Library Learning Spaces in a Digital Age

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Deakin University Driving the Digital Frontier

Vibrant campus life and creative cloud learning environment
Comprehensive teaching and research profile
Over 45,000 students
Four campuses, network of Deakin Learning Centres
25% students in the cloud
University is celebrating its 40th anniversary

Our Libraries
Melbourne Burwood Campus
Geelong Waurn Ponds Campus
Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library
Deakin University Library Building Program

8 years:
Master Planning and ongoing review (beginning 2006/7)

Business Case Development (8 separate business cases)

Development of Project Briefs (with Architects, Facilities, Academic community and Students)

Development of post project business analysis, aligning with the University strategic imperatives for learning and teaching, and research

Application of assessment methodologies (observations, client satisfaction surveys, focus groups)

Research to inform and improve evaluation of library and learning spaces
It is critical that capital investments have demonstrable value and positive outcomes for students and the communities within which universities are located.

The right match - expectations and outcomes - strengthens the Library's contribution to campus life.
Demonstrating Value

Institutions continue to invest in library building projects. How are they assessing value?

- Return on investment, applying usual financial performance indicators
- Architectural design and features
- University asset, reputation, marketable
- Positive outcomes for students and their learning
- Contribution to the academic and wider communities

Greater emphasis on qualitative benefits
Assessing Library and Learning Spaces

When approaching any assessment activity it is all about

the right questions

and the most appropriate methodology

that are fit for purpose

within the context of different stakeholder expectations

and institutional aspirations.
Lessons Learned. Questions unanswered.

The Library was striving to achieve more and more with each project.

Important to document Lessons Learned when undertaking post project benefits analysis

Continually striving to achieve best outcomes for students and researchers:
- the variety and types of spaces that suited different users and uses
- the balance between collaborative and individual reflective spaces
- extending aspirations for inspirational spaces (new architectural features, new technologies, more multimedia and a stronger digital presence)

The Library became interested in determining on what basis it could claim to have met or exceeded standards or expectations.
Quality Framework for Library Spaces

What criteria of quality are being applied as library managers continue to develop plans, learn from others, and assess their newly refurbished or newly built library and learning spaces?

In 2011-12, the Library undertook a joint research project with the School of Architecture and Building (now the School of Architecture and Built Environment) to establish a setting for the evaluation of academic library spaces, built upon a set of Criteria of Quality (CoQ) and Quality Indicators (QI).
The CoQ have been published and presented by Abbasi, Elkadi, Horn and Owen at a number of conferences in the United States (Association of Research Libraries: Library Assessment Conference, 2012) and Australia (Measuring and Improving Library Value, 2012 & ALIA 2012: Discovery) and have been applied at different points in Deakin University Library’s building program.
Criteria of Quality (CoQ)

Integration of technologies
Furniture design supports flexible use, wireless network saturation, visual display and signage.

Positive image and identity
Sense of place, contributions to education and culture.

Welcoming and inviting
Intermediary spaces for informal gathering and transition spaces, café and gallery.

Perceived comfort and sustainability
Natural light, temperature and thermal comfort.

Variety of spaces for different users and differences
Spaces for university, government, casual groups, industry, research, planning and administration.
Variety of spaces for different users and different uses
Spaces for unstructured and casual groups, individual quiet research, planned collaboration and presentation, 24 hour access.

Functional and efficient
Acoustics, lighting, adjacencies of noisy and quiet spaces, size and area.
and presented by Abbasi, Elkadi, Horn and Owen at a number of conferences (Assessment Conference, 2012) and Australia (Measuring and Improving Library...ed at different points in Deakin University Library’s building program.
Environmental comfort and sustainability
Make most of natural light, air quality and thermal comfort.

Access, safety and security
Visual connection maintained across spaces and among bookshelves, wayfinding, accessibility.
Research Question 1

Do library and learning spaces meet the Criteria of Quality (CoQ) for user experience?
**Research Question 2:**
*How do library spaces assist students in achieving their learning goals?*

The Library’s value proposition to the University has always been focused on student learning and the student experience, providing spaces that can act as change agents.

The introduction of new generation library and learning spaces is occurring when the benefits of learning outside of the classroom, informal peer-to-peer interactions and social networking opportunities are being recognised as critical to improving learning outcomes.
"The Library is in a good position to make a strong contribution to a collaborative strategic leap in the design of learning environments if the University chooses to go down that path."
Research Question 2:  
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Research Question 2

The Library is embarking on research that will translate the criteria of quality from an architectural perspective to a **social and behavioural understanding** of whether these new generation library learning spaces meet criteria of quality for users of the space.

Building upon this process, the research will then roll out a second stage to focus on **whether the renovated library spaces assist students, who are using these spaces, to achieve their learning goals.**

Library staff will learn how to develop behavioural markers and participate in the data gathering process for the research.
Digital Spaces
'The Verge': Waterfront Campus Library

From Vision

To Reality
Interactive Multimedia Project 'The Verge'

Content is critical, but the message is king

Key project aim: Connect students with global knowledge resources, excite and engage learners, and facilitate learning through interactivity.

Outcome: Media and digital information resources relevant to students' study and research have been selectively and creatively showcased in high-resolution, interactive presentation screens.

How the content is visualised, the messages conveyed, and how the content speaks to the target audience underpins the success of the project.
Interactive Multimedia Project
'The Verge'

From Vision to Reality: Keys to success

Engaging the right people with the right expertise at the right time

Challenges:
• Project within a project. Building projects often lack the tolerances required when dealing with uncertainties that cutting edge technologies bring

• Need to align the IT and audiovisual build with industrial design and fabrication requirements
Interactive Multimedia Project 'The Verge'

From Vision to Reality: Keys to success (cont'd)

Challenges:

- Constant oversight required and negotiation with architects, building foremen, IT and AV contractors, and internal IT division
- Developing a shared understanding of the vision amongst stakeholders.

Need to continually push forward to the unknown.
Interactive Multimedia Project ‘The Verge’

Harnessing innovation and developing team competencies
The team felt the responsibility of delivering engaging experiences beyond the first flush of success.

Looked for ideas and projects: libraries, advertisers, agencies, galleries, museums and market leaders in interactive technologies.

Setting up the team; bringing together the right stakeholders
Current staff, though relatively new digital library team, were given the challenge. Includes web and multimedia specialists, and technical knowledge.

Worked with IT and audiovisual consultants, and suppliers of IT/AV equipment and applications

Discipline librarians and the special collections curator advised on content.
Digital Spaces
'The Verge': Waterfront Campus Library

The team are looking forward to Phase 2 of development . . . 'with the right people, lessons learned and time we can achieve even better things: strength to strength'.

Thank you

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