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# Journal of EAHIL

European Association for  
Health Information and Libraries

**Vol. 16 no.2**

**June 2020**

**ISSN L-1841-0715**

The production of this journal  
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# Journal of the European Association for Health Information and Libraries

Vol. 16 No. 2 June 2020

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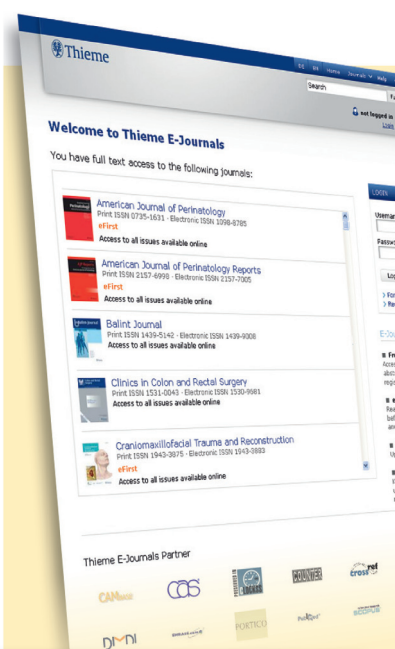
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## Flexibility in library spaces

**Federica Napolitani**

Editor in Chief

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Dear EAHIL friends,

It's been only three months since my last Editorial and yet so much has changed. We all managed to adapt to the rhythms of the lockdown, to overcome the difficulties of working from home, to re-arrange our habits by practicing social distancing, wearing face masks, and to fight the misinformation that spread on the web as an infodemic (as the WHO called it). I'm pretty sure we all strongly felt and understood the magnitude of this moment.

Nonetheless, *JEAHIL's* intensive activity has continued as usual, leading to the production of this June issue that I'm so pleased to present you here. "User-oriented and creative libraries: the opportunities of spaces", this is the topic of the Monographic section which collects six feature articles and which is edited by Michelle F. Schaffer (University Library of Bern, Switzerland). As Michelle highlights in her preface, libraries in the 21st century have become dynamic centres and "(...) the uncertainty over future technological changes and the rapid change in the needs of library users must not be neglected and requires a greater *flexibility* of spaces, with mobile fittings and furnishings that can be re-arranged along with their integrated technical installation". I particularly liked the use of the word *flexibility* as I personally found it to be incredibly appropriate and meaningful not only in regards to library spaces but also to the present pandemic, and our capacity to deal with it.

I wish to thank Michelle and the many authors who contributed with their excellent papers.

In her Letter from the President, Maurella Della Seta reminds us about the important elections taking place in these days, for the roles of EAHIL President and EAHIL Board members, while Carol Lefebvre (MLA Representative to EAHIL) informs us on the latest news from MLA and on the MLA 2020 virtual conference. Francesca Gualtieri (chair of the SIG Pharma) tells us about Pharma information during COVID-19 and Letizia Sampaolo informs us on New publications and products in the areas of interest of EAHIL.

Now some news on *JEAHIL* activities. We recently received some requests from new sponsors willing to advertise in the e-journal or/and in *JEAHIL* website. Some sponsors have been contacted by Tiina Heino, member of EAHIL Executive Board, whom I'd like to thank deeply. With the aim to provide them with statistics of access to the journal pages, Rebecca Wojturska, the new Open Access Publishing Officer at the University of Edinburgh, has conducted a very interesting analysis. As you will read in Rebecca's report, published in the "News from EAHIL" section of this issue, over 17,000 articles were downloaded and almost 37,000 abstract pages were viewed in 2019; and 2020 statistics are even more impressive. This means that the journal is doing very well, and that the work and efforts of *JEAHIL* Editorial Board members and of all those who are collaborating (authors, column editors, and many others) are producing successful results.



One last thing, *JEAHIL* Editorial Board has been discussing the topics of future theme-issues. Because the Łódź Conference has been postponed (see central pages for more info), the September issue, which is usually dedicated to the last EAHIL event, will host a new monographic section. I'm sure you will appreciate the topics chosen by the Board (see Table below). If you would like to collaborate by submitting a paper, please contact either one of the members of the Editorial Board, the guest editor, or myself.

### *Future JEAHIL issues*

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
<b>2020</b>		
3 (September)	The role of libraries during the COVID-19 pandemic edited by Petra Wallgren-Bjork and Gerhard Bissels	31 July
4 (December)	Climate change and libraries edited by Maria-Inti Metzendorf, Irma Klerings, Helge Knüttel and Gerhard Bissels	5 November
<b>2021</b>		
1 (March)	17th EAHIL Conference, Łódź, Poland, online	5 February
2 (June)	Artificial intelligence edited by James Thomas	5 May
Titles in this table are provisional		

*Have a nice summer holiday*  
*Federica*

## MONOGRAPHIC SECTION

### User-oriented and creative libraries: the opportunities of spaces

*Edited by*

**Michelle F. Schaffer**

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## User-oriented and creative libraries: the opportunities of spaces

**Michelle F. Schaffer**

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Libraries today are central features on university campus. They can fulfill several needs of university students, employees and of the public at the same place. The library space offers a unique opportunity to achieve individual learning mixed with collaborative techniques. The provided tools and services support learning and ensure that users find accurate information in the “flood of information”. Further the library is the place to meet the scientific writing tutor or information specialist for consultation in designing search strategies. Therefore even with the increasing digitalization trend the library stays as an important “knowledge transfer center” which is also shown in the increasing numbers of visitors. The challenging task of the library is to deal with the different demands. Transformation of the education paradigm in the 21st century converts university libraries into dynamic centres. While we should continue with developing more high-tech collaborative open-space design with audiovisual technologies, we should not forget that quiet study spaces are still a desirable feature (1). Therefore the library spaces have to be adapted to new services and to a variety of user needs (information services, group-work rooms, silent study zone, exhibition facilities, multi-purpose rooms, digital audiovisual editing rooms, etc.). However, the uncertainty over future technological changes and the rapid change in the needs of library users must not be neglected and requires a greater flexibility of spaces, with mobile fittings and furnishings that can be re-arranged along with their integrated technical installation.

The transformation of the library’s role in the network society and digital age has led to the redefinition of its mission and the adaption of new and innovative architectural design strategies, which prioritizes spaces for user activities over spaces for housing physical collections (2). Hence, the digital age has transformed the library’s role. It no longer has to safeguard and preserve only the physical collection of books or knowledge. The library becomes a learning and social centre and at the same time a producer of new contents and information products. Finally, the library has to consider the various special needs of its users such as students, researchers, entrepreneurs, cultural consumers, special interest groups, minorities etc. which makes the library an important meeting place within the lifelong learning paradigm.

It was a great pleasure to read about the innovative thinking and ideas on how different medical libraries transformed their rooms into unique meeting places. A predominant finding when reading all the articles was the importance of consultation of stakeholders (such as workshops with student representatives and academics, surveys etc.) for a successful library design. I think the quantity of articles received clearly shows that the transformation of the library’s role in the digital age has also to consider the library design.

In this themed issue, Kirsi Mäenpää of the Helsinki University Library in Finland demonstrates how freed spaces due to the decrease in printed books can be reused in a practical way. They started a collaboration with Terkko Health Hub, which is a startup community, a co-working area and an event space focused on health sciences and life sciences. The statement of Kirsi Mäenpää “the library transforms for its users and according to the demands of the time” hits the target of this issue very well. I am very grateful to her for showing us how premises can be used in a rather unconventional way and detached from traditional library spaces. Planning works, the shared organization of the services and experiences from the last two years are discussed in this article.

Annsofie Olsson and Lotti Dorthé of the Malmö University Library in Sweden had a very creative idea on how to use library spaces. The Researchers' Gallery shows exhibitions on current and ongoing research, which offers on one hand an opportunity to start collaborations between researchers and librarians, on the other hand, a platform to explain research activities in a comprehensible way to the public. With interactive and sometimes provocative elements, visitors are encouraged to react and contribute. This opens an active dialogue between science and the society and can give new ideas about current research. This is another excellent way to emphasize the role of the library as a place for knowledge transfer and research communication.

In another contribution, Isabelle de Kaenel, Cécile Jaques and Alexia Trombert of the Medical Library in Lausanne in Switzerland present how they tackled the challenge when the library was moved out from the hospital main building to new premises with a potential threat to close collaboration with the clinical and research units. As the authors state "More than a global service, customized solutions are expected from the medical librarians". In the article they describe their tridimensional approach to fulfill the students need to have a functional, comfortable and convivial space for learning, further to establish the library's role as online resources provider and finally how they could still offer offsite individual support services for the clinical and research community.

To find out how a student defines an attractive study environment and how the Linnaeus University Library is perceived by students leads us to reading the article by Marie Frederiksson from the Linnaeus University Library and Kalmar County Council Medical e-library in Sweden. The author demonstrates that it is valuable to work with students and to analyse survey results for guidance for future changes in the long term. By categorizing the results of the survey, a pre- and post-evaluation could be conducted and made the results comparable. For example, the results showed that the coloured markings made during refurbishment were helpful for the student to perceive the four different zones. This contribution shows us how helpful it could be to do space design based on an in-depth survey.

Other interesting results from user experience methods and how valuable they are to develop learning environments are presented in the article by Carina Ahlberg of the Karolinska Institutet University Library in Stockholm. The author presents to us how furnishing and colors can be used in different ways, for instance to reduce the noise or to connect the physical and the digital library. Through creative thinking from the library staff and using cost saving methods, user needs can be met. Therefore they could design an attractive learning place and make the library space distinguishable from other learning environments. This is another way to build the library of the future.

Kate Kelly and Kathryn Smith of RCSI Library in Dublin, Ireland present in their case study how the design of the health sciences library was based on user and stakeholder consultation and how the RSCI strategy was considered to create a state of the art learning space and to evaluate the impact it has on library service delivery. With their boundary-less library, the variety in spaces and seating and the new library service model, they can present very well that the library is much more than just a place. Their library was awarded with the prestigious SCONUL Library Design Award in 2019. Further, they had many visits from librarians and architects and there was even sufficient sectoral interest to hold a seminar.

The last article is by myself and describes the opportunity of the increase in medical student numbers and the introduction of a full-time pharmacy course to change the profile of a library. The cost-saving library refurbishment led to an attractive space that supports learning, research and encourages discussion between medical students and researchers.



## User-oriented and creative libraries: the opportunities of spaces

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In conclusion, I am most grateful to the authors of all the contributions in this themed issue for their support and I appreciated their innovative thinking to emphasize the importance of designing the library space, and also to the JEAHIL Chief Editor and Editorial Board for the invitation to be its guest editor. I am also thankful to the English editor, Claire Powell who revised spelling and style mistakes before this issue was published.

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# The innovative collaboration work in the Helsinki University Library: the case of Terkko Health Hub

Kirsi Mäenpää

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### Abstract

*Terkko Health Hub is a startup community, a co-working area and an event space focused on health and life sciences. The Meilahti Campus Library of Helsinki University Library also operate in the Hub. A library is an important meeting place and learning environment. In the library, you will meet people and the feeling of belonging to a university community is amplified. The co-operation with Terkko Health Hub started when the library removed part of the printed collection and freed space was available for alternative use. We were satisfied and excited on the campus about the new collaboration.*

**Key words:** libraries, medical; facility, design and construction; collaboration with faculty; startup community; learning environment.

### Introduction

Terkko Health Hub (1) is a startup community, a co-working area and an event space focused on health and life sciences. The place is for the university students and researchers, members of the startup community and for the health care service personnel. The Hub was established in the library building. Through the Hub, the Meilahti Campus Library offers modern library services in the medical and health science fields, a learning environment and both printed and e-collections.

The Hub is located in the heart of Helsinki's medical campus. It is the junction of the university hospital HUS, the Faculty of Medicine of Helsinki University, Helsinki University Library and HiLIFE, the Helsinki Institute of Life Science.

In this review, I am addressing our cooperation with the startup community, the planning work and our experiences from the past two years.

### The buildings of the Helsinki University Library

Helsinki University Library (2) serves its customers on all four University campuses and of course on the net. The libraries' doors are open to all with a thirst for knowledge. Everyone has the right to use Helsinki University Library free of charge.

The Helsinki University Library has modern buildings on all its campuses. Terkko is the oldest library building from 1998. The main library, the Kaisa house, is the newest (2012). The digitalization has changed the library services and purpose of the buildings. We have renovated all the buildings once we have repaired the Viikki Campus Library next summer.

The Helsinki University Library appears differently on every campus. The future university library is still searching for its form. Currently, the libraries have bookshelves for traditional printed material, versatile learning environments, space for co-working and communal events.

In order to meet the needs of the academic community the libraries need to pay attention to the traditional and

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## The innovative collaboration work in the Helsinki University Library

discipline-specific demands of its community. It also needs to consider the possibilities brought by the new information and learning technologies. The library transforms for its users, according to the demands of the time. According to the statistics, the renovations have brought more visitors to the libraries.

### The Meilahti Campus Library

The Meilahti Campus Library has focused on the needs of the researchers and students of the faculty of medicine and of the staff of Helsinki University Hospital. The library has stood on its present site for the last 20 years. At the same time, the health science library services and the ways of sharing the information have changed significantly.

Academic libraries have been sticking to acquiring mostly digital material for a couple of years now. The University of Helsinki has invested in large amounts back files of the digital material offered by the publishers.

With the change brought by the digitalization, the library wanted to make its premises more compact, thus allowing new uses for the freed space.

The library has always served the local medical campus. It also serves anyone who needs medical and health care information, through long distance borrowing as well as the Medic reference database (3) (medical and health scientific studies that have been published in Finland).

In the 1990's, the libraries needed a lot of room for their printed collections. In the 2010's, the situation is different: most of the material is digital. The printed collection fits in smaller premises. Students will still need room for studying in the future. It was clear that we needed and wanted a change..

### The library transformed

Growing the digital e-library Terkko Navigator (4) made a radical change in the library possible.

Before the transformation, there were 2 floors (about 4000 m<sup>2</sup>), nearly 300 seats and about 3000 meters of journals and books for the library customers. After the change, we removed 65% of the printed collections, the premises diminished in half but the number of seats and working places remained unchanged.

With this transformation, the library wanted to improve the comprehensive service and make financial savings. With the library implementation plan for 2017-2020 we

wanted the library to transform its premises into more functional learning environments. The changes have been carried out in cooperation with the interest groups and the customers. We also decided that the size of the premises for printed copies should reduce because we have more e-publications and use of them is growing. The library acquires digital copies of periodicals whenever it is possible.

We collected statistical material and observed the customers, which helped the planning work. In 2015, we arranged workshops for students and asked them to describe the library of their dreams. We interviewed students and customers in both the library buildings and on the internet.

We found out that the students would need spaces for both reading in silence and for group working. They mentioned hammocks and cozy chairs.



**Fig.1.** Terkko Health Hub is a startup community, a co-working area and an event space focused on health and life sciences. Through the Hub, the Meilahti Campus Library offers modern library services in the medical and health science fields, a learning environment and both printed and e-collections. Photo by Jussi Männistö, Information Specialist, Helsinki University Library.





**Fig.2.** *Everyday organization has been shared. The library is above all responsible for the students' working spaces on the second floor. Terkko Health Hub Team takes care of services for the startup entrepreneurs and Think Company Team hosts the community, the events and the premises on the first floor. Photo by Jussi Männistö, Information Specialist, Helsinki University Library.*

Beforehand we knew that the researchers would mainly use the online library. If we wanted the researchers to visit the library premises, there should be rooms for collegial and communal meetings and even medical and healthcare events.

### **From library to co-working hub**

After we had defined the need for change, we took forward our plans on the campus. Helsinki University Hospital owns the library building and the faculty of medicine is our biggest client so it was clear that we would promote the future changes together with them. The planning started in 2016 when our library project was linked with a wider project on the campus. In the faculty of medicine, the need for the new co-working space had arisen. The faculty would need a common space where it would be possible to combine the research, learning, studying and innovation work. Furthermore, there was a need for a space where one

could arrange events and where there is affordable space available for new startup entrepreneurs.

