How reducing library space can promote the shift from storage of printed collections towards a learning centre without limiting the access to information

Case KUH Medical Library

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Mia Haapanen, Pirkko Kultamaa, Tuulevi Ovaska, Kirsi Salmi
Introduction
General background

• Libraries and their services have changed
• Library spaces become learning/knowledge centres
• Information seeking and reading habits have changed
• But especially students still need libraries as places
The libraries in case

• KUH Medical Library
  – one of the library units of the University of Eastern Finland Library
  – serves both university and university hospital
  – agreement between university and hospital district

• NRL
  – repository for all libraries in Finland
  – library of libraries
KUH Medical library

- Aims to acquire key Finnish medical literature as well as a core book collection in English.
- Most of the library's collections are electronic.
- Based on the licence agreements, the electronic collections can be used in the library space (walk-in users) and by the university hospital staff and the university staff and students in their networks.
The National Repository Library (NRL)

• Receives and stores the material transferred from all other libraries
• Offers the material for the use of other libraries.

• For KUH library, serves as a repository
  ➢ no need for space in the library for the stacks of older or subsidiary books and journals
Objectives
The shift

• In our case the shift from printed to digital has been influenced by urgent space requirement for other hospital functions.

• Reduction of current physical space since January 2012 has led to revised collection policy that is taking its final steps during this year as the library is preparing to move to a completely new space.
Hospital under (re)construction

- In the near future, Kuopio University Hospital will become one of Europe's most modern hospital centres.
- The new hospital wing, in commission from 20\textsuperscript{th} May 2015, increases the facilities of KUH by a third.
- As also older buildings are being renovated, approximately 1600 hospital staff members move in 2015, and the rest in 2016 and 2017.
- Changes in the current library space as well as the new library in 2016, are only a tiny part of a huge building project.
Side effects

• Almost all hospital units eventually move
  ➢ have to look through their reference libraries, each unit’s own book and printed journal collections.
  ➢ end up removing older books and serials that must be sent to the KUH medical library to be processed
  ➢ From the library point of view, the huge renovation process of the hospital result in up-to-date collections and reference materials
Methods
Smaller space

• January 2012 a 650 m² library space was remodelled to a 450 m² without major negative effects to services.

• Apprx. 100 big red removal boxes full of periodicals were sent to the NRL, and hundreds of cardboard boxes were recycled, to make space for users instead of stacks.

• It was necessary to assure that by request the articles of the back issues of the journals – if not electronically accessible – would be easily and quickly delivered to the users from the NRL.
Boxes waiting to be collected
RFID tagging

• Next big effort in the library was RFID tagging of all books
• Space reduction had mainly influenced the printed journal collections, but before the tagging also the book collections were reduced.
  ➢ Titles that had not been on loan, or were out-of-date, or otherwise not needed in the current collection, were removed before the hectic two-week tagging job.
RFID tagging
New library

• Hospital has assigned KUH medical library its next location where a totally new library / learning space has been planned and will be renovated, furnished and equipped.
• Location better than now
  – easily accessible from the main entrance hall of the hospital
New KUH medical library

- Only staff and collections from the current library will be brought to the new one
- New library should open in January 2016
- Less square meters (468.7 > 404.5) but organized more efficiently
Illustration of the new KUH medical library
New KUH medical library

- Changed and changing roles of library staff can be taken into account better than now.
- Customers will be advised more and more to take care of the routines like borrowing and returning books themselves instead of queueing.
  - Staff will be able to concentrate on guidance and training as well as promoting the collections and services.
New KUH medical library

• Less space for print collections
  ➢ Reliable delivery from print resources is crucial, in addition to a wide electronic collection
  ➢ Daily deliveries of books and other printed materials from the campus libraries in Kuopio, Joensuu and Savonlinna
  ➢ Weekly deliveries of books from NRL, while scanned copies travel faster
    • Document delivery from NRL occurs in a matter of hours, or, at most, one working day.

• Physical library space can be used effectively for customer services, workstations, group study rooms, displaying only the most current and most used collections such as textbooks, handbooks, periodicals not published electronically etc.
Results
Current space since 2012

• The space is smaller but there is room for studying and working instead of storing printed journals.

• In collection management the model of removing one back-volume each year has proved effective instead of the earlier model of keeping journal volumes until the shelves are full and then sending huge loads approximately every fifth year.

• The result is a current and actively used collection in the KUH medical library that is supplemented with quick delivery service.
Collections

• The number of printed journals in the library has been minimized.
• There are some exceptions but mostly only journals that cannot be acquired in electronic format – or cost much less in print – are subscribed in print.
Number of printed periodicals has decreased significantly

Number of Printed Journals

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Printed Journals</th>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>198</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Collections

• The amount of the book collection has now been set at a level that both contains the core collections and will easily accommodate the new space.
• Older and less used books are stacked by the campus libraries and NRL, and delivered to KUH medical library on request.
Number of books 2010-2014

Number of Books 2010-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Books</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>14576</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Discussion
Challenges

• The collections that are invisible in the library space must be marketed.
• Libraries spend large amounts of money and time in developing and acquiring resources for teaching, studying and research purposes.
  ➢ Important that these resources are in effective use.
Targeting

- Library has to promote the “invisible collections” so that the message is targeted to the audience.
  - For example, it is not useful to tell a specialist how many e-books we have but to tell which particular e-books there are on their speciality.
  - It is important to tell how an article they need can be requested from NRL instead of telling there are 90 km of collections there.
Marketing

• Current marketing tools include
  – web pages and intranets (both university and hospital)
  – leaflets and bookmarks
  – information screens
  – social media
    • UEFLibrary blog
    • Facebook
    • YouTube
Promoting

• We also promote the use of resources
  – as part of training
  – by campaigns
  – in everyday customer encounters, also online

• Next steps will include at least
  – a chat service for quick questions
  – using QR codes when marketing electronic collections in the library space
Conclusions

- Libraries should take space changes as an opportunity instead of a threat
- Providing access to information requires active cooperation and common understanding
Thank you!

Sometimes the library staff has to bathe in information.

mia.haapanen@uef.fi
pirkko.kultamaa@uef.fi
tuulevi.ovaska@uef.fi
kirsi.salmi@uef.fi