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Improving the student experience – how can the Library help?

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Resume of presentation

- Looking at changes in the student body over recent years

- Challenges for libraries in meeting the needs of the new generation of students

- Is the future of libraries and librarians threatened by the latest technological developments?

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Changes in the student body

- More demanding of value for money (top-up fees etc)

- More motivated and competitive (tough jobs market)

- More of them doing masters courses

- They expect more choice and more personalised services

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Changes in the student body (2)

- They have had spending power since childhood
- They like to keep up with the latest fashions in technology
- A generation dominated by a) advertising and b) technology
- A generation of multi-taskers
- Information overload and Google

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Changes in the student body (3)

- Mass higher education, widening participation, and the narrowing of the information divide

- The student as customer and consumer

- Universities now concentrate on improving the student experience

- The Library has a key role to play

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Challenges for libraries in meeting student needs

- Constant balancing between print and electronic

- Sustained attention to the physical environment

- Push technology – where and when the students want their information

- Helping students to become fit for the world of work

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Challenges for libraries (2)

- Raising the profile of the library in the transparent technological world
- Students don't really care where the stuff comes from, who has selected it, who is paying for it, or who is providing it; they just need the stuff when and where they want it
- Getting off to a good start – welcoming tactics
- Pre-entry and pre-application welcome

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Is the future of libraries and librarians threatened?

- No more now than we were 30 years ago
- Libraries were among the first professional groups to embrace technology
- Universities are still planning new library buildings/extensions
- Libraries are adapting to student needs and demands

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Is our future as librarians threatened?

- Not if we continue to observe and analyse student behaviour

- And use it to adapt and develop our services to suit our customers

- And market our services in ways attractive to students

- Making concessions to their lifestyles

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Conclusions

- The library has a very strong role to play in the interactive environment
- And will continue to be a vital part of the student experience
- Librarians just need to continue to observe student behaviour, demands and needs
- And be ready to adapt our services to match

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