At the early stage of the planning, we agreed that the Terkko library building would be divided in two. In the future, the library premises would be located on the second floor. The innovative ecosystem of medical science and health technology and life science would come into the first floor of the building. There was an idea that the new ecosystem would expand the new studies, know-how and entrepreneurship.

The objectives of the library were obvious: fewer square meters, more space for studying and new cooperation. We had two challenges to the success of our objectives. Firstly, how are we going to connect studying alone in quiet areas with louder co-working spaces. Secondly, how should we organize the self-service hours: time, when the building is open and library facilities are available, but the staff are not there.

In our new cooperation-concept, we could get longer





**Fig.3.** *Terkko Health Hub and Meilähti Campus library are located in the heart of Helsinki's medical campus. Photo by Jussi Männistö, Information Specialist, Helsinki University Library.*

office hours because we would share the customer service work with the hosts of the startup community. We would get new kinds of events and action premises in our vicinity. Maybe this would attract some researchers to the library premises. We would offer library support for user enquiries and information requests. The students would get versatile working spaces and a unique opportunity to participate in the innovation work.

### **We are proud of our openness**

The benchmarking targets of the change project were, among others, the Harvard University (5) and some startup communities of the Boston area (6). There is something common in all of those co-working communities: inspiring premises, good technological facilities, friendly hosts, but also membership fees. The community hosts make sure that the atmosphere is good and places are in tip-top shape. They also look after a common kitchen, from where coffee and snacks are available for the members of the community. There

is a community membership fee with different levels of membership available. The lowest fee includes a working place, Internet connection and permission to use the common meeting rooms.

We also wanted to have all this on our campus. However, the openness of academic community and our open library culture set us to a different situation from our benchmarking.

The building would be open for all and especially traditional library services are available and free for everybody. The openness would bring challenges to us. In our international benchmarking targets, there were not any examples of how the library services would interrelate to the co-working community. We still wanted to bring co-working to the same premises with the library even though we would have a closed and open community side by side.

In the new premises there will be zones marked for the public and for the closed community space. The area also needs to be divided into an event stage and a quiet working place. This is important to students who have

been absorbed into studying and for community members that need to be able to concentrate.

It would on the other hand be easy to establish a new co-working community in the library. The libraries are regarded as the common space of the university where everyone can work freely, safely and alone or together. Furthermore, we have a good attitude to customer service and lots of experience in working on the medical campus.



**Fig.4.** The former Terkko library building has been divided in two. The library premises are located on the second floor. The innovative ecosystem of medical science and health technology and life science is on the first floor of the building. Photo by Jussi Männistö, Information Specialist, Helsinki University Library.

### Coexistence in Terkko Health Hub

We have been in the renewed premises for over two years. As we were making a new community, we together agreed that we would look where Terkko Health Hub is going and make necessary changes along the way.

At the initial stage, we agreed that Terkko Health Hub would need a steering group to make the decisions on the budget and to accept the action plan. The group has representatives from the campus and from the library.

Everyday organization has been shared: the library is above all responsible for the students' working spaces, Terkko Health Hub Team takes care of services for the startup entrepreneurs and Think Company Team hosts the community, the events and the premises on the first floor.

Terkko Health Hub brings the campus together. Many events, meetings, networking opportunities and for instance student recruiting opportunities have taken place. The students have found the Hub. They are studying all over the building, in the library premises and in the community free working area. The café, which was newly built in the renovation, has proved to be an important meeting place.

From the library point of view, the best part is the close collaboration. The library services are still the core. The most difficult part has been a change in the library's soundscape. It is no more merely for quiet working. We still need silent spaces, but it is not the only way to work.

### Future of premises in the Helsinki University Library

The concept of Ray Oldenburg's (6) third place means a public place where it is easy to come and which is located near your everyday life.

The main features of the third place fit in the modern university library. It is open to everybody, creating equality and interaction, intellectual, impartial and all in all a pleasing place.

In the library, you work together, research and study side by side - alone but together. The library is private and public at the same time.

Terkko Health Hub is a fine example where the library premises are going on at the University of Helsinki, perhaps, also in other universities. The role of library buildings as learning environments has increased and they are important enablers of the collegiality and sense of community.

A sense of community is formed from cooperation. We look for partners whose presence would be an advantage to our customers above all for the students





**Fig.5.** Students would need spaces for both reading in silence and for group working and rooms for collegial meetings. Photo by Jussi Männistö, Information Specialist, Helsinki University Library.

who use library premises the most. We want to promote research, cooperation and learning. In addition to the learning materials, the libraries offer a safe and communal place to work.

*Submitted on invitation.  
Accepted on 17 April 2020.*

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# Surrounded by science: The Researchers' Gallery at Malmö University Library

Annsophie Olsson and Lotti Dorthé

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### Abstract

*The Researchers' Gallery at Malmö University Library shows current research in exhibitions, co-created by librarians and researchers. The library invites all visitors to take part in and learn more about the research process and outcome. In an academic yet informal setting, the library offers a credible space for research communication. The Researchers' Gallery is a space for students, researchers and the society to meet, and encourage cross-border knowledge creation. The Researchers' Gallery has become a platform for continuing collaboration between researchers and between researchers and librarians. Exhibited research now has a natural and an integrated place in the learning environment of the library and at the university.*

**Key words:** *communication; libraries; exhibition; research; universities; information dissemination; professional role; interinstitutional relations.*

### Introduction

Malmö University is located in the city centre of Malmö in the south of Sweden, right by the Danish border. With nearly 350,000 inhabitants, Malmö is the third largest and the fastest growing city in the country. The young population, nearly half under the age of 35, are originally from 184 different countries (1). Over the past 20 years, Malmö has undergone a major transformation from an industrial town to a university city. Malmö University has about 25,000 students and the library is open to the public as well as students, researchers, teachers and other employees. The library is both a place for use of academic knowledge and a place for recreation set in an informal learning environment. This is why the library is a credible place for research communication.

The idea of the library as a space for research communication has been discussed at Malmö University Library, for over 10 years (2). In 2016, the library received a large funding to develop the concept of The Researchers' Gallery, and finally we were able to implement our ideas. The foundation of the concept is to bridge the boundary between the work of libraries and the activities of research and science communication to the public. The purpose is to make exhibitions based on current and ongoing research, and also to make the research easily accessible and reach a wider audience. There is a broader purpose too,

concerning communication between the university and society.

To produce an exhibition, a close collaboration between librarians and researchers is required. The librarians put research in a societal context and from this it is clear that the library is the originator of the exhibition. Through exhibitions in the physical library space, we invite all visitors to the library to consider and discuss difficult subjects, and challenge people's ideas about complex social phenomena and scientific questions.

Research is traditionally published in articles, dissertations and books. Research publications often have an academic language that makes them difficult to read for many people. Meanwhile there is a requirement to communicate the University's research to the surrounding community. This is important, since an open and active dialogue between science and the society can contribute to the use of research results as well as to give new perspectives and ideas to the current research. It may also inspire new groups to apply for higher education. Cultural museums in Sweden observe the same tendency - visitors create and share knowledge rather than being passive recipients in a one-way communication (3). The Researchers' Gallery is a space for students, researchers and the society to meet, communicate and create new knowledge together.

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These conditions motivate exhibitions about research at the university library and reinforces their important role. The librarians interpret the research and by that offer visitors the chance to be surrounded by research and to take a closer look at it. We capture the visitors' interest and explain how research can be undertaken. Therefore, we exhibit both ongoing research and research findings. We display the research process, the complexity of research and how it relates to other research and statistics. Additionally, we find it important that the exhibitions appeal to all the senses and are pleasurable.

### **A space for cross-border knowledge creation**

The space plays a significant role when setting up exhibitions. Space location and shape are of importance for how the exhibitions are designed and perceived. When this space is used in the context of an academic setting, it strengthens the aspects of learning and knowledge production.

The Researchers' Gallery is located centrally in the library, close to the entrance. It has a defined space, in an area where visitors pass through, as it has four openings without doors. This makes it easy to take part of the exhibitions in a casual way. It also allows the exhibitions to expand outside the gallery, in the surrounding passages that leads to the café, writing workshop and library classrooms. Therefore, the room itself offers possibilities that forms the expression. We want the exhibitions to arouse curiosity and engagement, both in terms of appearance and in terms of content. Most visitors come to the library to study, borrow books or to attend meetings. In this context, the Researchers' Gallery open the eyes for the unexpected. The visitors are welcome to use the exhibition space as part of the learning environment, or to take part of the exhibition and the research communication in a more active way. The design of the room provides the conditions and it is a space for cross-border knowledge creation.

When reading a text, you work your way through from left to right. An image or an installation communicates differently and appeals more to the senses (4). Color, light and sound give an impression and can interact with the artefacts, films and pictures that are included in the exhibition. A successful exhibition is readable, opens up the visitors minds and make them feel comfortable in the room (5).

Adding value to communicating research through exhibitions offers possibility to explore a new professional role where librarians act as curators of exhibitions. To create an exhibition, several activities and competencies are required (6). We have identified roles and qualities necessary to produce an exhibition. Librarians form a team that currently consists of five librarians with different roles: a graphic designer, a librarian who specializes in communication, a librarian with knowledge of media and collections, and two curators. Together with the library team the researchers take part in meetings, workshops and designing. We decided to adopt a collegial approach, which also includes colleagues outside the exhibition team, when it is relevant. Teaching librarians and bibliometricians are examples of colleagues that has contributed. With this approach, the strengths of the entire library staff can be included in the work of producing exhibitions. Curiosity, knowledge of the academy and experience in leading projects are important characteristics for a curator. Traditional librarian skills, like the reference interview is very useful, but it has also been important for us to learn new things. In the course of developing these skills and competences, we engaged in an iterative process of reading, shadowing programs, visiting museums and testing new ways of working creatively. By formulating questions, testing, describing procedures and reflecting upon them, we established new experiences and knowledge. In order to find structure in our work and process, we have made a five-step model that is available online (7). The model is inspired by Matassa's five steps (idea generation, evaluation and development, planning, implementation and review) but has been adapted for Malmö University Library (8).

To make meetings with researchers more dynamic and the role of the curator less vulnerable we use two curators, working side by side. In The curators handbook the curator is the editor of ideas (9). If our role is to edit ideas, then the role of the researcher is to share information that can be conveyed into an exhibition. When meeting the researchers, we listen with an open mind and ask ourselves questions like; what makes us react and want to know more? What is interesting to highlight? What gives us visual impulses and ideas for the design? How can we engage the visitors? Are there other stakeholders in society that can be involved in the exhibition?

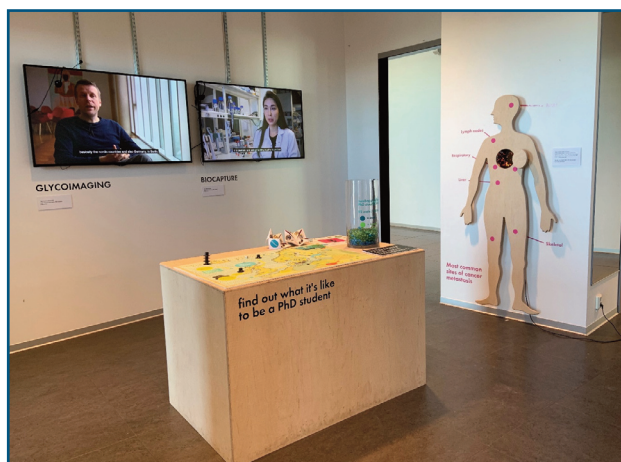
The graphic designer makes a small-scale model to visualize the narrative and the planned design for each

exhibition. It is important to keep the physical space in mind when making this model. When the researchers are shown the model, the design idea becomes clearer and visual. The model plays a significant role since discussions alone may never achieve the same effect. After entering the exhibition space, you are surrounded by research. Every exhibition has its own challenges and the staging comes out different, based on the subject. For example when staging a cancer research exhibition, the space looked like a lab. We want the visitor to understand what the exhibition is about and to strike a chord, without having to read any texts but we also want to offer the possibility to explore and to go in depth. The exhibitions always include interactive elements, it might be a board game about being a PhD student or a possibility to make your own journal placard. Often the exhibitions are a bit provocative and we invite the visitors to react and contribute. Sometimes the interaction has been part of the exhibitions and in some exhibitions, the researcher has asked for informants. When it is possible and relevant, we host events like lectures, discussions and quizzes connected to the exhibitions. Exhibited research has a natural and an integrated place in the learning environment of the library and at the university.

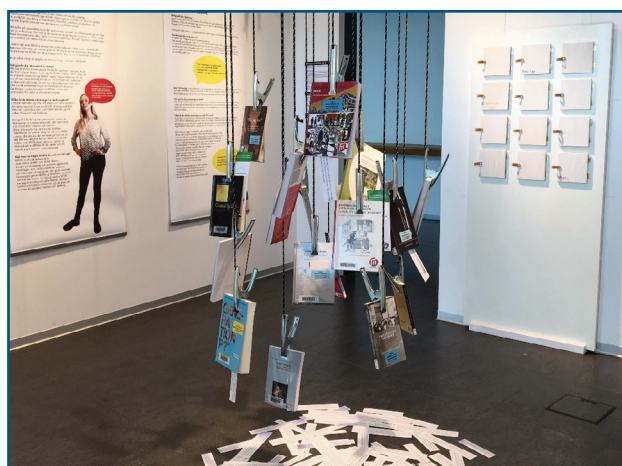
### A playful collaboration with unexpected outcome

During the four years that have passed since we started the Researchers' Gallery, we have produced seven exhibitions together with forty researchers (Figures 1-4). Our work is distinguished by playfulness and curiosity, where we test different approaches and learn new ones. We are not afraid to try things we have never done before, so we continue to explore and find new challenges.

Through the Researchers' Gallery we have obtained an overview of the university's research and created a platform that has generated continued collaboration between researchers and between researchers and librarians. This has led to collaboration between librarians and other actors both inside and outside the university and our expertise is requested for in new contexts. One researcher described the collaboration with librarians like this: "Participating in this work does not take time from my research, it enriches it". Working with exhibitions does take some time for us librarians, but the broader competences we have acquired



**Fig. 1.** From the exhibition "Fighting cancer with plastic bullets" 2020. At Malmö University chemists, physicists and biologists from two international networks, BioCapture and GlycoImaging, collaborate to find ways to diagnose and treat cancer at an early stage.



**Fig. 2.** From the exhibition "6 on sex" 2017. Six researchers, linked to the Center for Sexology and Sexual Studies, presented their fields of research. The exhibition also included a timeline with highlights from Swedish sexuality history, a curiosity cabinet and a collection of erotic literature.

through this work have built relationships and made our role visible at the university in a way that enriches our professional transcendental role.

The Researchers' Gallery has showed us the benefits of using research exhibitions to communicate scientific results and studies. It allows us to describe, explain and experience complex facts without having to simplify or reduce them. The Researchers' Gallery has made the library an even more attractive space for learning and





**Fig. 3.** From the exhibition "Green waves and red cottages" 2019. This exhibition places the concept "idyll" into a context of Swedish literary history and popular culture by highlighting work from different periods. Visualizing the songwriter Bernt Staf.

meeting, and has become a positive addition to the library.

The next step for us in working with the Researchers' Gallery is to develop an interactive digital gallery space and offer virtual tours of our physical exhibitions. This will open the way for people, unable to visit the library, to experience research in a pleasurable way.

*Submitted on invitation.*

*Accepted on 28 April 2020.*

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**Fig. 4.** From the exhibition "Green waves and red cottages" 2019. Visualizing the work of the authors Karl-Erik Forsslund and Vilhelm Moberg.

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# Moving the Lausanne medical library to a new location: shaping spaces, tailoring services

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### Abstract

*Moving the Lausanne medical library to a new location was the opportunity to investigate how to best support the educational, training, clinical and research needs of both the Medical Faculty and the medical community across all disciplines. Our analysis is based on a tridimensional approach. First, we examine the role of the library as space provider, especially for the students and educational staff. Second, we reflect to what extent we could improve as an online resources provider and trim the print collection. Finally, we underline the importance to position the library as solution provider geared towards clinicians and researchers.*

**Key words:** libraries, medical; facility design and construction; information services; students, medical; researchers; Switzerland.

