

REVIEW 2007/8

Library at Brunel



At a glance		August 2007 - July 2008	August 2006 - July 2007
	Total book stock	462454	457934
	No of books added to stock	20207	15653
	No of unique periodical titles	21354	17897
	No of periodical titles received in electronic form	20,000 (est.)	17203
	Total expenditure on information resources (books, journals, e-resources etc)	£1978200	£1773357
	Visits to the Library	691342	658421
	No of loans and renewals	1402240	1302263
	No of library staff (FTE)	60.57	60.2
	No of library staff hours spent teaching	381	263

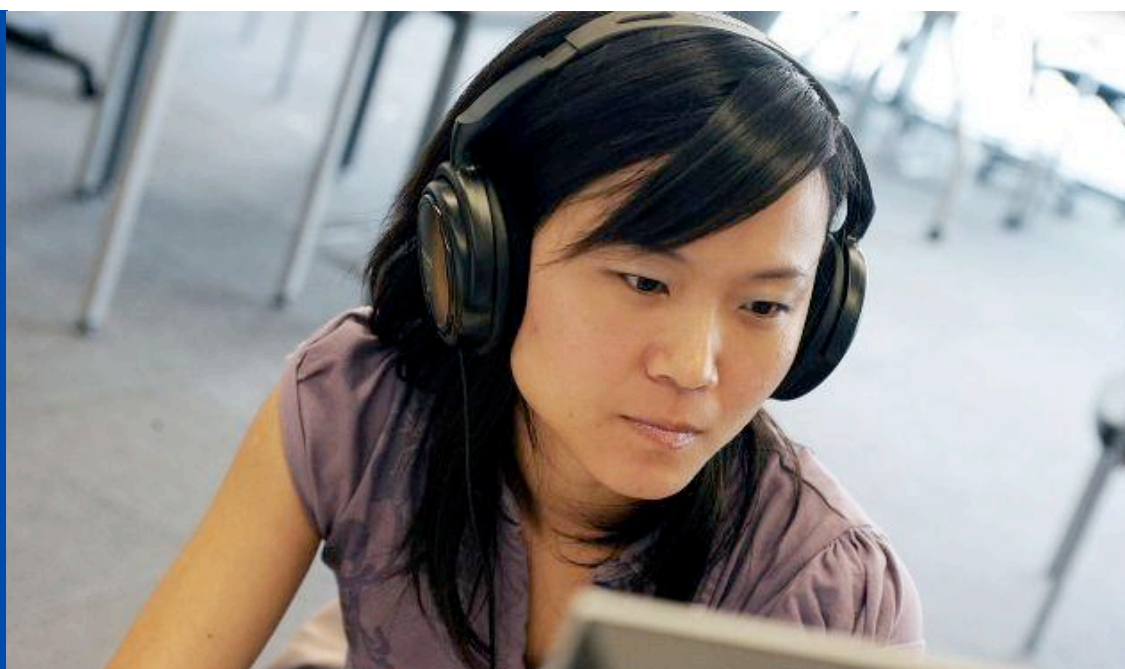
Supporting Teaching and Learning

- What did our students think about the library resources and services? For the fourth year in succession we saw an increase in the satisfaction rates expressed in the National Student Survey – from 3.67 (2005) to 4.09 (2008). Learning resources was the theme for which Brunel students expressed the most satisfaction.
- During the year the Library acquired nearly 400 e-books. These were individual titles which directly supported specific courses, rather than the subject collections we had bought previously. They supplemented rather than replaced print copies thus providing an alternative for books, such as short loan items, which were in heavy demand.
- This year we launched a pilot digital readings service, providing electronic copies of course readings for use in u-Link. The service covered book chapters and journal articles published in the UK and covered by the Higher Education Trial Scanning Licence. The School of Social Sciences chose to pilot this service – 39 items were successfully added to u-Link for the School. The reading with the highest number of views (1211) was actually written by a member of staff in the School but most readings were well used with the number of views in triple figures.
- We once again opened for extended hours before and during the exam period. We increased the length of the extended opening (from 6 weeks to 7 weeks) and by an extra hour every day until 2.00am. For the first time the service was staffed by postgraduate students from the University's Job Shop, rather than members of an external security firm, providing a more cost-effective student-focused after-hours service. Opening and weekend hours for the period after exams were also increased to support Masters' students and researchers.
- There was a significant increase in the volume of Information Skills teaching carried out by Subject Liaison Librarians. The number of library staff hours spent delivering sessions increased by 45%; the number of person-hours received by users increased by 9.5%.

