



Reinventing Library Environments to Enhance Service

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Reinventing Library Environments to Enhance Service

- ❑ Adapting to new realities
- ❑ Quality Space Supports Quality Service
- ❑ Library as Place
- ❑ Excellent Library Space
- ❑ Practical Suggestions
- ❑ Evaluating your library space



Adapting to New Realities

- ❑ Need to combine real space and cyberspace intelligently and effectively.
- ❑ Need to meet expectations from ‘tech savvy’ customers
- ❑ Need to transfer routine tasks to customer while maintaining valued relationships
- ❑ Need to challenge library ‘sacred cows’



Adapting to New Realities

- Need to redefine spaces to support services offers an opportunity to develop new roles and relationships in the community.
- Redefined roles require redesigned space
- Redesigned space fosters improved service



Quality space supports Quality service

- ❑ A library that does not work logically, also suffers visibly
- ❑ A library that suffers visibly also does not work logically.



Quality space supports Quality service

Good library planning recognizes how people use the library, and how they wish to be inconvenienced rather than inconvenienced.



Library As Place

- provides informal gathering places that:
 - Make people feel at home, have a sense of belonging
 - Foster relationships between people, support diversity
 - Create a sense of place and community
 - Invoke a sense of pride
 - Offer sanctuary, a place to relax and unwind



Library as Place

- ❑ provides a variety of comfortable seating options for those who wish to spend time in the library.
- ❑ provides accessible, user friendly spaces.



Library as Place

- provides a legible, logical layout that makes the library “self-guiding” with an intuitive layout of spaces and collections.
- opens up space to create an open welcoming feeling.



Library as Place

- Opening up of space to create an open welcoming feeling.


Openness, achieved through lower shelving units, wide aisles, lots of clear, uncluttered space between furniture and equipment make the space appealing, but also make the space more legible and secure.



Library as Place

□ Enabling Self Service

Through user-friendly design, patrons are encouraged to help themselves, freeing library staff to assist with more complex support.



Planning space around services:
what should be.

Planning service around spaces:
what often happens.



Excellent library space provides:

- ❑ simplicity and elegance in design, furnishings and equipment
- ❑ visually coherent spaces for greatest ease of use and friendliness of space
- ❑ sense of spatial definition for specific areas
- ❑ consideration of human scale in buildings and spaces at all times



Excellent library space provides:

- ❑ technology visually incorporated into the physical space
- ❑ ergonomic solutions considered and applied for both public and staff
- ❑ air and light qualities are conducive to specific activities
- ❑ streamlined layouts that enhance coherence and legibility



Practical Suggestions

- Avoid common ailments of libraries
 - Sporadic development over time:
“with time, flaws that may be obvious to even a casual visitor can become all but invisible to the library staff”
 - Technology inappropriately placed:
“because that’s where it fits”
 - Temporary sometimes lasts for years



Practical Suggestions

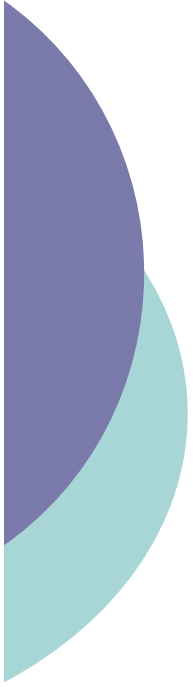
- Factors that contribute to ease of use:

Logical layout, clear sight lines, good lighting, open uncluttered aisles, colour to denote areas, clear and consistent signage



Practical Suggestions

- Minimize noise and disruptions
 - careful location of differing functions,
 - dropped or suspended ceilings over certain areas
 - stacks or furniture in alcoves
 - plants and carpets to absorb sound
 - segregation of washrooms, mechanical



“The ability of a non-library user to approach and recognize service points and overall library resources is critical to an effective library.”



Practical Suggestions

- ❑ Fine art of tweaking, you don't get everything right the first time;
- ❑ Let customers and staff tell you what they need/want.



Practical Suggestions

- Consult while planning
 - Consult the literature
 - Consult the Internet
 - Consult peers, visit libraries
 - *Consult your own staff*
 - Consult your users
 - Consult your funders



Evaluating your library space

- ❑ In many libraries, the opening of a new facility results in well-earned applause, but too often little is done to evaluate the building or respond to the inevitable surprises in the way the staff/public chooses to use the building.



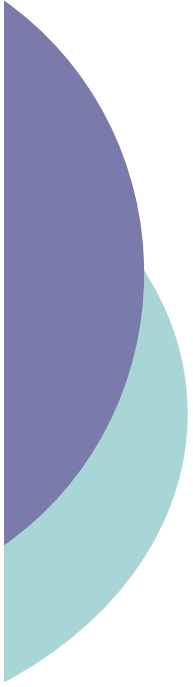
Evaluating your library space

- ❑ The evaluation process shouldn't be limited to new buildings - it can and should be used to improve a library at any stage in the building's life cycle.



Evaluating your library space

- ❑ Never stop evaluating the effect your space has on your service
- ❑ Never stop evaluating the effect your service has on your space



“A library should generate an atmosphere both exciting and refreshing – it must settle down so that it can be comfortably used.”

Paul Goldberger

US Architectural Critic