### Introduction

In November 2019, the Lausanne medical library moved to a new location. The design and planning process was mainly dedicated to space analysis and configuration. However, the relocation project was also an opportunity to tackle other strategic dimensions. Would a change of physical venue have an impact on the library's relations with the clinician users and the academic community it serves? How could we position the library in order to mitigate potential disruptions in professional connections and services? Our approach put an emphasis on the characteristics of three main roles a medical library plays to answer the varied users' needs, while keeping up with the changing medical research landscape.

### Background

For the last ten years, the Lausanne medical campus has been a constantly growing site and presently serves as a healthcare hub for a region of over one million inhabitants, 1/8 of Switzerland's total population.

The site brings together in a rather compact area:

- a university hospital, built in the mid-eighties, which now employs around 10'000 staff members in 16 clinical departments;

- research centers in oncology, neuroscience, immunology;
- the faculty of biology and medicine administration office;
- educational facilities for 1100 students present on the medical campus from the second year onwards. These facilities encompass several lecture halls and lab rooms for training in physiology, biochemistry and microbiology.

The medical library was created 35 years ago on the ground floor of the main hospital building next to the lecture halls, the student association office and the staff cafeteria. Employing 9 full time equivalents and 5 student helpers, the library is open all year round 7 days a week from 8 am to 10 pm. The library serves medical and nursing students, clinical staff and researchers. With online access to information, use of the library spaces by clinical staff decreased over the last ten years. Students became the main on-site users, but the library turned out to be too small to accommodate a constantly increasing number of learners.

In 2016, the hospital top management decided that the library should expand but could not develop within the

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walls of the hospital main building. It had to move out to new premises. This decision was based on a strategic principle that activities not connected with patient care had to be relocated outside the hospital central building. That very same year, the lecture halls already moved to the south part of the medical campus. No specific construction for the library was ever considered. New residential buildings with mixed commercial activities and facilities were planned close to the hospital. It was decided to rent part of these commercial properties, nearly twice the size of the initial location, to host the new medical library.

Moving out of the hospital main building in November 2019 was quite a challenge for the library staff who felt driven out of the heart of the campus. However, the 35-year-old facilities had structural limits in terms of extension and adaptability. There was no raised floor for ground wiring and electrical outlets, some installations were out of date, the ventilation system was poor.

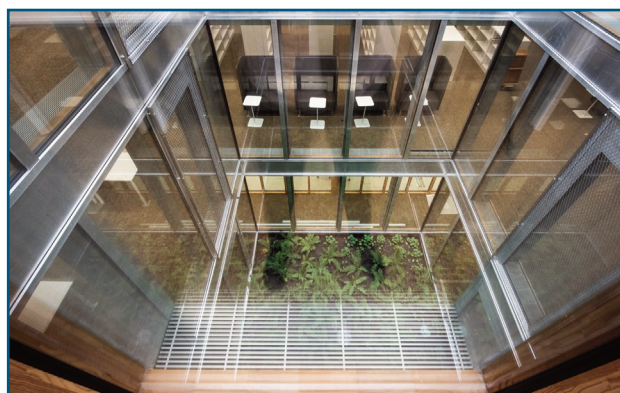
### The new library planning and design

The new site has many interesting features, particularly in terms of accessibility and situation. Three hundred meters away from the main building, the new location remains well embedded in the healthcare campus. It faces the hospital metro station and the faculty's lecture halls are within walking distance. The new venue literally broadens horizons since it overlooks the lake surrounded by mountains.

Nevertheless, as the premises were not planned specifically for a library, the initial space was given with its own constraints and characteristics. Making efficient and effective use of the space was a challenging task and requested the creation of a team with a variety of profiles: architects, engineers, designers, planners, main stakeholders: librarians, students and professors.

This group of experts had to deal with 3 open floors of around 600 square meters each. It was easy to define the goals of each floor: the ground floor would be a high activity zone with functional services: reception, workstations and printers; the first floor would be a quiet zone with the collections; and the top floor would be the silent area. The difficulty was that 2 huge light wells spanning the library's entire height fragmented these 3 large open plans (*Figure 1*). Many other features can also restrict the design of open spaces. After learning how to read and analyse architectural

plans, the librarians discovered the structural importance of steps, doors, pillars, circulation areas, escape routes and security exits. Project methods were introduced to manage the planning process and facilitate teamwork and timeline at the different stages of the project: conception, construction, tenders, delivery and installation.



**Fig. 1.** View of the library through the light well.

Planning a new library involves many quantitative evaluations concerning the users' areas, collections and activities. What is the initial situation? What would the ideal target be? The study places (258 seats) now represent 62% of the library surface against 42% (162 seats) in the former library. While the books and periodical compact shelving used to take up to 11.5% of the surface (1230 linear meters), they have been reduced after a drastic weeding to 6% of the surface in the new library (923 linear meters). Concerning the activities, it was decided to favour integrated, flexible and multi-purpose areas. The information desk was set at the entrance, close to a delimited social area around the coffee vending machine. The new premises also integrate the students' association and 3 laboratory training rooms on the ground floor. The lab rooms can be used as reading rooms when the laboratory training sessions are over, and after a full cleaning. These shared facilities create new synergies with students and educational staff but also need some practical and procedural adjustments.

During the planning phase, the librarians involved in the project also conducted a literature search for recent case studies, standards and guidelines and organised focus groups interviews with Bachelor and Master medical students to collect their needs and wishes.

### Library as space provider

By asking the students what they liked and disliked in the old library and what they expected from a new library, we found out that they consider the library mainly as a valuable place to work and study. They appreciate the physical aspects, spatial qualities and the opportunity to work in a calm environment. To study they essentially use lecture notes, handouts and resources stored on the faculty Moodle platform. Regarding the library space, the features they most value could be centered around three main dimensions: comfort, functionality and conviviality.

Comfort combines all aspects concerning noise, temperature, light, ergonomics and design quality. The Lausanne medical students declared studying mostly independently rather than in groups. To concentrate to a maximum they favour quiet space. Quiet not only means good acoustics. Students look for a feeling of privacy, intimacy, even seclusion, while seating in a public space surrounded by a community sharing the same ambitions. For that reason, they requested to have individual study carrels, and as many seats facing walls or windows as possible. In that respect, the three-storey light wells conveniently offer some partition while providing abundant light and a sense of common space. Students also insisted on having comfortable chairs with casters and large tables with enough surface to spread out their study materials and private mobile devices. Regarding size, the chosen model is 100 cm wide and 80 cm deep. The distance between rows is on average 1.60 m. These values are not outstanding but represent a good compromise for space optimisation (Figure 2).



Fig. 2. The library silent area on the top floor

Functionality includes such features as reliable Wi-Fi access, easy access to electrical outlets with sockets on all tables, spatial flexibility and movable partitions and furniture. However, some functions proved to be conflicting. For example, since every single table is plugged to an electric socket, it is difficult to quickly reconfigure the spaces. Even if power lines are mounted in accessible raised-floor channels and outlets slide quickly to new spots in each channel, it is better to refer to an electrician before you can change the position of the tables.

Functionality is also a challenge in terms of logistics. All group study rooms are equipped with tables, chairs, whiteboards, network connections and a projection screen. « Ready to use » facilities generally require a lot of care and attention to keep them in a state of tidiness for collaborative work to take place. These types of caretaking maintenance services are often disregarded by library staff members. They tend to consider that lending whiteboard markers and adaptors from the front desk is not a rewarding task and could even harm their professional image and status. However, it does belong to a general package of basic services meant to facilitate study work and contribute to a more ambitious goal which is to convey a general supportive attitude.

Conviviality is another dimension students seek after. Although medical students insisted during the focus group interviews that they were not in favour of relaxing furniture since they had little time to unwind, the reality proved slightly different. Every student working individually during long hours needs to take a break and socialise. A small student lounge on the top



Fig. 3. The student lounge on the top floor

floor, offering an unsurpassed view over the city and the lake, was designed both to relax and to encourage social interaction (Figure 3).

However, the central point for breaks is the coffee machine on the ground floor. During the discussions, students mentioned that caffeinated drinks were necessary to help them deal with the heavy workload. They were expecting to find hot beverages right on the spot and estimated that the nearest cafeteria (300 meters away) was not close enough. The idea of having a coffee vending machine in the library entrance, near the welcome desk, was dismissed by staff members for a long time, but was finally accepted because of persistent claims from the students. The fact drinks and food go with social interactions was overseen. The library entrance is now considered by the students as a place to share and socialise during breaks. Access to food and drinks has become a critical issue. Drinks in covered containers are allowed in most areas, but food is another concern since the variety of snacks, foodstuffs and multiple packaging may cause more disturbances. The opportunity to share a hot drink and a snack apparently makes the experience of spending long study hours in the library more bearable. Informal and social exchanges among our local medical students are probably as important as formal collaborative work and group studying. While there is a high degree of self-control and autoregulation in study areas, the entrance of the library is often crowded with animated groups of students chatting, eating and having a drink. Due to the proximity with the front desk and public computers, this has become an issue. This need was underestimated in the project and the coffee area not sufficiently delimited and carefully planned. In the next few months a new approach and strategy will be discussed with the students.

### Library as an online service provider

The planning of the new library required a lot of collection weeding. The medical library used to grant public access to print journal and book collections published after 2000. Before moving, printed journal archives not electronically accessible were sorted for local storage, and all issues available online thrown away. Thousands of bound volumes were sent to recycling. The medical library could take benefit from the national archives deal negotiated in 2017 by the Consortium of Swiss Academic Libraries. The aim of the project was to provide all Swiss universities,

research centers and citizens with a nationwide supply of electronic journal archives from academic publishers such as Springer, de Gruyter, Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press. Book loan statistics were also thoroughly examined in order to discard all copies not borrowed over the last 7 years. On the other hand, many textbooks were replaced since it appeared inappropriate to display worn-out items in a brand new environment (Figure 4).



Fig. 4. Collections on the library first floor

Over the last 10 years, clinicians and researchers have increased their use of the electronic library. On average, over 1.5 million article requests are recorded annually, just for the top 5 commercial publishers (Lippincott, Springer, Wiley, Elsevier and Taylor & Francis). On the other hand, ebooks are not widely used by students. Use of core reading list titles available online is far below expectations. An explanation could be that the ebook collections are mainly in English while French is still the official teaching language at the Lausanne medical faculty. Furthermore, relations between the library and medical curriculum designers are not close. Library instruction is integrated into the curriculum but the library's repeated offers to collaborate on teaching resources selection and dissemination have never been fruitful. This is one dimension where cooperation has failed until now, while the library's participation in clinical and research activities have steadily developed.

### Library as solution provider

Librarians considered that moving the library outside the hospital main building was a potential threat for close collaboration with the clinical and research units.



The former situation allowed busy clinicians to spontaneously pop in the library, which was next to the staff cafeteria. They used to ask questions, chat, inquire about services, as well as find a quiet place to work. These informal behaviours are now lost and need to be compensated. In fact, moving the library was an opportunity to promote the services in different ways. Construction progress and project evolutions were regularly advertised in meetings and interviews, on the hospital Intranet page and in the library itself. More significantly, months before moving, as the evidence-based approach spread in medicine and clinical research, new types of collaborations were progressively built with most of the institution's departments. The evidence-based movement is also closely connected with the trend towards Open Science. Both promote the need for robust methodologies, transparency and data sharing. Researchers can be supported by the library throughout the research and publication cycle, from the research project definition to post-publication evaluation. The Lausanne medical library was able to keep up with the changing medical research landscape in terms of expertise and labour. Over the last 4 years the library was able to dedicate 1/3 of its workforce to support systematic searching, academic publishing, data management and research metric analysis. 2 FTEs are in charge of mediated searches and assistance with development of specific search strategies, 0.5 FTE deal with data management and scholarly communication issues, and 0.5 FTE provide individual assistance for citation management tools and research metrics. All staff members committed to these specialised tasks have a first subject degree (nursing, pharmacy, computer science) and a qualification in Library and Information Science. These services require a high level of interaction with the users and a strong personal engagement from librarians who have to train extensively, constantly upgrade their expertise and go outside the library to meet the users in their working environment. With such an emphasis put on personal link, most of the requests come through recommendations.

On average, the library deals with 130 mediated search requests annually. More than 50 are comprehensive searches for systematic reviews, guidelines development and doctoral theses. Clinicians and researchers who request these comprehensive searches expect services tailored to their own specific activities and no general answers or one-size-fits-all solutions. They acknowledge the librarians strengths for systematic searching as well

as for scientific data and information management. To meet these expectations and strengthen their credibility, librarians need to be more than service providers. They are challenged to provide expert solutions for technical and methodological questions, which are distinct in each case. Background and general information can be targeted towards the users through web pages, LibGuides or flashcards. These kinds of tools are efficient to serve as a basis for training or for systematic search interviews, but they are not sufficient to position the library as solution provider. In order to develop a comprehensive, solution-oriented service package, the library is strengthening a wide range of activities:

- development of customised training courses, small group workshops and even individual tutorials on different topics: data management plans, open access publication and search methodology. The courses usually take place in the library training room and thus draw participants to the new location. On demand, training sessions are organised in places more convenient for specific groups;
- implementation of a “book a librarian” service with an open source web appointment scheduling system (Easy!Appointments). This program supports the planning of interviews and tutorials, either face-to-face or distant with the help of Webex, screen sharing technologies and desktop remote control;
- flexibility in the meeting places for the interviews, either at users' workplace or in the library where two specific private spaces with computers equipped with large screens are dedicated to one-to-one discussions and consultations;
- extension of the scope of the service: from systematic searches to full text delivery, including deduplication, consolidation of the Prisma Statement requirements and support on systematic review software;
- enhanced intranet visibility, with regular publication of news about the library services on the hospital intranet homepage. All information posted on this homepage has a strong impact on the clinical community;
- users' needs and satisfaction assessment. In 2019, 9 months before moving, the library conducted an online satisfaction survey among users who had received support for their literature searches in 2018. The response rate, close to 53%, was encouraging. More than 80% of participants mentioned that this

service had greatly contributed to the success of their research project. More than 9 out of 10 recipients said they would definitely recommend the service. Suggestions were made concerning speed of processing, clarity of reporting and visibility of the service. These results were published on the hospital intranet so that we could promote how the library contribution can impact a research project. The aim was also to publicly acknowledge the participation of the survey respondents and draw the attention of non-users. Repeating this survey in the next months might give us an indication on the influence of the library relocation on this specialised service.

Strong professional connections and long-term engagement work have helped the library to gain the user's appreciation and loyalty and these ties seem to withstand the relative geographical distance. To position the library as a solution provider is demanding and labour intensive. The balance between serving the community at large with prolonged opening hours and extensive electronic access and focusing on individual requests is hard to find. As we do not charge for this personalised collaboration, promotion of solution-oriented services has to be proportionate to the taskforce in order to avoid bottlenecks.

### Conclusion

Moving the medical library to new premises that integrate educational facilities and laboratory training rooms confirmed the library's position as a "teaching and learning" instrument, establishing its role as a study place for medical students. Nevertheless, on top of space design and planning, the project was also about strengthening relations. To support the clinical and research community at large and to help now distant users, librarians need to prove a high level of engagement, expertise and flexibility. When it comes to research projects and clinical reviews, customised solutions are expected from the medical librarians.

### Acknowledgments

The Authors wish to thank Gilles Weber from the hospital communication service who provided the photographs published in this paper.

*Submitted on invitation.*

*Accepted on 28 April 2020.*

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# The library as a physical learning environment at the Karolinska Institutet University Library

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### Abstract

*This article describes the development of the learning environment in the library at Karolinska Institute. It all began with a university-wide project, but when taking into consideration what makes a library special, the librarians had to find their own application of the pedagogical thoughts behind the project. The students' needs are changing depending on situations and times, so the library environment needs to be flexible and regularly updated accordingly.*

**Key words:** libraries; universities; students; case reports; learning.

### Introduction

How do we make use of the library space when the physical collections are disappearing from it? What will our students need to support their learning, now and in the foreseeable future? In fact, do they need the library as a physical place at all? And if so, how can we connect the physical and the digital library?

