News from member libraries

Aston University

Customer Service Excellence

Aston University library and information services (LIS) has recently received the Customer Service Excellence award. This is the government standard for customer service which replaces the old Charter Mark award. Aston LIS has a relatively small staff team but manages to provide a responsive, personal service to customers whilst still being efficient and cost-effective. Staff and student surveys regularly commend LIS staff for being knowledgeable and proactive. The library service users group congratulated LIS and the picture shows Nick Smith (director) and Angela Brady (assistant director, public services) receiving the award from Senior Vice-Chancellor Graham Hooley. Afterwards all LIS staff enjoyed strawberries and champagne (or a non-alcoholic equivalent).

Refurbishment

The library building at Aston has not been updated since it was built in the early 1970s, and a make-over was long overdue. This summer (2010) the lower two floors are being extensively refurbished and are due to be handed back at the end of October. The ground floor is being extended by incorporating the old colonnade and all staff offices are moving to the first floor. This will result in a flexible, student-centred learning space on the whole of the ground floor. There will also be a new entrance, with a glass atrium, an additional staircase and, for the first time, a publicly available lift. While work is in progress no day-visitor passes are being issued and we have apologised for the inevitable disruption to services. The upper floors will be refurbished in the summer of 2011.

Sending books to Nigeria

For many years Aston has had students from Nigeria participating in the MBA programme. During 2009, LIS was approached by two of these students nearing the end of their course, who felt that they would like to give something back both to their country and to Aston for the opportunities they had been given. About this time in Nigeria, Chief Olorunfemi, who runs a major oil- and gas-servicing company, was setting up a foundation with the objectives of 'promoting the reading habit, eradicating literacy and providing teaching aids for schools/universities'. The students hoped that we would be willing to donate any discarded books from our library to this new foundation.

Some of our discarded books were already being sent to Sierra Leone for use in libraries there, but we were only able to send a small number, the remainder being sold off to booksellers or put out for recycling. It was agreed that sending books to Nigeria would both increase library provision there and also contribute to the promotion of Aston University within the country.
Working out the logistics of the project has taken some time, but finally we seem to have arrived at a modus operandi. An agreement has been signed by all parties and our first shipment has been dispatched.

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Glyndŵr University, Wrexham

Foundation degree in Library and Information Practice

Glyndŵr University has just completed the first year of its FDSc in Library and Information Practice, which began in September 2009. Twelve students enrolled on the course from across England and Wales. All are employed in a wide range of libraries – public, further and higher education.

The course is run in conjunction with the university's school of computing and communications technology and was developed in conjunction with employers across all library sectors in Wales, although the course is very relevant to students from all over the United Kingdom.

The course comprises eight modules and runs over two years, part-time. Each year consists of four modules, with each module run over a one-week block. The week blocks comprise lectures, workshops, field trips and talks by eminent practitioners. For instance, Jacqui Weetman da Costa, information literacy librarian at New Jersey College and formerly of De Montfort University, delivered a webinar on information literacy during the first module.

A blended learning model is used, with face-to-face study on campus and the use of the university's e-learning environment. The latest web 2.0 technologies complement face-to-face teaching, allowing flexible and work-based learning. There are two assignments per module – one is completed as group work during the week block and the other is work-based and individually assessed. Modules are as follows:

- Information as a core product
- Design and delivery of library and information services
- Customer relationship management in library and information services
- Information and knowledge management
- Library 2.0
- Multimedia information systems and digital libraries
- Library events management and training
- Key management skills for the library and information professional.

Course fees are from £825 per year with the additional cost of accommodation for those attending residential weeks from a distance. A bursary may be available for the first year from CyMAL (Museums Archives and Libraries Wales), for those students domiciled in Wales.

Some of the comments from students include:

'This course has given me answers to questions that I didn't know that I needed to ask, in order to do my job effectively.'

'I was thrilled with the chance to work within web 2.0 technologies ... the sessions have been varied in their approach so I was kept interested.'

'The chance to mix with other staff from a wide variety of library / information settings has been valuable.'

We hope to complete a CILIP accreditation review for the course by the end of the next academic year.

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Leeds Metropolitan University

REPOSITORY PROJECT
Staff from Libraries and Learning Innovation are working with other university colleagues to lead a project linking repositories at Leeds Met, the

University of Leeds, the National Health Service and the University of York St John. The main aims are that stakeholders in each of the partner institutions can search across all of the repositories for learning objects, download these to their own environment and upload new or adapted content to each repository. For further information please contact Nick Sheppard (n.a.sheppard@leedsmet. ac.uk).

