

Welcome

The quality of libraries and access to IT remain in the top three factors of choice of University for prospective students. These developments greatly enhance student learning and in so, also deliver Northumbria a business advantage.

Northumbria's library services have a reputation for being leading edge, being the first 'hybrid library' in the UK; the first part of the University to offer wireless IT access and the first to bring together the elements which now combine to offer a 'learning café' as far back as 1989.

Today we can add to the list with newly-refurbished learning spaces awarded a good practice case study by JISC/HEFCE; a new welcome desk; regionally competitive demand-led opening hours; refurbished learning cafés at City and Coach Lane Libraries and the full integration of IT into our libraries.

Facilities for staff have been greatly improved with new enhanced opening hours for MARCET achieved through its integration into Library Services at both City and Coach Lane Campus Libraries.

Initiatives to support 'great learning' at Northumbria go beyond the physical learning space. We are addressing the online challenge faced by all libraries and we have developed a UK and European first in NORA, the search engine that improves access to our £3.4m worth of online resources. The Library team developing NORA has been short listed in the 2006 *International Information Awards* alongside tough competition from the giants of the library world with The Open University Library and The British Library also in the final group.

Support for innovation in learning and teaching is essential to the service and is achieved through collaborative working across the University including ULT enhancement groups and elearning initiatives. The Library hosts an associate team of Northumbria's Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning in Assessment for Learning; ensuring that our developments are based on sound pedagogy. Links to academic schools and programme planning are firmly

Welcome to this Library Newsletter celebrating a period of significant development in buildings and services which has put Northumbria's Library and Learning Services on the map locally, nationally and abroad.

embedded at the chalk face through the work of our subject information specialists, who also liaise directly at programme level and are active in School Learning and Teaching Committees.

As students spend more time managing their own learning and in group-based assignments, so their demand for resources and need for help using them increase. We are actively researching and designing services to support learning beyond the classroom timetable. Our learner support team handle over 50,000 enquiries a year for general and subject specific help with completing assignments, finding and using information and avoiding plagiarism.

Good information literacy, research and study skills are essential in supporting active and lifelong learning. These skills are reinforced daily through our enquiries service and using APT award funding we have developed the *Skills Plus* programme. This is now embedded in a number of academic programmes and is available 24/7 on the eLearning



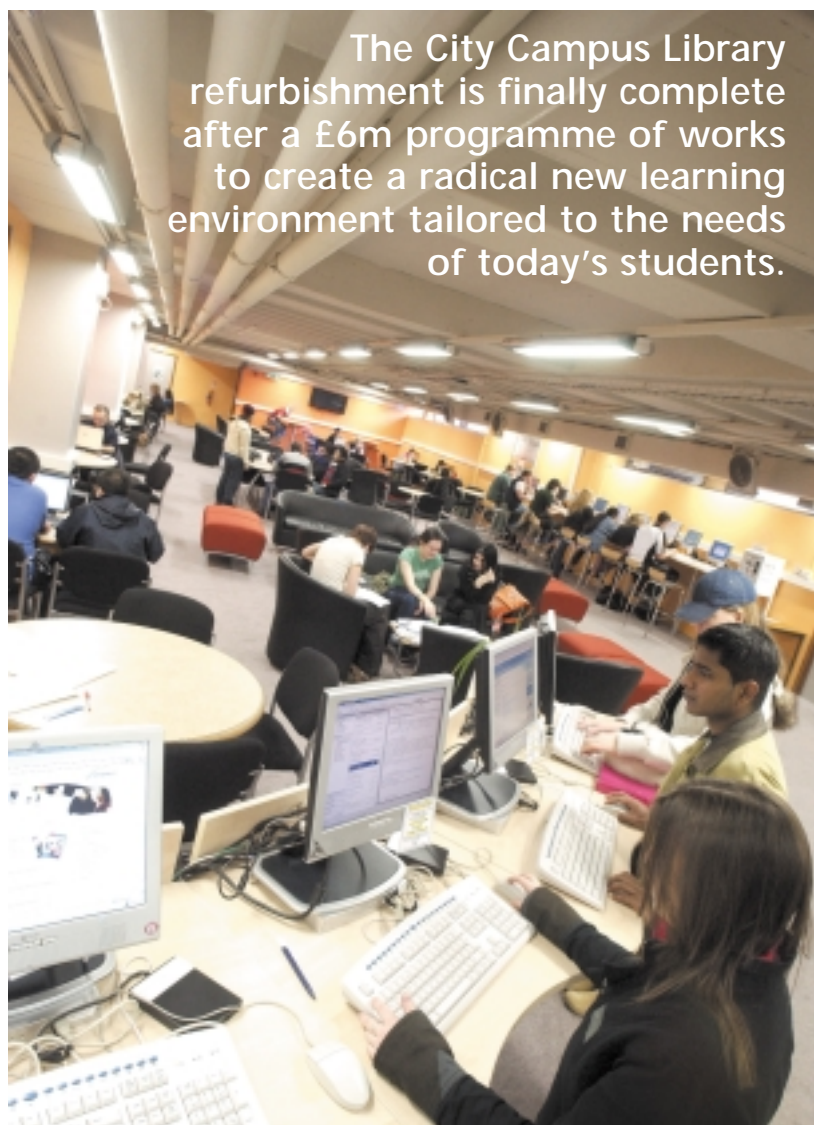
Portal. Extensive skills and induction programmes are taught face-to-face and online by Library staff, ideally embedded within programmes to ensure students can improve their performance by making the best use of our extensive resources in their assignments.