These questions we have tried to answer through different User eXperience (UX) methods in our library, in a small scale in 2011 and in a larger scale in 2018-2019. This has resulted in various improvements of our library spaces, and lessons learned for the future. As Susan Beatty (1) concludes: "Students choose library spaces that support their learning preferences. They are aware of how the design of library spaces influences their choices". (Figure 1).



**Fig. 1.** Students choose spaces that support their learning preferences, Photo: Erik Cronberg.

### Background

Karolinska Institutet is a medical university in Stockholm, Sweden, and the university library is situated in two different buildings at two different university campuses, in Solna north of and Flemingsberg south of Stockholm. Even so, we consider ourselves to be one library. We have a staff of about 100, whereof about half are librarians, and the rest is a mix of different professions such as IT-technicians, administrators, statisticians etc.

### Future learning environments

Eleven years ago, in 2009, Karolinska Institutet (KI) together with Stockholm City Council launched a project called Future Learning Environments in Health Professions Educations (2) The aim of the project was to improve students' learning environments on campus and in hospitals where KI educates students.

Karolinska Institutet University Library (KIB) took part in this project from the beginning, and the results of the project were part of the basis for rethinking the library as a learning environment. The basic principles brought forward by the project as important for good learning environments, were that they should be based on:

1. dialogue: any new space should enable dialogue between participants, and between participants and the faculty member;
2. visualization: any new learning space should be designed in a way to enable all learners to visualize their previous knowledge and experience to other participants;

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- peer-to-peer learning: any new space should foster peer-to-peer learning.

### Implications for the library

These principles are of course applicable to the library as well, and rather easy to accommodate. Our group study rooms had been booked weeks in advance for many years, so it seemed pretty clear that they were needed. They were also equipped with whiteboards and computers with large screens, which supported collaboration as well as visualization. Apart from them we also had tables and chairs throughout the rest of the library, where the students could work in groups, so all we really needed to do was to get some mobile whiteboards. However, a question we started to ask ourselves and eventually also our students was: is there anything that distinguishes a library compared to other learning environments? Might there be something more that we should think about when we re-think the layout our library?

### The first survey

In order to find out, in 2011 we started a project where we placed ipads throughout the library and through them asked our students what kind of study spaces they needed. We got in total 90 answers. This is not representative since we have in total around 6000 students, but still an indication of what our visitors find important enough to let us know about.

It turned out that the students in Flemingsberg had somewhat different wishes from the students in Solna. For instance, in Flemingsberg 23% of the students wanted work spaces with stationary computers, in comparison only 3,5% of the students in Solna did. Additionally, in Solna 11% of the students wanted quiet work spaces where laptops were not allowed, but only 3% of the students in Flemingsberg saw the need for that. The students in both campuses, but especially in Flemingsberg wanted more group study rooms. Simultaneously our users still expected the library to be a quiet place where they could read and study. (Figure 2).

The difference between the campuses we can only speculate about. Possibly a larger percentage of Solna students own their own computers and bring these to campus.

Consequently, the library needs to be flexible and accommodate varying needs, something that also is supported by literature (3).



**Fig. 2.** Quiet reading spaces.  
*Photo: Stefan Zimmerman.*

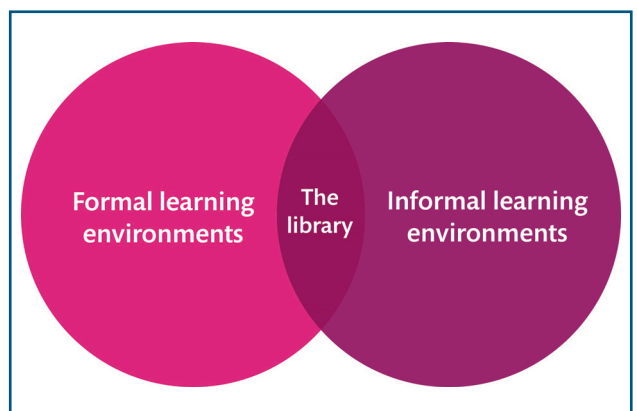
### The second survey

2018-2019 we worked with so called “customer journeys” (4) where we interviewed 40 students from 14 different study programs about their life as KI students. This was a much larger study, but the results supported our 2011 findings.

Additionally, the new results suggested that the library staff in the information desk makes the students feel safe in the library. “Safe” was the word of choice, possibly because parts of the two campuses can be rather dark and empty at times. The students also expressed a need for our help “just in time” in their studies, as opposed to “just in case” .

### Something in between

The results of the two studies suggest that the library is something in between. It is not a formal learning environment like a classroom, where the teacher has a clear-cut authority and there are expectations of how you as a student should behave. (Figure 3).



**Fig. 3.** The library is “something in between”.

Neither is it a totally informal environment such as restaurants or other meeting areas. The university library is clearly a part of the university, just as much as a classroom. But students can choose to just sit and study in the library, or to do group work, it is their own choice. The library has professional staff, but we are not teachers – and we do not grade the students. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this sometimes makes us easier to talk to than a teacher or a supervisor when students are confused or at a loss in their studies.

### A flexible library

The library should be a quiet place for studies as well as a place that can be rather loud, when for example group studies or a lunch seminar is taking place. It should also include plenty of group study rooms, and be well equipped with for instance power outlets, whiteboards and computer screens. The tables should be height adjustable if possible, or at least tables of different height, and there should be plenty of different types of chairs, suitable for different people.

Like most libraries we did not have lots of money or time, so we needed to first see what we could do with what we had or at a low cost. The costlier projects needed to be spread over a few years, and now, after almost ten years, we have come pretty far.

### Solutions: zones, signs and carpets

First of all, we decided to divide the library into different zones, with different levels of noise. And we also needed to make it easy to understand how the users are expected to behave in the different areas. We could of course do that with the help of signs, but when we made study visits for instance at airports, malls and IKEA and talked to experts we realized that there is a risk involved with having too many signs. You can easily become "sign blind", something that is well known when it comes to traffic signs, when you don't see any signs at all anymore. Consequently, we should try to keep the signs to a minimum and send the message in other ways. For instance, through the furnishing. Soft couches and armchairs send other signals than separate desks and chairs (5).

Another way to clarify the different areas has been the use of textile carpets in different colours. The carpets have helped immensely with the sound problems that otherwise are almost unavoidable in a large open area as one of our two libraries is.

We also wanted to use the opportunity to reinforce our identity as part of a medical university and also, that the library as a physical place is connected to the digital library. This was made possible by:

1. Using the colour palette recommended in the graphic profile of the university. The colours are mainly intended for use in print or on the web, but we have used them in our public areas as well, with good results. This can be seen on the frosting as well as on the carpets and on some walls (Figure 4).



Fig. 4. The KI colour palette. Photo: Erik Cronberg.

2. Creating our own signature frosting of the large glass areas in the library. We were lucky enough to have a librarian that is also a trained graphic designer, and he created the patterns for this – here you can see a pair of lungs and an ECG curve (Figure 5).

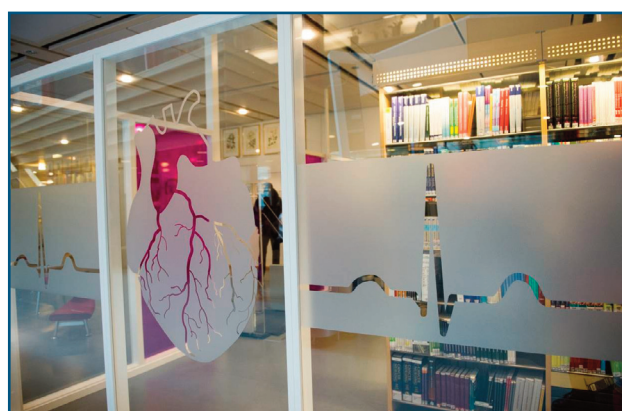


Fig. 5. Signature frosting. Photo: Stefan Zimmerman.

3. Using "the square" in the library as an open space where anybody at the university can give a presentation (Figure 6). The most common event

has been the lunch time lectures that the professors at the university give on Thursdays. But it is also used for both large events like the Welcome days where we welcome our new students to the library in the beginning of each term, and smaller presentations for a more limited group – provided that anybody can join if they want to.



**Fig. 6.** A presentation in “the square”.  
Photo: Erik Cronberg.

### A problem to solve: the sound of silence

The most difficult part has been – and still is – to create the silent areas. Especially the group study rooms in the middle of the library are difficult, because they have glass walls and no ceilings. Unfortunately, we so far have not been able to place any ceilings or other kind of soundproofing material over the rooms, since that would prevent the sprinklers above them from working. It helped a bit when we put carpeting on the floors, but not very much. Now we are thinking about soundproofing raster ceilings that won’t get in the way of the sprinklers, and about adding more textiles into the rooms (Figure 7).

Otherwise, I think it has worked well to keep the noise near the entrance, where people meet and where we also have our support functions. The library then becomes quieter the further in you go.

### A library for the future

All the experience we have had over the years has helped us when we now are planning a re-built and renovated library in Solna. The only part of the old library that will be kept as it is, is the quiet reading room, which is newly renovated, with furniture that send a clear signal that you are supposed to work in



**Fig. 7.** Glass walls and no ceiling.  
Photo: Stefan Zimmerman.

silence. Here we also contacted a light specialist, since it is a rather dark room and we really wanted the light to be good.

We hope that the renovation will be ready by the end of this year, and that it will be a both beautiful and useful place for students, as well as for staff.

The project has been planned with the use of UX methods in a small third survey, where we made some new, rather surprising discoveries: for instance, that many students wished for study rooms for just one person.

Even if the students usually come to the library in groups and book a group study room, they still want to study individually. They obviously want to have each other close, in case they need to ask or discuss something, even when there is no formal group work on their schedule. This made us, in collaboration with the architects, change our plan for more collaborative areas and instead create places for more individual studies without any demands for complete silence.

### Conclusion

We hope that we have created a library that lasts at least a decade, but something we have learned is that constant change is inevitable, and each situation, and each student, is different. We need to keep listening to our users and to be as flexible as possible, then hopefully the library will continue to be their workplace of choice, even in the future.

*Submitted on invitation.  
Accepted on 17 April 2020.*



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This article will describe the user experience (UX) methods used during the years, the results and the implementation of the suggested changes conducted will then be summarized.

## Methods

### *In-depth survey 2012-2013*

In late 2012 and the beginning of 2013, an in-depth survey was conducted in the Linnaeus University Library in Kalmar and Växjö. Four sub studies were defined: 1. examine current use and give a short background to the study environment from a student perspective; 2. provide a forecast for the physical collection and needs for teaching environments; 3. examine the student needs and expectations for the study environment; 4. identify good examples of study environments in other libraries. A number of methods were used: questionnaires, observations, web surveys, seminars, interviews, detailed personal interviews and focus groups. A study visit day and an attendance at a national conference about future learning spaces gave inspiration for the planning for more appropriate study environments. The total results were categorized in nine attributes for user preferences for informal learning spaces defined by Harrop and Turpin (1) in a study at Sheffield Hallam University.

The results of the survey conducted in 2012-2013 were useful in guiding the redesign of the library in Kalmar and Växjö in the years to come and gained the planning of informal learning spaces in new university buildings in Kalmar.

### *Studies and observations 2014 - 2018*

Over 3 weeks in 2015, in Kalmar, student opinions about refurbished learning places, were collected, through short interviews.

In 2017, after the redesign of Växjö Library, some smaller studies and observations were conducted, in order to find out the students opinions.

### *User experience in Växjö 2019*

To gain knowledge about how the students perceive the study environments that were refurbished in 2015-2016, a survey with focus on a typology of learning space preference attributes (1) was conducted in Växjö 2019. Different UX-methods were used. To get an understanding about student study preferences, they were asked to dot in their preferred places on library photos. The respondents also marked out where in the library they considered different zones were located.

Students furthermore gave their opinions on different subjects either in in-depth interviews or in written form.

## Results

### *2012-2013*

The 2012-2013 survey results were categorized in a typology constructed by Harrop and Turpin (1), and a report was compiled (2). A short summary follows: *Destination* (location preference) – most respondents chose Linnaeus University Library over other places, but some were only choosing the library when it came to group work. A factor that limited the time students spent studying in the library were the opening hours, which were seen as too limited. *Identity* (the ethos of the space and how it should be used) – some study spaces were perceived to have multiple identities and could be used for several kinds of learning, which students found confusing. In the interviews, the students claimed that some spaces were difficult to interpret and the observations showed that the spaces were used in other ways than planned. *Conversations* (collaboration and interpersonal communication) – in the interviews and the focus groups, students emphasized the importance of group study rooms or demarcated places for two or more while learning was said to deepen understanding of the material. *Community* (social interactions, support and sense of common purpose) – the students expressed the view that the library was a central meeting place. Surrounded by other students and to be seen as a person seriously studying motivated them even more. The “library feeling” was perceived as important. *Retreat* (privacy and quiet study) – multiple respondents expressed the importance of being part of a community in a quiet environment. Sometimes it was hard to concentrate in the open spaces because of the loud and messy impression that other students passing by makes. The students wanted more possibilities to separate parts of the study spaces. *Timely* (just in time and on demand access to spaces and their resources) – bookable and non-bookable group study rooms and generous open hours were important factors as well as collaboration with fellow students, computers, literature, food and drink. *Human factors* (ergonomics of work spaces and physical attributes) – the user studies underlined the need for an improved sound environment. A distinct division of study zones divided after the expected sound



## Long-term value of an in-depth survey regarding study environments

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level could help students to accommodate for different needs. *Resources* (access to technology) – over all access to technology such as Wi-Fi, electrical sockets, computers and widescreens was a necessity. *Refreshments* (access to food and drink) – a popular space is regarded as hard currency and was not left for lunch breaks. Instead, the students consume their lunch in place even if that behavior created an untidy and smelly environment. Some respondents desired a dining area adjacent to the library.

The survey 2012-2013 gave rise to a number of improvements: create a better acoustic environment, clarify the use of different study places, an increase in the number of group study spaces and spaces for lunch breaks, more plug sockets and extended opening hours.

### 2014-2018

When deciding which improvements suggested in the survey 2012-2013 should be implemented, the cooperation with the Linnaeus University Office of Facilities Management and Services (LOS), with responsibility for facilities planning and keeping, was intensified. The library determined which proposals had priority and the LOS decided if the improvements could be implemented.

In the survey, the need for more group study places were significant. In 2015, a small classroom/silent room in Kalmar was revamped into six group study places, partitioned off with slimmed sound shields between each place. Whiteboards with sound absorbers and TV screens for connecting to laptops were fixed to the walls

In 2015, the students' opinions concerning the refurbished study spaces were evaluated. The students thought that the new study places were convenient for group study. The library as a whole was perceived to have flaws in its sound environment and there was a suggestion to have a map in the entrance to the library where the expected sound level in different parts of the library should be described. As a result of the evaluation the study spaces in Kalmar were divided into zones.

In Växjö, students wanted a more varied range of informal learning places with good ventilation and a uniform temperature. During 2015-2016, library staff, LOS and interior designers developed the ideas from the user studies. When the furniture was selected, students had the opportunity to test sample pieces of furniture and give feedback.

In 2017 defining the zones permanently in Kalmar and

Växjö became more intense and four zones were settled: Silent zone (silent individual study, no talking or noise), Quiet zone (quiet conversation and collaboration), Social zone (group work and collaboration, possibility for interaction and meetings), Pause zone (for breaks, relaxing and to have a meal). In Växjö the furniture was ordered in the same color as the zone it was placed in. In addition to new furniture, parts of the premises were repainted and access to electricity, Wi-Fi and ventilation improved.

Students also expressed a desire for increased opening hours. This was implemented with the introduction of self-service opening hours.

A library-parking system was constructed. When using the parking system the students could keep the space for up to an hour during lunch break.

The development of the study environments at the university library 2014-2017 is described in a report (3).

