

KNOWLEDGE FOR ALL:

The University of Leeds libraries expands digital collections through Gale Accelerate

Guided by the Libraries' vision of "Knowledge for All," the University of Leeds expanded its digital collections and increased access to primary sources with Gale Accelerate, advancing research-led teaching and digital scholarship.



PARTICIPANTS

Jane Saunders: Associate Director of Content and Discovery

David Morgan: Collections Liaison Manager

Cassie Ulph: Digital Development Officer

Jane Saunders, David Morgan, and Cassie Ulph, all from the University of Leeds Libraries, leveraged the Gale Accelerate Programme to expand access to primary sources and digital resources, directly supporting the Libraries' vision of "Knowledge for All".

THE MODEL

Gale Accelerate strengthens libraries with instant access to customisable packages of Primary Sources, including historical newspapers and thematic archives. Libraries can easily add or swap archives to suit their needs. Comprehensive support is provided, including training sessions and tailored marketing materials, ensuring libraries maximise the benefits for students and academics. The programme allows institutions to unlock resources upfront, access content for a year, and secure significant financial advantages on add-on purchases, supporting diverse academic needs within budget.

THE VISION

The University of Leeds is a values-driven institution, harnessing expertise in research and education to build a better future. These aspirations are reflected in the Libraries "Knowledge for All" vision, which focuses on four key strands:

Digital Futures: Leveraging advancements in technology to transform how information is accessed, shared, and created.

Open Higher Education: Promoting equity in knowledge access through open research, educational resources, and transparent methodologies.

Sustainable Environments: Building resilient foundations for long-term resource availability and fostering sustainable academic practices.

Enriched Experience: Engaging with the whole community to ensure services meet the evolving needs of students, faculty and beyond

The library has a strong tradition of developing collections, particularly in the humanities, which has supported research-led teaching and learning for decades. Jane Saunders noted, "Things have changed so much over the last 20 years. It has become easier for people to connect with resources without having to own them." This shift to digital accessibility aligns with the library's vision to empower students and researchers by providing seamless access to high-quality resources.

Recognising the value of digital innovation, the library invested in Gale Accelerate to expand its range of primary sources and ensure that its offerings meet the diverse needs of academic programmes, from the humanities to the sciences. As David Morgan explained, "We've added various archives this year through Gale Accelerate, and it's been a smooth process to integrate these resources." By leveraging this programme, the University of Leeds Libraries continue to support research excellence and interdisciplinary learning, critical to the overall mission of the University.

“It is good to know that when we purchase from Gale, it’s a smooth process.”



THE OPPORTUNITIES

The Gale Accelerate programme provides the University of Leeds Libraries with an opportunity to expand access to primary sources and digital collections and encourage digital scholarship. This allows scholars to leverage new methodologies to explore content at a scale that has hitherto not been possible. Jane Saunders noted, “What Gale Accelerate offered was the opportunity to expand that digital range, making it possible for researchers and undergraduates to access primary sources and material.”

Two of the standout features of Gale Accelerate was its cost-effectiveness and flexibility. David emphasised, “The ability to try before you buy was a game changer for us.” This flexibility enabled the library to better align its offerings with the current academic setting, without the pressure of making a final purchase. Additionally, Jane Saunders noted, “It’s opened up more content to us. When we’ve been swapping things in and out and making decisions, we haven’t felt constrained by the model.”

Moreover, Gale Accelerate’s comprehensive support ensured a seamless transition to the resource. Training was provided for both library staff and users. Cassie noted the impact of this support, saying, “We’ve had some training sessions here, and it’s been a useful entry point for us into thinking about those key concepts without necessarily having to have all the technical background.” Gale Accelerate provided a smooth transition for the University of Leeds library, enabling a clear path to furthering its vision.

The integration of Gale Primary Sources has helped foster a vibrant research culture at the University of Leeds. With a rich array of historical newspapers and thematic archives, students and faculty can engage with primary materials that deepen their understanding of complex topics. This influx of materials not only enriched course content but also stimulated academic inquiry across disciplines.

The implementation of Gale Accelerate has enabled the University of Leeds to expand its digital offerings, in line with its vision of “Knowledge for All”. Gale Accelerate has helped the University of Leeds Libraries realise a key ambition to enrich scholarship across the institution by expanding access to primary sources, promoting digital scholarship, and supporting interdisciplinary research.

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