



KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT
LEUVEN

E-only and learning centres – a balancing act

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Radical decisions at the K.U.Leuven

- The biomedical group board of the K.U.Leuven wants:
 - to go e-only
 - Reduce space and costs
 - an optimal learning environment
- The science and technology group wants:
 - as much as possible of the top 20% of scientific journals – electronic only
 - to optimize library space usage
 - maximise efficiencies
- The humanities group wants new learning facilities but not to disturb its libraries



Leuven University

- The oldest university in the Low Countries
- Complete range of disciplines, research driven, Times world ranking 65 (2009) 72 (2008)
- Traditional, highly democratic in organisation
- Conservative in approach to learning
- Distributed decision making and financial authority



Background – Leuven UB

- The University Library is a distributed group of 12 libraries and units
- Faculty and campus libraries are owned and financed by the faculty or academic group: central library and services are funded centrally
- But policy and professional matters are developed and implemented by a UB-wide management team led by the Chief Librarian
- The above mentioned decisions are made by the group board with advice from the Chief Librarian/UB management team



Reforming the science libraries

- Researchers do not need the physical library any more
- Students DO need a study environment suited to their contemporary way of working:
 - Group work
 - IT intensive
 - Special equipment: e-boards, screens etc.
 - AND quiet space still



Humanities libraries

- Arts, Theology, Law and Philosophy still intensively used by researchers – the Theology library is indeed built around their offices, use of electronic developing
- Social Sciences, Economics and Psychology likely to evolve more quickly towards electronic
- All faculties wanted to preserve their libraries along the traditional model
- But students desperately need more learning and study space of various sorts
- Thus feasibility study for a learning centre on condition that the faculty libraries remained unchanged



Learning centre concept

- What is a learning centre anyway – aren't we already doing that?
- Not widely known before in Leuven, nor Belgium
- Visits to Warwick and Sheffield gave inspiration – management team, students, monitors (learning support), vice-rectors, deans
- But, something to do with learning is a matter for the academic staff, isn't it ? What has it to do with the library?
- Gradual acceptance that the learning centre (or rather study landscape) is an evolution of the library



The balancing act – e-only

- Balancing three speeds of adoption: Top gear – biomedical sciences, Second gear – science and technology, First gear – humanities
- Balancing savings on administration and space with access and preservation
- Cost of big deals against other resource allocation
- Balancing the big deals against choice of publishers
- Negotiating and protecting the big deals whilst convincing users they are good for them



The balancing act – learning centres

- Providing for traditional against changing learning behaviours
- Accommodating new behaviours whilst reassuring academics about loss of standards
- The learning centre as evolution of the library (a study landscape) against encroaching on the domain of teachers



Preservation and access -The Flanders depot service

- One copy of each paper journal held by one of the participating libraries in Flanders
- Pilot – the biomedical sciences
- Participants:
 - K. U. Leuven
 - U. Gent
 - Free University of Brussels (VUB)
 - U. Antwerp
 - Royal Library
 - Institute for Tropical Medicine



Service Level Agreement

Agreed mutually and reciprocally that:

- The depot holder may not dispose of the depot copy without consulting the other partners
- No partner is obliged to dispose of any material
- The depot holder is identified in union list
- The depot holder must keep the depot copy in reasonable conditions for preservation
- The depot holder will deliver a requested copy of an item within 48 hours via the Flemish interlibrary loan service (Impala) at the standard price



Criteria for assignment

The following criteria were used to assign titles to participating libraries:

- Completeness of the holding
- Uniqueness of the holding
- Specificity of the holding (e.g. tropical medicine)
- The holding is already designated for preservation by the library



A win-win

- All the participating libraries are short of space and can now solve their problem by co-operative action
- While the future access to the paper version is assured within Flanders
- And the K.U.Leuven can move ahead with the re-orientation of its science libraries

But

- What about e-only?