### 2019

The UX-activities during 2019 and the result (4) can be summarized as: *Destination* – the students gave their preferences by placing dots on library photos. It was found that most popular study spaces were the group study rooms followed by an open area with group study places. *Identity* – the visitors' task was to define where the different zones were situated in the library. The results showed that the students' knowledge of the zones was high and that the color marks were helpful.

A proposal that emerged was to advertise the activity zones on the website at the start of the semester.

*Conversations* – interviews revealed that although there was an awareness of the amount of group study places, it was considered difficult to find a place for 3-4 people during daytime. *Community* – students who study next to each other knew each other but do not always attend the same courses.

*Resources* – a written questionnaire concerning Wi-Fi, power outlet and technical support confirmed that the Wi-Fi worked well but that there is a lack of power outlets in some places. It was easy to receive technical support when required. *Human factors* – the students wanted more table spaces and group rooms. The students pointed to places where there was too much noise. Library ventilation was good, but it was cold in some areas.

*Retreat* – during an in-depth interview, students highlighted the silent zone and some of the group rooms and sofas with high backs as places for retreat. More shielded places were desirable.

*Timely* – most of the respondents were happy with the

opening hours and could usually get some kind of study place, except between 10 am and 3 pm, especially if searching for a calm, quiet individual place. *Refreshments* – the students were aware that the University offers spaces with microwave ovens. In order to keep their places at the library people left things, took turns taking lunch breaks or ate at their place. Only a few knew about the special library-parking system.

### Discussion and conclusions

This article set out with the aim of get an understanding of students' definition of an attractive study environment and how the Linnaeus University Library perceives by the students. During the survey, the close collaboration with the students and LOS has been fundamental. Working with study environments in a library in two locations has been rewarding as changes made in one location, if successful, could be adopted in the other. Before changes were implemented, the students' wishes were gathered, and after rebuilding or refurbishing, they have been asked to evaluate. The commitment to conduct an in-depth survey in 2012-2013 meant collecting a large amount of information about the students' expectations of the library's informal learning spaces. Over the years, the librarians have learned more about different UX methods. Jones and Grayson (5) describes how the students can be treated as partners when the staff works actively and collaborates with them. The method "you said, we did" has been developed to become an ongoing dialogue which contains the inviting phrase "what should we do together?". That is a device well worth working after.

The creation of zones in order to clarify the expected behavior in the areas has been received positively; it has been easy for the students to navigate the different zones and their locations.

Due to the library's involvement in study environments, the library was also deeply engaged in planning the formal and informal learning spaces for the new university campus being built in Kalmar. Furthermore, having had the opportunity to work closely together

with students has been beneficial when developing the plans for the new University Library building.

*Submitted on invitation.*

*Accepted on 1 May 2020.*

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# Transformed library spaces lead to transformed library services: a case study of the RCSI library

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## Abstract

*A new health sciences library integrated into a state of the art academic and clinical education building provided opportunities for transforming library services delivery, positioning space as a service, deeper integration of library expertise within the University community and the curriculum, and for enhancing the student experience.*

**Key words:** libraries; libraries, medical; facility, design and construction; learning models, theoretical.

## Introduction

Founded as the national training body for surgery in Ireland, RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences has been at the forefront of healthcare education since its establishment in 1784. Today it is Ireland's newest university and an innovative, international health sciences education and research institution offering education and training at undergraduate, postgraduate and professional level in Dublin and at international campuses in Asia and the Middle East. RCSI Dublin is Ireland's only stand-alone health sciences campus and the medical school is Ireland's largest.

In July 2017 RCSI opened its state of the art ten storey health sciences education building. At the heart of the building is the RCSI Library occupying three floors, levels zero to two, with advanced clinical and surgical simulation facilities above, and a five hundred-seat auditorium and sports facilities below. The building has won numerous awards, the most recent being the prestigious Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) 2019 Library Design Award, small library category (development under 2,000 square metres)<sup>1</sup>.

This article describes the design of the library, how it aligns with RCSI strategy and the impact it has on library service delivery and the institution.

## Design

The design of the whole building was based on extensive user and stakeholder consultation. The library consultation included workshops with student representatives and academics; a "chair fair", where students tested and ranked seating prior to procurement; and the utilization of annual student survey data to inform the design. We participated on benchmarking visits to the US, UK and Europe and undertook additional library benchmarking within Ireland.

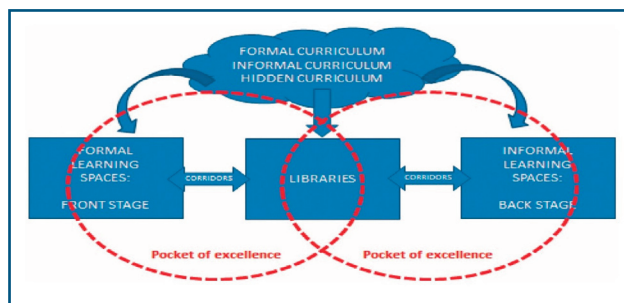
As the Information Point was a significant change it was mocked up for the library team to test height and dimensions. To help the team envisage proposed layouts the Library Learning Commons and the Staff Suite were taped out enabling team members to "walk" the spaces. In addition to desk research key conceptual influences were the "campfires, caves, and waterholes" articulated by Thornberg (1). The location of the

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/library-design-awards-2019-winners>

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library in the centre of the building reflects Norquist's (2) articulation of libraries as connectors, where formal, informal and hidden curricula intersect (*Figure 1*).



**Fig. 1.** *Libraries as connectors (2).*

Newer library design experienced on benchmarking trips influenced the sense of transparency, openness and collaboration, which redefines the boundaries of the library in the building – there are multiple entry and exit points, no library turnstiles<sup>2</sup> or book security gates and “overflow” study spaces on the upper floors. Constraints on size meant not everything was included in the final design, e.g., maker spaces, accessibility services and data visualization facilities were all considered but excluded, and the University heritage collections were out of scope from project inception as they were not considered core to the educational objectives of the building and remain in the old library building.

The design principles aimed to optimise the learning environment thereby engendering a transformative learning experience. For the library this enabled key innovations such as: the boundary-less library integrated into the centre of the building; the creation of an environment to encourage interaction and engagement; variety in spaces and seating to support individual learner preferences; a new roving service model; replacing the traditional library desk with a bespoke pod-style information point – the first academic library in Ireland to do so; the Learning Commons Expo Stage enabled the introduction of

event “pop-ups”<sup>3</sup> which have been hugely successful; and positioning space as one service among many that the library provides.

### Alignment with RCSI strategy

RCSI strategic goals include a transformational education experience, impactful research and reputation enhancement (3).

The new library provided a once in a generation move for the library team and opportunities for deeper integration within the University community and the curriculum, and for enhancing the student experience. The former library building was a stand-alone facility on the edge of the RCSI campus, out of sight of, and distant from, the centre of University activities. While functional it was uninspiring and lacked the variety of spaces to support anticipated curricula changes and the student engagement agenda. The goals for the new library were to:

- create a vibrant, state of the art learning space;
- integrate the library service within the continuum of life-long and self-directed learning supports;
- be a showcase and access point for the full range of library services;
- use space as a change agent signifying that the library is much more than just a place.

Library spaces (*Appendix 1*) reflect the University's strategic shift in health professionals' education towards team based, self-directed, life-long and inter-professional learning and also: support learner preferences for where and how they learn; facilitate engagement with, and among, the learner population; and provide ready access to information specialists and digital resources. The spaces have also played a large part in creating a new and vibrant culture of learning that has arisen through the convergence of multiple learning, study, and recreational environments in the building. They feature prominently in student recruitment campaigns and University promotional literature and together with library customer services support they actively facilitate student and public

<sup>2</sup> There are building turnstiles managed by the Estates department and connected to the Building Management System; previously the library had its own turnstiles connected to the library management system.

<sup>3</sup> Pop-up events hosted in the Learning Commons Expo Stage are temporary marketing events which pop up and after a few hours or days they pop down. The Expo Stage provides a high traffic location to attract people to events which are promoted on the Library's social media channels. A wide range of events have been hosted including; Student Union election campaigns; Student Clubs & Societies bake sales and other charity drives, cultural awareness events and membership drives; Green Campus promotions; student and staff survey promotions. The Library team uses the space for ad hoc information skills training sessions and user engagement activities.

engagement activities making the library more visible and connected than at any previous time in its history.

### Service redesign and innovation

In tandem with the building project the library team underwent a restructuring resulting in six new positions and the creation of three distinct teams: Library Services Delivery; Education Research & Clinical Support; and Heritage. The Library Services Delivery team, led by the Associate Librarian for Library Services Delivery, was created in anticipation of the impact of the new building and included a new Customers Services & Communications Coordinator position and revised job descriptions for library assistants, all of whom are members of the Customer Services team.

The design and restructuring enabled significant service redesign resulting in a more active and proactive service and new collaborations and relationships including:

- new experiential and engagement spaces such as the Library Learning Commons (Figure 2), the Expo Stage, study zones (Figure 3) with supporting services contributing to a new culture of learning in RCSI;



**Fig. 2.** Entrance to the Library Learning Commons.  
Image: © Hufton+Crow/RCSI.



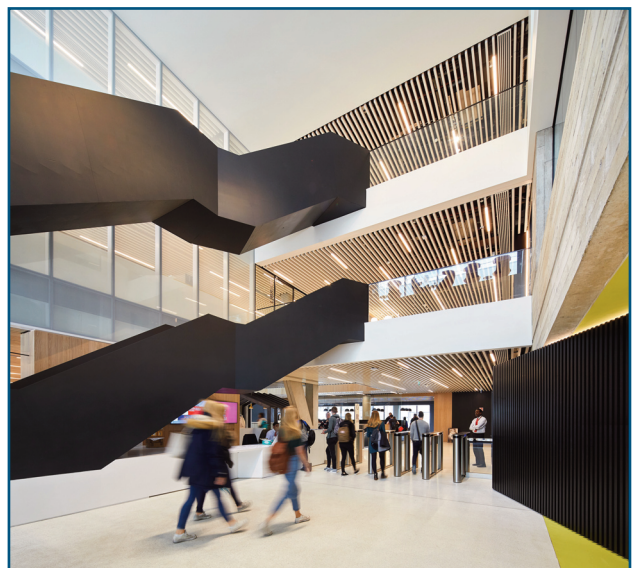
**Fig. 3.** Silent Study Zone.  
Image: © Hufton+Crow/RCSI.

- an Information Point (Figure 4) with pod service area and a roving service model, self-service circulation and a dedicated Customer Services team enhancing the customer experience;



**Fig. 4.** Information Point.  
Image: © Hufton+Crow/RCSI.

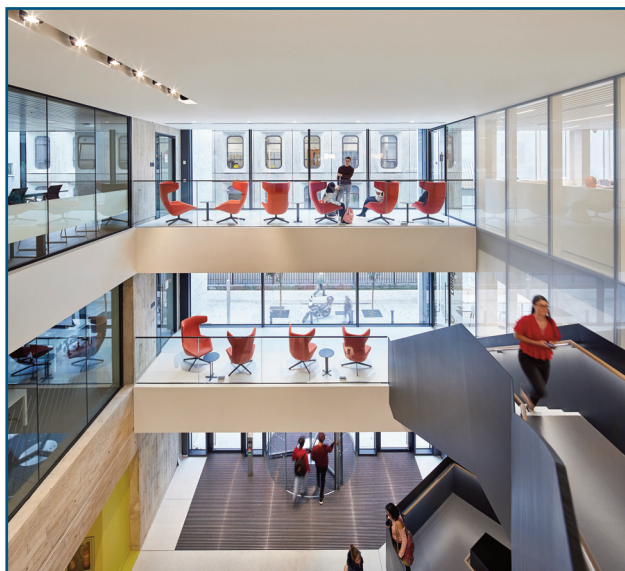
- elimination of book security and turnstiles at the entrance to the library have contributed to a sense of flow and connectivity between and around the whole building and which removed all access management responsibilities from the library team (Figure 5);



**Fig. 5.** Turnstiles at entrance to the Building managed by the Estates team. Image: © Hufton+Crow/RCSI.



- an environment and ambience conducive to innovation including a wide variety of spaces and seating types; “touch down” and “break out” areas (Figure 6); ceiling to floor write on white boards in enhanced group study rooms; mobile whiteboards; magnetic notice boards for student and professional notices;



**Fig. 6.** Library Link Bridges on Levels 1 and 2 provide break out areas for library users. Image: © Hufton+Crow/RCSI.

- provision of clearly defined spaces and support services to postgraduates and surgical trainees for the first time in the library’s history;
- new operational relationships with a wider range of stakeholders to manage the impact of activities happening simultaneously in a shared building;
- digital signage used to promote library services and key messages in high impact spaces.

### Post-occupancy evaluation

Post occupancy evaluation used a variety of methods including specific questions in the end of semester student surveys run by the RCSI Quality and Enhancement Office, using user experience methodologies (UX) such as graffiti walls to capture early user feedback, and capturing user feedback at the Information Point on an ongoing basis. Arising from

these touch points we know that many of the library spaces are working really well but the volume of use of the building has been such that formal student feedback has focused almost entirely on the perceived lack of individual study seats.

To address this issue we: made layout and furniture changes to the Collaborative Study Zone to increase the number of seats and switched it from collaborative to silent mode for the majority of the academic year; actively engaged with the Students Union about student behaviours impacting on seat availability; engaged with the University Senior Management Team to agree protocols for the use of space in the overflow study areas on the non-library floors at exam time; and contracted with the RCSI Quality Process Improvement Centre (QPIC) to undertake a formal review of seat management and student behaviours. Working with QPIC and the Student Union we introduced the #FairSpaceForAll campaign<sup>4</sup> designed to address student behaviours around seat reservation by limiting the amount of time students could leave a study space unattended without risking their belonging being removed and put in a box for later collection. Feedback on these initiatives indicated they were well received and had some impact. However, despite this and almost three years later the most consistent complaint is that there is “not enough space” in the library.

### Innovation and evidence for success

That the building has met the objective of being a state of the art game changer is in no doubt, it has received significant media attention and has won numerous awards. Likewise, the Library can point to the following as evidence of being innovative for users, the University, and the library community:

- an award winning library as judged by our peers;
- significant across campus, not just student, uptake of the new services and spaces such as the Expo Stage; the Library Learning Commons; the enhanced group study rooms; the presentation practice room; self-service book circulation and the Postgraduate Suite;
- overwhelming demand for study areas to the point that the building is flexing to accommodate more study spaces earlier in the term;

<sup>4</sup> <https://rcsilibrary.blogspot.com/2019/04/fairspaceforall-new-library-seat.html>



- over 359 librarian visits from across Europe and Ireland, including several who brought architects and senior management teams to show them what innovative library spaces can look like;
- sufficient sectoral interest to hold a seminar *Why Learning Space Matters: aligning learning landscapes with health sciences curricula*<sup>5</sup> in June 2018;
- for the official opening in June 2018 the Library Learning Commons was used to host 500 guests and the Postgraduate Suite served as Green Room for Michael Bloomberg, who unveiled a plaque commemorating the event.

### Conclusion

In short the development has transformed the services we provide, how we provide them and to whom; it has also transformed operational relationships, increased the visibility and impact of the library and positioned us to serve the continuum of RCSI learners from undergraduates, to postgraduates through to continuing professional and specialist learners. Space has become an aspect of service rather than being the “library”. While the challenge of “not enough space” remains perhaps it is a good challenge to have.

### Acknowledgements

Figures 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are reproduced with the permission of the copyright holders Hufton+Crow/RCSI.