I invite colleagues to talk to their

subject information specialists to ensure that students can feel the benefits of our services and to capitalise on the business advantage our recent developments offer in recruiting and retaining students across all modes of study, on or off campus.

Prof. Jane Core
Director of Library and Learning Services

Praise heaped on £6m library refurbishment



The City Campus Library refurbishment is finally complete after a £6m programme of works to create a radical new learning environment tailored to the needs of today's students.



the building to offer a one-to-one enquiry service at the student's work-space throughout the day.

The First Floor offers a choice of learning spaces for group and individual use, including:

- a bustling IT environment;
- bookable Research Hubs;
- a new flexible learning space which allows students to configure furniture and IT to suit changing requirements.

Floors 2 - 6 house the extensive and regionally significant library stock, adjacent to attractive study areas which are fully wireless enabled; a proportion of spaces offer fixed access to IT to address the student demand for combined access to print and online information such as e-journals, databases, NORA and the eLearning Portal in support of their programmes.

The Basement Learning Café expresses the importance and understanding of social and informal learning as a fundamental part of the student experience.

Bean bags, easy chairs, vending machines and a shop provide students

with an informal, relaxed space to discuss their work and conduct group projects.

The Library teams' experience in supporting this emergent learning style underpinned the University's successful bid for the CETL Assessment for Learning and the further development of flexible learning space and learning cafés across both campuses.

In addition, a spacious self service area adjacent to the ground floor Welcome Desk allows users to borrow and return materials from 8am until midnight everyday during term time.

Christine Willoughby, Assistant Director, commented on the changes to the Ground Floor: "The Library now welcomes its users with immediate emphasis on support for learners.

"With over 900 queries in the first fortnight of operation the new Welcome Desk is proving popular in helping students to access services relating to and signposting beyond the Library building."

Prof. Jane Core added: "I'd like to thank all our users for their patience as these developments have been rolled out - we have been on the move in literally every sense, from our buildings to our books to our web presence.

"Particular thanks need to go to all colleagues with whom we have had fantastic collaboration to achieve

this, in particular our Estates and IT Services departments."

Andrew Short, Property Services Manager in Estates, said: "The Estates Department were acutely aware of the need for the Library to continue to provide a service during this complex project and succeeded by liaising closely with everyone involved.

