Suggestion cards and replies May 2010 - May 2011

The Library received a total of 34 comment cards in the 12 months between May 210 and May 2011. Of these 34 comments, 16 came as a result of the change in the print credit sales policy in February and a further 5 came over one weekend about the condition of the toilets over a bank holiday weekend.

Below are transcripts of the comments and the replies given by Library staff.

Comment: The library catalogue should have a 'back search' button. This would make it easier to flick through and note large numbers of results.

Thank you for your suggestion about a "back to search" button. The Library catalogue does actually have such a button – you need to look for the toolbar at the top of the catalogue page for the button marked "Results List". This will take you back to the list of records at the point at which you clicked to see an individual catalogue entry. If you simply wanted to go back to your original search, you can look in the same toolbar for "Basic search".

We are very grateful for suggestions about the Library catalogue, especially as we are in the process of evaluating other available systems to take over for the one we have now.

Best Regards,

Frank Parry

Comment: When our library books are due, you should be automatically added to our Google calendars as events/tasks. The university should utilize the Google service as we are paying for it.

Thank you for your suggestion card – it is always useful to get outside points of view on the services we provide.

I have spoken with our Library Systems Team and they inform me that it is currently not possible to add items to users' Google accounts due to the limitations of our library management system. This is a bought in piece of software that is currently used by hundreds of university libraries and as a result updates to its functionality take time and consensus amongst institutions to enable a change. As not every institution users Googlemail, this is not something we foresee happening soon, but it is certainly something we will feed back to our account manager to start the ball rolling.

We are currently working with colleagues in IT Services to try and imbed more Library account information into Learn and hope to have at least a beta version working this academic year. In the meantime, we continue to send out reminder emails at least 3 days before a book is due for return and allow you to keep track of your Library account online via the "My Library Record" section of the catalogue.

Regards,

Matt Cunningham

Customer Services Manager

Comment: Keep the library open until about 8/9pm during holidays. Many people I have spoken with would like that as most are working till 5pm.

Thank you for your suggestion that the Library needs to extend its opening hours in the evenings during the vacation periods. As you indicate, you are not alone in seeing this as being "a good thing". In a recent survey, increased opening hours was identified by many as being of value.

http://www.lboro.ac.uk/library/about/PDFs/usersurvey2009.pdf

This academic year, the opening hours have been extended in term time but not during the holidays. As you would expect, the major issue influencing opening hours is the funding. The Library is continually reviewing its opening hours and will take your suggestion into consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Graham

Dr Graham Walton

Head of Planning and Resources

Comment: Please can the fixing of the second floor toilets be made a priority? Having one functional toilet during this busy time is unacceptable as queues are often large. Also they need to be more regularly stocked with toilet paper as it is often all gone by the afternoon. (5 complaints)

Thank you for your suggestion card.

Please accept my apologies about the state of the ladies toilets.

The toilets are not actually cleaned by Library staff but by a team of cleaners provided by the University's Facilities Management department. They are primarily employed to clean the building first thing in the morning. An afternoon/evening cleaner is also employed by Facilities Management, for an hour each weekday, specifically to clean Level 3, including in the toilets.

Unfortunately, some students/users do create rather a mess in the toilets and the ladies is regularly far worse than the gents.

We are in a difficult situation at the moment in that the cleaner who has been doing the afternoon/evening job has moved on to another post and, as yet, Facilities Management have not appointed a replacement.

Hopefully this will be sorted out in the near future.

Kind regards,

Brant Hickman

Comment: The music department (Arts and music department) have a huge(ish) collection of sheet music. Would it be possible to put this sheet music into a public lending database so it can be used? It is currently useless in storage.

Thank you for your suggestion card concerning the collection of sheet music. Unfortunately this collection is not owned by the Library and we have no control over it and in fact were unaware of its

existence! I'm afraid that you will have to contact the Arts & Music Department directly to ascertain if it is possible for them to create a database.

Best Wishes

Jeff Brown

Head of Collection Management

Comment: Try and check up the computers more regularly during exam time. It seems about half of them break down.

