Improving the student experience – how can the Library help?

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Improving the student experience – how can the Library help?

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Resume of presentation

• Looking at changes in the student body over recent years
• Challenges for libraries in meeting the needs of the new generation of students
• Is the future of libraries and librarians threatened by the latest technological developments?
Changes in the student body

• More demanding of value for money (top-up fees etc)
• More motivated and competitive (tough jobs market)
• More of them doing masters courses
• They expect more choice and more personalised services
Changes in the student body (2)

• They have had spending power since childhood
• They like to keep up with the latest fashions in technology
• A generation dominated by a) advertising and b) technology
• A generation of multi-taskers
• Information overload and Google
Changes in the student body (3)

• Mass higher education, widening participation, and the narrowing of the information divide
• The student as customer and consumer
• Universities now concentrate on improving the student experience
• The Library has a key role to play
Challenges for libraries in meeting student needs

- Constant balancing between print and electronic
- Sustained attention to the physical environment
- Push technology – where and when the students want their information
- Helping students to become fit for the world of work
Challenges for libraries (2)

- Raising the profile of the library in the transparent technological world
- Students don’t really care where the stuff comes from, who has selected it, who is paying for it, or who is providing it; they just need the stuff when and where they want it
- Getting off to a good start – welcoming tactics
- Pre-entry and pre-application welcome
Is the future of libraries and librarians threatened?

• No more now than we were 30 years ago
• Libraries were among the first professional groups to embrace technology
• Universities are still planning new library buildings/extensions
• Libraries are adapting to student needs and demands
Is our future as librarians threatened?

• Not if we continue to observe and analyse student behaviour
• And use it to adapt and develop our services to suit our customers
• And market our services in ways attractive to students
• Making concessions to their lifestyles
Conclusions

• The library has a very strong role to play in the interactive environment
• And will continue to be a vital part of the student experience
• Librarians just need to continue to observe student behaviour, demands and needs
• And be ready to adapt our services to match