

McMaster University Libraries

ACRL Excellence in Academic Libraries Award

McMaster University Libraries submits this application for consideration for the Association of College and Research Libraries Excellence in Academic Libraries Award. Our application details our dramatic transformation and evolution from a very traditional academic library to an innovative, user-centred partner in teaching, learning and research on campus. We believe our achievements represent excellence in academic libraries.

I. INTRODUCTION

McMaster is a mid-sized, research-intensive university located in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. The institution, originally founded in 1887, now ranks as one of the top 100 universities in the world (Shanghai Jiao Tong University ranking of world universities). McMaster supports 21,906 full time students and 1,434 full-time faculty. We have a reputation for being one of Canada's most innovative universities. Indeed, the vision of the university is "to achieve international distinction for creativity, innovation and excellence." We are well known for the "McMaster Model" of problem-based and student-centred learning and rank number one in Canada in research intensity.

McMaster University Libraries consist of four physical spaces on campus: Mills Memorial Library (Humanities & Social Sciences), Innis Library (Business), H.G. Thode Library of Science & Engineering and the Health Sciences Library. The four libraries opened their doors in 1951, 1974, 1978 and 1971 respectively and today are easily among the busiest buildings on campus, achieving a combined gate count of almost 2.5 million visitors in 2006.

We recognize that libraries today are at the heart of unprecedented change. This change is fueled primarily by new technologies, new resources and new services that were unimaginable as recently as three years ago. Increasingly we are called upon to do more; do it more effectively and more efficiently; and do it in a way that distinguishes us from our competitors.

Successful organizations are measured, in part, by their ability to adapt quickly to the changing needs and expectations of their users. Adaptation requires a culture of risk-taking and innovation that encourages and rewards the radical rethinking of library resources and services.

The McMaster University community is recognized for its ability to lead by reinterpreting/reinventing itself. The recent hiring of a new University Librarian and the creation of seven new librarian positions provided us with an opportunity to make some significant organizational changes to meet the needs of the 21st century academic library user. To that end, the McMaster University Libraries has engaged in a strategic planning process to redefine our vision, mission and goals to ensure that they align with the University's reputation for innovation and academic excellence:

2005-2006 Statistics

Materials budget - \$6.2 million

Print volumes - over 2 million

Print journals - 6,000

Electronic journals - 21,000

Electronic books - 200,000

E-resource expenditures - \$3.7 million

Vision

McMaster University Library will be recognized as Canada's most innovative, user-centred, academic library.

Mission

The University Library advances teaching, learning and research at McMaster by:

- teaching students to be successful, ethical information seekers
- facilitating access to information resources
- providing welcoming spaces for intellectual discovery
- promoting the innovative adoption of emerging learning technologies

We value:

- excellent customer service
- collaboration, innovation, creativity and risk taking
- inclusiveness and respect for the individual
- accountability for our actions and decisions

Our strategic planning process involved a series of half-day retreats with all library staff. We worked in groups to brainstorm model vision and mission statements, values and strategic directions. Next, these were finalized by the senior management team with the assistance of an outside consultant. The high level of staff involvement in the planning process has resulted in a greater degree of ownership for our new vision, mission and values as well as for our strategic goals.

II. TRANSFORMING OUR SPACES

Historically, McMaster University Libraries focused on library space in terms of housing collections. Study spaces were secondary and were matched to collections. This meant that we devoted large library spaces to 'reading rooms', 'microform rooms', and 'periodical reading areas.' In short, our spaces were very traditional and did not complement a modern student's needs. We were faced with a number of challenges as we pursued a transformation of our spaces:

- reducing the footprint of collections to free up much needed study spaces
- responding to a dramatic escalation in enrollment and skyrocketing gate count at the library
- needing to re-organize and re-energize spaces for different types of study (silent, group, quiet)
- accommodating users with very diverse needs and desires
- satisfying the desire for both attractive and functional spaces by refreshing and repurposing spaces

In order to address these issues, we undertook several renovation projects, including the Mills Learning Commons and the Health Sciences Library; we increased and differentiated different types of study areas in line with user needs; we solved collection space issues by procuring off-site storage; and, anticipating the future, we embarked on creating virtual library spaces.