Thank you for your recent Library suggestion. I have checked up regarding the availability of PCs in the Library. In the past few weeks, there has only been one machine not working which has necessitated bringing in an engineer. Library users are currently adopting various strategies to reserve PCs which is probably the reason why you have had access difficulties. The Library is undertaking various actions to manage this behaviour.

Best wishes

Graham

Dr Graham Walton

Head of Planning and Resources

Comment: I tried to find 10 books today. 6 were out on loan. Please make it so at least 1 copy of every book can't be checked out.

Thank you for your suggestion card regarding access to books in the Library. I can understand your frustration of not finding all the books available when you visited the Library, but as you can imagine, there are a lot of students trying to access the books they have been recommended to read by their lecturers. We do put books in the high demand section (issued for 24hrs) if they are heavily requested or if we are asked to by the lecturer for a particular module, but we do not have a policy of making a copy of every book in the library "library use only". If you can send me the details of the books you were trying to locate I can check to see if there are copies in high demand or if we need to purchase extra copies.

Regards,

Louise Fletcher

Comment: Do not charge me for returning books after 22:00. It's a joke!

Thank you for your comment card, which was passed to me this morning.

You query why we require books to be returned by 22.00 on your card. The reason for this is because Library staff only work until 10pm during the week. If an item needs to be processed by staff (for example, if it has an outstanding request on it) it needs to be returned by the time they go home to ensure that the correct holds are placed to allow the email to be transmitted the following morning. I do agree, however, that if an item does not have a request on it, the 10pm time is somewhat arbitrary. I am discussing with our Library System's Manager if it is possible to change this timing to just before midnight. Some of this depends on what programmes need to be run overnight, however, so I cannot make any guarantees at this stage. If we do manage to make any changes, I will make sure we blog the news on our website.

I hope this has been of some help. If you need any further assistance, please do not hesitate to ask.

Regards,

Matt Cunningham

Customer Services Manager

Comment: For students who forget their library cards they should be able to cross-reference their ID number, name and course with a database to prove their identity.

Thank you for your suggestion card, which was passed to me yesterday to answer.

There are three reasons why a student needs to have their Library card on them when they want to borrow books: firstly, your student ID card tells staff if you are registered for the current year and therefore able to borrow. Secondly, you need to have your card to activate the self-service machines in the Library to issue books onto your account. Thirdly, we were specifically asked to ensure cards were needed to borrow books by the Students Union when we had problems with people borrowing books having claimed to be other users a few years ago.

Unfortunately, counter staff do not have access to the student database due to data protection issues, so there is currently no other way for them to access the data you mention. We do try and be as flexible as possible by offering to put books aside for 48 hours to allow users to get their card if they have forgotten it. We will also bear in mind if someone is ill and informs us in advance that they would like someone to collect their books for them.

I hope that this helps explain the current situation. You may be aware that the university is currently working on a simplifying services programme to try and improve the student experience. I will feed your comments about the student database to them as well. If you need anything else in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Regards,

Matt Cunningham

Customer Services Manager

Comment: Social networking sites should be banned during busy periods, for people who can only study during certain times (those with children and jobs) it's really important to have that time, but during 12 – 2 many people are on Facebook or Twitter.

I fully agree that it must be very frustrating for people looking for access to a Library PC and to see none available whilst others are taken up by people using social network sites. In 2008, the Library undertook a general user survey where a range of students expressed similar frustrations. To follow this up, a further investigation was completed to explore what students do when they are on social networking sites.

The findings gave the Library a real dilemma as students indicated the sites were used for social purposes but they were also used for academic reasons. By removing access to these sites, the Library would also be removing an academic resource. The Library will continue to monitor the position but it is a very difficult issue to resolve.

Regards

Graham

Dr Graham Walton

Head of Planning and Resources

Comment: I would like to highlight the fact that, unfortunately, many students leave rubbish (food, bottles... etc) on the tables at the end of the day. Also books are left behind! I know the place appears clean and tidy the next morning, however, my suggestion is to put signs reminding the students to be more respectful. It is embarrassing to me to see how people show a complete lack of respect and education, when ironically, we are at university. If one can study to be an engineer, he/she can also pick up rubbish. It is 'common sense'. I believe that further measures should be considered. This should not be tolerated.

