

Taking the mountain to all the Mohammeds

Elements of embedded librarianship at a large university



38th Annual IATUL Conference 2017

Embedding Libraries – Service and Development in Context

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Münster University and its library system

Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster (WWU)

- One of the biggest universities in Germany
- Founded in 1780, newly founded in 1902
- 15 faculties
- More than 120 subjects taught in over 280 degree courses
- ~ 44,000 students, 670 professors, academic staff of 5,000
- 220 buildings spread over the entire city » no central campus

Münster University and its library system

University and Regional Library Münster (ULB)

- Central literature & information supply institution for WWU
- Legal deposit library for the province of Westphalia
- Open to all students and staff of Münster University and of the University of Applied Sciences Münster
- Open to all residents of Münster and the surrounding region
- Founded in 1588, transferred to the WWU in 1780
- 1 central library + ~ 100 department & institute libraries
- 6m volumes (2.6m central library, 3.4m decentr. libraries)
- Staff of 248 for about 182 FTE (full-time equivalents)

Where we were in 2013

Libraries

- 1 central library + 4 branch libraries with 170 employees
- 130 autonomous departmental libraries with 70 employees
- › “Classic” two-track system
- › Suboptimal regarding cost structures and efficiency
- › But: non-campus university
 - › Direct access to literature important for students, lecturers, and researchers
 - › Most facilities not about to change

Where we were in 2013

Subject librarians

- 17 subject librarians for 42 subjects
- Time available for subjects beside other tasks: 5–80%
 - › Mostly < 50% » mostly ‘not enough’
- Strong relations to some departments/institutes, but only little contact to most institutes
- › Subject librarians did not know exactly what their user groups needed
- › Users were not aware of all the services the libraries offer
- » Dissatisfaction
- » Since 2011: deliberations on how to change the structure

The reform of 2014

Why, when and how it began

University library

– Dissatisfaction

- › With the disadvantage of the two-track system
- › With the structure of subject services

– Ideas on how to tackle some of these problems

University

– Economic pressure

- › 2011 state audit office analysis › demands structural changes in two-track university library systems to cut costs
- › 2012 tight university budget › consolidation required

The reform of 2014

Why, when and how it began

University

» Appointment of 7 expert working groups

- **Aim:** to develop short-, medium-, and long-term measures to optimize processes and save costs
- **Working groups** 11/2012–3/2013:
 1. Organizational Structures 1 (faculty organization & administration)
 2. Organizational Structures 2 (central administration)
 3. Personnel Costs
 4. Structure of the Library System
 5. Structure of Information Technology Services
 6. Structure of the Universities' Workshops
 7. Overhead Costs

The reform of 2014

The working group “Structure of the WWU Library System”

Members

- WWU Vice Rector for Teaching and Studies
- 2 members of the university libraries’ board of directors
- 3 professors as faculty representatives
- 2 directors of other university libraries that have gone through similar changes

Tasked with

- Developing a new structure for the library system of Münster University › functional one-track-system
- Complying with demands of teaching & research and technological change & progress

The reform of 2014

The working group “Structure of the WWU Library System”

Key topics for saving costs while improving services

1. Standardizing acquisitions

- › Standardizing work flows for buying and indexing media
- › Concentrating journal subscriptions
- › Concentrating on electronic media (“e-only”)
- › Improving terms & conditions of purchasing media

2. Uniting the libraries’ personnel

- › Ensuring the same conditions for all library staff members
- › Improving services for smaller libraries without trained staff

3. Reducing the number of decentralized libraries

- › Merging libraries where possible (in terms of content & space)
- › Uniting the management of several small libraries under one team

The reform of 2014

The working group “Structure of the WWU Library System”

8 recommendations of the working group 2013

1. Pooling the libraries’ trained staff under the auspices of the central library
2. Coordinating electronic journals and databases
3. Extending the supply of electronic journals (“e-only”)
4. Implementing university-wide use of acquisition software
5. Reducing decentr. libraries & strengthening bigger libraries
6. Coordinating opening hours of libraries
7. Completing retrospective conversion in 2017
8. Setting up a standing committee for library & information infrastructure

» **University decided to follow these recommendations**

The reform of 2014

Negotiations with the faculties

- **3–5 meetings per faculty 2014–2015**
- **Different faculties = different starting points**
 - › Open atmosphere vs. fear & refusal
 - › Varying opinions on how to manage a library
 - › Big or tight faculty budgets
- » **Signed contracts with all 15 faculties**
 - I. General agreement** about rights & responsibilities regarding the management of the faculty libraries
 - › Facilities, budgets for media, budgets for student assistants, managing acquisitions, responsibilities for running the libraries, ...
 - II. Economic plan** with specific data regarding the faculty libraries
 - › Collections, personnel, number of student assistants, opening hours, type of cataloguing, ...

