HOW LIBRARY USERS USE SPACE: RESEARCH RESULTS

Get involved: future proofing your library through dialogue
18th Seminar of the LIBER Architecture Group, Freiburg, 12th – 16th April 2016
My presentation will:

• Explore 9 research papers around library users and space
• Describe library users and space studies at Loughborough University Library from 2006 to 2016
• Capture the lessons learned from the user studies
Papers used to inform themes in use of library spaces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Publication dates</strong></th>
<th>2011 – 2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authors’ backgrounds</strong></td>
<td>Librarians, Architects, Academics, Learning Technologists</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Country</strong></td>
<td>Australia (1) Canada (2), Netherlands (1), UK (3), USA (2)</td>
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<td><strong>Single site case studies</strong></td>
<td>All</td>
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Some themes from the papers about users’ behaviour in university library space

• **Furniture**: students like to move furniture around. They also like to have large tables. The furniture needed depends on the type of learning they are completing. They are in the library for a long time so comfort is important.

• **ICT provision influence on how the space is used**: where there is good Wi-Fi, people will cluster. High use of laptops and PCs. Power sockets and charging facilities are popular.

• **Students display similar behaviours across libraries**: students undertaking independent study like to take up study space intended for group use. Students reserve spaces by leaving possessions, books at a study space when they leave the building.

• **Provide diversity in spaces**: silence areas are popular, group study is popular. Students choose space depending on type of learning. Library needs to provide lots of different learning spaces.
Some more themes from the papers about users’ behaviour in university library space

• **Lighting:** preferably lighting should be daylight or natural. Dim lighting is not acceptable

• **Library provides sense of community:** individuals appreciate the sense of community (even when working independently). Students develop their own zones.

• **Social learning:** common across most case study sites (Crook’s 4 typologies of social learning)
  1. **Focussed collaboration:** (traditional and intense joint problem solving)
  2. **Intermittent exchange:** individual side but occasional and improvised
  3. **Serendipitous encounters:** chance meetings with friends
  4. **Ambient socialising:** gain inspiration and assurance from simply being there
Users and Library space: ten years of research at Loughborough University Library: 2006 to 2016
2006

• Paper based survey was distributed in the Library and asked for people’s views about the different learning spaces.
  

2007

• Library had created a social leaning space but senior University staff asked ‘Why are you turning the Library into McDonald’s?’. Ethnographic study completed which showed how it was being used for learning
  
2009

General user satisfaction survey completed which included views about learning spaces


Benchmarking exercise with similar universities on

- number of full time students per Library study space
- number of full time students per Library open access PC
- amount of Library space by square metre per full time student

Above used to inform successful business case for £4.7 million funding to transform Library
2012

Three year general user satisfaction survey completed which focussed on kind of new spaces students would like


2013

Ideas tree set up 2 months after refurbished Library opened for initial feedback from users
2009

General user satisfaction survey completed which included views about learning spaces


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- number of full time students per Library study space
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Transforming the Library entrance
Making the entrance lobby more appealing
Changing space with more natural light and knocking walls down
Improving group study rooms
Removing walls and corridors
Removing more walls and corridors
And yet more walls...
Making book stacks more attractive
Making help desk on levels where books more attractive
Slide title

• Item one

• Item two
Slide title

- Item one
- Item two
Lessons learned in researching students use of university library space

• **Lesson 1**: Benchmarking both internally and externally is powerful

• **Lesson 2**: Using research completed externally about the Library service is very influential

• **Lesson 3**: Mixed methodologies make sense
Lessons learned in researching students use of university library space

- **Lesson 4**: Research in how students use library space should be used to strategically inform the wider university
- **Lesson 5**: Undertake research on use of library space continually
- **Lesson 6**: It is important to be opportunistic and pragmatic when researching users and space
Thank you!

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