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### Additional Reading

1. RCSI 26 York Street Campus Tour <https://www.rcsi.com/dublin/student-life/life-on-campus/our-campus/26-york-street>
2. Designing Libraries, RCSI Library 26 York Street. <http://www.designinglibraries.org.uk/index.asp?PageID=1498>

*Submitted on invitation.  
Accepted on 18 May 2020*

#### Appendix 1. Overview of RCSI library spaces and the learning and engagement activities they support.

Level	Space	Learning & engagement activities
0	Learning Commons Collaborative and interactive space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engagement and exchange of ideas</li> <li>- Individual, small group and peer-to-peer learning</li> <li>- Skills development &amp; resource access via PC access</li> <li>- Print/copy/scan services</li> </ul>
0	Expo Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pop-up activities &amp; engagement in a high traffic and visible area allowing students to engage and connect with each other</li> <li>- Hosts student clubs &amp; societies, Library clinics, University units who wish to market and promote services and engagement</li> <li>- Digital screen for online exhibition promotion and informational messaging</li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.conul.ie/rcsi-library-seminar-why-learning-space-matters-aligning-learning-landscapes-with-health-sciences-curricula/>

Level	Space	Learning & engagement activities
1	Reading Lounge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Books &amp; reference materials to support learning, teaching and research</li> <li>- Casual, comfy seating for reading, study spaces &amp; oculus viewing window</li> <li>- Computers facilitating access to online resources and learning tools</li> </ul>
1	Computer Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self-directed learning and group work for students</li> <li>- Training room for all library information skills sessions &amp; can be booked by other departments delivering online training &amp; examinations</li> <li>- Access to applications and software</li> </ul>
1	Language Learning Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Language and communication skills practice and development</li> </ul>
1	Group Study Rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Small group and peer-to-peer learning</li> <li>- Tech enabled with audio visual equipment</li> <li>- Floor to ceiling write-on walls</li> </ul>
1	Education & Research and Consult Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supports referrals from the Information Point to specialist information services and supports</li> </ul>
1	Information Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Welcoming staffed customer services area</li> <li>- Query management and referral point to expert support</li> <li>- Available for student use outside of staffed service hours</li> <li>- Self-service circulation</li> </ul>
	Study Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Zoned to inform and influence user behaviour.</li> </ul>
2	Silent Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self-directed, reflective, solitary deep learning</li> </ul>
2	Collaborative Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peer-to-peer learning and small group study</li> <li>- Moveable furniture for students to shape study spaces to suit their need</li> <li>- Converts to a silent study zone at peak times</li> </ul>
2	Postgraduate Suite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Theses write-up and self-directed study for postgraduate students</li> <li>- Group study room to support collaborative, group work</li> </ul>
2	Amphitheatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supporting presentation practice and peer feedback</li> <li>- Technology to record and playback presentations</li> <li>- Tiered seating and lectern mirroring those in full size lecture theatres</li> </ul>
1 & 2	Concourse Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Touch down and break out spaces for groups and individuals</li> </ul>
1& 2	Link Bridges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Touch down and break out spaces for individuals</li> </ul>

# Transforming the medical library into a welcoming learning space: a collaborative project

Michelle F. Schaffer

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## Abstract

*The University of Bern is expanding the training of future physicians. This significant increase in the number of medical students has led to a shortage of student study places in the medical library “Fachbereichsbibliothek Bühlplatz” (FBB) of the University Library of Bern. For this reason, during the summer of 2019, the FBB was refurbished and reopened under a new name: Bibliothek Medizin providing more library services and student study places.*

**Key words:** libraries, medical; facility, design and construction; learning; education.

## Background

Since 2018, the University of Bern Medical Faculty has increased the number of places for medical students to contribute to tackling the shortage of physicians in Switzerland. In total 600 more students will be trained by 2023. With this increase in student numbers, the position of the University of Bern as a leading centre of medical education in Switzerland will be strengthened. In addition, in 2019, the University of Bern is introducing a full-time pharmacy course to counteract the shortage of pharmacists with 150 new students. With this expansion, the Faculty of Medicine is now the largest faculty at the University of Bern and the number of students that will use library services and facilities will increase more than 20%.

The interdisciplinary library Fachbereichsbibliothek Bühlplatz (FBB) with collections in medicine, geology, biology, biochemistry and chemistry had an urgent need for additional student study spaces in order to cope with the demands of increasing numbers of medical students.

Previous FBB refurbishments had resulted in a confusing library layout – no separation of quiet zones for student study and noisy zones for conversations. Library spaces did not reflect the changing learning

styles and preferences of students so change was necessary.

This article describes the cost-saving and innovative design of the library to meet the needs of their stakeholders.

## Library refurbishment

Refurbishment took place on the Library's ground and 1st floor. The removal of the unused roll rack system and the relocation of the science books to the new science library made provision for more student study places. Science books and journals had to be assessed, de-duplicated and removed. This work proved to be time and labour intensive and should not be underestimated. It started with one person 18 months before the library's refurbishment and only finished by using other library employees and volunteers.

Through the clever zoning of quiet student study places on the ground floor and group study areas and tutorial rooms on the upper floor, the noisy and quiet zones are separated. A previously locked door on the 1st floor was opened so that students coming for courses could enter by this second entry point without using the Library's main entrance.

As most people desire natural light for quiet reflection

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and study (1), the Library's rear wall now has bookshelves for the medical books (Figure 1). With room for reading between the bookshelves and the clear labelling on the top of the bookshelves with symbols from the NLM classification (Figure 2) it is a pleasure to visit the "book zone" and browse the shelves.



**Fig. 1.** The books shelves at the back wall (top) and natural light for quiet study places (below).



**Fig. 2.** Attractive symbols for the different NLM classification subjects.

Inside the main entrance the Library's anatomical models are displayed in a new glass case to increase their vis-ability for students and visitors and informing them that they are now entering a medical zone! There is a reading area for newspaper and journals and shelves for new book acquisitions.

As the demand for consumer health information increases, the public represents a distinct proportion of library users (1). Hence, our medical subject librarian curates temporary exhibitions with books on current topics such as health and nutrition and medicinal plants in medicine.

One of the Library's new facilities is the student relaxation room (Figure 3). In particular medical students spend often a long time in the library to learn and appreciate a room to take a short break, to relax, to meditate or to have a power nap. The relaxation room equipped with beanbags can be separated into smaller areas by curtains and the lights can be dimmed for a cozy effect.



**Fig.3.** The relaxation room can be separated into smaller areas by curtains to have individual niches.

Signage is a powerful visual tool for communication and a crucial tool component of the library user experience. However, signage can be problematic when contributing to visual noise through overload; this often leads to signage overload, library anxiety and general confusion (2). Nevertheless, by applying parts of the concept of a design-thinking process (2) the newly designed signage of the medical library gains the attention of users and guides them through the Library (Figure 4).



**Fig. 4.** Clear signage lead the visitor through the library.

With the Library's refurbishment came a change in name – Bibliothek Medizin marking an essential conceptual change. The removal of the science books to a new building meant the new Library only served the needs of the Medical Faculty staff and students. A new name marked a new beginning for the Library's staff and students.

### A collaborative project together with students

Today a library offers much more than only books. Despite the digital revolution, the library is still attractive as a place of study, information services and student study places. Students will find quiet zones for learning without any distraction (3) and as they prefer a combination of e-media and printed books for learning there is enough work space to have printed books open beside the laptop or tablet. In addition, they can meet other medical students to have discussions or to get hints from students in other study years for example on exam preparation. Further, with the increase of information the need for orientation increased. The more research is undertaken, the more publications there are, the more demanding the literature research and scientific writing becomes. Therefore, the library offers courses within the curriculum of medicine and individual consultation session for students and

researchers by a team of highly qualified information specialists and an academic writing tutor.

The library space has an important impact on learning which has to be considered in the reorganization of different libraries (1, 4-7). The library should offer spaces and services that support all types of learning (8). This was also a requirement of the University of Bern's medical students. In workshops, the learning environments were planned together with students and they could test for example the appropriate lighting for learning. Based on this collaborative working of the library team, the architects and the students - learning environments were improved with study carrels, small group working zones with various seating styles and multifunctional tutorial rooms (Figure 5). These tutorial rooms are ready for use for problem-based learning classes of the medical students, individual research consultations with the research support services team and library courses in scientific writing and literature searching.

Therefore our library offers space that support learning, research and encourage discussion between medical students and researchers.



**Fig. 5.** Various learning environments created together with students during workshops.



## Finally – do not forget the library team and their working environment

Spaces and collections alone do not make up the library. Already in 2014 Blumenthal stated that the library of the future will be people (9). The students and researchers benefit from the library services offered by the library team. Students and library users receive immediate information at the information desk and all email enquiries are answered by the circulation desk team. The research support services team consisting of scientific information specialists and an academic writing tutor teach and consult in scientific literature searching, academic writing and in scientific publishing. Finally, the media acquisition and cataloguing team do all the background work so that students and researchers have access to databases, e-media, apps as well to the printed books and journals and that they can be retrieved easily. To perform all this challenging tasks and to have innovative ideas such as an E-Day event (10) every year (introducing first year students to library e-resources) the library team need an inspiring working environment. Therefore, all the team received height-adjustable tables to have an ergonomic working space. The team's social area has been refurbished with acoustic panels in different shapes to reduce the noise when several people are speaking together and to give the room a relaxing and creative atmosphere. A pleasant working environment for the library team influences their motivation and working methods. At first, some of the team members had difficulties in adapting to the new office design, but with time and during a team meeting discussion everyone confirmed that the new working environment motivates them to engage themselves in their library roles more than before.

## Conclusion

Nevertheless, despite different uses of the library space, the Library will not lose its original meaning – namely to be a space for knowledge transfer and to offer services in information retrieval for education and research. It can achieve this by creating different learning zones for study, research and conversation and by promoting the various services and resources it offers to students and staff. Finally, it is important that the library team will find an inspiring working environment to develop new library services for the future.

## Acknowledgments

The author wishes to acknowledge Claire Powell who proofread the article.

*Submitted on invitation.  
Accepted on 1 May 2020.*

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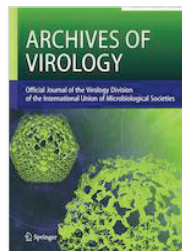


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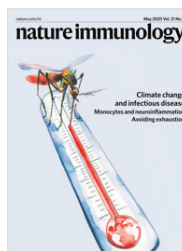
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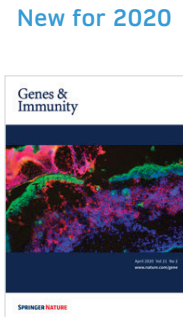
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### Letter from the President



**Maurella Della Seta**

Istituto Superiore di Sanità (retired)  
Rome, Italy  
Contact: maurella.dellaseta@iss.it

Dear EAHIL Colleagues,

Many sad events took place after my last letter, published in the *JEAHIL* first issue of 2020. Most European countries were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, and many of you had to face the challenge imposed by lockdown and by having your libraries closed and working from home. By the time I am writing this letter the situation is improving, at least in Europe, and we are slowly coming back to our normal lives. Our association has been active during this period and the Board met online to carry on our usual tasks.

As you know 2020 is an election year and I wish to provide you with some news about this process.

#### **Elections for President and Board**

Voting for the EAHIL President and Executive Board positions from 2021 will take place from **8-19 June 2020**. There is one candidate standing for President and ten candidates standing for four executive positions in the EAHIL Board. The candidates with the highest numbers of votes will be elected to an executive position. The EAHIL Board normally has two non-executive co-opted members, so the two unelected candidates with the highest numbers of votes will be invited to take on these non-executive positions.

The candidates and their election statements may be seen on the EAHIL website at the following URL: <http://eahil.eu/board-candidates-election-statements/>

It is particularly important to participate in the elections, since EAHIL is a democratic organisation, relying on active participation by members. In order to vote in this year's elections, your membership record must be active. So, please, update your membership record and your e-mail address at the following URL: <https://fd8.formdesk.com/EAHIL/membership> .

Thank you for your participation in the voting process.

#### **Elections for Council members**

The nominations and voting for Council members for each country where there are vacancies will be in late Summer and Autumn. The new Councillors will begin their terms in January 2021. You are strongly encouraged to consider becoming a Councillor for your country or suggesting possible candidates among your colleagues.

## 17th EAHIL 2020 Conference in Lodz, Poland

All of you are probably aware, from the EAHIL website and from EAHIL social media, that the Local Organising Committee for the 17th EAHIL Conference in Lodz, Poland, decided to deliver the Conference as **an online event**. The virtual EAHIL 2020 Conference will take place on **16-18 November 2020** and will replace the Conference that was going to be held by the Information and Library Center of the Medical University of Lodz in Vienna House Andel's Lodz conference hotel. Both EAHIL Board and Council meetings will be online, while remote participation and voting for the General Assembly will be organized, at the same time of the Conference in November.

All the information about the virtual Conference can be found here:

- <https://eahil2020.wordpress.com/2020/06/09/eahil2020-online>
- [https://twitter.com/EAHIL\\_2020/status/1237722899852734466](https://twitter.com/EAHIL_2020/status/1237722899852734466)

As you will remember, the main theme of the 17th Conference was and will remain Open Science, with a focus on topics such as **open access, professional collaboration, and innovation**.

Open science was also the theme of an interesting workshop, that took place on December 3, 2019 in Rome, in the Italian Ministry of Health auditorium. It was organised by Bibliosan, a network collecting the libraries of the main biomedical Italian agencies. The title of the Bibliosan workshop was: “**Open science and Data Treatment: possible models, good practices, critical issues**”. Librarians, publishers and scientists were involved in the discussion. Among the participants, several active Italian EAHIL members. At this link, you can find the program and the presentations, just in case you want to get inspired for the next EAHIL conference: [http://www.bibliosan.it/ftp/ws2019/ws\\_03\\_12\\_2019.html](http://www.bibliosan.it/ftp/ws2019/ws_03_12_2019.html) .



**Fig. 1.** Mauro Mazzocut and Valeria Scotti (Italian EAHIL Council members) with the EAHIL President Maurella Della Seta, attending the Bibliosan Workshop “Open Science and data treatment”, 3 December 2019, Rome, Italy.

Unfortunately, all the presentations were given in Italian, except from one, given by a publisher, I hereby translate the titles for you:

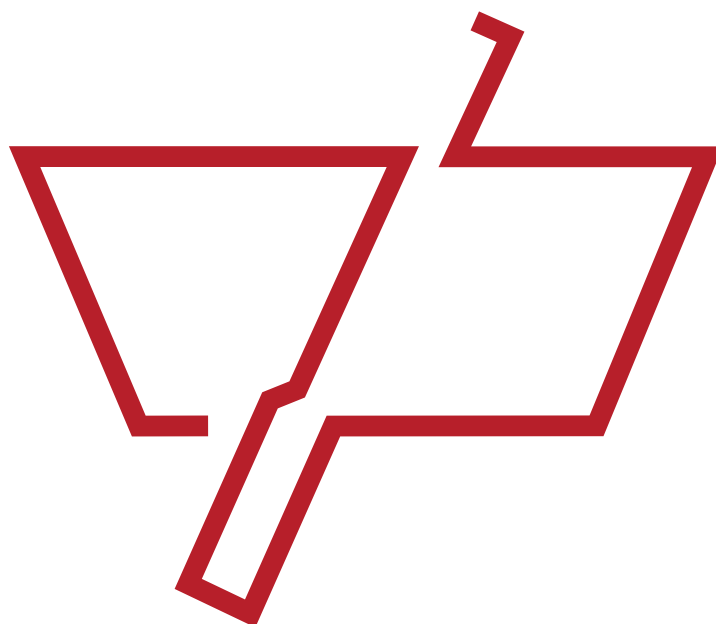
- 1) What is the purpose of Open Science?
- 2) How to define and implement a research data management policy
- 3) The Open Science world and the Librarian role
- 4) Research data in Padua University: sharing and reusing research data
- 5) Open research: a view from *BMJ*
- 6) Open Science in action
- 7) Repository and Medical Research Hospitals: an experience
- 8) Open data: a scientist perspective

I take this opportunity to send my best wishes for the upcoming Summer holidays to all EAHIL members.

Maurella



# EAHIL



# 2020

**B** e   **O** p e n  
**A** c t   **T** o g e t h e r

17th EAHIL Conference

**16—18.11.2020**

**Łódź—online**

## Dear EAHIL Community

Due to the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and with the safety of our community as a top priority the Local Organising Committee for the **17th EAHIL Conference** in Lodz, Poland, have decided to deliver the Conference as an online event. The virtual **EAHIL 2020 Conference** will take place on **16-18 November 2020** and will replace the Conference that was going to be held by the Information and Library Center of the Medical University of Lodz in Vienna House Andel's Lodz conference hotel. We have been carefully monitoring the situation with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the recommendations regarding events and travel provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Polish Government and, regrettably, we feel that this is the only proper decision to be made during these difficult times.