Mills Learning Commons

Once a drab and outdated reading room with none of the hi-tech functionality required by library users today, the Mills Learning Commons is now an active, student-centred learning space. Armed with information from a concept feasibility study, a series of public consultations and a thorough

examination of the learning commons model at other institutions, approximately 7,000 square feet of library space was renovated to become the Mills Learning Commons.



The result was open ergonomic computing spaces, lounge spaces with soft seating (chosen by students via a "vote with your seat" contest), collaborative study rooms, bookable consultation rooms, and new spaces for academic skills counseling, services to students with disabilities and expert IT help. We added 170 state-of-the-art computers, full wireless access, new printers and scanners, productivity software and special software for students with disabilities.

In response to an opinion survey, we introduced a student art competition which will continue for five years. Each year the competition theme will be a word from the

branding scheme for the Mills Learning Commons: inquire, explore, discover, create, learn. The winning students will each receive \$1,000. Our first installation was recently completed.

Health Sciences Library renovation

This large-scale renovation project was completed in early 2007 and resulted in a user-centred transformation with a design emphasis on "people space." This means reduced collection space, more group learning and quiet study space, an overall addition of 100 new study spaces, a dramatic two-storey Reading Pavilion, an e-classroom with 24 laptops and hundreds of electrical and network connections to accommodate personal and library laptops. The Health Sciences library now seats approximately 760 people, with a mix of lounge chairs, individual study carrels, and a range of e-tables for collaborative work. An open reserve and multimedia room was added. Users are no longer confused by multiple service points and are able to access research help, circulation and interlibrary loan from one convenient location.



Increased silent study and group study space

In response to an increasing demand for silent study space, two new silent study areas were created in Mills Library, improving silent study capacity by a total of 80 seats in this library. This was achieved by reorganizing and repurposing staff space.

In part through reducing collection space, three new group study rooms were created at Innis Library, five new study rooms were added to Mills Library, and three new group study rooms were added to the existing twelve at the Health Sciences Library. These rooms have been booked steadily through a new online booking system and we are receiving very positive feedback from students.

Thode Learning Commons

The planned renovation of H.G. Thode Library of Science & Engineering will create a hi-tech/hi-touch facility that is attractive to students and faculty alike. It is intended as a space that changes attitudes, practice and outcomes. Students and faculty will have access to:

- high end computing workstations, multimedia pods, wireless networking, and laptops
- welcoming spaces for individual study and quiet reflection
- enhanced spaces for research and IT assistance
- small group study spaces featuring interactive whiteboards and plasma displays
- classrooms and breakout rooms enabled with video conferencing, podcasting, and vodcasting equipment
- collaboration spaces for faculty and graduate students to work on their teaching
- a future home for the Faculty of Science's integrated Honours Science program (iSci)

Off-site storage

We procured an off-site storage solution in order to alleviate the overall lack of space for physical collections and to free up additional study space. The facility is low-tech but high density.

Island in Second Life

We currently have a library building on Information Island in Second Life but have recently purchased an entire island. Steel City Island will become the home to McMaster University Libraries' virtual presence. The island will position us as a leader in the exploration of library services, collections, and spaces in virtual worlds. It will consist of space for both large and small group collaboration/instruction, an area for experimentation and discovery, and room for 3D exhibits of our digital resources as well as services such as reference assistance and instruction. We will open the island to our community partners from McMaster and the Hamilton Public Library, offering a space for discovery of learning and teaching opportunities in virtual worlds.

III. TRANSFORMING OUR RESOURCES

McMaster Libraries have always maintained a balance of print and electronic resources; however, we were previously a passive channel through which resources, both print and electronic, passed to our end users.

We are now taking a leadership role in the development and delivery of all of our collections. We have reduced the footprint of our physical collections through de-duping/weeding projects and off-site storage solutions. Whereas in the past, faculty members personally selected a large majority of the monographs, now liaison librarians are cultivating relationships and collaborating with faculty in order to purchase balanced collections in alignment with the research priorities of academic departments. To reduce local processing costs, we are buying shelf-ready books, getting items to our users faster. This also permits technical services staff to devote their time to cataloguing unique materials which may not be owned at other institutions. Furthermore, we are actively preserving our local and unique collections and improving access to these resources via digitization.

