Self-service at the LLC!

Over the summer, we have completed a major project to bring self-service technologies to all our libraries. We previously had two self-service machines, located in the Main Library and Duncan of Jordanstone Library, but these used old technology and were slow and frustrating to use. The new system, which uses radio-frequency identification technology (RFID), should really improve your experience of self-service.

The new system is estimated to be up to 3 times faster than our old self-service machines.

Benefits:

• You can issue several books at once, and you don’t even have to open them up – just place them in the aperture and see the titles pop up on the screen.
• You can pay your fines with either coins or notes at the machines. A credit card facility is coming soon to the Main Library.
• Check your library record and renew books at the same machine. At all sites except the Main Library, you also return your books at these machines.
• In the Main Library, you return your books either by posting them into an automatic sorter, or by dropping them into a secure external returns machine, which means you can return your books even when the Library is closed.

These benefits should reduce the need for queuing. The new equipment is intuitive and easy to use, but Library staff will be on hand if you require any help. Both issue and return machines provide receipts.
Power to the People - more power in your libraries!

Another project over the summer has been to install more power in the Main Library, Law Library and DOJ Library for laptops and fixed PCs.

Main Library
Over 400 additional power sockets on the first and second floors. This means that laptops can be used on the desks in the central floor areas, and not just around the perimeter or pillars. In the second floor silent study zone (2B), 96 new desks have been provided with integral pop-up power in each study place. The desks are larger, giving more space for flexible study using laptops and print resources together. It is also planned to introduce fixed PCs to this area, in partnership with ICS.

Law Library
Power, networking and new desks have been installed on the stage area. 8 fixed PCs have been installed by ICS.

DOJ Library
An additional 3 fixed PCs have been installed by ICS.

Using self-service equipment for routine transactions will give Library & Learning Centre staff the time to concentrate on providing more face-to-face help around the Library, and to answer more complex enquiries. In the Main Library, the former Issue Desk area has been reconfigured to provide a colourful, open, collaborative space called the InfoZone where staff can help with any questions.

What you can do in the InfoZone
- Use the computers at the large island desk to search for locations and availability of books, journals and electronic resources.
- Library & Learning Centre staff are available to help, or can refer you to a Subject Librarian if your enquiry is more complex. There will be a staff presence at all times in the InfoZone except during ‘self-service only’ hours in the early mornings and late evenings (see http://www.dundee.ac.uk/library/opening_hours.htm for more details).
- Pick up your reservations; the email notifying you that the book is ready to collect will explain how to locate the book on the shelves at the back of the InfoZone. Then just issue it to yourself at the self-service machine before leaving the InfoZone.
- Use the Short Loan collection, also on the shelves on the back wall. Select the book you require, and then issue it to yourself before leaving the InfoZone.
- Return your books in either of the two return points; a receipt will be given which is your proof of return.
- Issue books to yourself here, or at any of the other three self-service machines located just outside the InfoZone opposite the café.
Duncan of Jordanstone Library sits at the centre of the Matthew Building, and has been described as the ‘heart of the DoJ campus’. The Library primarily serves the academic community of art, design, media and architecture, as well as interested parties from the wider University. It is also used by practising artists, designers and architects from the local community.

For those who have never visited, but feel the Library looks vaguely familiar, you may recognise it as a location for the DUSA Youtube hit ‘Skint’, the Library’s characteristic black and red furniture having provided a backdrop for many student video productions.

In just over a 1000 m², in the DoJ Library you’ll discover books, journals, DVDs, Blu-ray discs, maps and slides; also photocopiers, study spaces, viewing facilities for video, DVD and Blu-ray, network access, and, not least, space for investigation, relaxation and reflection.

Library Manager Marie Simmons is assisted by a dedicated team which includes Liaison Librarians Morag Henderson and Sandra Charles, Senior Library Assistants and Library Assistants.

The stock ranges from Tintoretto to Tarantino to Tracey Emin, book design to space exploration to social media, and from Vivienne Westwood to tensile structures to composting toilets - and much else besides.

Marie observes, “We have a wide range of material, in both physical and electronic formats. When people think about an art and design library, they tend to think of drawing or painting books, but our patrons’ interests are so much wider. We have students and staff researching and designing medical devices, animators using specialist software to create visual effects, architects designing sustainable buildings and so our stock reflects all the interests of our readers. Space limitations mean that in addition to the 83,000 items in the Library there are 33,000 books and films in a remote store which can be accessed via the requests system. With the limited space available we can only display the newer and heavily used items, but older books and films are retrieved from storage on a daily basis as required. It’s a compromise we have had to make with the Library’s shelves filled to capacity. In addition to printed stock, students and staff now also have a range of online books and journals to draw on.”

DoJ Library has seen a lot of activity over the summer, with a new self-issue and self-return system installed, the transfer of Town and Regional Planning stock to the Main Library, and the imminent installation of additional network PC’s.

The new self-issue system will give patrons independence when borrowing and returning resources, freeing library staff to concentrate upon helping students and staff maximise their use of this highly regarded collection.
We aim to continually improve the resources, information and guidance that the LLC provides. At the present time and for the foreseeable future, we will be completing that aim during a period of financial restraint. This provides us with challenges, and in particular, the need to balance enhancements and developments with efficiency and effectiveness.

Investing in self-service technologies provides an efficiency gain that allows us to maintain our library site opening times and further sustain other key services. As students and staff learn to use the systems they will discover the benefits such as 24 hour return, reduced queuing at busy times and the ability to issue almost all library items from 8 am to midnight.

It is fascinating to see these new self-service technologies in use throughout other aspects of our lives; supermarkets, fast food outlets, petrol stations, airline check in and banking. We are familiar with these systems providing a route to enhancing the speed and efficiency of straightforward transactions, and indirectly enhancing the service of more complex transactions. In many sectors, it is the client demand for minimal cost that supports a business model such as the low cost airlines where passengers issue their tickets online, use automatic check in, and pay for extras like baggage and catering.

Portable personal devices

Another efficiency gain is made when library patrons choose to use their laptops to support their research and study in the library environment. Combined with ICS, we are providing an impressive environment for laptops with power sockets, wireless, wireless direct printing and secure lockers. This form of self-service reduces the demand for the University to provide and support fixed PCs, while the patrons gain productivity as they use a familiar and flexible environment at home and on campus. Our wireless support extends to mobile phones and tablets that represent the latest form of efficient personal computing, information access and communication.

As I have outlined previously, our main resource expenditure is licensing serial publications that underpin research and learning throughout the disciplines. Work in collaboration across Scotland and the UK to extract the maximum value from these subscriptions continues, and frequently involves the transfer of publications to an online only format, providing an efficiency gain with direct online access, reduced shelf space and, sometimes, purchase cost.

Please be reassured that throughout our efficiency drives, the LLC will maintain a human and personal touch, ensuring that patron expectations for flexible, responsive and comprehensive services are met. We will continue to welcome feedback on our existing and new services.

Richard Parsons

Film & Sound Online

Film & Sound Online is a JISC funded set of collections of film, video and sound material. It includes hundreds of hours of material available for download, which can be used freely in learning, teaching and research. This diverse set of collections covers subjects such as medicine, literature, and philosophy including ‘Wellcome Film’, ‘Royal Mail Film Classics’, ‘Logic Lane’ and ‘Performance Shakespeare’.

For further information and descriptions and lists of film titles go to the website at www.filmandsound.ac.uk/