NSS Satisfaction up
from **3.67** to **4.09**

45%

Increase in
staff teaching
hours

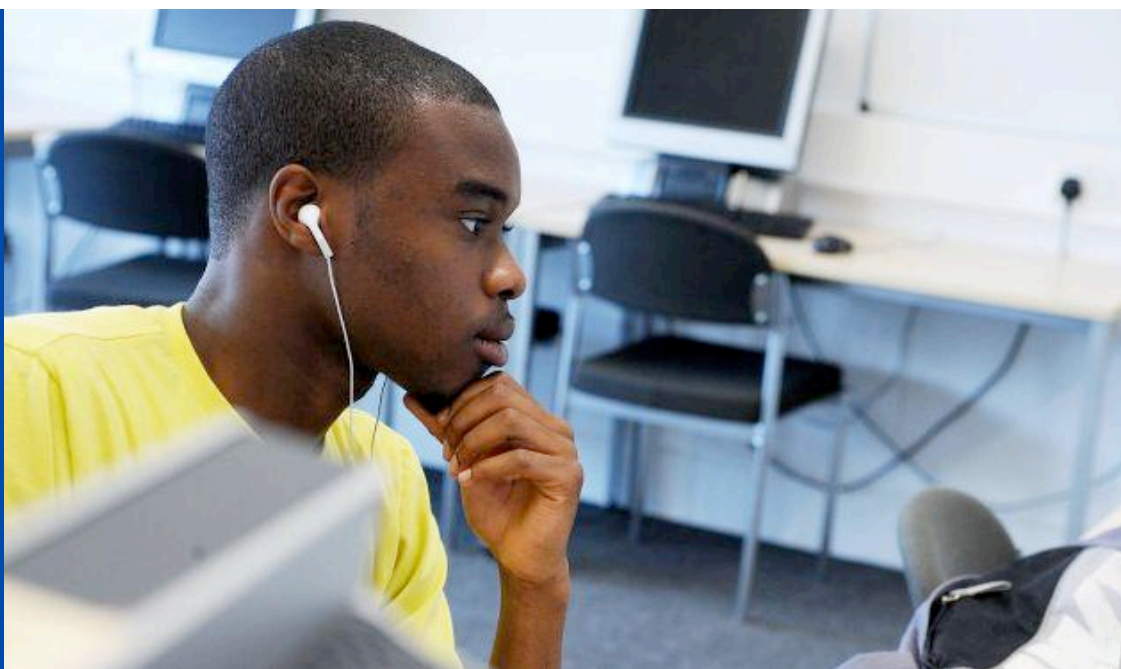


Supporting A Vibrant Research Community

- Following a successful development bid, the library budget for information resources (books, journals, e-resources, and other media) was increased to cover the prevailing high inflation rate on serials. This enabled us to maintain our purchasing power in 2007/08. However, towards the end of the year initial work had commenced on planning for forthcoming efficiency savings.
- We acquired a number of new e-resources including: Business Source Premier, SportDiscus full text, OECD Health Data, Literary Encyclopedia, OHE Compendium of Health Statistics, SAE Digital Library Technical Papers, Thomson One Banker, GreenFile (free database), Common Law Series (add-on to LexisNexis Butterworths) and InfoSci-Journals. We were also able to benefit from major research series funded by JISC and made available to the whole HE community, notably 18th and 20th century parliamentary papers and 19th century newspapers.
- In September we launched the Find IT! service which enables users to carry out keyword searches simultaneously on many of our databases and electronic journal collections plus the library catalogue, e-book collections and selected internet resources such as Google Scholar and Intute. We also acquired and started work on developing link resolver software which will automatically link from references in bibliographic databases to the full-text of articles where these are available to Brunel staff and students.
- By the end of the year BURA (Brunel University Research Archive) had trebled in size, increasing from 737 research outputs (July 2007) to 2143 (July 2008). Around this time, BURA was ranked 16th in terms of size amongst UK academic institutional repositories.
- The Library contributed to the Research Assessment Exercise by checking the bibliographic references of all Brunel submissions – over 2,400 items over a 21 month period ending in November 2008.
- 126 Brunel theses were sent to the British Library to be digitised for their new e-theses database called EThOS (Electronic Theses Online Service). The Graduate School Board agreed that from 1st October 2008 all research degree theses should be archived on BURA, with some discretion up to 31st March 2009. There are now a small but growing number of theses on BURA.

2143

Research
Outputs in
BURA



Services To Customers

- A number of service improvements were made this year, notably a courtesy email service to remind borrowers that books are due back shortly and a telephone booking service for group study rooms. The short loan collection was housed behind a glass partition to improve the security of the collection.
- An electronic request form for interlibrary loans was introduced, available via the library catalogue. We streamlined the process for transferring money from Schools to pay for interlibrary loans. Overall these changes simplified the interlibrary loan request process for both researchers and library staff.
- It is interesting to note that, contrary to the experience in many university libraries, Brunel has seen an increase in use of both the electronic and print collections – this year the number of full-text electronic journal article requests increased by 27% and the number of book loans and renewals increased by 8%.