***focus on electronic resources, both new and print replacements
rationalize print collections through collaboration***

We were hearing loud and clear from our users that they wanted desktop delivery of library resources. As part of our effort, we are members of several consortia including OCU (Ontario Council of University Libraries), whose Scholarsportal project gives us access to 8,000 electronic journals, dozens of CSA databases and soon, e-books. As a member of CRKN (Canadian Research Knowledge Network), we have access to thousands of items including large journal suites. CRKN

was also recently awarded a Canada Foundation for Innovation award which will provide improved content in the humanities and social sciences, including more e-books, journal backfiles and primary research material.

We became a member of CRL (Center for Research Libraries) in 2007 to provide our users with unique primary research materials, particularly in humanities and social sciences. Liaison librarians have already been able to connect researchers with the unique materials in this collection.

McMaster is also taking part in the CCCC (Collaborative Collection Continuity Committee), an OCUL committee with the mandate of rationalizing print collections at all OCUL institutions. This group will strategically decide which institutions will keep specified legacy print collections in order to ensure long-term preservation, share costs and free up much needed physical collection space.

improve access through systems

Evergreen

Together with The University of Windsor, Laurentian University and Algoma College, we have established *Conifer*, a collaboration to develop an instance of the open source integrated library system software, Evergreen. Summer 2008 is the goal which has been established for a local McMaster implementation. As an open source product, Evergreen will allow these libraries to manage collection resources more efficiently and respond more rapidly to changing user needs. As well a consortial implementation will provide users with a richer collection of shared resources.

Verde®

Verde® is an e-resources management system which, as an early OCUL adopter, McMaster implemented in May 2007. It manages both local and consortially licensed electronic collections, sharing information with a range of applications, including acquisitions and cataloging systems, OPACs, A-Z lists, metasearch tools, and link servers. Verde® collects and displays detailed information about the collections and also brings new resources and other products available in the marketplace to our attention, thereby serving a key role in ongoing collection development.

acquire and preserve unique materials broaden access through digitization

Hardy Boys

We recently acquired the diaries, correspondence and early material of Leslie McFarlane, best known for penning the hugely popular Hardy Boys books. This acquisition represents a wealth of primary research materials for scholars and the public. In addition to the archives—which include McFarlane's first published essay, an IODE 1918 Haileybury High School prize winner—we have acquired first editions of two of the 20 books McFarlane wrote for the Hardy Boys series. We will continue to augment this collection by purchasing further first editions.

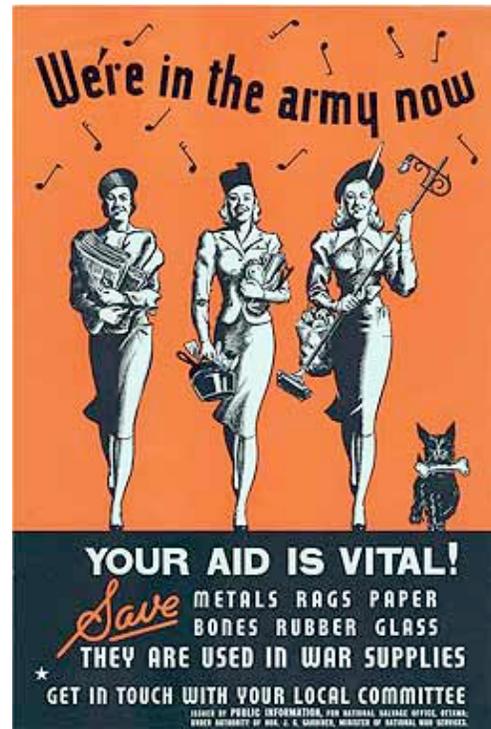
Trench maps

Our first digitization project focused on 425 military maps and 480 air photos from our World War I collection. We have an uncommonly rich collection of detailed, topographic maps known as "trench maps," which delineate trenches and mark machine gun nests, trench mortars, and artillery and enemy headquarters. Dating from 1917 and 1918 and covering the Canadian sector of the Front in France and Belgium, the maps are also a lasting record of the evolution in mapping that occurred as a result of advances in survey techniques, aerial photography and photogrammetry. Digitization will allow researchers to view, pan and zoom images to a level of detail surpassing that which can be seen without a magnifying glass.