"All partners have worked hard to minimise disruption for students and deliver an exciting new environment which is both technically innovative and aesthetically pleasing."

The refurbishment has been much admired by library members and visitors. Sibylle Pomella, Account Manager for market intelligence organisation Euromonitor International, said: "I was impressed with the atmosphere of the Library and thought it was one of the busiest ones I had visited in the UK. Large numbers of students were busy working away either individually or in groups.

"I had the feeling of being in one of those libraries to which students don't just come because they have to but because they are offered the right facilities and because they actually enjoy meeting and studying there."



The journey through the refurbished building is entirely learner focused, starting from the new Welcome Desk which signposts students towards an impressive range of services and facilities. These have been designed in the light of feedback from students and redefine traditional thinking about libraries.

The Basement and First Floor areas, both designed by Architectural

Technology placement student Ryan Bird, capture the challenging vision of the Library planning team and have been the subject of a JISC/HEFCE case study into best practice.

The First Floor is the hub of student support, offering face-to-face enquiries, telephone links from all the floors and a 24/7 helpline service - NEED@northumbria.ac.uk. In a new development the Learner Support team visit all areas of

Self service

The introduction of the smartcard in 2001 heralded the start of a number of significant changes to the Library service, to the benefit of its users.

A ground breaking change was the introduction of a Self Service Opening model.

Building on the enhanced security and increased opening hours made possible by smartcard access the Library now operates a robust service model, capable of 24x7 operation if required.

Libraries at City and Coach Lane are now open from 8am or 9am until midnight, seven days per week, with 39% of opening hours being in self service operation.

Support for staff

The dedicated staff support service, MARCET, at Coach Lane has relocated to new premises within the Library.

The move, which was aided by CETL funding, means the service is now available until midnight, mirroring the service already available at City Campus.

Academic staff can develop their skills in learning, teaching and assessment and e-learning through a range of training courses and one-to-one assistance.

MARCET will also assist all staff in developing their ICT skills, including delivery of ECDL courses and support.

Support for the region

The Library has been a partner in a project with school and FE partners to design and deliver a pathway to come to Northumbria University.

The Tyne Metropolitan Passport scheme is run in conjunction with the Tyne Metropolitan College and a library induction module attended by 200 students received positive feedback.

"It was great going to the Library. I nearly died at first, it was huge but everyone was really nice....I feel much more confident now..." said one student.

No need to pay fines

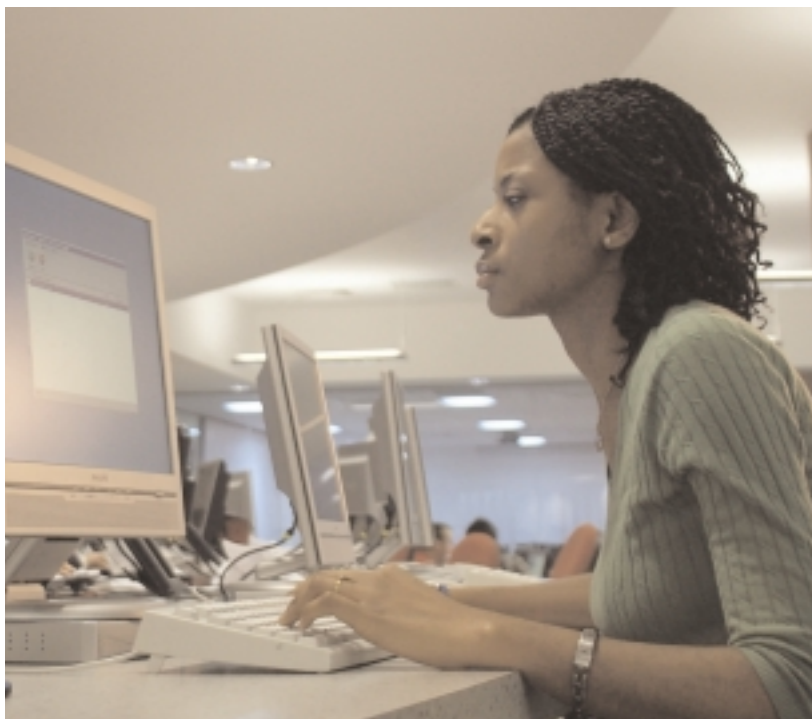
Students now receive emails warning them that their books are due for return.

