



# Functional library design: building on experience

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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





# University Library

- More than a library: also a learning & resource centre to support PBL (“Studielandship”©)
- 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!



# Task for the architect

“Transform an outdated, dark, unfriendly mix of historic and concrete buildings into a modern, inspiring, user-friendly, library-*cum*-study centre without disrupting the unique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





## Key features of new building (I)

*(Opened to library users in January 2003)*

- Integral concept: library, ‘*Studieland*’, computer facilities
- Atmosphere: functionality, furnishing, choice of materials
- Colouring accents, ‘light everywhere’ (rooms with a view)
- “Somewhere in there, there’s a place for everyone”





## Key features of new building (II)

- 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







## University Library



Result?  
Students seem to like it





# 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 scepticism, 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*

