

What do we want from our Digital Librarians?

Michael Breaks
Heriot Watt University

Overview

- Library visions
- Digital library challenges
- Places/Collections/Services
- Staff Issues
- Role of the Librarian
- The Digital Librarian

A Vision for Libraries (SCONUL)

- Personalisation of Services
- Collaboration
- Flexible Use of Space
- New Organisational Models
- Management and Skills
 - Full-costing and evidence for investment
 - Process-based management
 - Digital requires new or external skills
 - Delivery of personal help

A Vision for Libraries (OCLC)

- Decrease in guided access to content
- Disaggregation
- Providing context
- Collaboration
- Future Frameworks
- Come together as community

Summary of Changes

- Pervasiveness of the internet
- From just-in-time to just-for-you
- Client relationship management
- New sectors and users
- From information to inspiration
- More collaboration/teamwork
- More teaching
- Remote support

Digital Higher Education Trends

- E-learning, e-research, e-science
- Management of digital resources
- Integration of digital resources
- Open Access and Institutional Repositories
- Digitisation of everything
- Preservation and digital archiving
- Cooperation
 - 'Research Clusters'

Library Responses

- A Space
- Collections of Resources
- Set of Services
- Co-located, so adding value for users
- Now being separated and recombined

Spaces

(Bringing People and Information Together)

- A sense of place
- A learning and supportive space
- A collaborative and social assembly space
- A 'neutral or third space'
- The Learning Cafe
- Virtual Space
 - Library as Portal
 - Making the invisible, both visible and usable

Collections

(Meeting Users' Needs)

- 'Traditional' resources
 - Standard formats/Standard solutions
- Digital content
 - Individual formats/individual solutions
- Institutional collections
- Big Deals
 - Death of collection development
- E-only collections
 - Everything is available
- Subject Gateways

Digital Collection Challenges

- User perspective challenges
 - Know what is available
 - Learn multiple interfaces
 - Manually fuse results or move data
 - Meet repeated authentication challenges
- Resource characteristic challenges
 - Provider driven
 - Autonomous
 - Individually controlled
 - Different functions
 - Limited disclosure of content

Services

(Making collections come alive)

- Predictable, supporting infrastructure
- The Library Brand
 - Alternatives now available
- Partnerships with publishers
- Distance learners
- Virtual Reference and 24x7
- Information literacy/Research skills
- Integration with learning and research

The Recombinant Library

- Unbundle our
 - Spaces
 - Collections
 - Services
 - Staff
- Recombine them with
 - Virtual Learning Environments
 - Research Environments
 - Campus/Library Portals

Staff Issues

(People Deliver the Vision)

- Staff Skills
- Subject Librarians
- Senior Managers
- New Roles
- The Digital Librarian will.....

Staff Skills

- Self management
- Task management
- Problem solving
- People skills
- Thinking outside the box
- The art of reflection (CPD)

Subject Librarians

- Proactive liaison with users
- Working with technical staff - intermediary
- Working in teams
- Select and promote resources
- Information skills training
- Organise the information landscape
- Changing learning and research environments

Skills for Subject Librarians

- People/Communication skills
- Technical/IT skills
- Presentation and teaching skills
- Management skills
- Team-working and team-building skills
- Project management skills
- Flexibility
- Ability to learn quickly
- Vision and Assertiveness

Senior Library/IT Management

- Generic management skills
- Technical credibility
- Specialist skills and knowledge
- Management experience
- Background in higher education
- Library background for converged services

Personal qualities

- Confidence, assertiveness, decisiveness
- Willingness to take risks
- Networking skills, having a good public profile
- Good political skills, influencing and persuasion skills
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Ideas and a creative approach to service delivery
- Ability to see, and to seize, opportunities

New Roles

- Cultural Role
- Teaching Role
- Providing Access to Information
- Space Provision
- Act as Information Advocates
- Advising Role
- Information Organisation and Retrieval
- Knowledge and Digital Management
- Information Mining

The Digital Librarian Will...

- Stay in advance of need
- Believe in themselves and what they can offer
- Not take their existence for granted
- Develop themselves
- Learn from each other
- Seize the opportunities
- Lift up their heads
- Get out more and **Engage**
- Be confident and claim the future

“Never Underestimate the
Importance of a Librarian”

Elsevier