SCRIBBLING ON THE JOB
20 delegates from as far afield as Bristol and Stirling joined Leeds Met MSc Information Studies students and LLI staff at a very successful training event on 29 April. 'Scribbling on the job: effective writing for librarians' was run by the library at Leeds Met and the UC&R (University, College and Research) Yorkshire and Humberside Group of CILIP. It included workshops on writing for the web, communicating clearly and concisely and academic and creative writing, as well as an interactive presentation exploring the writer's tale and the editor's role, all delivered by Leeds Met practitioners.

JANUS (JANUS – JANgle for Users of Sirsi) project
A project team of library and IT staff have been awarded funding of £31K to carry out this JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) project, running from April to October 2010. They will use the open source environment Jangle (designed to facilitate access to library systems) to create a specific connector to the Sirsi Dynix library management system used at Leeds Met. The team will also write a Jangle-compatible application for Facebook enabling access to library management system data. Please contact Arthur Sargeant for further details (A.Sargeant@leedsmet.ac.uk).

15 MINUTES OF FAME?
As part of university publicity regarding our customer service excellence standard reaccreditation, a small group of staff representing different parts of the service was interviewed by the university's publications and PR officer for an in-depth profile, featured on the university website. This enabled us to dispel some of the librarian stereotypes and highlight the wide variety of work done behind the scenes in day-to-day interactions with customers and was warmly received across the university.

MENTORING EVENT – LEEDS YEAR OF VOLUNTEERING
Supporting Leeds city council's year of volunteering, Libraries and Learning Innovation at Leeds Metropolitan University welcomed information professionals and librarians from around the Yorkshire & Humberside Region for a mentoring

exchange of experience event. This networking afternoon brought together experienced colleagues who volunteer their time to mentor new professionals, encouraging continuing development and the attainment of additional qualifications within the sector.

Noise action week

Anecdotal evidence suggested a change in behaviour in the weeks following our campaign reminding students to be quiet in the silent study areas. Taking our cue from Environmental Protection UK's annual campaign, which had student noise as one of its themes, posters and flyers, alongside Facebook posts and tweets reminded students how their behaviour impacts on others.
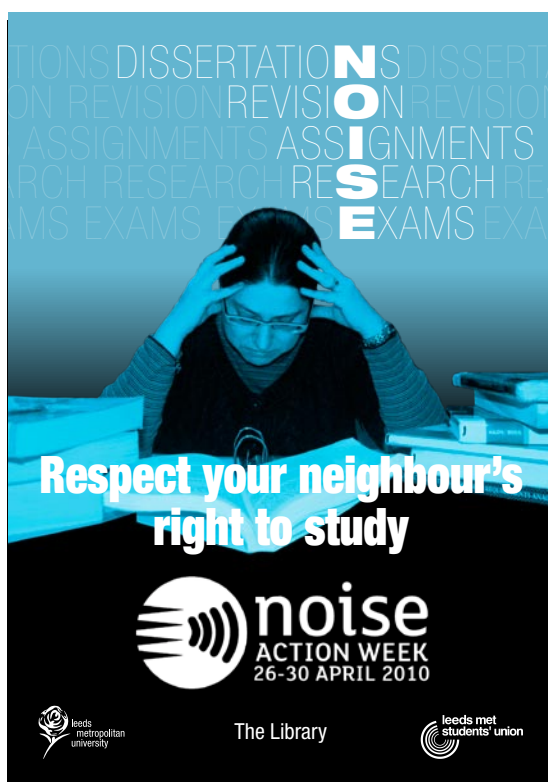
Helen Loughran
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University of Lincoln

Ian Snowley,
University Librarian

I have spent the eleven months since my initial appointment and subsequent confirmation as University Librarian at the University of Lincoln setting out (and getting agreement to) the Library's new strategic direction. This can be summarised as 'promoting learning and research support'. We started planning for a summer which would bring a lot of weeding and modest steps toward creating flexible study space in the Library but we suddenly found ourselves faced with a significant (six figure) windfall from the VC - all to be spent by the end of the summer. Now this seems to be a normal occurrence in other institutions but it is definitely new territory at Lincoln!

Fortunately, we had spent a lot of time identifying our priorities with staff and were very quickly able to compile our initial shopping list: further development of the planned flexible learning area; RFID self-service (to replace our ageing 3M machines); increased expenditure on books and DVDs; laptop loans; and new shelving for both our Riseholme campus library and our special collections reading room.