Peace and War in the Twentieth Century

In June 2007, the Division of Archives and Research Collections received a grant from the Canadian Memory Fund to develop a state-of-the-art website on Peace and War in the Twentieth Century. Unique collections from partner institutions (Hamilton Public Library and Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum) augment McMaster's special collections and, when digitized, will provide users with online access to a breadth of materials which could previously only be viewed by visiting the three separate institutions. Included are treasures such as a series of World War I and World War II posters, Vera Brittan's diary account of the declaration of the First World War, and the lifelong efforts of peace activist Sir Norman Angell, winner of the 1933 Nobel Peace Prize.

Emphasis on the vital issue of peace is one of the unique aspects of this project, setting it apart from other websites which focus strictly on warfare, weapons or military campaigns. It will be relevant both to today's researchers and to the general public, engaging visitors in thoughtful consideration of the context of previous wars and the efforts which have been made to wage peace.



Digital Commons, a first in Canada

In order to share local collections more widely, the library created an institutional repository. We have opened the repository of dissertations and theses to the world by launching DigitalCommons@McMaster, the first Canadian installation of the ProQuest Digital Commons institutional repository service. It currently provides access to 3,455 digitized dissertations and theses, previously available only in paper or microfilm. McMaster students and faculty are able to link to the full text of the dissertations and theses free of charge, while DigitalCommons@McMaster visitors from around the world will have access through their own institutions' full-text ProQuest subscriptions. We hope to make these dissertations and theses freely available to all users in the near future. By using this platform, we're able to focus more on our users and their needs and less on the technology itself. We can use our limited human resources to focus on the promotion and use of our repository.

Russell Journal

The scholarly journal, *Russell: the Journal of Bertrand Russell Studies*, a publication begun as a newsletter in 1971, has been digitally reincarnated as the first journal in DigitalCommons@McMaster. All backfiles, which include 900 journal articles, are freely available worldwide up to the most current four years. The articles can now be picked up in a routine Google search and their open URLs guarantee access through international indexes and library catalogues.

We are working with other journal publishers on campus to add their journals to our Digital Commons site, in addition to working papers from various campus departments and proceedings from several conferences.

new collection experiment

Popular reading

McMaster Libraries traditionally had a policy of NOT purchasing popular fiction; however, it became clear that this was something our users wanted. Thus we decided to experiment with the university library's role in providing students with ready access to leisure reading such as mysteries, graphic novels, and other popular fiction. In summer 2007, we purchased approximately 150 popular reading titles. This has been enormously popular with our users as seen by the nearly empty popular reading shelves. Within a period of two months, some titles have already circulated 7 times. We are now exploring a leasing agreement to provide a rotating collection of titles in the most popular genres. Finally, we will be partnering with the local public library system to encourage university students to get public library cards and explore these collections.

IV. TRANSFORMING OUR SERVICES

In the past, we had multiple service points for circulation, interlibrary loan, and reference/research help. Users had to know which desk/area to approach in order to get a question answered easily and, despite our efforts to refer, this arrangement ultimately provided fragmented service to our users. Our static reference desk was staffed mainly by full-time librarians, answering a high volume of questions on printing and computer problems. There was no separate technology help from IT experts. We also lacked an organized system of contact with academic departments, required to integrate information literacy into the curriculum.

Because our library catalogue was not intuitive, we tended to focus a large portion of our instruction sessions on teaching users how to search (ACRL information literacy standard #2: access). We failed to consistently teach our students how to evaluate information sources, use them effectively and understand the broader context of information. Our very static website was our primary means of communication with users, mimicking the reference desk by making users come to us.

We needed to reposition ourselves and respond to our users by engaging in a discussion with them and making some changes. We did this, in part, by fully embracing a "2.0" mentality of flexibility, risk-taking and experimentation, and internally calling this shift "Library Service 2.0 @ Mac."