Staff have received email 'underdue' notices from the Library advising them when items are due for return and providing a link to the web renewals service for some years now, but in recognition of the impact on fees and the need to shift from sanction-driven to customer-driven library services, 'underdues' are now also being sent to students.

The move has resulted in a 42% increase in online renewals as students seek to avoid paying fines.

Supporting learning: anytime anywhere

Students require increasing support to assist them in obtaining maximum benefit from the full range of materials available – which includes some 22,000 ejournals and 300 databases.



In addition to the Library's regionally important print collections, the *Skills Plus* programme is a self-directed course designed to provide students with the skills needed to become an effective learner.

Students can self-enrol using the eLearning Portal and can use online diagnostic tests to help to identify the skills areas they need to work on.

Skills Plus can be integrated with academic programmes and used by students as evidence in their Personal Development Portfolios.

Staff can recommend *Skills Plus* to students; promote its use in reducing plagiarism; reinforce its use in student feedback and incorporate it into

existing modules by using quizzes in formative and summative assessment. Introductory sessions can also be arranged by contacting NEED@northumbria.ac.uk.

One-to-one support for learning is available by phone during service hours and 24/7 using the online helpdesk, NEED.

The Learner Support team handles over 50,000 learner support enquiries a year and immediately answers queries or arranges individual or group help to be provided by a subject information specialist.

This model of support for learning ensures quick answers and in-depth help are there as and where needed.

Card is a smart idea

A system set up initially as part of a Library project five years ago is now one of the University's core tools for managing student data.



The smartcard system was introduced in 2001 to simplify access to a range of Library Services, provide security for Library users and to generate management information from which services could be planned and foundations laid for a cost effective extension of opening hours.

As a result, Library opening hours at both campuses have been increased by over 35% in the last three years.

By 2003 the smartcard had proved its worth and it is now embedded across the University, providing access to a range of facilities including membership of the Students' Union and Sport Northumbria, 24/7 access to Pandon Building and car parking at Coach Lane.

This summer, the smartcard was used for the first time to support Academic Registry with the Student Enrolment Project, providing Northumbria with definitive proof of enrolment and reducing the need for students to stand in multiple queues at the start of term.

Next year the card will also be used to manage

access to the new City Campus East development and out-of-hours access to other University buildings.

The card has been praised by students. Martin Farr, Vice-President (Education & Welfare) in the Students' Union, said: "The Library smartcard is a fantastic piece of equipment that facilitates the longer opening hours of the Library whilst maintaining the secure atmosphere."

"The card has so many potential uses across the Library and other University services, and I for one think it has had a very positive impact."

David Chesser, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Resources) is chair of ISMCG which will oversee the future development of the smartcard. "The system has proved itself robust and scalable to a range of University-wide applications," he said.

"It is capable of significant further development for the mutual benefit of both students and staff."

Why 'Google' when you can ask NORA?

Despite the praise heaped on the refurbishment of the Library building, the physical environment is only a part of the provision offered by Library and Learning Services.

Staff and students increasingly rely upon the Library to provide virtual access to electronic resources which they can access from anywhere in the world at their own convenience.

NORA, the Library's ground-breaking online information gateway and search engine, has been nominated for the Best Information Knowledge Team in the Academic and Public Sectors title in the *2006 International Information Industry Awards*, against The British Library, The Open University and the UK Government Department for Communities and Local Government.

The system was developed by Library staff to allow users simultaneously to search multiple databases in their subject area with one simple 'Google' type search, making it much more straightforward for students to find and access information.