Having identified our priorities and some outline costs, our next step was to liaise with the University's procurement team to manage the selection of an RFID self-service supplier – no easy task in the eight weeks available. We were lucky to have good support from the team and feel relieved that we were able to agree terms with local company 2CQR in time to receive delivery of seven RFID Totems (distributed across all four campuses) and to see the 'Tagging Team' up and running retagging all 260,000 items of stock.

Inevitably, given the deadlines involved, we could not neatly compartmentalise these projects and there was one day when we had to utilize three separate entrances to the library in order to accommodate separate deliveries of furniture, shelving, and security gates. We also stuck to our plans to weed the stock, particularly important with tagging underway - and thanks to the hard work and commitment of staff, we completed this on target too, both making room for new stock and refreshing the look of the libraries in the process. In the University Library we also recruited a joiner to reduce the size of the service desk, in order to prepare for the introduction of roving support - something we will combine with responsibility for first-line IT support in the library.

As I write this at the end of August the flexible learning zones are ready, the laptops are being

loaded into their charging/security cabinets, the bookshelves look good with their new stock – especially the DVDs which have replaced videos – and we are about to commission the RFID machines as the tagging is completed.

We believe we have done a great deal to make our libraries more flexible and better places in which to study. Of course we all know that there are difficulties ahead for the sector but at least we have been able to deploy a buffer which will help us to maintain a high level of provision for the next few years to come. And we hope that we have made a good case for continuing investment despite the squeeze to come.

Inevitably we could not have completed this process without the support of library staff, and support from colleagues in finance, estates and ICT. But most of all we could not have done it without a clear idea of future strategy and priorities for the library service.

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Northumbria University

Take 5 takes off! Getting the feedback and liking it
Like many other libraries, Northumbria University's library and learning services (LLS) has for many years been obtaining customer feedback in a variety of ways. Its comments and suggestion system, 'Your say', has proved valuable in helping us to measure performance and shape our services. The national student survey gives us an indication of how we're doing nationally and also in our comparator group. Some of the richest data, though, comes from the library's in-house student survey, which takes place annually. The most recent survey (conducted in November/December 2009) was accompanied by a 'You said, we did' campaign, giving us the chance to practice some double-loop feedback with our users. It's an excellent opportunity for us to show those doubting the need to fill in yet another questionnaire that it is worth the trouble. We do listen! We do change and improve things if we can and even the smallest kernels of feedback often spawn ideas for service developments. It was with these things in mind that we embarked on a new way of encouraging and obtaining feedback.

'Take 5' could be said to be a library version of the 'Big Brother' diary room chair. No need to fill in a questionnaire or tick those boxes. Students and

staff just take a seat for five minutes and have their say. The whole thing is made more of an experience by the use of an 'egg chair' modelled on the famous Arne Jacobsen design. The chair is set up in a corner of our busy basement café and, despite the background noise, the microphone picks up the feedback without a problem. A dome camera is placed opposite the 'egg' to capture images and automatically switches off after five minutes.

Becky Rhodes tells it like it is …

Take 5 has so far been a success. We've had some very valuable 'in their own words' feedback from students, and much of it, to our delight, is complimentary. One student commented that ' 24 hour [opening] has made a massive difference to a lot of people. Some people prefer to work late into the night and you feel like the pressure's off. I love the … coffee shop and feel safe. It's a really nice place to be.' Of course, we also get the odd show-off but that's all part of the fun.

In spring 2010 we will evaluate the usage and value of Take 5 in more depth. That will include a review.

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Open University

Open University Strategy
The University has developed a new strategy 'OU Futures 2010 – 2013' which contains 11 'focus areas'. Library Services' main contributions are in Focus Areas 2 and 3 which aim to develop and deliver courses more efficiently, to increase flexibility and responsiveness, and make courses more compelling and pedagogically effective. Library Services is involved in supporting this with a move to technology-enhanced learning and is leading on ensuring OU students graduate with transferable information literacy skills. To support this work:-

- we have developed a new information literacy framework and are developing a suite of generic information literacy activities to support its embedding in all programmes;
- we are producing a series of case studies which demonstrate good practice and innovative use of Library resources and other third party material;
- we are promoting our expertise in finding new, relevant and authoritative content, including OERs (Open Education Resources).

