Chapter VIII

The University of Queensland Cybrary: A Virtual Library in a Wired University

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Students discover short cuts to scholarship

Any place..... Any space..... At any pace..... At any time

The University of Queensland Cybrary – Australia’s first – makes travel to a new world of knowledge easy. Students can plan their route and take advantage of short cuts, or if they prefer, take a leisurely meander and discover exciting new places off the beaten track. The Cybrary integrates state-of-the-art information technology with traditional services to create a “virtual library” in a “wired university.” From any of hundreds of high-end Pentium computers within the Library, and day or night from home or office, students can explore or target the world of information as they wish. The Cybrary pushes out the boundaries of information gathering and gives students new scope for synthesizing and processing the material they discover. The Cybrary is an indispensable, integrated approach to meet the information demands of lifelong learning and problem-based teaching. It is a powerful support for flexible learning and an enhancement to flexible teaching. The Library has taken a leadership role in applying this innovative approach to addressing the real needs of students in the 21st Century, and is working collaboratively with students and teachers to develop and refine the Cybrary as new possibilities open.

INTRODUCTION

Cybrary, or virtual library, services have been discussed in the literature for many years. However it is only in recent years that it has become technically possible to achieve the vision.

The University of Queensland Library is leading the way in developing cybrary services in Australia. Its Cybrary is an innovative, ongoing project. Other libraries have some components but the University of Queensland Library is the first in Australia to integrate its information technology support services with traditional services to provide cybrary services.

These services are accessible from lecture theatres, offices on all campuses and homes. Access is available any time of the day or night; 24 hours per day access from students’ own terminals, 81 hours per week in the Library.

Bauwens (1996) states a virtual library “is still a place, albeit a virtual one. The whole secret of interactive marketing is to become an invited persuader. In general it will be imperative to motivate the users to visit even though there will be enormous competition for their attention.” This paper describes the University of Queensland Library’s efforts to capture that attention and become an invited persuader in students’ learning journeys.

HOW THE CYBRARY BEGAN

The University of Queensland Library is the largest library in the state of Queensland and one of the largest in Australia. It contains 1.8 million volumes, 11,000 videos, 20,000 journal titles and extensive microform, multimedia, digital and primary source collections. It provides services to students and to their teachers through 13 branch libraries located on several campuses, in a number of teaching hospitals and the University’s Dental School, as well as other scattered sites throughout the State. The collections are housed in branch libraries, and in a warehouse on the main campus which provides cost-effective storage for less used material. Each branch library includes similar facilities and provides similar services, although there are some variations due to client need.

The Library’s very size can be confusing to students and finding a way through the many resources to the few that are needed for a particular purpose is not easy for many. Services are designed to assist
Building the Capacity of Librarians through Collaboration: The Experience of the University of Bergen and Makerere University Libraries with their New Partners in the North and South
Maria G. N. Musoke and Ane Landoy (2014). *Collaboration in International and Comparative Librarianship* (pp. 137-147).
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/building-the-capacity-of-librarians-through-collaboration/103081?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/building-the-capacity-of-librarians-through-collaboration/103081?camid=4v1a)

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