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How can we make our digital material more visible in the physical library?

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Abstract:

Digital Collections enables the library to move anywhere. But the printed books are still in demand and will continue to be so for some time. In addition, the quantities of e-books on for example Law in Swedish are not yet sufficient. We see this as a relevant project, especially because we want to show the amount and variety of media that libraries offer today. Ultimately, we aim to continue to bridge the gap between the physical and the digital. We believe in the great development potential of the brand "Library" as a place for development and meeting people. To this end we shall discuss what could we have done differently and what methods were good to involve staff, users and course coordinators?

We wanted to create more value in the room with the help of technology, QR codes, TV monitors, photo frames and skills. We also wanted to link together courses with textbooks and relevant materials with the help of streaming lectures and electronic online courses for students. Our aim was to highlight and bring digital resources into a context where our visitors work and study and creating commitment and participation of both users and staff. It gave us the opportunity to work from a beta-culture and think "fun at work".

We are from Uppsala University Library. It is organized as one library, but we are at 12 different locations. We are representing Library for Economic Sciences the Law Library - not really far from each other, but sometimes different cultures as we will show you later.

Our main focus for this project is:

We can't separate our real lives from our online lives. We live in both, but we've been treating it like its two separate worlds. We want to put them together. So we focused on students in the physical

library. They go to the shelves, browse and can experience that we don't have much material in their subject. It's not true! We have about 350,000 e-books!

Why a pilot project then?

We wanted to show the positive and negative experiences in a quick way. Sometimes you just need to try things to see if they work! We realized that we're not first to think of this. So we started to read on the subject. We shared the articles between us in Dropbox, since we are working at different parts at the university library. We also used EndNote Web, where you can add comments and so on.

And then we networked: We got in touch with some people through Twitter, Facebook and we also met with colleagues from other libraries IRL as well.

At the same time, we wanted to involve students, lecturers, researchers and others who are interested in this

How did we get started?

Researchers

We contacted the researchers and lecturers to find out more about what they know and think about e-materials and especially e-books. We had the opportunity to introduce our experimental projects and different ideas to the Library Advisory Board (with representatives from throughout the university). They were very positive and interested, but did not have much extra to give us. It became clear that the business is located here at the library - it is up to us to present ideas and realize them with the help of our researchers and other stakeholders. We also contacted a number of researchers, course administrators and students who we already had had contact with on other issues. We used already existing networks!

There were discussions about various pricing models and economic models - most of them belonged to the departments at the Library for Economic Sciences. Ipad was seen as a saviour; at long last it is possible to read e-books and e-texts for real. It's good for students without much money, but can they really absorb large amounts of text online? Their lecturers seem kind of sceptical about this.

Students

Then we asked students for their views on our experimental project. We caught those who visited us physically and contacted student organizations. They were completely sold on the idea to have all the textbooks as e-books for their courses. Availability would indicate that it is definitely the e-books that the library should focus on. If a student absolutely wants to have a printed book is it available to buy, was their comment.

Students find it difficult to find e-books. Our catalogue doesn't have e-books and printed books in the same post. There might be 16 people waiting for the same book, without knowing there is an e-book available. The students had some suggestions for improvement:

- Why don't you have a pop-up box that offers tips on e-books when standing in queue on a print?
- Our course instructors always present course literature, so why not mention the books that are available as e-books?
- They asked - Would you like to be a part of our "Feedback-day"? Of course we would! We got the chance to ask some questions about the library and the students' opinions about e-books.

The results from the questions showed that one third of the students read e-books, while two thirds rarely or never do.

Benefits include for example: you can't lose them and they are"free". Disadvantages: there are strange technical solutions – "too difficult to find the e-books".

Most people who respond that they don't read e-books say that they don't know that they are available and don't know where to find them. So we felt that our ideas about the project was on the right track.

Colleagues

We tested a method known as "Open Space" with our colleagues. It works much like this conference: it gives the opportunity to go in and out of various conversations and discussions. When you're done talking about something you can move on to something else that interests you. I'm not going to talk so much about this method here but its well worth trying it! It makes organizations go creative! You can read more about this method on the web. And you'll also find documents from the meeting etc. at the end of this presentation

We realized that we want to have more meetings where we all have to be creative. Everybody get development and training. It is important to create occasions where staff has the opportunity to be creative. It can provide staff development and training. We also had a new intranet this spring that provides interactive opportunities. There, we created a place where we can share pictures, screenshots and more. The benefit from this is that the different subject libraries can use each other's work and avoid doing the same job over and over again.

What did we do more than talk?

Well, we went for QR codes and screens. QR codes began with a campaign for new students called "New Student". We papered the campus with QR codes that led to a website where they were welcomed and encouraged to come to the library to get their library card and receive a welcome gift. Several libraries were sceptical, but the funny thing was that the most sceptical in the humanities were those who were handing out the most gifts. We used QR codes as a simple way to link directly to electronic books, the mobile interface of databases, RSS feeds etc.

Screens were purchased for our library. We wanted to show information such as tips on databases, which have had an effect at our information desks and at training sessions. Students ask more about what we found; more students come to the training in the library. Smaller screens placed strategically to either show support such as book, or a librarian, or to explain how they can find books according to the Dewey Decimal System, or where there is a lot of e-resources to display attached to the subject.

We will show several examples of texts on our big information screens and for our smaller screens placed on shelves.

Positive and negative experiences - so what have we learned from all this?

1. Think, plan and coordinate together, it saves time! It takes a lot of time to analyze the market when you're about to buy new technological stuff.
    Sell the idea to your colleagues, why are we doing this? This isn't just because we want to have fun with new technology; we really want to increase usage and statistics. It can be difficult to get everybody on board. "You don't have to try it just because it is new," and: "we're still a university library" were comments we got.

2. Positive feedback from students and researchers: Good examples show that we are on right track.

3. Skills increase with colleagues: they improved their technical skill and also got a chance to see how much digital material we have in the selected areas.

What should we have we done differently?

Pilot-project is a bit vague, it can be difficult to make decisions. For example, the decisions around the screens. There are many minds with opinions about most things.

We also wanted to show that it's ok to make mistakes and how to learn from them. This is it's a new task in the organisation: someone needs to be responsible for the information and development around the screens and its content. We want to automate as much as possible, but someone must be responsible for the work and update the information

What do we do next?

- We want to expand student and faculty participation. They have already asked if they can get to add information and use our screens for more things. We will discuss that …
- Audio? Can we use it? TV broadcasts, etc.
- To connect our course shelves with broadcasts from lectures.

It's so easy to move the screens and also to change the content.

Questions? Please contact us!