The reform of 2014

The new ULB department “Academic Library Services”

- Uniting the libraries’ staff = key element of the reform
- But: how to merge 63 colleagues (+ 30%) and 100 libraries into the organizational structure of the central library?
- › Founding of a new department for academic library services
- › 5 units that divide up the 15 faculties according to “subject kinship”

The reform of 2014

The new ULB department “Academic Library Services”

History, Theology, Art

Fac 1 Protestant Theology

Fac 2 Catholic Theology

Fac 8 History and Philosophy

Fac 15 University of Music

31 libraries

Mathematics, Natural Science, Medicine

Fac 7 Psychology/Sport Sciences

Fac 10 Mathematics and Computer Sc.

Fac 11 Physics

Fac 12 Chemistry and Pharmacy

Fac 13 Biology

Fac 14 Geosciences

22 libraries

*Fac 5 Medicine = separate department
with 14 libraries*

Languages, Literatures, Cultures

Fac 9 Philology

14 libraries

*Low Countries Studies = special collection
with 1 library*

Educational & Social Sciences

Fac 6 Educational and Social Science

4 libraries

Law & Economics

Fac 3 Law

Fac 4 Business and Economics

11 libraries

The reform of 2014

The new ULB department “Academic Library Services”

Example: “Languages, Literatures, Cultures” unit

Subjects

- › Book Studies
- › English Studies
- › General and Comparative Literary Studies & Linguistics
- › German Studies
- › Middle Eastern & Oriental Studies
- › Nordic Studies
- › Romance Studies
- › Slavic Studies

Faculty

- › WWU Faculty 9: Philology
- › About 10,000 students
- › 22 BA courses
- › 26 MA courses
- › 4 Graduate Schools

Libraries

- › 14 libraries
- › 707,000 volumes
- › Staff of 12

The reform of 2014

The new ULB department “Academic Library Services”

- Each unit responsible for its staff members, libraries, and subject services
- 5 subject librarians = unit managers » central contact for students and academic staff for all questions regarding the subjects, library collections, and digital services
- › A structure that matches the diversity of the library system while enabling fast and efficient decisions
- » A solid base for our way towards a functional one-track library system

Comparable reforms at other German universities

- **Berlin (TU)**
- **Dresden**
- **Frankfurt am Main**
- **Freiburg**
- **Gießen**
- **Heidelberg**
- **Leipzig**
- **Marburg**

Publications

- › Bauer 2004
- › Dugall/Gärtner 2014
- › Martin-Konle 2015
- › Probst/Balzuweit 2014
- › Reuter 2003 & 2014
- › Sühl-Strohmenger 2014
- › et al.

Where we are now in 2017

The 8 recommendations of the working group 2013

1. Pooling the libraries' trained staff
2. Coordinating electronic journals and databases
3. Extending the supply of electronic journals (“e-only”)
4. Implementing university-wide use of acquisition software
5. Reducing and strengthening libraries
6. Coordinating opening hours of libraries
7. Completing retrospective conversion in 2017
8. Setting up a standing committee for library & information infrastructure

Where we are now in 2017

The library system


– About 30 fewer libraries

- › Improvement of routines and services in the remaining libraries
- › Administrative alliances for small libraries
- › Change of status for very small libraries › personal reference library

– New department with subject cluster units

- › “One stop management” of decentralized staff & libraries and subjects

– Budget for decentralized libraries still within the faculties

- › Departments/institutes decide how much they spend on their libraries
- › Difficult for syndicated acquisitions
- › Negotiations in the Electronic Licences Committee necessary
- » Important element of a functional one-track library system 