We recognize the importance of the annual meetings for the EAHIL community – to be able to continue supporting medical professionals and researchers and continue contributing to the advance of medical and health sciences we need to continually broaden our knowledge, improve our existing skills and learn new ones. And this is exactly what EAHIL events have to offer. That is why we would like to take advantage of the technologies at hand and bring you the best of EAHIL conference in this new virtual format. Let's **Be Open** to this new digital experience and **Act Together** despite the difficulties.

Please stay tuned for further information on the programme, tickets and more.

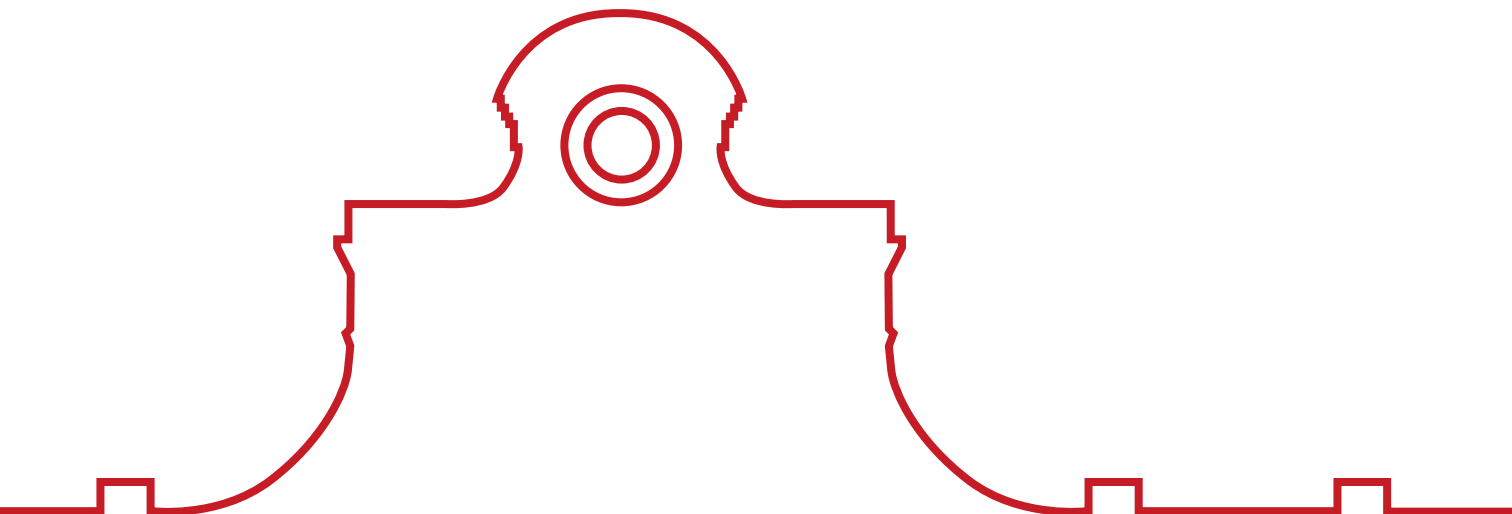
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NOFER INSTITUTE OF OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE



## JEAHIL online usage



**Rebecca Wojturska**

University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK  
 Rebecca.Wojturska@ed.ac.uk

Hello everyone! I'm Rebecca Wojturska, and I'm the new Open Access Publishing Officer at the University of Edinburgh. I'll be responsible for providing the hosting service for the Journal of the European Association for Health Information and Libraries (JEAHIL) and very much look forward to working with the JEAHIL team!

I thought it would be interesting to share the usage for JEAHIL as I found that the journal is very well used, with over 17,000 article downloads in 2019 and almost 37,000 abstract page views (Table 1). Excitingly, 2020 appears set to beat these impressive statistics (Table 2).

It's also interesting to review the top 10 article downloads and issue usage, as we can see which articles or themes are the most popular or well used, and also see if older content is still being used (Table 3). In 2019, content from 2015 onwards was still being highly used, and the most used issue was Volume 11 Number 3 from 2015 (Table 4). This demonstrates that the research published in JEAHIL continues to be relevant years after publication and is a real strength of the journal.

Finally, a quick look at Google Analytics shows us that there are a core group of people who regularly use the JEAHIL website, and that 83% of users from 2019 to now are new users. This means the website is not only continuously attracting new people to discover the research but also retaining a loyal group of readers, which is fantastic!

Again, I'm looking forward to working with the JEAHIL team; if you have any immediate questions, please just let me know.

	Journal home-page views	Table of content page views	Abstract page views	Article downloads
January	1073	1026	2460	1190
February	763	740	1940	1229
March	980	710	2235	955
April	1104	1359	2616	1423
May	1140	1048	2969	1263
June	1079	1754	3282	1907
July	991	835	2406	1147
August	930	903	3042	1051
September	1105	1898	4104	1900
October	829	1226	4509	1954
November	829	828	3253	1621
December	974	1112	3990	1767
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,797</b>	<b>13,439</b>	<b>36,806</b>	<b>17,407</b>

Table 1. JEAHIL online usage 2019.



	Journal home-page views	Table of content page views	Abstract page views	Article downloads
January	964	1214	4837	1730
February	863	1119	4418	1995
March	918	1134	4303	1633
April	1175	1953	5097	1708
May	1012	1244	4719	1207
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,932</b>	<b>6,664</b>	<b>23,374</b>	<b>8,273</b>

Table 2. JEAHIL online usage 2020.

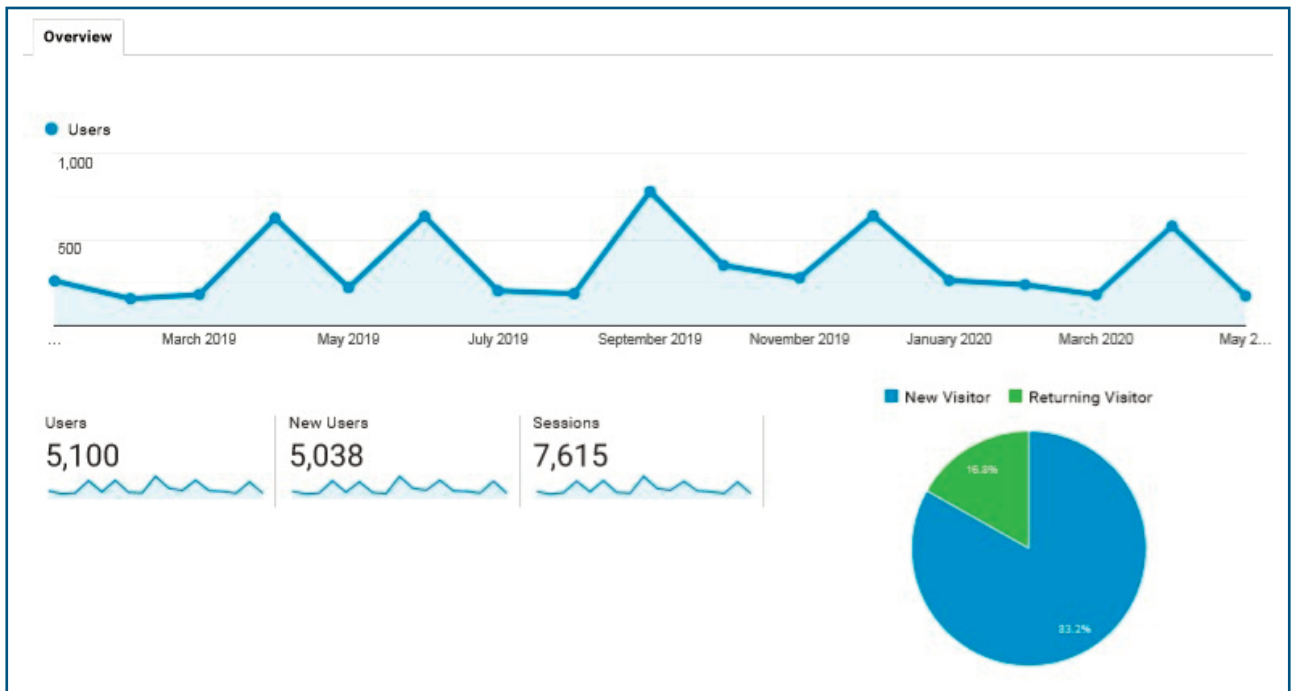
Rank	Article title	Author(s)	Issue	Count
1	Observation research techniques	Christine Urquhart	Vol 11 No 3 (2015)	827
2	Hunting for the library value: Benchmarking as a communication tool	Karen Johanne Buset, Ghislaine Declève and Tuulevi Ovaska	Vol 15 No 1 (2019)	291
3	Book Review: Systematic Searching: Practical ideas for improving results	Tom Roper	Vol 15 No 2 (2019)	284
4	iPads as digital platform for medical study: The SAMR model for mapping impact	Mark Hamilton and Terese Bird	Vol 12 No 1 (2016)	262
5	Health libraries: sharing through gaming	Gómez-Sánchez et al.	Vol 15 No 3 (2019)	226
6	Establishing a Clinical Librarian service: a practical framework	Kirsty Rickett	Vol 14 No 2 (2018)	212
7	Talking about professional failure: what can we learn from each other?	Elinor Harriss and Tom Roper	Vol 15 No 2 (2019)	206
8	Qualitative research methods: interviewing as a way of learning and knowing	Johanna Rivano Eckerdal	Vol 12 No 1 (2016)	200
9	DocToBib: an expanding project of video research training tutorials for interns, health students and practitioners, three years later	Robin Ricaud	Vol 15 No 1 (2019)	200
10	Working in partnership and building relationships as a specialist information service	Deena Maggs	Vol 14 No 4 (2018)	195

Table 3. JEAHIL top 10 article downloads 2019.

## NEWS FROM EAHIL

Rank	Issue	Count
1	Vol 11 No 3 (2015)	2367
2	Vol 14 No 3 (2018)	1513
3	Vol 15 No 3 (2019)	1453
4	Vol 12 No 1 (2016)	1410
5	Vol 15 No 2 (2019)	1242

**Table 4.** *JEAHIL top 5 issues 2019.*



**Fig. 1.** *Google Analytics Website User Overview (January 2019 - May 2020).*

### Pharma Information during COVID-19



**Francesca Gualtieri**

Rottapharm Biotech s.r.l, Monza, Italy  
Chair of SIG Pharma  
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We have been living with a unique pandemic crisis since 1919 - during the 1st World War there was a pandemic called Spanish flu, from the name of the country where the pandemic effect of the virus was firstly reported. To maintain morale, World War I censors minimized early reports of illness and mortality in Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and the United States. Newspapers were free to report the epidemic's effects in neutral Spain, this gave rise to the name "Spanish" flu. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. There are many types of human coronaviruses, including some that commonly cause mild upper-respiratory tract illnesses. COVID-19 is a new disease, caused by a novel (or new) coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans. It is causing many deaths and stress in sub intensive and intensive care department in country hospitals world-wide.

In the north of Italy, we experienced the most dramatic scenario I have never seen in my life!

All of us, in all European countries and all over the world, have to cope with this new crisis and be active in different ways, to know and inform then about COVID-19.

Since February, we have been collecting different information and developed new competencies - a new job style to be ready to support with answer against an unknown enemy (some of us from home, others in place but all ready to answer). I would like to list all the special initiatives and the references that the European Library services are offering to patrons, they are all super, I cannot mention all. Let me give only some examples starting from the north part of Europe. I do appreciate the Norwegian Institute of Public health live map on COVID-19 evidence, in collaboration with Cochrane Belgium and Red Cross (all the collaborations are listed in the web site <https://www.fhi.no/en/qk/systematic-reviews-hta/map/>). The survey promoted and sent to EAHIL members from Alicia Gomez, María García-Puente, Rebeca Isabel to know how health librarians are contributing to the current pandemic, and the emerged initiatives related to COVID-19. And the last, the Italian GIDIF-RBM initiative with "day by day post" or "knowledge drops" to accompany colleagues in such a difficult time. In the institutional web site, there are, ready to copy and paste, sets of search queries according to the different database syntax (PubMed, Embase, Scopus or Web of Science and so on) or links to useful websites. You can find practical information about pharma company initiative and drug development status, useful and reliable resources for patients & citizens in the COVID-19 era and how to avoid fake news about it. There are also some videos about history of medicine: pandemic during ages, and why we have to wash our hands.

All of you did a great job!

Dear colleagues hoping you are all safe, I'm looking forward to seeing you soon. #stayhealthy #stayinformed.

*Francesca Gualtieri*



### US Medical Library Association report for EAHIL



**Carol Lefebvre**

MLA Representative to EAHIL  
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#### **LATEST NEWS: MLA 2020 CONFERENCE TO BE TOTALLY VIRTUAL**

Update on MLA '20 Virtual Conference (vConference)

On 7 May 2020, the Governor of the State of Oregon issued a press release stating that:

“... large gatherings such as conventions, festivals, and major concerts and live audience sporting events will need to be cancelled at least through September. Restarting events of this size will require a reliable treatment or prevention, like a vaccine, which is many months off.”

<https://www.myoregon.gov/2020/05/07/gov-kate-brown-releases-plan-for-rebuilding-a-safe-and-strong-oregon/>

This was the final nail in the coffin for the planned ‘in-person’ MLA '20 Annual Meeting in Portland, Oregon. You will remember from my last piece in the March issue of JEAHIL, that I had reported that MLA had taken the very difficult but wholly necessary decision to postpone MLA from May 2020 to August 2020, in the hope that the COVID-19 situation might be adequately under control by then. This is now, clearly, not going to be the case, so MLA and the conference organizers are now working hard to put together a fully virtual event. <https://www.mlanet.org/meeting>

As I mentioned in my last piece for the March issue of JEAHIL, I would ask you to support MLA at this difficult time. Please do consider attending the vConference remotely this year. You may have conference funds in your budgets that you have been unable to spend on attending conferences in person this year, so, do please consider using those funds to register for the MLA vConference. This will be the 120th Annual Meeting and as such should be a landmark event.

It is difficult to confirm, at this time, the proposed programme for the MLA '20 vConference, as the demise of the ‘in-person’ event in Portland has only just been announced. In the coming weeks, MLA will need to reconfirm their presenters’ availability and investigate the necessary technical solutions. It will be interesting to see if moving to a fully virtual format at half the normal registration fee (see below) might, in fact, increase the number of registrants and exhibitors. Normally the conference would expect to attract c. 2,500 participants, including delegates and over 100 exhibitors.

MLA are planning to offer 4 Keynotes this year, for which delegates can view the ‘livecast’ or view it later in your own time. It is anticipated that the audience will be able to interact with the presenters through Q&A via ‘chat’ (Audience Response System). Additionally, selected keynote presentations will be streamed live without requiring a vConference Registration.

With respect to the contributed programme, it is expected that there will be c. 100 papers and c. 40 ‘Lightning Talks’ presented, which can be viewed as videos online, listening to the presenters in your own time, and interacting with attendees and presenters in virtual sessions and through ‘chat’. The ‘Lightning Talks’ are five-minute presentations and focus on one main topic, submitted as either a research abstract or a programme

description abstract. Additionally, there will be c. 160 posters, which can also be viewed online, listening to the presenters in your own time, and interacting with attendees and presenters in virtual sessions and through 'chat'.

This year there will again be Immersion sessions, described as follows. "They are intended to: provide an in-depth perspective on areas of interest to MLA members. They are your chance to design and offer the programming that you want to see. Immersion sessions should strive for excellent engagement and can vary in format from a panel of invited speakers to a single invited speaker, a facilitated book discussion, as well as less-conventional sessions like an "unconference" or flipped session. The only type of programming excluded from immersion sessions are paper presentations." It is envisaged that c. 20 sessions will be held as Immersion sessions this year. These were an innovation in the 2019 MLA programme. MLA are currently considering how best to offer these virtually.