NORA is one of the most visited websites in the University. The service has handled almost 240,000 search sessions and made five million searches on library materials since its launch in February 2006.

The system also reduces the need for users to have numerous passwords to access electronic resources and simplifies the authentication of databases.

Prof. Bob Cryan, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Learning & Teaching) said: "Northumbria really can claim to be the library without walls."

"The learning and research collections have shifted from an emphasis on print to online and it is fantastic to be able to access research publications at a stroke from the airport, on the train, at

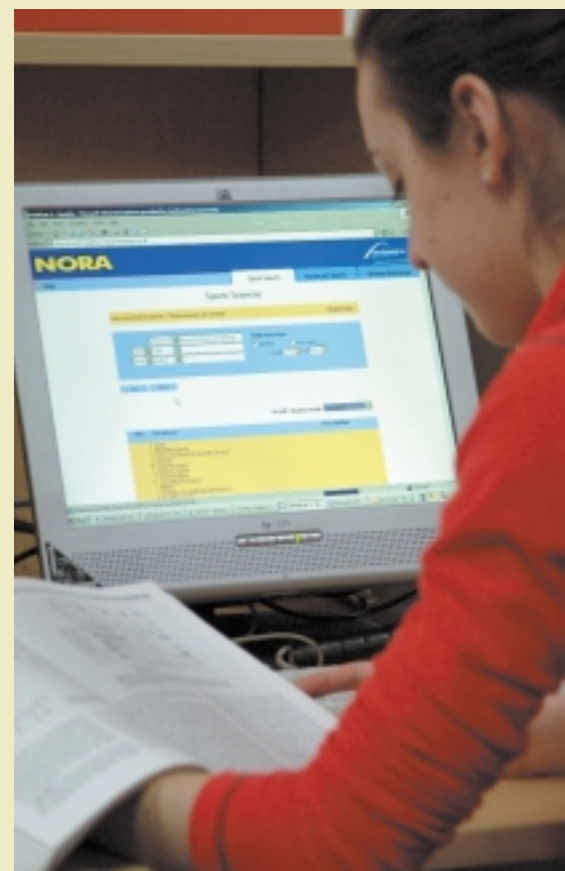
home or in the office, all seamlessly powered by NORA."

Todd Miller, the President of US federated search engine WebFeat, said: "From what we've learned in the course of our work with Northumbria... the notion of single point of authentication is very progressive – and Northumbria appears to be the country's first major academic library to pull off this feat!"

"It is also worth noting that Northumbria currently holds the record for the greatest number of links managed through a WebFeat system!"

"I think it is terrific that Edinburgh and Oxford are turning their eyes toward Northumbria, as you have clearly set the bar for the new UK standard for federated searching!"

Anyone can access NORA by clicking the *eLibrary* tab at the top of most University web pages.



A sector leader...

The Library is now recognised worldwide as a leading example of excellence in the provision of learning resources and support for learning in the Higher Education sector.

In 2005 the Library was recognised by JISC/HEFCE as a case study of good practice in the *Innovative Practice with e-Learning* strand and visitors from a wide range of institutions regularly visit Northumbria's Library to use it as a reference site.

NORA has been a UK first and both Oxford and Edinburgh Universities have gone on to develop pilot systems building on Northumbria's ground-breaking work.

The building refurbishment has been a major attraction for other libraries undertaking building programmes, and visitors from China, Australia, Grenada, Ireland and Sweden have travelled to Northumbria to see the work first-hand.

Closer to home, a visit to Northumbria's Library during the SCOUNL Conference of Academic Library Directors was oversubscribed, and institutions as diverse as Lincoln, Warwick, Huddersfield, Leicester and Newcastle have all learned from Northumbria's experience.

Warwick University Librarian, Anne Bell, said after her visit: "The innovative use of technologies and new models of learner support at Northumbria's Library were visionary.

"Students have access to a terrific range and quality of information and support and can utilise IT and other learning materials flexibly to suit their changing learning styles and study modes."

