unUXpected and UXpected feedback:

Uncovering what students think of the new library and library services at Royal Holloway

- Leanne Workman, Acting Head of Academic Liaison
- Emilia Brzozowska-Szczecina, Now Senior Information Advisor @ Kingston University
Overview

• What is UX?
• Background on our new library
• What UX research we’ve done
• Our findings – both the expected and unexpected!
What is UX?

“User Experience or UX, as it is defined in the library context, is a suite of techniques based around first understanding and then improving the experiences people have when using our library services. It utilises ethnography and design to achieve this.”

A bit of background...
What we have now...
Collecting the first impressions of the new building…

Was overwhelmingly positive!
George Priestley @bigmeatygeorge · 15 Sep 2017
It's so stunning. I'm amazed and mesmerised 😊 2 years of building sites was so worth it 🙌

Steven Franklin @MagnaCartaPhD · 17 Sep 2017
As study spots go, the new EWD @RHUL_Library

Julia Koricheva @KorichevaLab
1st day of Welcome Week @RoyalHolloway and my first visit to the new @RHUL_Library. Great space & stunning views of the Founders Building!
BUT...
BUT...

Any Eastman @AnyEastman
Sep 30, 2017 · Egham

Adore the new study space but please please could @RHUL_Library sort out & enforce silent sections?! Dickens demands my full attention.

Kanye Malick West @Nythernia
Sep 29, 2017

@RHUL_Library why is there no silent study section here 😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞😞�

In reply to RHUL_Library and 1 more
Megan @mafilkins
Sep 26, 2017

2 yrs of studying in Bedford means I am more used to most study spaces being silent, so imo it would make sense to follow that model.

Jenny McHugh @jmc_hughy
Oct 23, 2017

I'm not being funny but the amount of people talking in the SILENT section of @RHUL_Library is ridiculous. Wish someone would sort it out.

Jenny McHugh @jmc_hughy
Oct 23, 2017

@RHUL_Library are librarians meant to be enforcing the silent study areas? Because that would be helpful at the moment. >.>

Jack O'Neill @MrJack_ONeill
Sep 25, 2017

@RHUL_Library looks great with brilliant service but refusing to go there until some silent areas are introduced - how can one work!

Jack O'Neill @MrJack_ONeill
Sep 16, 2017

@RHUL_Library when will the new library have silent areas?
Silent Study areas at Davison Building

Hello everybody,
The Library Customer Service of Royal Holloway University of London set a new policy for our new library.
The new policy suggests that there are not silent study spaces at Davison Building. There are just group study areas and individual study areas where people can still talk.
Right now I am in an individual study area trying hard to study about my dissertation! People around me are talking laughing screaming and having fun.
The library is NOT a coffeshop where people can meet and have fun! Davison Building is a place for us to STUDY and CONCENTRATE. It is a place for us to find PEACE in order to achieve our goals. We have to defend our rights and respect each other in order to succeed during these 3 years.
PLEASE HELP ME BY SIGNING THIS PETITION TO GET BACK TO OUR LIBRARY SILENT STUDY SPACES

Make the EWD Library efficient and functional

Following the huge number of complaints and issues concerning the actual state of the New EWD Library at Royal Holloway, and following the great number of students not finding study spaces (1,400 spaces for 9,000 students...), non working sockets, out of service elevator, the continuing annoying beeping, non access to Post-Grad room for Masters students, the unreliable printing services, busy IT help desk, closed upper balcony... etc
I have decided to start this petition in order to put pressure onto the college to make those changes and improvement for our own welfare and sake and in order to pursue our studies in the best conditions possible.
Sign this petition if you agree and I will bring those issues to the Principal Paul Layzell, in person.

The more we are, the stronger we will be.

We pay up to £8,000 a year, SO WE ARE expecting a certain range of services and commodities.

Please Sign & share this all around you. Thanks

Emilie ANCELIN
3rd Year Law Student
Student Representative on College Council.
Study Space and Behaviour Observation (Nov 2017)
So how did we go about mapping...

• 3 observations a day at 11am, 3pm and 7pm for 7 days during the Autumn term
• Looked at which seats were occupied
• Monitored the noise
• Noted how people were working – was it collaboratively, individually, seated in groups but working quietly, etc...
% of study spaces occupied at the time of the observations: 43%

Noise scale:
1 - silent
2 - quiet conversation
3 - talking loudly

Working style:

Sum of Total working groups
Sum of Total working individually

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We learnt a lot about our students...