As part of the communications strategy for the rollout of the new strategy, the Vice-Chancellor is recording a video message for all staff bi-monthly. If you would like to know more about 'OU Futures' you can visit the website at http://www.open.ac.uk/ou-futures/index.shtm

Third International m-libraries conference

Mobile technology is revolutionising how we access information. If you have a particular interest in mobile technologies why not join other library practitioners, researchers, technical developers and managers from around the world to exchange experience, expertise and generate ideas for future developments? The third International m-libraries conference will explore work carried out in libraries to deliver services and resources to users 'on the move'. The conference is hosted by the University of South Queensland in Brisbane, Australia on 11-13 May 2011 in collaboration with the Open University Library, Athabasca University (Canada), Thompson Rivers University (Canada) and Emerald Group Publishing.

If you are researching or working in areas such as emerging mobile technologies or development of content for mobiles and would like to share what you are doing why not submit a paper or poster for the conference? For more information go to: http://www.usq.edu.au/m-libraries

Access to Video Assets (AVA) Project

The AVA project aims to address the increasing demand for exploitation of the Open University's rich media legacy assets. The project will deliver a proof of concept for a system for staff to search and find OU video assets for the primary purpose of reuse within course production. A second strand will deliver a sustainable digital preservation model.

Work carried out so far includes the development of a time-based media metadata profile, the digitisation (to preservation standards) of over 1,000 video tapes held on 'at-risk' formats, as well as the preservation of 38,000 pages of accompanying paperwork with vital metadata. The migration of a single user database of video footage descriptions to a web interface for OU staff to search and preview 9,000 course video programmes is planned and prototype repositories are being built as proof of concepts in Fedora, Greenstone and Documentum.

The project is due to deliver its findings July 2011. For more information, visit the project website: http://www.open.ac.uk/library/ava/

LUCERO (Linking University Content for Education and Research Online) Project

LUCERO which, incidentally, means 'Bright Star' in Spanish, is a new one-year JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee)-funded project at the Open University which aims to apply linked data technologies and principles to education and research practices.

One of the major objectives of the project is to demonstrate the benefits of linked data in a University environment, especially to researchers and students. It is hoped that at the end of the project there will be a pool of evidence for other organisations, who want to follow this route, to draw on. For more information go to the project blog (http://lucero-project.info)

The Evolving Information Professional

This course is aimed at information professionals in all sectors looking to keep up to date with modern technologies, sources of information and today's users. Building on the different perspectives of four information professionals (a health information worker, an assistant librarian in a Public Library, an archivist and an academic library manager) the course looks at the new information environment and its increased personalisation and immediacy – the affordances of mobile technologies and the facilitation of user-generated content and tagging. The implications for information services brought about by new learners – the Netgeneration and computer game players – are explored as is the 'everything for free?' mentality centred around the increasingly digital media and publishing industries. The course concludes with activities centred on the costing and marketing of information services. Form more information visit the online course

information at: http://www3.open.ac.uk/study/
professionaldevelopment/course/gt067.htm

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University of Reading

Staff changes

Our kind and committed Languages Liaison
Librarian, and Arts and Humanities Team Leader,
Anna Beasley retired this August. Our experi-
enced and learned Law Librarian since 1974, and
Social Sciences Team Leader, Ian Sainsbury is
retiring in September 2010. We wish then both
well with their respective plans to enjoy homes,
families and world travel. We are fortunate to
have already been able to replace Ian, and expect
great things from an equally well-qualified succes-
sor, Ross Connell. (Note that we do not subscribe
to nepotism as Ross is no relation to his Faculty
Team Leader and office companion, Gordon
Connell). We are also glad to be able to promote
our own Charlie Carpenter to Liaison Librarian,
covering Karen Drury's maternity leave. Jonathan
Jones takes up Charlie's Trainee Liaison Librarian
post supporting Classics and Philosophy, also this
September.

