians are highly respected for their expertise in teaching students how to find, evaluate and use scholarly information. In an era of the democratization of the web, teaching students information literacy is expanding to include information fluency— defined as “the ability to effectively and efficiently use information and understand its role in their lives and in society”. Librarians will work with learning strategists and teaching faculty to tailor our information fluencies agenda to student needs and the curriculum.

RULA has taken the lead on a geovisioning project to examine future directions of innovative instruction and research involving geographic information, by housing materials supporting spatial instruction and research across disciplines. Given the cross-disciplinary nature of spatial technology, RULA holds a strong strategic position as a neutral body to facilitate the concept of spatial literacy in teaching and geospatial research across Ryerson University departments. To that end we envision an expanded Geospatial Map and Data Commons in the new building incorporating such student services as a numeracy centre.

Collections, Access and Preservation

We shall continue our aggressive growth in electronic resources, including journals, indexes and ebooks, through consortial licences, while maintaining a balance of resources to reflect differing needs. In the sciences, teaching faculty have embraced digital access to scholarship. In the arts, there is a still a much higher reliance on

monographs: technical issues are still hampering widespread uptake of e-books. However, international digitization projects of public domain monographs will continue to improve access for arts students and faculty.

We shall continue to develop a 'live' working collection of monographs that reflects student and faculty needs. With careful attention to program profiles we shall ensure that every monograph we acquire deserves to be in the collection, and our collection includes the core material needed to support Ryerson's programs. Through systematic evaluation we shall ensure the quality of our collections, both physical and digital. We aspire to double our monograph collection over time. The judicious acquisition of monographs to support graduate studies and research will be coupled with efficient interlibrary loan/document delivery services. We shall continue to manage acquisitions spending with care. As Ryerson's student FTE count grows, so do our licensing costs on which they are predicated. A volatile exchange rate can severely affect our purchasing power.

Ryerson's creative and career focused programs mean that we have many information sources, types and formats outside of traditional publishing to capture. We shall continue to take a wide view of what constitutes an appropriate collection for Ryerson. We shall develop our unique special collections that enhance learning and teaching excellence in specific flagship programs, either through managed donations or specific purchases.

SRC

The collaborative nature of research now means that a faculty researcher's 'department' is just as likely to be a virtual gathering of specialists in his/her field from all over the world.

We plan to build a Ryerson digital repository, through which we can harness the SRC output of Ryerson, published and unpublished; data sets; objects; images; theses, multimedia etc. in a systematic way with the use of metadata to ensure that our collections are accessible and interoperable to support research, teaching and learning at Ryerson. As technology advances we shall seek out further streaming solutions for video and sound content. We shall keep abreast of copyright implications in both hard copy and digital media.

The repository has implications for knowledge management of all kinds: not only SRC output, but the digitization of archival and unique collections, for example. With appropriate metadata and stewardship the repository can also support other facets of campus information.

The expansion of our role in serving the SRC agenda won't be at the expense of our students. Rather it will open up new avenues of information to them.

Partnerships and Collaborations

We have been engaged for some time in relationship building, to become much more integrated with teaching, learning, student engagement, service provision, and SRC.

Each of the groups on campus who deliver services to students has a unique view into the lives and learning habits of students. Collaboration provides us with opportunities to draw on these multiple viewpoints and to refine and enhance our approaches to delivering services. We have a clear opportunity for a partnered approach with Student Services in the Student Learning Centre to develop an innovative and integrated approach to service, by replacing fixed desks and self service machines and retraining staff to be part of generalist welcome/triage teams at multi-use mobile service points. The success of this model depends on a comprehensive customer service training program, developed across traditional departmental lines.

A close partnership with CCS will enable us to collaborate on maximizing access to technology and technical expertise for students. In the rapidly changing educational environment there is constant need for experimentation, and collaboration between librarians, faculty, learning strategists, CCS, the LTO and others will allow us to bring different expertise to bear on joint strategic initiatives.

We have established an excellent record of collaboration on the local, national and international level through reciprocal agreements and consortia. Recognizing that we are stronger collectively, Ontario university libraries are working together on such far-reaching projects as ODESI (a data portal), a geospatial portal for access to geospatial datasets, and the preservation of digital resources, to ensure persistent access to digital scholarly output.

Applied Technology

We are committed to providing a technology-rich and flexible environment which prepares for tomorrow's technology. As we continue to strengthen the library's digital presence we will work with CCS to ensure we have a robust platform from which to launch our access to collections and services to an increasingly wider audience. Using technology in support of information literacy instruction is an essential development area for us as we face a huge increase in demand from faculty for instruction sessions.

We are living in an age of ubiquitous online content. As students make Google their search engine of choice, we constantly enhance our web presence to ensure that they are guided to quality resources. We encase our formal information architecture in socially appealing frameworks. We shall integrate a library presence in course management systems: technology is only a tool in our user-focused goal of enabling our users to develop their research, access and learning.

Mobile and ubiquitous computing, cell phone and PDA use, and the diverse nature of our campus community, has led us to move on from the library on your laptop to seek to develop the library in your pocket.

Expertise

As we develop the Student Learning Centre, trained support staff will handle more general reference, while librarians will focus on in depth research help, by appointment, drop in office hours, or within teaching areas.

As we develop our repository and move even further into digital media, more multimedia programmers and intellectual property expertise will be required. With a balance of current and archival resources to support the teaching, learning and research agenda, professional expertise such as archival librarians and curatorial specialists are essential to the success of our Special Collections and Archives. The new Ryerson Photography Gallery and Research Centre affords opportunities for strategic staffing partnerships including further internships for PPCM graduates, for example. Other experiential learning and internship opportunities for students abound.

Promotion, Marketing and Outreach

Our reputation will be enhanced by paying careful attention to the needs of our many and varied constituent groups. Not only do we strive to make RULA an essential destination for the Ryerson community, our dynamic and creative environment will make us a workplace of choice for the best in our field. By attracting the best, we can ensure that our commitment to continuous improvement will be supported.

We shall promote Ryerson's SRC and unique collections to the world through our website and digital repository. Digital exhibitions on our homepage will attract researchers, alumni and potential donors to Ryerson, thus expanding our niche collections and ultimately enhancing our reputation.

Systematic assessment is an essential part of the strategy. Established qualitative tools will be used to chart our progress in providing the highest quality collections and services. We shall seek out those on campus who aren't using our services to determine why. We shall focus on the diverse needs of our student population, to develop a strategy for improved access to resources for such groups as distance education and Chang School students.

We shall also pursue external community relationships to promote our concept of The Library Mile (the grid which encompasses Toronto Public Library, the University of Toronto, ourselves and others) as part of Ryerson's city-building agenda.

We have an exciting and dynamic five years ahead as we continue to build on our success.