Similarly, Library staff have been asked to disseminate their experience to others with invitations to speak at conferences of Irish National and Academic Library Directors, Nordic Library directors, various regional groups and UK Professional bodies.

The Library's learning support services have also attracted worldwide interest with Australian visitor Geoff Mitchell from the Queensland University of Technology saying: "The trip has proved to be extremely valuable... especially some of the ideas I gleaned from your move to establish the new enquiry service, a model we have begun to discuss in terms of its applicability to our situation."



Vital Statistics

For supporting learning 2005/6

- Face-to-face enquiries – 24,000
- Telephone enquiries – 12,000
- NEED electronic helpdesk enquiries – 5,500
- Specialist subject enquiries – 1,466
- Taught information skills sessions to students – 10,728 person hours
- Induction/introductory skills sessions attended by 10,192 students
- Approx 1,700 students undertake formal skills assessments set by Library staff.

For library collections 2005/6

- Total Library visits – 870,000
- Books – 500,000
- Journals – 2,000
- e-journals – 22,000
- Total borrowing transactions – 1.63m

MARCET wins plaudits

MARCET, the University's Staff Development Resources Centre, has now been commended by the British Computing Society for its excellent IT skills training for four years in a row.

The Society awarded its highest 'excellent' rating to the Centre for its management of the University's European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) test centre, describing it as "a very well organised and documented training facility, which was a pleasure to audit."

For the eLibrary 2005/6

- Over 10.2 million searches have been logged on Library databases
- 840,000 full texts have been downloaded from the e-journals.
- The Library website had over 900,000 hits between February–July 2006.

A day in the life...

In an age when the concept of a 'Library' covers such a diverse spectrum of services and skills, a typical day in the life of Library and Learning Services' Principal Information Specialist Jan Storey is a very full day indeed...

"The day opens up with an e-mail request to deliver an information awareness session for some BA Marketing Management students. This will require planning a hands-on workshop to demonstrate information sources covering local statistics, retail company information, transport infrastructure and consumer trends. I will need to read through the module descriptor, the NORA Library search engine and the *Skills Plus* module... I need a cup of tea already!

"No time though as next up is a series of three information sessions for all NBS undergraduate students. The sessions explain good academic writing practice; how to avoid plagiarism; a demonstration of the *Turnitin* plagiarism detection service and explaining sources of advice and support with referencing.

"I move on to run an update and training session for the Global Marketing Information Database. We invited academic staff but few could attend so I have made a note to investigate the best way to cascade this information to them. Never did get that cup of tea...

"Back to the office to find that the Enquiries Desk team have passed on requests that I speak to three students who are having trouble researching an assignment. Two of the group are still in the building so I go to the Library Learning Café to talk through how to get started. It is terrific to see that the Enquiries Team have already got them into using a wireless laptop so we can get straight to business. The third member of the group will be given a demo by the others as they are already booked in to meet in the Library research hubs

later in the day.

"A School Learning Teaching Committee is next on the agenda. I give a brief report about Library enhancements and open a debate on the appropriate forum for delivering academic staff development. It was agreed to discuss this further at meetings with programme directors.

"A trip out to the Freeman Hospital takes me off-campus to give a presentation to Health Libraries North on Information Marketing.

"We are organising a training day for North East and Scottish members of the British Business Schools Librarians Group (BBSLG) so I need to check arrangements and chat with one of their trainers before I meet with a colleague to discuss the content of a presentation we are giving to Masters students starting to research their literature review for their dissertation.

"This is followed by an appointment with two new part-time students who were worried about their first assignment and wanted to know more about finding relevant books and journals. I gave them a demonstration of an information search using NORA which calmed their panic though.

"No rest as next I have to pop out to give a tour and a short talk to new University members of staff as part of the HR induction programme and then I have to attend a demonstration of services by a company called Courtts who supply eBooks to libraries.

"After this, it is late and dark and time for me to go home – and finally get that cup of tea!"



