

M-Libraries University of Hong Kong 27-30 May 2014

Submission of a paper under strand 2: Challenges and strategies involved in embracing mobile innovation for libraries

Learning Services at Edge Hill University, UK comprises a complex range of academic support services of which the library is a key component. It was evident in 2012 that progress on the development of mobile technologies within the library was slower than in other divisions. To address this, two managers one from an academic liaison team, the second from the learning technologies division were given a remit to develop a mobile strategy for the library. They were encouraged to draw on staff from across the Service pooling colleagues with expertise and confidence in the use of mobile technologies with those who were lacking confidence and openly sceptical about the benefits. The original brief consisted of priority areas identified as having the potential for expansion of mobile practices across the library for example

1. Communication including, social media, push notifications and location based information to enhance two-way communication, promote and encourage access to staff, resources and services
2. Identification, review, promotion and uptake of Library apps.
3. Assessment of the opportunities and user interest in enhanced instructional support and information through the provision of multi-layered augmented reality

To progress these, a number of task and finish groups were formed. To complement their progress staff development activities for all staff were run to maintain awareness and support uptake, and in parallel a series of key performance indicators were identified to ensure that new services were linked to appropriate metrics.

This paper will critically appraise the approach taken, the progress achieved and the emerging realisation that staff directly engaged on academic liaison activities with academics and students have a time limited opportunity to remodel their roles, make new connections and promote their expertise through conversation and dialogue. If successful this will aid the (re)-establishment of their specialist skills and whether perceived or real, defy the threat of disintermediation.

Alison Mackenzie