Collections Project 2009-2013

Our ambitious project to re-profile Library col-
lections to better meet users' needs, and address
space issues, moves on apace:

- We joined UK Research Reserve this year,
  and have submitted the first list of journal
  volumes we're withdrawing from stock. The
  list represents 264 linear metres of journals.
- Work continues on our review of books and
  serials, making decisions about which items
  to withdraw (8% of books so far); relegate to
  closed access storage (now at 6%); or keep at/
  move to Main Library. (From Summer 2011
  academic activity leaves Bulmershe campus
  and our library there will close). So far over
  a third of all our books have been reviewed,
  and roughly 35% of those books requiring
  changes have been processed. Shelf space
  'saved' at Main Library amounts to over 1.5
  km so far. We will use it for easing tightly
  shelved areas, accommodating Bulmershe
  stock and for additional study space.
- The lease for a new off-campus store was
  signed in June 2010. We plan to start filling

it with lesser used research material from
November, following shelving installation.
- This summer we switched some books and
  journals between floors at Main Library with
  a view to later creating a more user-friendly,
  numerical sequence of Dewey numbers from
  our 2nd to 4th Floors. We moved about 300
  shelves of material although we had to move
  2,050 shelves to enable this. It certainly gave
  us a taster of the larger scale moves next year.

Read more at www.reading.ac.uk/library/collec-
tions-project

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Swansea Metropolitan University

Swansea Metropolitan University has given the
biggest indication yet of its environmental creden-
tials with the installation of a solar photovoltaic
system on its Mount Pleasant campus.

Following successful planning permission, the
panels were fitted onto the roof of the univer-
sity's Owen Library during the Easter holidays
by Hereford-based company Greenearth Energy.
The system, which is made up of 45 panels, will
generate 6.6 kW of electricity that will contribute
to powering the library.

South West Wales Higher Education Partner-
ship's energy coordinator Mark Blackmore, based
at Swansea Met, said: 'There will be a real-time
display in the library showing what the panels are
generating at any time. The panels will be linked
to the internet so that their electricity generation
can be viewed remotely and the information will
be used in lectures within the university's school
of the built and natural environment, where they
teach environmental conservation and construc-
tion programmes.'

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University of Wales: Trinity Saint David

The new University of Wales: Trinity Saint David

The towns of Lampeter and Carmarthen are
celebrating this year as the University of Wales
Lampeter and Trinity University College join to
create a new university: the University of Wales
Trinity Saint David. The new university will capi-

talise on both institutions' heritage, expertise and knowledge to develop international excellence in teaching and research, and contribute to the economic, social and cultural prosperity of Wales. The University of Wales Trinity Saint David will welcome its first students in September 2010.

Thomas Phillips Exhibition

July 2010 marked the 250th anniversary of the birth of one of the university's three main benefactors: Thomas Phillips. Phillips's dramatic support for what was then St David's College took the form of 60 consignments of rare books and manuscripts that began arriving in Lampeter in 1834 and continued until 1852, six months after Phillips's death at the age of 91. More than 22,000 books and manuscripts purchased by Phillips were shipped from London to Carmarthen, from where they were carted the remaining 23 miles along rough roads to Lampeter, a journey that was both hazardous and costly.

The Phillips collection now forms part of the Roderic Bowen Library and Archives, opened in October 2008 and named after former university President (1977–1992) and benefactor, Dr E. Roderic Bowen. The special collections contained within are undeniably a treasure, not only for the university but also for Wales, comprising a unique collection of more than 30,000 volumes printed between 1470 and 1850 (including 69 incunabula) as well as 8 medieval and 100 post-medieval manuscripts.

To celebrate this historic anniversary, the Roderic Bowen Library and Archives held an exhibition entitled 'Thomas Phillips and the greatest little library in Wales' between 12 July and 2 August 2010. To accompany the physical exhibition, a permanent online exhibition is available via the university's website.

Exciting new learning space: Y Cwad

In January 2010, a brand new learning space was opened on the Carmarthen campus. Taking its name from the historical square courtyard outside the space, Y Cwad (The Quad) features specially designed areas for group study and individual learning, a Starbucks café, a redeveloped university shop and reprographics service and a reception desk where students can also submit assignments.

Y Cwad features wireless internet access throughout, including the outdoor courtyard area, and a mixture of student PCs, laptops and iMacs to fully support the university's technology-enhanced

learning agenda. Bookable group-study rooms are also available for student use and include plasma screens that can also be used with PCs and laptops for presentations. Situated in an ideal location on campus between the teaching rooms of Y Hen Goleg (the Old College) and the library, Y Cwad has already become a focal point for students and staff alike in its first six months of opening.

Y Cwad is based in the location of the former teaching resources centre, and prior to the redevelopment work learning resource centre (LRC) staff had the unenviable task of relocating around 46,000 resources to temporary storage. The LRC now has a permanent store in the former reprographics area of the campus, which includes new movable shelving units, and LRC staff have been working over the past academic year to integrate the most popular teaching resources into library stock.

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