Web Services and IT Support

- As part of the restructuring process a new post of Web Services Officer was created to develop our web pages and provide the technical support for the DSpace software which underpins BURA. We began the process of completely redesigning our web pages with the intention of providing more attractive pages, arranged in a more logical manner and with a more personal feel. This work continued into 2008/09, with the top tiers moving to the University external pages in September 2008.
- During the year several discussions were held at University level on the move to a single student card for a range of activities to replace a multiplicity of separate cards. The first stage of this project resulted in the merger of the student card with the library card so that, from 2008/09, students would only need a single card to enter the library, borrow books and print/copy.
- At national level the year saw a move from one type of authentication for electronic resources (“Athens”) to another (“Shibboleth”). Unfortunately this was not a smooth transition, at both supplier and national level; with the consequence that logging on to electronic journals and databases became more complex than we (or other university libraries) would have wished. This presented a challenge to the Systems Team and also to the Academic Support Team as it prepared induction materials for the forthcoming academic year.

c**20,000**

Periodical
titles in
electronic
form



Process Review and Restructure

- Mirroring and supporting the wider strategic review that was taking place this year was an internal staff restructure and process review. Approval was given for the creation of a new Deputy Director post in summer 2007, initially to lead the process review. Following extensive consultations internally with library staff, and externally with focus groups of students and key academic stakeholders, a new structure was approved in early 2008 and came into effect on 1 August 2008.
- The new structure is based around three teams – Academic Support, Services Support and Systems Support.

Academic Support	Brings together Subject Liaison Librarians, copyright advice and support, research support, BURA and special collections	Assistant Director (Academic Support) – Lorna Mitchell
Services Support	Central team supporting core library activities of resource provision, help desk and the library environment.	Deputy Director – Ann Cummings
Systems Support	IT support including SirsiDynix Symphony, e-resources, web pages, BURA technical support, staff and student PCs	Assistant Director (Systems Support) – Malcolm Emmett

- The re-structure was intended to provide a better and more consistent service delivery by bringing teams together to enable key processes to be completed more efficiently and flexibly and with a clearer definition of roles and responsibilities across the service. Implementation was a major project involving the creation of new posts, notably three Managers in the Services Support team (Help Desk, Resource Provision and Environment); assimilation of existing staff to new roles with new job descriptions; and the amalgamation of a number of previously distinct teams. All this was achieved with no additional resource and, indeed, a slight reduction in staffing levels as not all vacancies that were carried through the change process were able to be filled.
- The relocation of the Disability and Dyslexia Service into the Bannerman Centre in summer 2008, and consequent loss of library office space, gave us the opportunity to create a single office for the Services Support Team on the first floor thus providing the necessary physical environment for the creation of a single team. By the end of this year work had already commenced on the next stages of the restructure process which will involve process reviews of activities, improved staff development and working towards a more flexible team through job rotation.

Five Year Vision & Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan

- In 2008 the University published its Strategic Plan for 2008 to 2012. Following this, all Schools and departments, including the Library, produced their own five year service plans. The following five years will be a period which will see further significant changes in the ways in which students learn, the formats in which information is produced and research outputs disseminated, and the methods by which services are delivered. However, the Library will retain its importance as a physical and social learning space where students are inspired to work and think in a supportive environment, and our role in equipping students with research skills will become even more important as information increases in volume and complexity.
- The changing environment is reflected in the Library Plan which sets out how we will support each of the key university strategic imperatives over a five year period. Some lines of delivery, notably those relating to refurbishment of the environment and expansion of the electronic library, clearly depend on significant additional resources which may not be available in the near future. Nevertheless the Plan provides us with a vision for the service and a framework for our development over the next few years.

Bannerman Centre Refurbishment Bid

- Work commenced on an ambitious proposal to refurbish the Ground Floor of the Bannerman Centre to create a world class student and learner support centre at the heart of the campus. This proposal would involve transforming the existing space by creating an adaptable social learning area with exciting furniture and IT facilities, establishing a single help desk for learner support (see below), extending the Student Centre, improving cafe facilities, and opening up the existing space to end the current barriers between services.
- This project was included as one of the infrastructure projects approved in principle by Council at its December 2007 meeting. More detailed planning continued in spring 2008, although the project (together with a number of other infrastructure projects) was subsequently put on hold in the light of the overall University financial situation. Nevertheless, the vision behind the project remains. It forms one of the planks of the five year departmental plan and it is hoped that it will be possible to revive the project in the next few years.
- One of the big ideas behind the Bannerman Centre Ground Floor project was that of a single help desk for library, IT and learner support enquiries. A report on this was commissioned from the SUMS management consultancy and delivered in August 2007. It was recognised that a merged desk would only be feasible once the relevant teams were located together and the space had been suitably refurbished. Nevertheless, for part of the autumn term, we piloted a “co-located” enquiry desk with Computer Centre and e-learning staff. This gave us some experience of working with colleagues from other services and, for its duration, enabled students working in the Library to have IT queries resolved in person without having to walk over to the John Crank building to get help.

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