Distance learners

With the development of distance learning courses, the University now has whole cohorts of students who are rarely, if ever, on campus.

Part-time and distance learning students find their time is precious and they need to be very efficient accessing materials.

In addition to the extensive online support offered, the Library helps these students derive maximum benefit from their time at Northumbria by offering a dedicated postal service for books and journal articles.

Materials are dispatched to Northumbria students world-wide studying part-time or by a distance learning programme.

MSc student Trish Bailey contacted the

Library to say: "Just for the record, I think your information resources are outstanding and being a person who has studied alongside work most of my working life, this is the best and most structured online resource I have ever come across and your response rates are first class. I shall continue to make full use of it.

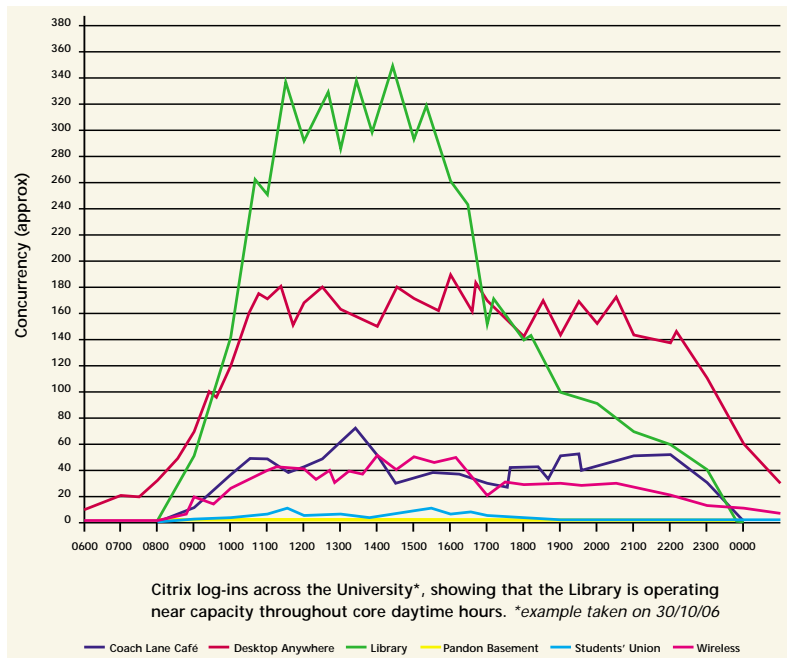
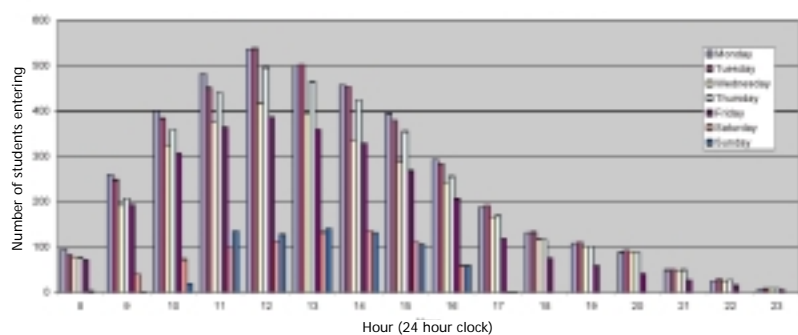
"My thanks to you and your staff for superb service – keep up the good work. I certainly will not hesitate in recommending anyone to study with Northumbria University – outstanding for distant learners."

The future...



Following the refurbishment and considerable investment in IT, student use of IT in the Library remains at capacity throughout the core daytime hours and shows the value of the extended opening hours. Similarly average entries to the Library are strong throughout the day. Future development plans will concentrate on areas demonstrating strong and growing demand.

Average entry to the Library by day of the week during Semesters 2005/6



"The pace of change in learning methods and technologies, coupled with the need for Northumbria to retain the leading edge to attract students in a competitive market place will all require the Library to continue developing new services, facilities and delivery mechanisms."