Augmenting the website

In 2004, we introduced a library news blog which displays useful content to our users such as new resources and services. One central database now controls the news feed and allows for the display of targeted content on library webpages such as Mills Learning Commons News, Innis Library News, Archives News, etc. RSS feeds allow users to subscribe to a news feed for whichever segment(s) of the library most interest them.

In 2005, we also introduced instant messaging (IM) research help which has been most recently augmented through the use of Meebo chat boxes, now placed at various pages on our website. For example, if users are looking at our online research help guide for English, they will see a Meebo chat box directly on this page through which they can start a chat conversation with the English Liaison Librarian or, alternatively, leave her a message to be answered the next time she is online. According to our online tracking database, use of IM research help has tripled over the past year.

Liaison librarians with certain subject responsibilities have also begun using del.icio.us to collect links to interesting news stories in their subject areas and are syndicating that content in the subject-specific online research guide.

Online catalogue more user-friendly

We radically transformed our online library catalogue, becoming the first Canadian library to use the vibrant Endeca software, an interface used by such retailers as Home Depot. The changes eclipse earlier approaches to online catalogues, adding capabilities that users, and particularly students, expect from web browsing. They can search results ranked by relevance, and refine navigation by topic, author, genre, language, material type, etc. As students turn increasingly to the internet to find information, this easy-to-use approach reinvigorates interest in library collections.

We worked with Syndetics to add both cover art and book reviews to our catalogue. Our users are pleased with this addition as their interest is piqued by browsing cover art and they are able to read reviews in order to make decisions about materials they are using for research. In summer 2007, we also added direct linking to Amazon from the library catalogue, allowing users several options including reading customer reviews and ratings, or purchasing their own copy of a book for personal use.

First year experience wiki

The Mac Library Experience wiki is a "one-stop shop," gathering together essential information that new students need to know about the library. The wiki format allows students to post and share tips, give each other advice and post comments. One unique feature of the Mac Library Experience wiki is a calendar of events, including introductory tours of all four campus libraries and workshops designed to help students achieve academic success.

Faculty and Staff 2.0 @ Mac

Following on the heels of the successful Learning 2.0 @ Mac program for library staff (see section V, p.12), 2.0 training was offered to faculty members and university staff. So far we have led a hands-on workshop on web 2.0 tools for faculty and graduate students from the DeGroote School of Business, covering how to use blogs, wikis, and social bookmarking tools in teaching and research. A 12 week program for the campus' career services unit has also just begun.

Wiki/blog service for the campus

Beginning winter 2007, we are expanding our services to include hosting blogs and wikis for faculty members interested in using these tools for teaching and research. These emerging tools can be used to extend in-class discussions, promote groupwork, and provide a platform for collaboration and distributed research in a non-commercial and ad-free academic environment.

Google Mashups

McMaster's Map Collection is the first to use a Google Maps mashup as an index for a heavily used collection of 5,000 local air photos. This tool allows researchers to zoom to their research site using Google Maps, and then see whether McMaster Library has air photos covering that site for any time period between 1919 and today. The convenient website eliminates the need to make a special trip to the library to consult paper indexes.

Second Life

We currently offer research help in the virtual world Second Life (SL), where the avatars of our librarians and library staff work from a help desk in McMaster's SL Library 8 hours per week. When in-person (or in-avatar) help is offline, help is available through IM or e-mail. We will expand this service as McMaster University's presence in SL grows. Currently, the Faculty of Engineering runs Café Fireball, a place for avatars to chat about engineering topics.

Liaison program pairs librarians with faculty

In summer 2007, we launched an exciting new initiative, Library Liaison @ Mac, which matched librarians with academic departments, schools and programs to ensure that library services and

collections were closely aligned with teaching and research priorities. Liaison librarians have four key priorities:

- Building partnerships with departments, schools and programs
- Partnering to teach 21st century fluencies
- Managing access to scholarly literature
- Providing research consultations for faculty, graduate students and research assistants

Reuven Dukas, associate professor of Psychology, hails Library Liaison @ Mac as "a wonderful idea," commenting that "it makes sense to have more integration and for librarians to have a personal interaction with faculty, graduate students and undergraduates."