Thank you very much for your comments on the Library suggestion card.

We couldn't agree more! It is unfortunate that some students at Loughborough University do not seem prepared to clear away their own rubbish when they leave the Library. As I'm sure you can imagine, staff at the Library spend a lot of time and effort trying to make the Library as hospitable as possible.

We have recently bought more high profile rubbish bins in the hope that users would notice them and make use of them. We have put information out on our plasma screen and blog about these and, although they do get used by some, there is still a lot of rubbish left about.

I can understand your suggestion about more notices but, unfortunately, people don't tend to read the signs we have up already. At least once a week someone suggests putting signs up about a variety of things, including noise, eating, mobile phones, etc.

We do already have signs on the desks on Levels 1 and 2 which ask that people refrain from eating, drinking and using mobile phones on those Levels – but I'm sure you won't be surprised to learn that we frequently have to ask people to stop doing all of those things listed on the signs, usually with the sign just in front of them!

Only last year, to try and alleviate some of the problems on Level 3, we appointed an afternoon cleaner whose job it is to clean the toilets, empty the bins and, where possible, remove rubbish from tables on Level 3 – but it's a never ending task.

Thank you again for your comments and we will certainly have another look at possible new signage.

Kind regards,

Brant Hickman

Facilities Manager

Comment: Build a shelter for smokers across the road away from the entrance of the library. A library entrance should feel pleasant and inviting not repulsive, littered

with cigarette butts, chewing gum and stained with black cigarette residue. It is a disgrace!

Thank you for your comments on the suggestion card.

We do agree with your comments about the state of the area outside the Library entrance. We have cigarette bins and normal waste bins located in that area but unfortunately the Library users who smoke there don't always make use of them.

The responsibility for cleaning the area outside of University buildings lies with the University's Facilities Management Department and not the Library's staff. We have recently let them know about the poor state of the area and hope that they will come and clean it soon. I will pass on your comments to them. If you would like to contact them yourself please feel free.

We also agree with the idea of a smoking shelter away from the building – I am just not sure how keen smokers would be to go all the way over the road, especially in the middle of the night during our 24/7 periods.

Again, having a smoking shelter is not something the Library can decide upon - it would again be the responsibility of the Facilities Management Department.

Thanks again for taking the time to comment.

Kind Regards,

Brant Hickman

Facilities Manager

Comment: Please stop people smoking underneath the canopy at the entrance.

Thank you for your comments on the suggestion card.

We do try.

All staff, including those from the Department of Information Science and other departments, should always speak to smokers under the entrance and mention to them that smoking is not allowed within 3 metres of University property. All the people I have spoken to have always been polite and moved away, but I cannot be out there all the time.

Some staff, I know, feel uncomfortable about doing this as the University has not done anything to promote the policy. At the front there is one very small sign indicated that smoking is not allowed within 3 metres, but it's very difficult going to someone and saying 'haven't you seen the sign' when you know full well there is very little chance of them having seen it. Everyone I have spoken to is not aware that it is University policy.

We have repeatedly contacted FM to ask for more, larger signs, as well as bringing the issue to the attention of the H&S Department (it was the H&S Department who put up the small sign) and asking them to do something to promote the policy. There doesn't seem to be any sanctions in place if someone smokes within 3 metres and unfortunately both departments seem unresponsive to our requests for proper guidelines and signs.

Someone from FM or Security (to be honest I'm not sure who it was) did indicate to me that the difficulty is partially down to the law, which states smoking is allowed outside except in certain areas such as stadiums and railway stations. I don't know how true this is but having checked through the law as best I can, we do seem to be in bit of a grey area.

One of the managers from FM is trying to help us by getting rails put in place to stop people going down the wings of the entrance area and possibly getting an area of the floor marked out as a non smoking area – this will depend on him getting backing from higher up in FM.

Please feel free to contact either FM or the H&S Department - hopefully, if more people complain, something might be done and if you do see someone smoking please ask them to move away – the more staff that do so, the less it might happen.