- Noise levels are as predicted and prompted by the interior design
- Library zones were established by library users very quickly
- ‘Unwanted’ noise comes mostly from the foyer, not from the people
- But if it comes from people - library staff are still expected to intervene...
- 80% occupied seats at our busiest times (we are not full)
Touchstone tours and cognitive maps (May 2018)
What did we hope to learn from this UX research?

• To understand how students view and use the library after a few months
• To learn about the different studying styles and preferences
• To analyse the distinct topics that emerged from discussions about the maps or tours
Why did we choose touchstone tours and cognitive maps?

• Information provided by students is not prompted by questions, but rather comes out naturally through the process.
• Library users decide themselves what is important for them and worth mentioning about the library.
• Therefore topics which arise during these conversations are more likely to be something significant to our library users, even if mentioned by ‘just’ five of 76 people.
The facts:

- 22 touchstone tours (10-30 mins each)
- 54 cognitive maps (10 mins)
- Discussion after each map or tour
- Also included a checklist of facilities and services we offer to check to see if students were aware of them
- No such thing as a "bad answer"
- Offered Starbucks voucher for a tour and chocolate/sweet prize for a map
Mezz for nerdz.

Room that no one goes to

People who care + commit

Chill, socialize and annoy people who study.

People who care but don't commit

Random pointless admin

Postgrad useless space.

People who don't do work

Reception IT

Café panini

Addiction

Half of my day gone

Me taking our way to many books!
What did we learn?

- Still concerns about lack of space, particularly at busy times
- Confusion over High Use vs General Collection
- Lack of knowledge about the services we offered
- Navigation of the building is not intuitive and can feel overwhelming
- Students love the library, the furniture, the librarians and resources/services they did know about
Welcome Week 2018
Your Welcome Week Story

- 2 week long exercise
- 14 mini-tasks, which ranged from taking photos of their favourite study space to placing emojis on where they liked best on campus, or simply filling in a diary pre-loaded with questions about the experience
- 13 finished entries (of 28 handed out)
- Offered £20 Amazon voucher upon completion of all the tasks

Aim: for us to improve the welcome week experience for future years
Your Welcome Week Story – the findings

• A range of different students = a snapshot of different student experiences for Welcome Week
• Communication from across the College varied – some found it useful and well timed, for others this was not the case.
• Some found the campus big and uninviting at first, but got settled and things like Welcome Fairs helped
• People were friendly and helpful – community atmosphere was felt early on
Your Welcome Week Story – the Library

- A masterpiece

- Large and modern – so different from my high school library!

- Didn’t attend the library induction, but would have been useful

- Great atmosphere, good for productive studying
5. Visit the Library. Have a walk around on all of the floors. Don't be afraid to be nosey. After the visit – please write what do you think of the Library? Think about the other libraries you have used in the past – is this one different, if yes – why? Was it easy for you to find your way around? Is there some study space you would like to use once the academic year starts?

I love that it is new and open 24/7, that really gives me the possibility to chase my own hours. However, like most of campus, it's too small for all the students that go here! It is quite easy finding my way around, and I like the silent parts of it.

I did not go to a library induction usually I'm good at finding things out by myself.

Unfortunately, I was not able to attend the library induction by the librarian. But the library is very practical and is easy to understand and use.

On my library visit I actually took out a few books. A librarian on the second floor helped me and explained the 'High Use' section down stairs where the majority of my books were. I haven't had a library induction however I found it very simple to scan the books to take out. I like the fact it gives you a receipt so you can pin it on your board to remind you when they're due.

I did attend my library induction, and it was very useful hearing how to use. Library search was definitely needed and I managed to find a very useful book for my first formative essay.

And I have to mention that the librarians are just so kind and friendly, they helped me initiatively, which was different from the place where I used to study in. Besides I love the sofa in front of the ground floor where is full of sunlight and great atmosphere.
What was UXpected and unUXpected?
Just because the library has been built, it does not mean the work is over...
People really want clear directions...

So we had to improve our signage...
It is hard to get our messages "out" to users...
But we did expect that the library would be popular 😊
Conclusions

- Our library spaces are being used as prompted by their design, but we need to show that & communicate it to users.
- UX research informs our response to students’ feedback and the decision making process (e.g. emphasising with signage the silent study spaces).
- UX research helps Library staff to know how library spaces are being used.
- We got really good unprompted feedback about the helpfulness of library staff.
Questions?
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