
News from member libraries

Leeds Metropolitan University

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Libraries and learning innovation were delighted to hear that our customer service excellence assessor recommended that we retain the award. Of the 57 separate elements of the standard, we comply fully with 56 and partially with one. The assessor was very complimentary about the service and about staff's commitment to quality service delivery. He noted our excellent track record in meeting our service standards and how staff appreciated that it is understanding the small things and getting them right that makes for excellent services.

REPOSITORY

The Leeds Met repository is developing apace and a great deal of work has been carried out on customising it to meet the needs of the university. Unusually for the sector, our repository holds a range of materials, including a steadily growing number of research outputs, open-access educational resources and others – for example, digitised readings are stored in the repository and linked to directly from within modules in the virtual learning environment. Nick Sheppard is the repository development officer and can be contacted at n.e.sheppard@leedsmet.ac.uk or repository@leedsmet.ac.uk.

BIBLIOSIGHT PROJECT

Libraries and learning innovation (LLI) was awarded a JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) 'information environment rapid innovation' grant in 2009 and the work they have done on the project, entitled 'Bibliosight', is to be used by Thomson Reuters as a case study to use with current and prospective customers. Thomson Reuters particularly recognise the value of the work undertaken in helping customers make sense of the complex functionality of Web of Science (WofS). The project is investigating building a link between our repository and the Web of Science database, facilitating the population of research outputs of Leeds Met staff, which would develop a tool to be used by any university or research centre. The project is able to alert academic staff when their publications have been included in the WofS database, prompting them to lodge the full

text in the repository. The team has developed a desktop tool that can be used to carry out a regular search of Web of Science, gathering the latest additions by Leeds Met staff. As well as interest from Thomson Reuters, the project's outputs are also attracting interest from the sector. Wendy Luker and Nick Sheppard recently presented to repository managers on the outcomes of the project at a meeting of the UK Council of Research Repositories. They can be contacted on w.luker@leedsmet.ac.uk or n.e.sheppard@leedsmet.ac.uk.

SKILLS FOR LEARNING PODCASTS

A range of podcasts intended to help boost students' study skills has been launched by Skills for Learning: <http://lskills-dev.leedsmet.ac.uk/podcast/podcast.shtml>. The podcasts enable students to listen to helpful advice whenever they need it. Themes include essay-writing, how to avoid plagiarism and analysing statistical data. A new podcast will be uploaded every month during term-time and podcasts from previous months will remain accessible for the current academic year. Students can listen to the podcast on the Skills for Learning website, download the MP3 file or subscribe to the podcast feed in i-Tunes. Each podcast episode is approximately 6–8 minutes long.

INFORMATION LITERACY STRATEGY

The library has developed an information literacy strategy for the university in consultation with teacher fellows and other academic staff. The aim is for information literacy to be embedded in the curriculum and assessed in all first-level courses. A matrix has been created to show recommended information literacy learning outcomes for each level of study and how these could be assessed. These will then be matched to the teaching, learning material and support offered by the library. Learning objects (hosted within the repository) and resources will be bundled together to achieve specific learning outcomes, and academic staff will be able to embed these into their modules. In addition to bundles of learning objects, an online version of the 'Little book of information literacy' is being created which will include videos, tutorials and audio. This will form the basis of a stand-alone module which academic staff can use for their students. The library will of course continue to offer face-to-face teaching as part of their support for the strategy and are working with academic staff to pilot the strategy with certain courses, and will use these as case studies to cascade further across the university. Contacts are Fiona Middleton (f.middleton@leedsmet.ac.uk),

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Liverpool John Moores University

NEW SERVICE MODEL

In September 2009 the new service area called library and student support (L&SS) started its first academic year as a converged library, IT and student administration service, operating out of three newly refurbished learning resources centres (LRCs). The service model, as previously reported, is quite unique in that staff coming from the main business areas of L&SS (research and learner support and student administration) come together within the LRCs to form a standard customer services area, which delivers front-facing student services from the service points known as the 'hub' and the transaction desk. These areas are now known as the 'student zones' and all student-facing support and administration now take place within these overarching customer services areas. The services available include programme and module enrolment, coursework submission, progression advice, access to welfare and careers appointments, library and IT support and guidance, student finance, programme administration and so on. The areas surrounding the student zones in the new LRCs, then, start to look a little more like a traditional LRC, featuring lots of student-facing spaces, including IT and PC areas, flexible and social learning spaces, bookable group rooms and meeting rooms, café areas, quiet study areas and, of course, library areas.

The new service and its associated developments have represented huge changes to the university and all the staff involved, and a robust change-management programme, sitting alongside a fairly rapid cultural and physical transition (with regards to the LRCs and the services delivered within them), has allowed L&SS staff to move into the new environment whilst continuing to deliver excellent services and facilities to our customers.