Support for learning

"We are currently exploring a number of new technologies in collaboration with academic colleagues, such as podcasting and the use of wikis, with a view to delivering services in keeping with student expectations of real-time access to services and support."

"Whilst we are pleased to have developed NORA and other online support tools, these are in their early years. There is enormous scope for further innovation in this area, not least in supporting ubiquitous access to resources from mobile and handheld devices."

Learning spaces for the 21st century

"The physical library facilities and the associated web-based library services reflect the needs of learners and redefine our understanding of the library for the 21st century."

Dr Peter Slee, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student and Staff Affairs)

"The Library remains full and requires additional space to accommodate students and new developments."

"Building on our rich data on student behaviour, we aim to develop the flexible learning spaces available in our Libraries to provide a community learning space separate from school boundaries and to permit sharing of the educational experience in its widest sense."

"There is agreement in principle that the Library will be significantly expanded on City Campus as part of the City Campus West redevelopment. This would allow us to meet the demand for space which current refurbishments have held in check but could not address, and offer access to the next range of technology applications which students expect and are already using in their daily lives."

Recent service developments have created a truly visionary environment for today's students, says Prof. Jane Core, Director of Library and Learning Services.

City Campus East

"The Library will have a physical presence in the new Law Practice Library which replaces the existing facility in Sutherland Building with a purpose-designed space and state-of-the-art IT provision."

"Even more important will be the development of new models of remote support for all schools via our e-information and enquiry services, which are available 24/7."

"We look forward to working with colleagues to realise the potential for using our online services to support students at the new campus."

All night long...?

"Since 2003 the Library has pushed the boundaries on opening hours and self service to offer a cost effective service which meets the growing need for access from our students who already operate on assumptions of a 24/7 society, combining study with work and leisure around non-standard working days."

"In 2007/8 we will be looking at the case for further incremental improvements to opening hours, particularly targeting peak periods such as exam times."

"With the most competitive blend of opening hours and service availability in the region we remain committed to working with Students' Union officers to offer service levels and hours based on sound evidence and feedback."

"I have been amazed at how the Libraries at both City and Coach Lane have transformed themselves in the past few years."

The environment is totally different and far more conducive to learning, encompassing everything ranging from the lighting and the ventilation to the staff support and the opening times."

Spike Reid, Students' Union President.



RFID – a University first

A further development at City Campus sees innovative radio frequency identification technology (RFID) being utilised to make self service borrowing and return of books the norm.

This new approach to service follows an extensive analytical project, based on Six Sigma methodology, to identify blockages to successful borrowing and return of materials using self service.

Through a collaboration with market leaders 3M, the Library now uses RFID book tags, streamlined self-check machines and a completely redesigned ground floor layout to help users to borrow and return items, access the Keytext collection and check their loan details quickly and intuitively throughout library opening hours.

The project has massively exceeded expected targets with self service issues rising from 16% to 82% in 12 months.

Plans are underway to extend the services to Coach Lane Library in 2007/8.



Health library provision is top class

In 2005 Library and Learning Services received the highest accolade available from the NHS Health Libraries and Information Confederation (HELICON) for its provision of health information.

Northumbria was the first University in the North East and one of the first institutions in the Higher Education sector to achieve stage three accreditation, which means that our Library Services to health students fulfil all the essential criteria demanded by the NHS and over 80% of the graded criteria.

Satisfied with the service

The Library's annual user survey shows sustained high levels of satisfaction with the service. In 2005:

- Overall satisfaction rating – 87%
- Range of stock rating – 81%
- Opening hours rating – 80%
- IT provision rating – 70% – a major increase from the 58% rating received in 2003 before the refurbishment.

Learner Support – 0191 227 4125 (City Campus) or 0191 215 6565 (Coach Lane Campus)

email need@northumbria.ac.uk

www.northumbria.ac.uk/library/help