News from member libraries

Durham University

Digitisation of Durham theses

The library is working on a project to digitise 8300 Durham University theses (approximately 10 000 volumes) that are currently held in print format. This will enable the long-term preservation of the university's PhD and Masters research. Once complete, all Durham University research theses from 1899 onwards will be freely available electronically from Durham University's e-theses website <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/>, which already contains access to the full text of Durham University Higher Degree theses passed since 1 October 2009.

Open access statement

Durham University has reaffirmed its commitment to the open access agenda through a new statement agreed by the university's Senate and Research Committee. The Durham University Open Access Statement advocates that where possible, all Durham University research outputs should be made available on an open access basis. Durham Research Online, the university's research repository, <http://dro.dur.ac.uk>, and Durham e-theses, http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/, are promoted as ways of achieving this. The statement also encourages Durham academics to contribute papers to open access journals and subject repositories. The statement confirms Durham University's commitment to widening access to research findings, enhancing their use and impact amongst the international academic and research community and more widely within society.

Library developments: main library

Level 2, the entrance level of the library and the west wing PC cluster, are being refurbished during summer 2011, giving our users a preview of what they can expect once the major extension and refurbishment of the library is complete in 2012.

The refurbishment to the entrance area and the rest of level 2 will provide

- one 'Help & Information' point for enquiries: all our services will be available at one desk, with borrowing machines distributed throughout the library rather than just in the busy entrance area
- an increase in study rooms with improved technology
- an improved short-loan study area
- more visible book return area preparing for future automation
- new informal and group study spaces to ease overcrowding at busy periods
- a nicer environment with more light and space and views of the cathedral

Library developments: Palace Green and the Lindisfarne Gospels

Palace Green Library is going through a programme of improvement and renovation. Improved facilities will benefit both researchers and visitors to the library. These changes will create spaces with specialised environmental conditions and security where the university treasures and special collections, as well as exhibitions on loan, can be displayed. On that note, the British Library has confirmed that the Lindisfarne Gospels will be displayed at Palace Green Library for three months from June 2013.

Library developments: Queen's Campus Stockton

Improvements to Queen's Campus Library are expected to be complete by the beginning of October ready for the start of the Michaelmas term. The Careers Service have moved out of the library, allowing us to enhance the quiet zone further (which students have told us they would like) by providing 16 more study tables and two additional study rooms. The library is also taking ownership of the space formerly occupied by the adjacent café (which is being re-located on the ground floor of the building) and this is to become a dedicated library postgraduate study area.

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Open University

Access to video assets (AVA) project

AVA, a three-year internally funded project, came to an end in July. The project focused on the preservation and use of the university's extensive and valuable archive of video material. The aims were

- to deliver a proof of concept repository prototype for digital preservation of OU video
- to improve access to OU video assets to support re-use

These aims have been achieved through the following deliverables:

- a video repository prototype ('Avadora'), using open source software. The prototype supports linked data, in-video search and conforms to preservation standards.
- a strategy for digital preservation of video and a digitise-on-demand service. The service has been piloted and is now being implemented by the University Archive staff in Library Services.
- a video search tool ('Videofinder') has been developed and piloted to provide end-user access to previously 'hidden' resources. This is now in service and available to OU staff.

In addition to these key achievements, the project has been able to carry out a systematic audit of holdings across the university, digitise selected collections of at-risk material and put important frameworks and processes in place to improve access and discoverability for OU staff.

For more information about the project see the website at <www.open.ac.uk/library/ava/>

RISE PROJECT

OU Library Services has just completed this short JISC-funded project as part of the JISC activity data programme which aims to explore how data generated from institutional systems could be used to improve the user experience or administration of services.

The RISE (Recommendations improve the student experience) project focused on the use of e-resources because our students and researchers mainly access the rich collection of library resources electronically. With over 100 000 annual unique users of e-resources we thought it would be worthwhile looking at the data recorded by the EZProxy system, with a view to providing recommendations to users of the EBSCO Discovery Search Solution. Our main aim was to find out if students wanted recommendations and found them useful.

The prototype interface we developed for the recommender system called MyRecommendations enabled users to receive a set of search results plus a number of recommendations which were
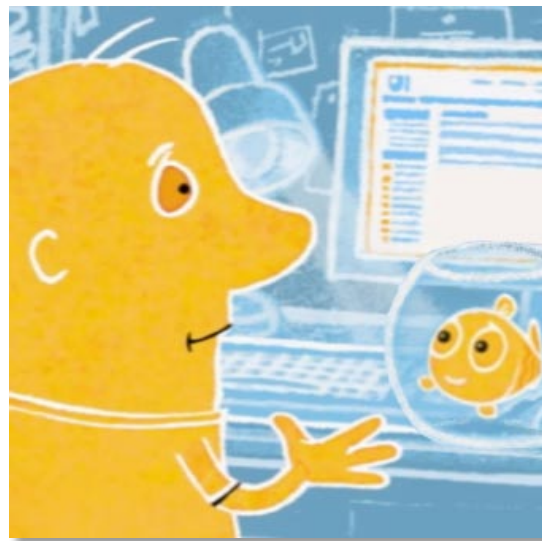
- **course-based:** '*People on your course(s) viewed*'
- **relationship-based:** '*These resources may be related to others you viewed recently*'
- **search-based:** '*People using similar search terms often viewed*'

Overall, 61% of students thought recommendations were either very useful or quite useful. For a full picture of how the evaluations were conducted, see the project blog at <www.open.ac.uk/blogs/rise>.

