Biomedical library to e-only learning centre supported by a depot service

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Meeting of minds

• The biomedical group board of the K.U.Leuven
  – Wants to go e-only
  – Wants an optimal learning environment

• The Flemish association of academic libraries
  – Wants to organise a co-operative depot service for scientific periodicals
The University Library is a distributed group of 12 libraries and units.

Faculty and campus libraries are owned and financed by the faculty or academic group: central services are funded centrally.

But policy and professional matters are developed and implemented by a UB-wide management team led by the Chief Librarian.

The decision by the biomedical group to go for an e-only learning centre is made by the biomedical group with advice from the Chief Librarian/UB management team.
Background – The Flemish association of academic libraries

• A co-operative organisation of libraries of universities, high schools (awarding professional bachelors), other scientific libraries and research institutes

• Works together on:
  – Consortial licensing
  – Professional development
  – Specific issues e.g. copyright
Reforming the biomedical library

- Researchers do not need the physical library any more
- Students DO need a study environment suited to their contemporary way of working:
  - Group work
  - IT intensive
  - Special equipment: e-boards, screens etc.
  - AND quiet space still
Coupled with:

A building development programme which will take space from the current library

Hence the move to e-only journals and smaller but more intensively used reader areas and a reduced core collection of textbooks and handbooks

Inspiration for this approach: the Learning Grid model of Warwick University – employment of students as supervisors/advisers will be looked at in Leuven.
But there was still a problem

How to ensure ongoing access to the older periodical literature?

Answer: a co-operative depot service in Flanders for the paper volumes

• Idea initiated by K.U. Leuven and U Gent
• Taken up by the Flemish Association of Academic Libraries
• Leuven chairs the workgroup
The depot service - concept

- One copy of each paper journal held by one of the participating libraries in Flanders
- Applies to the biomedical, natural and exact sciences
- The humanities and heritage collections not included
- Pilot – the biomedical sciences
- Participants:
  - K. U. Leuven
  - U. Gent
  - Free University of Brussels (VUB)
  - U. Antwerp
  - Royal Library
  - Institute for Tropical Medecine
Steps

- Agreement in principle by all institutions before work began
- All holdings checked and updated in the Flemish union catalogue of periodicals – Antilope (run by Antwerp)
- Service level agreement developed and formally approved by all institutions
- Criteria for assignment of titles to libraries agreed
- Antilope updated with the depot holder information
- System ready for use June 2009 – relegation to depot holder and disposal of duplicates if desired
Agreed mutually and reciprocally that:

• The depot holder may not dispose of the depot copy without consulting the other partners
• No partner is obliged to dispose of any material
• The depot holder is identified in Antilope
• The depot holder must keep the depot copy in reasonable conditions for preservation
• The depot holder will deliver a requested copy of an item within 48 hours via the Flemish interlibrary loan service (Impala) at the standard price
The following criteria were used to assign titles to participating libraries:

- Completeness of the holding
- Uniqueness of the holding
- Specificity of the holding (e.g. tropical medicine)
- The holding is already designated for preservation by the library
Further possibilities

- Move on to the natural/exact sciences
- Co-operation with the Walloon (French speaking) institutions
  - Mutual interest in exploring the possibilities
  - Walloon institutions already have a similar project for reference and bibliographic works

Meanwhile.....

The biomedical library of the K.U.Leuven is about to start relegation – commencing with the big runs of journals which give the quickest win in space saving related to effort.
A win-win

• All the participating libraries are short of space and can now solve their problem by co-operative action
• While the future access to the paper version is assured within Flanders
• And the K.U.Leuven can move ahead with the innovation and re-orientation of its bio-medical library