Where we are now in 2017

Personnel

– Staff in one group

- › Closer contacts to “the decentralized world”
- › Stand-ins easier to organize
- › Joint training
- › Switching jobs between central & departmental libraries possible
 - » Important element of a functional one-track library system

– Smaller group of subject librarians

- › Added liaison librarians’ tasks
- › But fewer other tasks

– Costs

- › No personnel expenses saved until now (due to added staff and assignments to higher pay scales)
- › Expectation: 10 FTEs less over the next 7 years

In other news: parallel developments

Accompanying construction projects

- Ongoing projects: new library for Philosophy & Science of Art, library extension for History, renovations in several libraries
- New project: religious science campus uniting Catholic, Protestant & Islamic Studies 2024 › biggest campus in Europe › library 700,000 vol.
- New project: new physics building with 1 library instead of 11 in 2021
- › Intense discussions, long-running projects
- › But an opportunity to establish contacts with faculties & institutes

Expanding information literacy services

- Developing e-learning resources: online tutorials & webquests
- Integrating information literacy courses in curriculum of some faculties
- Cooperation of information department and subject librarians
- › Closer contact with both students and teaching staff
- › <https://www.ulb.uni-muenster.de/ulb-tutor/>

In other news: parallel developments

Expanding publishing services

- Infrastructure: document repository, Open Journal Systems, series for hybrid open access books (online & print), funds for APCs of open access journal articles
- Activities: information about service portfolio, support for publishing projects of WWU authors
 - › Reaching out to graduates and academic staff by promoting the services and advising publishing projects
 - › <http://publizieren.uni-muenster.de>

Setting up an electronic licences committee

- Members: 15 representatives of faculties & ULB head of acquisitions
- Discussions and decisions about licensing electronic media
- Costs can be split according to usage per faculty
- › Contact to academic staff and faculty management

In other news: parallel developments

Setting up research data management services

- Developing a research data repository
- Developing a range of services for the data management cycle
- Joint research projects with WWU institutes
- › Maintaining close contact to academic staff and research groups
- › <https://www.uni-muenster.de/Forschungsdaten/>

Setting up a centre for digital humanities

- Joint proposal of a group of professors, the university library, and the university centre for IT infrastructure and services
- › Proposal accepted 3/2017 › centre to be established in autumn 2017
- › Expectation: close contact to academic staff and research groups

Elements of embedded librarianship in the subject services

Thanks to the reform the subject & liaison librarians benefit from ...

More contact

- More contact to colleagues in departmental libraries
- More participation in information literacy services
- More participation in institutes' management boards, library committees, working groups, ...
- More participation in research projects (research data management, publications)
- More exchange of information about current topics and the latest news – both in the libraries and the institutes

Elements of embedded librarianship in the subject services

Thanks to the reform the subject & liaison librarians benefit from ...

Better collections

- More information about courses and research activities
- More coordination of acquisitions between central & departmental libraries
- › Acquisitions that better suit the demands of the different user groups

Improved services in the departmental libraries

- Better grasp of services & activities, but also of the needs in the units' libraries
- › Exchange of ideas between all libraries

Elements of embedded librarianship in the subject services

Thanks to the reform the subject & liaison librarians benefit from ...

Influence on library buildings

- Participation in working groups for building projects
- Contribution of knowledge about library buildings, services, needs
- › (Some) influence on concepts, plans, and buildings

More opportunities to spread the word

- More contact to different user groups
- More knowledge about the different needs of users
- More knowledge about the departmental libraries
- » More opportunities to inform users and colleagues about services

Conclusions: Still on our way but the ground-work has been laid

- The last four years = “a long and winding and uphill road”
- Most worries & fears have disappeared
- Most goals have been reached or at least approached

Libraries

- Opportunity to develop the library system together with the faculties
- Quantity of libraries will be reduced, but quality will increase
- Ongoing adaptation of transformation processes and structures

Subject & liaison librarians

- Today: colleagues, collections, and libraries in one unit
- Tomorrow: stronger relations with students and scientists, new ideas
- The day after tomorrow:
 - › Less collection building, subject indexing, ...
 - › More information services, networking, project management, ...

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Questions and comments welcome! :)

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