The RISE project team hosted a one-day workshop in July entitled 'Innovations in activity data for academic libraries', where a number of other higher education libraries involved in similar activity data projects were able to explore what can be done with activity data and examined what the challenges might be by taking part in a world-café style exercise.

The RISE project finished at the end of July 2011, and OU Library Services is currently exploring the options available around rolling out recommendations as a service.

LIBRARY SHORTS – ANIMATED VIDEO SERIES

Library Shorts is a series of animations that follow OU student Bob (and his goldfish Fin) as he explores and learns more about the range of library services and resources that will support him and other OU students with their studies. We have released two further animations in this series, *Evaluating information: knowing what to trust and Searching with One stop search*, both of which can be viewed at <www.open.ac.uk/library/bob> Transcripts for all the videos can be found on the Open University podcast site: <http://podcast.open.ac.uk/pod/LibraryShorts>

Around 18 500 research publications are freely available to view and consult via Open Research Online <http//oro.open.ac.uk/>, one of the largest and fastest growing research collections in the UK. Of the publications in ORO, 35% have the full text attached and we are encouraging academics to submit the full text of items as it enables interested parties to gain access to their research more easily. The ORO blog gives details of the monthly top 15 downloaded publications <www.open. ac.uk/blogs/ORO/>. According to the Registry of Open Access Repositories, (ORO) ranks third among UK higher education institutions' level of sustained deposits and deposit activity. Since its launch in 2006, ORO has had more than 1.6 million visits from over 200 countries. ORO played an important role in the Open University's recent research audit and will be used to support the publications part of the REF submission.

M-LIBRARIES: TRANSFORMING LIBRARIES WITH MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

OU Library Services co-hosted the Third International m-libraries Conference in Brisbane in May. Our partners were Athabasca University in Canada, the Emerald Publishing Group and the University of Southern Queensland. The conference was attended by 170 delegates from all areas of the globe and provided a forum for exchange of ideas, experience and expertise in the growing field of providing library resources and content to students via their mobile phones and other devices.

Delegates were treated to a broad range of papers demonstrating the creative ways in which this technology is being used by libraries worldwide. In some countries in the developing world, mobile phones are the predominant vehicle for accessing the internet (where network infrastructure is poor) and therefore very important for delivering information and learning. In other countries they are used as adjuncts to conventional online delivery in order to engage students and to provide more flexible services to an increasingly mobile audience.

The OU Library Services mobile developments were among the 40 or so presentations, and there was particular interest in the development of the mobile recommender service under development as part of our JISC-funded RISE project <www. open.ac.uk/blogs/RISE/>. Links to abstracts and presentations are available on the m-libraries conference programme: <www.usq.edu.au/m-libraries/program/confprogram>.

We look forward to hosting the next conference here at the Open University from 24 to 26 September 2012.

Nicky Whitsed
Director, OU Library Services

Royal Holloway, University of London

EASTER 2011

As the exam period followed immediately after the Easter weekend, the library remained open right across the two college discretionary days prior to Easter, the whole of the Easter weekend and the two subsequent bank holidays at the end of the week. Staffing levels were maintained through the use of additional hours worked by staff from the evening and weekend teams, as well as through additional hours worked by regular staff. Both our campus libraries saw very high levels of usage, which vindicated the cost of the exercise both financially and in terms of time in lieu accrued. Occupancy levels were really high; for instance, approximately 450 at 17:00 on Good Friday, 280 at noon on Easter Sunday and 420 at 13:00 on Easter Monday. The library was the only area within the college to extend its services in this way and some interesting lessons were learnt! Improved join-up is expected next year.

INTEGRATION OF THE MUSIC LIBRARY INTO FOUNDER'S LIBRARY: POSITIVE NSS OUTCOME

In the summer of 2010, the library implemented its strategy of moving from three sites to two. The small Music Library was closed and the collection integrated into one of the main libraries. This allowed the stock to be co-located in one area rather than being dispersed through a series of rooms in what was originally a cottage. The users benefited not only from access to a holistic collection but also from the full opening hours of the main libraries (97.5 hours per week during term time and over 100 from next session), self-service

provision, enhanced IT and good lighting and heating. The National Student Survey scores for 2011 have just been released, and it is pleasing to see that the score for music has increased by 21% from 57% in 2010 to 78% in 2011.

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