Librarian/faculty collaboration

Since October 2006, History Liaison Librarian Olga Perkovic has collaborated with faculty on the development of a new, mandatory inquiry course for second year history students. She has been involved in many aspects of the planning, from designing the course document that records and tracks all essential elements of the course to taking part in the external review process for the course. She worked on curriculum planning by setting learning objectives for two research skills (library) sessions and assignments and created a course wiki which will complement the library's WebCT presence.

Psychology Liaison Librarian Shawn McCann worked with 70 psychology teaching assistants over a period of three days in September 2007. He taught them how to prepare their first year students, who number over one thousand, for their first university research assignment. This course, *Introduction to Psychology*, is being taught for the first time this year via an online video lecture series and interactive website with various multimedia components. Next year, Shawn will create a library module for this website which will further integrate the library instruction component into the course.

Geography and Earth Sciences Liaison Librarian Cathy Moulder collaborated with professors Carolyn Eyles and Michael Mercier on wiki assignments for a fourth year Geography class on the changing Canadian glacial landscape and a third year class on segregation in world cities. Charged with the task of gathering and organizing large quantities of information, students worked to produce results far exceeding expectations. Students collaborated to solve problems and meet challenges, using the wiki format to creative advantage and experiencing firsthand the satisfaction of seeing their results accessible on the internet. The fact that the assignment was to be graded seemed to be forgotten as the teams fed off each other's ideas and critically engaged with the topic.

Finally, this year we have developed an exciting new partnership with the Faculty of Science. The Honours Integrated Science Program, iSci, will have its new home in a freshly renovated Thode Library of Science & Engineering. This partnership will combine an interdisciplinary academic program with a ground-breaking library teaching and learning space that will bring together faculty, students, librarians and technologists to deliver innovative new learning experiences.

Easing the everyday for our users

- We provide **writing and authoring** help in a newly created space in the Mills Learning Commons. This service is a result of our partnership with the Centre for Student Development (CSD) and is offered by CSD staff.
- The library offers **assistance with document delivery** for a growing population of students with disabilities. They are now well-served by a full-time staff member in the Mills Learning Commons.
- As part of the Mills Learning Commons, users gained access to **dedicated IT assistance** offered by a large team of student consultants hired by the campus computing centre (University Technology Services).
- We merged interlibrary loan, circulation and reserve services, renaming them "**Access Services**" at Mills Library, reducing service points which had proven confusing to users.
- We recently initiated **email circulation notices** to inform users much more quickly about holds, recalls and long overdue items.
- Striving to offer fast, efficient services, the library has installed a new **self-checkout unit**, featuring an easy-to-use touch screen and providing borrowers with a receipt listing checked-out items and their due dates.
- We have completed a pilot project to **digitize old exams** in the social sciences and humanities and have made the files available via the library catalogue.
- We **eliminated fees** for interlibrary loan (previously \$5 per journal article) and also **eliminated fees** for alumni cards.
- Due to the generosity of the Students Services Committee, the Office of Student Affairs, and in collaboration with the McMaster Students Union, the libraries are now offering **laptops for 3 hour loans**. The machines are fully loaded with productivity software such as Microsoft Office and adaptive technology like ZoomText, JAWS, Kurzweil and Inspiration.
- Together with the Student Library Advisory Committee, the library initiated an **online booking service** for group study rooms in order to allow students greater control over library spaces and to coordinate group work.
- In fall 2007 we began opening a section of the Mills Learning Commons until 2:00 am for **late-night** studying. In spring 2008 we will be conducting a **24 hour access** pilot to this area of Mills Library.
- We installed a **vending machine** in Mills Library when we introduced late night hours. The library and the campus bookstore are now collaborating to provide users with supplies such as USB keys, post-it-notes, earbuds, recordable CDs and DVDs, pens, pencils, and printer ink. Since installing the vending machine in fall 2007, it has been extremely popular. Students, faculty and staff can suggest new items and, if the suggested item ends up being added to the machine, the person will receive a 512 MB memory key.

