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# Redeveloping the world's largest Social Science library for the 21st century

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# Redeveloping the world's largest Social Science library for the 21<sup>st</sup> century

LSE

Library

British Library of Political and Economic Science

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## Feasibility and fundraising

- 1916 former book warehouse
- Became LSE Library in 1978
- By 1990 needed major changes
- 1994 feasibility study by Foster
- 1994 to 1999 lots of fundraising
- Money received from government, heritage lottery fund, and many individuals



# Early planning

- Project manager and architects appointed summer 1998
- Steering group and Library Planning Group set up
- There were two large projects:
  - Redevelopment
  - Temporary move out



# Planning the move

- Work around or move out?
- Search for temporary building(s)
- "The Library is closing" rumour
- Persuading the academic community
- Department by department
- Two buildings found
- One nearby and the other not



# Moving out

- Planning was difficult
- Less used materials went further away
- Move took 14 weeks at twice normal speed (June-September 1999)
- Library staff assisted at both ends
- Full library service was maintained



## Maintaining library services

- Lots of consultation with users
- Services parameters agreed
- Extra money required and agreed
- Communication plan was essential
- Explaining constraints and managing user expectations
- Involving all library staff
- Publicly available action plan agreed



# The redevelopment

#### Aims:

Modern research and learning environment with much more IT Redesigned circulation around the building Expansion space for print Improved storage conditions Improved environmental conditions



## Building features

- Library on 5 floors covering 15,000 square metres
- 8% increase in floor area but much higher increase in space efficiency
- Central atrium with spiral stepped ramp and two glass lifts
- Glazed north-facing dome at the top



## More building features

- Double-height lower ground floor
- Computer-controlled natural ventilation
- Presence-detection lighting
- Staff offices arranged in vertical stack with goods lift and loading bay for deliveries



#### Services and facilities

- More of the space is for users
- 95% of the library is open access
- 1600 study spaces, including 500 IT spaces and 226 laptop points
- Service counter, course collection, and copy shop (ground floor)
- Archives and IT helpdesk (lower ground)



#### More services and facilities

- Information desk and visitor PCs (first floor)
- Two IT training rooms
- 14 group study rooms, 2 for disabled students
- 50 kilometres of shelving enough to stretch the length of the Channel Tunnel



# The planning process

- Weekly meetings with architects from July 1998
- Many library sub-groups set up
- Architects visited library departments
- Much consultation with users
- Final plans ready February 1999



#### Major issues

- Shelving; choice and layout
- Design of service points
- Heating and ventilation
- Lighting
- Acoustics (open plan building)
- Study space and IT zoning
- Signage and colours
- Furniture and fittings
- Layout of staff offices (18% less space)



#### Construction

- Began in September 1999
- All internal walls demolished
- Most of ground floor removed
- Full internal construction according to design
- Fitting out the building
- Completion March 2001



#### The move back in 2001

- January/February move from one temporary building
- To save money on rent
- New building not yet ready
- March to May: main book move with dual site operation
- Very close to exams
- 12 March: switch to new library as main site



#### Was it worth it?

- £30 million and two massive book moves
- There were lost of problems along the way
- The project went over budget, mainly because of structural defects
- There had to be compromises



## Was it worth it (2)

- Sorting out the problems after the move takes a very long time (we are still doing it...)
- But library staff quickly settled in
- And usage by students doubled in the first year
- It is a wonderful building
- One of the most photographed in London (also featured on BBC TV)



#### Some words from users

- 'First rate...I use the library about twice as often as before'
- 'It not only looks terrific but it is also very well organised and user friendly'
- 'A wonderful energy efficient space'
- 'Great building ...but not enough toilets' (true)













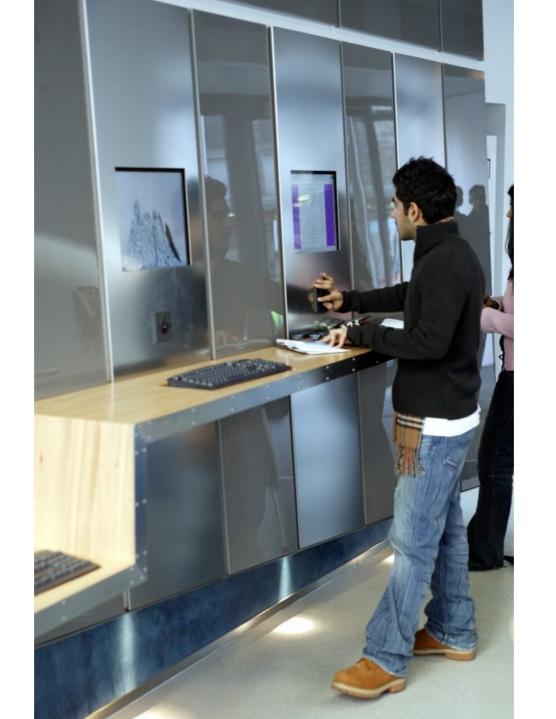
















































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