As to what the students think about their new services, feedback and management information received during semester one have indicated that the new service has been very well received and that students are pleased to be able to access all their student support services from one place and from a consistent customer services team. We are now entering into a review period, when univer-

sity-wide groups will be evaluating the impact that all the changes have had on the delivery of student administration and student support services.

We will be holding open days during the summer of 2010 so that colleagues from other university libraries can come to see exactly what we have done with our LRCs and our student services.

MARKETING AND PUBLICITY INITIATIVES

We will be approaching our bi-annual LibQUAL survey during autumn 2010, and are still keen to capture our users' perceptions of the library services delivered to them, even within our new super-converged service. During 2009 we thoroughly evaluated the responses that we received from our 2008 survey and have been able to act upon the findings, particularly as we have opened newly refurbished LRCs during 2009.

The main findings are associated with users' perceptions of our IT facilities and designated quiet and group study spaces, as well as critical feedback regarding our electronic library pages. All this allowed for us to make the necessary developments to our services and facilities and to take a targeted marketing approach, via our marketing strategy, during 2010. This included:

- redeveloping our electronic library pages and publishing a new user guide to help re-launch them
- acquiring further PCs and laptops and having a focused campaign about PC use and availability within the new LRCs
- a 'know your zone' campaign, focusing on raising customer awareness of the types of spaces and areas available to them within their LRCs.

We were then able to package all this information together and produce a 'LibQUAL response leaflet' for our customers, entitled 'You said – we did.'

We look forward to carrying out our 2010 LibQUAL and to seeing how far we have progressed with some of these facilities and services.

L&SS VALUES

As part of our 'merger' we decided, in the autumn of 2009, to redefine our values. This seemed appropriate as we were bringing lots of service teams together to form library and student support (L&SS): as part of the process of becoming a unified team, it was important that we all agreed upon and shared the same professional values. We have approached this by consulting all our main stake-

holder groups (students, academic staff, service area staff and L&SS staff) and ascertaining how they envisage L&SS as a service, both now and in the future. We did this through a 'cultural web' model, and the output of the initial stakeholder focus groups has allowed L&SS managers to develop some specific values for the department.

The two main 'values' areas are that:

- 1 We provide support services to the highest standards we can achieve, with customers at the centre of our business.
- 2 We deliver responsive services through working in partnership with our stakeholders.

What these actually mean day to day for L&SS can then be broken down, and we are now in the process of working with L&SS staff and the other stakeholder groups to establish the appropriate behaviours and attitudes to accompany the values of the service.

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University of Plymouth

THE IMPACT OF ENTERPRISE

The university recently launched its strategic plan for 2009–2012, 'Embedding enterprise: creating our future: the University of Plymouth 2009–2012' (available at <http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/mission>). This enables information and learning services (ILS) to position its own three strategies clearly within the university context, with e-business and technology-enhanced learning to the fore.

The university's enterprise initiative has been felt in a number of areas. Some ILS staff have been involved in the network of 'enterprise enablers', greenhousing suggestions around issues such as health and wellbeing, through-life learning and social enterprise. Linked to this, ILS made funding available for small projects related to the university's themes, and the first of these has now been completed. Nigel May, academic support manager, worked with the English language centre and business language and information service in evaluating and developing a questionnaire aimed at Chinese students, to enable a better understanding of their learning experience prior to the UK and hence their immediate study-support needs.

The next project, looking at the provision of alternative formats for users who are unable to access standard print, is already under way, and others are in the pipeline.

The new human resources strategy has led to an institution-wide leadership development programme, run in partnership with the university's centre for leadership and organisational excellence (CLOE). Currently, members of the ILS management team are involved in the senior programme with a group of ILS team leaders in the initial cohort for the essential leadership skills programme, running from February 2010. A leadership toolkit (practical workshops) and informal leadership skills are also part of the extensive programme, which aims to ensure that leadership development is embedded throughout the university.

SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS

Following the move to the 'cashless library' in the autumn term of 2009, from January 2010 users have been able to pay Voyager charges from the intranet, by adding a 'MyVoyager' web part to their own 'MySite'. At the moment there still has to be a manual intervention before the user's record is cleared, so the transaction does not yet fully take place in real time.

Digital display screens showing library and other relevant information are now being used near the library entrance and in the 24x7 area. These are likely to link to a university-wide information feed when it becomes available.

This term has seen the introduction of self-service access to large-format printing (up to A0, priced at £8), with two printers available for use within the library, one of them in the 24x7 area. Making these printers available on open access is thought to be a first within higher education; so far there have proved to be fewer problems than anticipated.

A Braille printer has also recently been installed within the library. The number of undergraduates who have a visual disability continues to rise, alongside the increasing proportion of Plymouth's undergraduate population who are registered as having some level of disability, currently 10.9%.

