
**Better library and learning space:
projects, trends and ideas
Edited by Les Watson
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This book poses the question 'What are the most important things a 21st-century library should do with its space?' and addresses it via three themes, tackled by 25 authors.

For any librarian interested in space, this work could not be more timely, and it covers a great deal: theory, practice and international perspective.

Part 1 explores projects and trends, starting with well-known examples of UK library space projects, the Saltire Centre at Glasgow Caledonian University, the Hive in Worcester and the Forum at the University of Exeter. As we progress through this section we roam across the continents, capturing new library spaces in the USA, Europe, Far East and Australia.

The scale of some of the library projects described, particularly that of the Chinese libraries, is incredible. A smattering of disappointing black and white photographs doesn't really do justice to the spaces described, nor support the reader in their understanding.

Part 2 is where things get really interesting. Les Watson and Jan Howden take us through four chapters exploring ideas of library space, and in particular in relation to technology and learning.

Les Watson challenges us with the view that 'a 21st-century library is itself an act of creativity'. To deliver that effectively 'the importance of creativity, experiences and emotions in respect of space' has to be embraced. By identifying the promise of what technology, in its many forms, can bring to library space, Les also lays the gauntlet down as to how and whether librarians can respond strategically.

Part 3 tackles ideas and futures, and comprises a selection of essays relating to library space from fourteen very different perspectives. The

reader can now graze according to personal taste. Whether you are interested in furniture, technology, research or teaching there is something insightful and thought-provoking for you.

This is a valuable book for anyone embarking on a library space project, particularly in a higher education environment. The reader is offered examples of good practice, given big themes for thought and reflection, and is provoked by a range of specific views on everything from supporting researchers to viral design.