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The Re-imagination of Academic Library Services for the Next Generation of Students and Researchers
Wits Case Study

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Overview

• New generation & their service expectations
• The context
• The data
• The process
• Transitional interventions
• Interim plan
New generation – new expectations

Alma R. Clayton-Pedersen with Nancy O'Neill. Curricula designed to meet 21st-century expectations. Educause, 2016¹ observed:

– Due to prior exposure to technology, “Where students had once called ... their classes "death by lecture," ...they now called them "death by PowerPoint."

– HE is expected to draw on a variety of technologies & use them as resources to deepen students' learning

– In the 21st century, the curriculum is expected to engage students in the construction of knowledge to address complex, global societal challenges.

How are we innovating?: the Wits Library case study

¹ Available at: http://www.educause.edu/research-and-publications/books/educating-net-generation/curricula-designed-meet-21st-century-expectations
The Wits Framework

Strategic priorities

– Research & knowledge leadership
– Academic excellence
– Extensive networks & partnerships
– An IT savvy university
– Innovation & social leadership
– Excellence in governance, management & support services

Library role

• In support of these priorities, the Library is acquiring & implementing access to information resources, facilities, services and tools.
• How well are we doing in the context of the new expectations?
What have Users Been Saying?²

• Increase access hours; 24 hour reading facilities.
• Library staff should be subject knowledgeable and friendly; deploy Library staff according to their specialist skills, based on which disciplines the library serves.
• Increase e-access to textbooks & number of textbook copies; More journal subscriptions; update book collection.
• Library should not be expected to supply textbooks for every student.
• Space for group work, "individual-private-study-rooms; more study desks; media laboratories and maker spaces.
• Paintings/art in some library spaces is unwelcoming, oppressive and insulting; mount more inclusive paintings; commission additional pieces to speak to & engage with the problematic pieces.
• Integrate services with the e-learning system; quality improvement in user education.
• Promote open-access.
• Align IT systems with service delivery to respond to the university teaching and learning, financial administration and procurement requirements; increase website usability.
• Pay specific attention to safety, security and maintenance.
• Alumni should be courted because of the value that they can contribute to the university as a whole.

² 2011-2016: 1st Year Student Experience Survey 2011, Postdoctoral experience 2011, 1st Year Student Experience Survey 2012, and Undergraduate Survey 2012. the 2011 LibQual survey; Library triennial review 2014; Student protests 2015-2016; Wits Library / San José State University) School of Information (iSchool) collaboration between 2015-2016.
## Transitional Interventions

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<td>Discussion Rooms in Commerce Library</td>
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<td>Wits Digitization Centre</td>
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Older Spaces
Newer Spaces
Re-imagining the Wits Libraries for the 21st Century

- The Wits Library indicators suggest a marked change in library use patterns.
- The University has committed to the reconceptualization of its libraries.
- A Task team was appointed to lead the process
  - **Composition:**
    - representatives from the student body, academics, the Library & a planner; DVC Research & PG Affairs is advisor and University Librarian is a resource person
  - **Terms of Reference:**
    - Get a clear sense of how the library can create conditions for users to do their work at the highest levels
    - Establish the unmet needs
    - Identify opportunities to develop new services or to stop unneeded services;
    - Enable resources and staff to be devoted effectively to the strategic goals of the university.
    - Formulate a strategy to source / get access to knowledge resources in a climate of austerity.
    - Consider the effective use of space to achieve the goals of the re-imagined library.
    - Produce a masterplan.
The process

• DVC Research & PG Affairs: “The team should dream big and not be constrained by economic realities.”

• A series of meetings since May 2016

• Inputs from the University community, students and researchers

• Library task teams produced a discussion document addressing 6 themes: What is the 21st century library?; Library space; Information resources and services; Digitization; People; Technology

• An online survey to complement the previous findings will be released in the first week of August 2016, to run for two weeks.

• Compilation of report/masterplan; an external expert will give a review before submission to University Management
Interim Outcomes

• For storage of less used materials consider create “The Wits Tower of Knowledge”
• Possible new features: create garages in the library; introduce interactive spaces; furniture color coding for different space functions; consider storage spaces for books; expand on postgrad and undergrad learning commons
• Audit of Library spaces
• An inventory of technologies available across all campuses
• Visit other libraries to explore their re-imagined their spaces
• Updated quotations for alumni access to databases
• Consider redeployment of some identified posts to new service areas, e.g. data services
• Embed Microscopy & Microanalysis Unit (MMU) into BioPhy Library but consider an architectural impact assessment
• CHELSA should revisit the use of GDP as criteria for setting information resources prices for BRICS countries in light of challenges the country’s economy is facing.
• Purpose built archives & digitization facility
Interim Masterplan
Selective removal & freeing of shelf space to:

• Install collaborative space with transparent movable walls; private study rooms; places to mediate & nap, with coffee & snacks close by

• Expand maker spaces for creation, invention & learning.

• Refurbish libraries for visually appealing interiors

• Build archives & digitization facility

• Possible consolidation of 11 branch libraries

• Convert one of the 11 branch libraries into storage facility
Possible Model

3. San Jose State University School of Information. MLIS Group Project report, 2015
Thanks

Q&A

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