With the help of an Italian student on placement we have also recently undertaken some research into the motivation behind journal loans. Why do library users choose to borrow our print journals (one-day loans) rather than read them within the library or photocopy them? The results are unsur-

prising – reasons include staff and researchers borrowing so that they can copy 'for free' in their departments; others simply prefer to read at home.

STAFFING

Julie Moody has recently taken up the post of subject librarian for health within the academic support team; in a previous post she was manager of the library at Saltash College, one of our partner colleges.

Rosemary A. Smith

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University of Reading

NEW TRAINEE LIAISON LIBRARIANS

We mentor several trainee liaison librarians for CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) chartership in well-structured three-year posts designed to give new professionals a range of liaison, functional and supervisory services. Recently we appointed David Brown, Elizabeth Simpson and Elizabeth Schlackman.

STUDY SPACE GRANT



In March 2009, we created further study space on main library's fifth floor from three areas, latterly used for storage, that were vacated when our special collections were transferred to new premises. Revising students made good use of them, despite mismatched furniture. However, in July we made a successful £10,000 bid to the university's annual fund to refurbish them with new tables, chairs and flooring. Designated for quiet study, they have been in use since late 2009.

IN THE (BBC) NEWS

Testament to the attractiveness of our main library's ground-floor refurbishment was seen nationally when BBC's 6 o'clock news broadcast interviews in October 2009. Further interviews

continued on the following local 'South Today' news broadcast. They showcased our course collection study space, glazed balcony and staircase, vaulted main hall (with self-issue points) and café, whilst university staff and students explained how Reading enhances student employability.

Rachel Redrup

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The University of Sheffield

#1 IN *TIMES* HIGHER EDUCATION'S STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY

The University of Sheffield came top in the UK for 'good library and library opening hours' in this year's *THE* student experience survey, the results of which were published in the *THE* on 14 January 2010. Martin Lewis, director of library services and University Librarian, said, 'This great result confirms the strong performance on student satisfaction from our own surveys. It reflects great credit on the university library's staff, who have made huge efforts to develop our services and who are passionate about helping students to access and use information effectively. It also reflects a really good partnership with the Union of Students and with our academic colleagues.' The university came fourth overall in the survey, which collected the views of over 11,000 undergraduates during the 2008–09 academic year.

WESTERN BANK LIBRARY EMERGES FROM £3.5M FACELIFT

The Western Bank library, opened in 1959, is a grade II* listed building of striking modern design by architects Gollins Melvin and Ward (GMW). It contains the bulk of the university library's print collections and, until the opening of the information commons, was the most heavily used site. The refurbishment, overseen by conservation specialists Avanti Architects, has restored some of the building's original features along with twenty-first-century upgrades, including more power and data, new study areas (including some group study areas) and new solar glazing. Western Bank library now aims to provide an environment optimised for researchers, complementing the information commons. A key feature of the refurbished building is the exhibition gallery, funded in part by a grant from the Wolfson Foundation. This opened in March 2010 with an exhibition celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of legendary showman P. T. Barnum, curated by Professor Vanessa Toulmin, director of the national fair-ground archive in the university library.



Figure 1. The restored main hall in the Western Bank library

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Swansea University

ARCHIVES REFURBISHMENT

A total refurbishment of our Archives collections and services was completed in October 2009. This £1.1 million project was funded by Higher Education Funding Council Wales (HEFCW) capital funding and SRIF3 (Science Research Investment Fund round 3). The eighteen-month project involved converting some book-stock areas and a former lecture theatre in the basement of the library. The new storage facilities more than double our capacity for archive collections and meet BS5454, the national standard for archival storage and preservation. A large new reading room for archives consultation has also been provided, along with a drying room and accommodation for archive staff. Swansea University's archive collections include the South Wales coal-field collection, the Raymond Williams capers and the Richard Burton collection.

SWWHEP LIBRARY PROJECT

The SWWHEP (South West Wales Higher Education Partnership) library project is now in its final year. Funded by the HEFCW reconfiguration and collaboration initiative, the library project has taken collaboration between the library services of Swansea University, Swansea Metropolitan University and Trinity University College Carmarthen to a new level.

The RFID element of the project was



completed on time in September 2009. Over 1.1 million items of stock were RFID-tagged and a uniform set of RFID self-service units went live in all three partner-university libraries. The next element of the project, for completion this year, is a package of discovery tools based on the Metalib resource discovery platform, the VuFind portal and the Relais document-delivery system.

SMITHSONIAN FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL, WASHINGTON DC



Siân Williams (Librarian, South Wales miners' library) was invited by the Welsh Assembly government to be one of the Welsh representatives at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington DC, in June and July 2009. The festival is an annual cultural festival run by the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, a research and educational unit of the Smithsonian Institution. The festival celebrates the cultural traditions of communities from across the United States and around the world. Siân showcased the South Wales coal-field collection, including a display of miners' banners.



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