

# Functional library design: building on experience

J. D. Gilbert Director of library services, UM



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## Universiteit Maastricht

- Young (1976), innovative, international
- Famous for problem based learning (PBL)
- 2 campuses: Randwijck (modern) and City (historic)
- Main disciplines:
  - medicine, health science, psychology (Randwijck)
  - law, economics, cultural sciences (City)
- Rapid growth to beyond 12,000 students in 2006





- More than a library: also a learning & resource centre to support PBL ("Studielandschap"©)
- Concentration, but near users: 2 library centres
- Rapid growth UM gives problems in City:
  - Library in 3 separate buildings
  - Cramped; limited space for 'browsable' collections
  - Insufficient study space for PBL support
  - Growing dissatisfaction amongst users
  - Faculties start to build their own 'computer rooms'





## Plan for new inner city library

- Planning starts about 1994!
- "Study centre 2000" concept: functional integration of library, *studielandschap* and faculty computer rooms
- Big enough for browsable collections and varieties of study space (> 700 study places: 8 h per week self study)
- Build on user needs and previous experience
- Changing focus: digital services, 'collections to connections', merge library into teaching environment



1995 ... Former public library building up for sale!



"Transform an outdated, dark, unfriendly mix of historic and concrete buildings into a modern, inspiring, user-friendly, library-*cum*-study centre without disrupting the unique character of the historic Jeker Quarter of Maastricht"







## Functional demands

- Easy to use, easy (economical) to operate
- Logical lay-out, clear structure
- Concentration of *facilities*, differentiation for *faculties*
- Mix of study facilities: groups work and individual, quiet and whisper rooms, with and without PCs, lecture rooms
- Safe; ergonomic; adaptable; interactive (staff <-> users)
- Accessible (also for handicapped users), transparent
- Attractive study environment, *a place people want to go to*





### (Opened to library users in January 2003)

- Integral concept: library, '*Studielandschap*', computer facilities
- Atmosphere: functionality, furbishing, choice of materials
- Colouring accents, 'light everywhere' (rooms with a view)
- "Somewhere in there, there's a place for everyone"





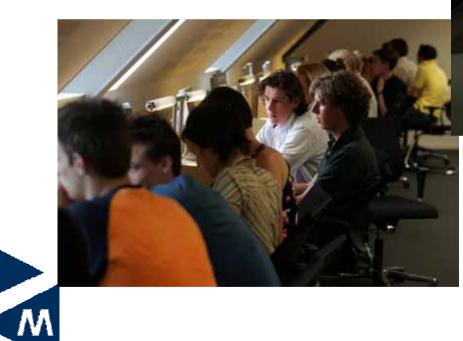
- Nice open stacks, compact closed stacks (basement)
- Server based computing (SBC): esthetic and efficient
- Laptop facilities (n.b. SBC & laptops compatible!)
- Service desks *and* DIY facilities
- Logical interfacing of front office and (office-less!) back office





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### Result? Students seem to like it





#### University Library

# for

## Result? Experience so far

- Open in January 2003: extremely popular with students
- Weekday usage doubled, weekend usage up tenfold!
- Library suddenly *the place to be* (meeting point)
- Peak problems with study space and...bicycles!
- Call for better café facilities
- Server Based Computing successful, despite scepsis, both in the library... and now as base for services outside library
- Lots of interest from other libraries!





## Lessons learned

- *Cooperate* closely with faculties, building department, users (students) and architect (OD 205)
- Get all parties *involved*, especially users (students)
- Combine past successes (*experience*) with future insight (vision)
- Be practical: *functionality first*
- Create *atmosphere*





## Let's go see!

3 groups: Building & construction
~ 6 groups: Library & interior
Max. 10 persons per group