Kind regards,

Brant Hickman

Facilities Manager

Comment: In mathematical subjects we use a 'yellow formula book' which contains formulas given to us in exam conditions. Mathematics and joint degrees use these quite a lot and always refer to them. My suggestion is use of these as a book in the library. Ground floor is the floor for mathematics so having some 'Yellow Formula Books' available on the floor for library use only (could be kept on librarians desk) would be good. If you wanted to ensure these weren't taken out of the library why not put a magnetic strip in them. Yellow Formula Books are available from the Maths Learning Support Centre. PS. I've numerously not been able to answer some questions on problem sheets in the library because I did not have access to one.

Thanks for your suggestion card about the Library holding copies of the yellow formula book. I've arranged to receive copies from the Maths Education Centre and they will be made available through the Library Catalogue for library loan and reference in due course.

Again, many thanks for your suggestion.

Best wishes

Peter Lund

Academic Librarian for Mathematics

Comment: Thesis should be available to take away from the library.

Thank you for your suggestion card regarding the loan of PhD theses. Unfortunately the Library only holds one copy of the majority of PhD theses and as these are generally the only copy of the thesis held in the University, they are irreplaceable. As such, the Library has to be very careful that any theses do not get lost. Therefore we restrict their access to use only within the Library to minimise any chances that a thesis might get lost. Since 2010 the University has required that PhD theses are also submitted electronically and these are made available for reading online via the University's Institutional Repository, so more recent theses are available outside the Library.

I hope that this explains the Library's position but should you require any further information, please let me know.

Best wishes,

Jeff Brown

Head of Collections Management

Comment: Ceiling plugs – more plugs needed for tables away from the walls.

Thank you for your idea on the suggestion card.

Electrical sockets suspended from the ceiling is something we have looked at getting in the past. Unfortunately the University's Health and Safety Department and Facilities Management do not feel that this is an acceptable idea for the Library. Also, as the floor is made from solid concrete, we are unable to get power to tables in this way either. Another solution would be to install a false floor, but this would cause other problems such as differences in floor levels at toilets, offices and stairwells as well as increased noise Levels.

Apart from concerns over safety and problems with getting power to tables, Level 3 hasn't got much more capacity in terms of electrical expansion without major investment – the building wasn't originally designed to have as many people or electrical devices. Up until 2007 Level 3 was still used for book and abstracts storage.

Thank you again for your suggestion.

Kind regards,

Brant Hickman

Facilities Manager

Comment: Go back to the old system that allowed you to put less than £5 on to your printer credits.

Thank you for your comments regarding the alignment of the Library's print credit system with that of the rest of the University.

It may be useful to give some background information to help you understand our decisions. Firstly, the Library is not in charge of the print credit system, it is actually owned by IT Services, we merely act as agents for them and do not make any profit from providing the service. For many years students have been asking IT Services for an online payment system for print credits. This was finally created this summer and as a result of this IT Services decided to remove the print credit kiosk from the Library as it no longer complied with the new system. This meant that any cash payments for print credits could only be made at the main counter in the Library and lead to a 70% increase in these sales. As this was causing problems with queues at the counter and affecting the other services we offer, we felt we had no choice but to increase the amount of money we could accept to standardise it with the rest of the University. We did do our utmost to advertise this change in advance – on Learn, via our blog and the student notice board and on signs throughout the Library. We deliberately waited until after the exam period had ended to ensure no additional pressure was placed on students in this stressful time. We do also accept both cash and cards (unlike IT Services, who will only take card payments).

Any money we make from printing does go directly into reinvestment for our users. For example the last contract we signed for new combined printers and photocopiers allowed follow me printing – a much more user friendly system than our previous one where printouts were often lost/damaged. It also meant that we were able to get 8 of these machines instead of the five we had previously – all of

which were able to print in colour and double sided. It also meant a reduction in our prices. This summer we were also able to activate the scanners on these new printers, which meant students were able to scan to their email account for the first time at a cost of 1p per sheet.

I do appreciate having an upfront payment can be challenging and will ensure that all the feedback we are given is passed to IT Services. The Library is currently working with IT Services and Imago to combine the print account with the Diners + scheme so that students will only need to have one account to pay for food/laundry & printing on campus. We hope to launch this over the summer. It is also possible to get a refund from IT Services for any unused print credits throughout the year.

Regards,

Matt Cunningham

Customer Services Manager