Sunrise Seminars, Lunch and Learns, and Technology Showcase sessions are planned to go ahead as either live or recorded virtual presentations allowing interaction with the presenters through Q&A via 'chat'.

Continuing Education courses, which were planned for the two days prior to the conference, will probably not be held this year, as they were based on face-to-face instruction. MLA, however, continues its programme of webinars, available as both live and recorded events.

<https://www.mlanet.org/p/cm/ld/fid=412>

The Exhibition will also be fully virtual this year and c. 65 vendors are expected to 'attend'. It is anticipated that delegates will be able to view vendor videos and download product and education materials in their own time, as well as join public video 'chat' sessions (scheduled or open) to ask questions and talk about products and services.

A Preliminary Programme will be made available shortly.

<https://www.mlanet.org/meeting>

Networking Events will also be fully virtual this year and more information will follow on the meeting website in due course.

Conference registration is expected to open in early June 2020. There is a discount for EAHIL members through EAHIL's association with MLA. The vConference registration fee for EAHIL members is 350 USD, reduced from 685 USD for the originally planned 'in-person' event in Oregon.

<https://www.mlanet.org/p/cm/ld/fid=1653>

The MLA '20 Blog will continue to provide coverage of a range of topics including programme sessions, plenary sessions, exhibition activity and virtual social events, before, during and after the meeting.

<https://www.mlanet.org/p/bl/et/blogid=136>

Additionally, you can follow the meeting on Twitter with the MLA '20 hashtag #mlanet20 and follow MLA more generally on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/MedicalLibraryAssn>

Future MLA annual meetings - dates for your diary:

Washington, DC, 21-26 May 2021

New Orleans, Louisiana 2-7 May 2022

Membership of MLA

MLA offers International Membership to individuals at a reduced rate. This category applies if you work or

have worked in a health- or health information-related environment and live outside the US or Canada. The current annual subscription rate for International Membership is 150 US dollars (or 25 US dollars if you are from a HINARI-eligible Group A or Group B country).  
<https://www.mlanet.org/join>

### News and publications from MLA

The latest issue of the Journal of the Medical Library Association (JMLA) (Volume 108 (2) April 2020) is now available (open access) at:  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/journals/93/latest/>

Open access to back issues of the JMLA (and its predecessors back to 1898) is available from:  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/journals/93/>

Preprints of articles from the forthcoming issue of the JMLA are no longer available. JMLA does, however, encourage self-archiving at any point in the manuscript preparation or peer review process:  
<http://jmla.mlanet.org/ojs/jmla/article/view/877>

MLAConnect is MLA's members-only e-mail newsletter and is circulated weekly. The online version now displays all articles to which members have access, including from blogs of MLA sections and is updated continually. Most articles are restricted to MLA members and/or to members of specific MLA sections. For the most complete display of articles, you need to login with your username and password.





### What about our kids during the pandemic?

**Letizia Sampaolo**

Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Rome, Italy  
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*Dorota Bródka is a psychologist based in Norway that has become the subject of sudden media interest in Poland, her native country. Last March, during the lockdown due to the pandemic, she penned a children's fairy tale explaining the implications of COVID-19. The story revealed itself a success and went viral in a few days.*

*Written with tender sensitivity in a language easily understood by children, Dorota's essential message is light and playful while keeping its core meaning.*

*The story, titled Bajka o złym Królu Wirusie i Dobrej Kwarantannie (A fairy tale about the evil King Virus and Good Quarantine), was released as a free audiobook and pdf, first published on Bródka's website, and later also translated into English. It was intended for just a limited audience at first. In an interview, Dorota said, "it all basically came about after a friend of mine posted a request to her friends involved in the field of psychology to write a story for kids." The story describes a number of kingdoms living happily until, one day, they are attacked by King Virus. "Everywhere the King rules," says Bródka, "loses colour, and even the habitants become sick and grey."*

*Soon the King and Queen of the Kingdom of the Scented Apple rally the rulers from the other kingdoms, together with quite many mysterious and wise figures, to discuss a plan, build a defensive wall of resistance and surround it with a quarantine to stop King Virus.*

*I will not tell you how the story ends, although I guess you already know it. Dorota perfectly explains how "right now we all need a little bit of hope. Just looking at how much everything has changed since I published this in the middle of March, you have to imagine how difficult it is for children to comprehend. They're having to be schooled online while also being kept apart from their friends – not to explain why is cruel, and I'd say to not give them hope is even crueller."*

*Hers is a gift of hope and joy, although times are difficult, specifically dedicated to our children.*

*Enjoy the full reading!*



*The Evil King Virus and a Good Quarantine*

### JOURNAL ISSUES

*Health Information and Libraries Journal: Contents of June 2020 (Vol. 37, Issue 2; Pages: i-iv, 95-169)*

#### Editorial

**Supporting the health library and information workforce**

McNamara S

### Review Articles

#### Factors influencing the success of knowledge management process in health care organisations: a literature review

Ayatollahi H, Zeraaktar K

### Original Articles

- **Findings from a training needs analysis survey to support health professionals across the research lifecycle**  
Purnell M
- **Measures of self-efficacy among doctors in conducting an online search for clinical decision making**  
Naeem SB, Bhatti R
- **Pre-requisites, barriers and advantages of clinical informationist participation in grand round: a qualitative study**  
Farashbandi EZ, Farashbandi FZ, Adibi P, Rahimi A
- **Performance evaluation of three semantic expansions to query PubMed.**  
Massonnaud C, Lelong R, Kerdelhué G, Lejeune E, Grosjean J, Griffon N, Darmoni SJ

### Regular Feature

- **Dissertations into Practice**  
**Use of bibliometric analysis of Greek hospital personnel publications**  
Massonnaud C, Lelong
- **International Perspectives and Initiatives**  
**The Covid-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic: reflections on the roles of librarians and information professionals.**  
Ali MY, Gatiti P

### Teaching and learning in Action

- **Regular Feature**  
**Learning how to teach unfamiliar subjects: developing training on writing for publication and presentation of research for health libraries**  
Barker E, Phillips V

### Obituary

Shane Godbolt, 9 December 1943 – 24 November 2019

### FROM THE WEB

- **Publishing in English. Is it a challenge?**  
Jef Akst is a science writer. As managing editor, she edits The Scientist's [Features](#) and writes articles across the publication. An [interesting one](#) published last March 10 on the Scientist's blog describes the challenges and issues often beyond the language barriers that international authors face when submitting manuscripts in English. It also portrays some editors, journalists, and professors' opinions about the topic. It reports, "Authors sometimes struggle with online submission systems, and lack of familiarity with the norms of the journal's process can also impede the path to publication." It also points out that language issues are not

exclusive to non-native English speakers; cultural differences in how researchers present their work can be a further challenge. Finally, although researchers can identify high-quality editing services, they may not be able to afford them. Sometimes “a journal editor encourages an author to seek language-editing services, and recommends a service that the journal has a partnership at a discounted rate, or points authors to a list of reputable language editing services on the journal’s website.” The ones interviewed call this “the language polishing industry,” often “riddled with high-volume, low-quality services”.

To end up successfully with a publication, is it just a matter of knowing the system? Get the [full article!](#)

### HEARD FROM THE WORLD

Susanna Holstein, known as Granny Sue, is a member of the National Storytelling Network, the West Virginia Storytelling Guild, the Kentucky Storytelling Association, VASA, and the Storytellers of Central Ohio. Her story is worthwhile reading. It reinforces the belief that all people, given the right tools and a little boost along the way ahead, can succeed. And it may lighten up our days when our librarian spirit may lose inspiration.

#### An Ornament Memory

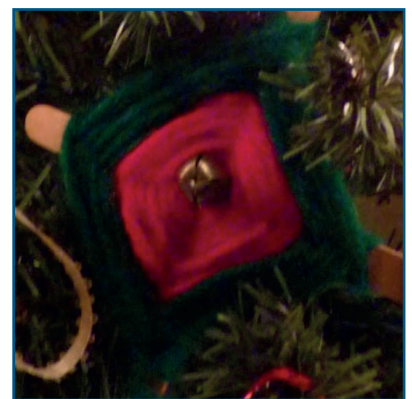
“About 30 years ago I was librarian in a small, struggling West Virginia town. An Adult Basic Education class met at the town's community centre, but I could not get the class to visit the library although I often went to their class to talk about the books and services. I even told them my own story of dropping out of high school as a senior to get married and have a baby, about having four sons by the time I was 22, moving to West Virginia at 23 and trying to subsistence farm, then getting divorced and remarried at 34, having another son, starting college at 36 and finishing when I was 40. I told them about how I visited the library often in those early years, and how much I learned from books. The teacher told me they just didn't think the library was a place for them.

Finally, one day I told the teacher I would show the film Catfish Man of the Woods if she would bring the class to the library to watch it. The video was about an old time herb doctor in Glenwood, WV, who did a lot of foraging for wild plants, and the people in the class knew a lot about that, as many of them hunted ginseng and wild mushrooms among other things.

So, they came to watch the movie, and I took them for a tour of our little library, showing them the plant identification books, car repair manuals, craft books, and so on. They all got library cards. After that day, the class came at least once a month, for books, to watch a movie or come to a library program. Some of them came after school and brought their children to get cards. They told me privately that they always thought the library was “for rich, educated people, not people like them”.

The following year I was promoted to a new position, and had to leave my first little library. On their last visit, each member of the class brought me an ornament they had made. This God's Eye is one of them. Some years later when I was working at another library, one of the class members came in to show me her practical nursing degree, and told me her son would soon be starting college. She said, “The library is what got me started.” I always believed in the people in that class--talented, hardworking, creative--and I am sure many of them, like the lady who eventually became a registered nurse, that they succeeded in whatever they set out to do.”

#### Granny Sue's - God's Eye



*Granny Sue's - God's Eye*

Please feel free to contact me ([letizia.sampaolo@iss.it](mailto:letizia.sampaolo@iss.it)) if you have any further suggestion about events you would like to promote.

### **Journal editors should seek information specialists as peer reviewers for knowledge synthesis publications: a letter to the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)**

The letter published below has been sent to the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) to encourage journal editors to actively seek information specialists as peer reviewers for knowledge synthesis publications and to advocate for the recognition of their methodological expertise.

This letter represents a collaborative effort by the Canadian Health Libraries Association (CHLA/ABSC), the European Association for Health Information and Libraries (EAHIL), the Health Libraries Australia section of the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA-HLA) and the US Medical Library Association (MLA).

Who could have envisaged, when we set out on this venture some months ago, how timely this would be with respect to the current Surgisphere scandal resulting in retractions in both the *Lancet* and the *New England Journal of Medicine*?

The editors of the above two journals, so badly caught out in this scandal, recognize that they did not ask the right experts to peer review the study, as noted in this recent article in the New York Times, published under the title: *"The Pandemic Claims New Victims: Prestigious Medical Journals"*.

*"This got as much, if not more, review and editing than a standard regular track manuscript," Dr. Rubin, the editor in chief of the NEJM, said of the heart study appearing in the NEJM, which was based on a smaller set of Surgisphere data. "We didn't cut corners. We just didn't ask the right people."*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/14/health/virus-journals.html>

We are not suggesting that librarians or information specialists would have been appropriate peer reviewers for the Surgisphere articles now retracted but the general point that appropriate methodologists should be appointed to peer review articles still stands, and with respect to peer review of the search process and search strategies, the appropriate methodologists are librarians and information specialists.

We encourage you to share this letter across your networks. Let us hope that our letter may make a difference with respect to peer review of search strategies and the search process in the future.

Carol Lefebvre  
MLA Representative to EAHIL  
Independent Information Consultant  
Lefebvre Associates Ltd, Oxford, UK

*How to cite the Letter below:*

Iverson S, Della Seta M, Lefebvre C, Ritchie A, Traditi L, Baliozian K. International health library associations urge the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) to seek information specialists as peer reviewers for knowledge synthesis publications. JEAHIL. 2020;16(2):58-61. [Editor's note: the above citation was corrected on 13 July 2020].





International health library associations urge the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) to seek information specialists as peer reviewers for knowledge synthesis publications

Canadian Health Libraries Association (CHLA/ABSC)  
 European Association for Health Information and Libraries (EAHIL)  
 Australian Library and Information Association/Health Libraries Australia (ALIA-HLA)  
 US Medical Library Association (MLA)

10 June 2020

To the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)

Dear Colleagues,

We are writing to you to encourage journal editors to actively seek information specialists as peer reviewers for knowledge synthesis publications and to advocate for the recognition of their methodological expertise.

Evidence indicates that few systematic review and other knowledge synthesis publications reflect the participation of information specialists(1-4) despite the recommendations of international knowledge synthesis organizations such as the Campbell Collaboration, Cochrane and the Joanna Briggs Institute.(5-7) There is also a growing body of research suggesting that there is a crisis in the reproducibility of methods reported in these types of publications.(2, 8-10) This is the case despite reporting guidelines like PRISMA having been widely known for a decade (11) and the benefits of information specialists' involvement in the conduct of systematic and scoping reviews having been well documented.(1, 3, 12)

Based on our extensive collective international experience and the published evidence, it is our view that journal editors should more actively recruit information specialists as peer reviewers for knowledge synthesis publications. Information specialists bring to the table a unique set of skills, including considerable methodological expertise that can help address issues of rigour and research waste.(13) In the same way that inappropriate data collection methods for primary research undermine the integrity of research results and conclusions, the quality of the search - the data collection method for reviews - can undermine the integrity of a systematic review. Without robust and thoroughly critiqued methods for identifying studies for inclusion, knowledge syntheses are subject to potential error and systematic bias. To this end, information specialists are encouraged to ensure that the search strategies for systematic reviews and other knowledge synthesis publications are reviewed by a second expert searcher prior to finalizing the study identification process.(14) This is supplemental to the other aspects of the peer reviewing process which occur immediately prior to publication.

The membership of the associations contributing to this letter represent the most skilled, qualified and experienced expert searchers in the fields of medicine and health care in the world. They are deeply invested in improving the quality of knowledge synthesis publications.

## LETTER

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These health library associations encourage their members to register as potential peer reviewers for journals in their specialty areas. A recent survey of librarians and information specialists, however, suggests that these professionals are rarely approached to participate in the peer review of systematic reviews or their search strategies at the publication stage.<sup>(15)</sup> We note that the selection of peer reviewers prior to publication is the responsibility of journal editors, as described in the ICMJE recommendations section II.C.2.c<sup>(16)</sup> and peer review plays a crucial role in maintaining the quality and trustworthiness of research publications. To this end, journal editors can solicit information specialists to peer review knowledge synthesis search strategies by contacting association leadership for recommendations, by reaching out through professional networks, and via social media.

We ask, therefore, that the ICMJE should recommend to their journal editors that information specialists be approached for methodological peer review. To assist with this, you may find the Librarian Peer Reviewer Database (<https://sites.google.com/view/mlprdatabase/home>) of assistance. This database was created by a group of professional librarians to connect experts in systematic searching with journal editors seeking their input in the peer review process.

Yours sincerely,

*Sandy Iverson*, President: the Canadian Health Libraries Association (CHLA/ABSC)

*Maurella Della Seta*, President: the European Association for Health Information and Libraries (EAHIL); *Carol Lefebvre*, MLA Representative to EAHIL

*Ann Ritchie*, National Manager: the Australian Library and Information Association/Health Libraries Australia (ALIA-HLA)

*Lisa Traditi*, President: US Medical Library Association (MLA); *Kevin Baliozian*, Executive Director, MLA

*We acknowledge original drafts by: Robin Parker (CHLA/ABSC Knowledge Synthesis Interest Group Co-Convenor) and Sarah Visintini (CHLA/ABSC KSIG member), with comments and feedback from Ana Patricia Ayala, Lindsey Sikora, and Kelly Farrah (CHLA/ABSC KSIG members) and Carol Lefebvre (MLA Representative to EAHIL)*

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Editorial layout and pagination: **De Vittoria srl**, Rome, Italy

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**IBAN NL08 ABNA 0530364697 - BIC ABNANL2A**

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