

# BHL Mission Exercise

## *What is a mission statement?*

A mission statement describes an organization's reason for existing.

## *What does a mission statement include?*

Who we serve (our audience)

What we do (our "business")

What we value (our values)

## *Our current mission statement...*

The Biodiversity Heritage Library is a consortium of natural history and botanical libraries that cooperate to digitize and make accessible the legacy literature of biodiversity *Business* held in their collections and to make that literature available for open access and responsible use as a part of a global "biodiversity commons." *Values*

## *A contribution from the Collections Committee...*

The Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) is an international collaboration of libraries, museums, and research institutions working together to make biodiversity literature available *Business* for use by the widest possible audience *Audience* through an open access environment and sustainable management *Values* of its resources. Much of this literature is rare or has limited global distribution. More than any other digital library, this collection and its associated services are centered on the history and future of biodiversity literature.

## *A mission statement with all the right elements...*

The Mississippi Library Commission is committed - through leadership, advocacy and service - to strengthening and enhancing libraries and library services for all Mississippians. *Values*

*Business*

*Audience*

## *Other mission statement examples...*

**International Children's Digital Library:** The mission of the International Children's Digital Library Foundation is to support the world's children in becoming effective members of the global community - who exhibit tolerance and respect for diverse cultures, languages and ideas - by making the best in children's literature available online free of charge.

**World Digital Library:** The World Digital Library (WDL) makes available on the Internet, free of charge and in multilingual format, significant primary materials from countries and cultures around the world.

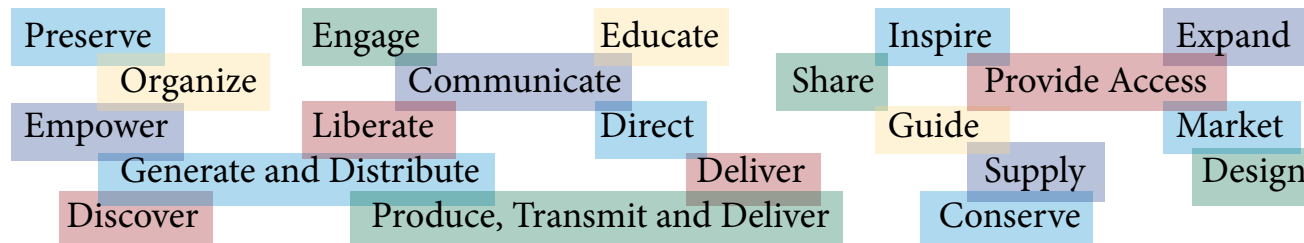
**Hathitrust:** The mission of HathiTrust is to contribute to the common good by collecting, organizing, preserving, communicating, and sharing the record of human knowledge.

## *Business examples...*

Examples of words or phrases that other organizations, including BHL, have used to describe what they do, or their "business:"

*BHL Currently:* **Digitize** and **make accessible** the legacy literature of biodiversity

*Other Examples:*



For all of these examples, we must also think about what we are preserving or liberating or expanding. So it becomes not only the action we do, but what it is that we do the action to or for (i.e. we digitize *what?* we provide access to *what?*).

## *Value examples...*

Examples of words or phrases that other organizations, including BHL, have used to describe what they value:

*BHL Currently: **Open Access, Responsible Use***

*As articulated by BHL Collections Committee: Sustainable Management*

*Other Examples:*

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Value Examples</b>
Smithsonian Libraries	Broad and Enduring Access
California Digital Library	Innovation, Collaboration, Openness, Sharing, Privacy, Learning
Missouri Botanical Garden	Preserving and Enriching Life
New York Public Library	Accountability, Excellence, Expertise, Freedom, Innovation
Harvard Library	Respect, Effective Communication, Excellence, Preservation, Honesty, Creativity, Teamwork

## *BHL Audiences...*

Through surveys, blog posts, Gemini feedback, emails, and conferences such as Life and Literature, we have identified a variety of audience segments that BHL currently reaches.

Those include:

Taxonomists

Ecologists

Zoologists

Researchers

Paleontologists

Physiologists

Students

Biologists

Geologists

Educators

Molecular Biologists

Librarians

Artists

Scientists

Information Technologists

Citizen Scientists

Historians

Bioinformatics Technologists

Conservationists

Botanists

Anthropologists

Archaeologists

Geneticists

Archivists

# BHL Goals Exercise

## *What are goals?*

“Goals are general statements about what you need to accomplish in order to meet your mission and address major issues facing your organization.”<sup>1</sup>

The key is **general statements**. Goals are not meant to delve into how something will be accomplished, but simply the general concepts we want to address as an organization. So, **think what, not how**.

## *Our current goals...*

Below are BHL's goals as stated in our current strategic plan from April, 2009. The goals are a combination of the six articulated in the UK version of the document, with one additional goal (goal #7) added in the U.S. revision.

- 1.) **Establish the major corpus of digitized biodiversity publications on the web.** Through scanning its member library collections, through sharing with partner projects, and through cooperation with content providers BHL will establish the most comprehensive collection of digitized, openly accessible, biodiversity publications available on the web.
- 2.) **Improve access to accurate, documented information about the world's biodiversity.** The BHL will create services for disambiguating the complex web of 250 years practice of citing and documenting biodiversity literature and will create a repository for community-vetted bibliographies in support of ongoing research.
- 3.) **Improve the efficiency of biological research for users.** The BHL portal will be regularly improved and further integrated with the Encyclopedia of Life and other biodiversity projects.
- 4.) **Preserve the textual record of biodiversity for the future.** The BHL will ensure that the corpus of biodiversity literature is available for future generations using the most effective technical and social practices.
- 5.) **Sustain the project into the future.** BHL members will collectively prepare annually two significant grants proposals and develop a sustainable model for long-term preservation and accountability of the corpus.
- 6.) **Ensure that the BHL is widely known, understood, and used by scientists and the general public.** The BHL community will communicate and promote the services, content, and uses of the BHL to multiple audiences.
- 7.) **Internationalize the BHL.** The BHL will seek international collaborative projects to ensure and demonstrate that the legacy of biodiversity research belongs to all of humanity and is the exclusive provenance of no one country.

<sup>1</sup>*Strategic planning Facilitator Guide*. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development.