V. TRANSFORMING OUR STAFF

Before the arrival of the new University Librarian, the library faced several staffing challenges. We had:

- the lowest number of professional librarians among members of the Association of Research Libraries

- a high percentage of staff in “back office” operations
- staff members who had not been given the opportunity or encouragement to expand their skills to meet the changing demands of our students and faculty

Following an extensive organizational review (conducted by a team of library staff and an external consultant), the library has been restructured into three divisions: Collections and Facilities, Teaching, Learning and Research (including Research Collections, Maps, and traditional public services such as circulation, inter library loan, etc), and Library and Learning Technologies (including digital initiatives, the website, the integrated library system, etc). The restructuring allowed us to: increase our emphasis on public service, particularly the “user experience”; increase emphasis on development of digital resources; integrate the libraries into teaching/learning. In summary, we moved from a model based on transaction-based services to one based on pedagogy and learning services.

In December 2006, we offered a voluntary separation package to 10 individuals. Copy cataloging as a function and unit was eliminated (shelf-ready and PromptCat would be used instead) and copy cataloguers were redeployed to positions that best matched their skills and abilities. Former full-time cataloguers took on reference responsibilities at research help desks and new positions were created (User Experience Librarian, Metadata Librarian and a Director of Library Liaison). Finally, new middle management level positions were created, allowing staff the opportunity to advance and easing the workload for the supervisors of now merged service areas such as circulation, research help and interlending.

<p>New Middle Management Positions</p> <p>Mills Learning Commons Supervisor</p> <p>Supervisor, Innis Access Services</p>
--

seven new librarians

- The **Immersive Learning (Gaming)** Librarian uses new technologies like gaming and virtual worlds to make libraries relevant to today's tech-savvy students.
- Our **Digital Technologies Development** Librarian manages local systems and the ILS and is investigating and implementing open-source solutions, such as Evergreen, in the library.
- The **Digital Strategies** Librarian manages digital initiatives, providing vision and leadership in the development of a library digitization strategy.
- Our **Marketing, Communications and Outreach** Librarian develops and implements a marketing and communications program for the library, increasing our profile both on and off campus.
- The **Teaching and Learning** Librarian provides leadership in integrating the library into the teaching and learning mission of the university. She is responsible for integrating information literacy and research skills across the curriculum and coordinating training opportunities for all library staff.
- The **E-Resources** Librarian provides leadership in identifying new electronic information resources and coordinating their evaluation and purchase. She manages the serials and electronic resources area of Collections, and is responsible for the purchase, access, and control of all licensed electronic resources, including e-book collections.
- The **Archivist** Librarian works with the Director of Research Collections in building special collections, enhancing them digitally, meeting donors and antiquarian booksellers, and writing grant applications.

staff training and development

Inventory of staff needs

In order to identify staff development needs and to share information among staff about professional development activities and job related training opportunities, the library created a needs assessment survey and a staff development and training web site. Staff were asked to identify the types of professional development they would find most useful, and how they would like to learn about these. The web site features the results of the survey, an event calendar, and links to training and development opportunities and resources of interest to all staff. In order to encourage staff to visit the web site regularly, it also features a cartoon of the day and RSS feeds for weather and news items of interest.

Learning 2.0 @ Mac

From February to May 2007, library staff participated in Learning 2.0 @ Mac, a hands-on, immersive learning program that provided an opportunity to explore Web 2.0 tools and the impact these tools are having on libraries and library services. The program was self-directed, low-threat and above all, FUN! Eighty-four Library staff members voluntarily enrolled in the program. Each week focused on a particular technology and participants were given a task to practice their new skills using freely available online tools (such as Blogger, WordPress, Bloglines, del.icio.us and Facebook). Sixty-eight staff members completed the program along with some staff from University Advancement who also participated in the weekly activities.

Invited speakers

A series of guest speakers were invited to come and give talks to library staff in areas of emerging interest: Michael Stephens, Instructor in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Dominican University, presented on "Web 2.0"; Perry Willett, the Head of Digital Library Production Service at the University of Michigan, spoke about Google's digitization projects; Michael Ridley, Chief Librarian at the University of Guelph, discussed the Future of Libraries; Joan Lippincott, Associate Executive Director of the Coalition for Networked Information, familiarized staff with "The Net Generation;" and Carla Stoffle, Dean of Libraries and Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona, delivered a talk about "Organizational Transformation."

Professional support and recognition

Mentoring has been in place at the library for a number of years. However, over the past year the program has taken off, with the reorganization and hiring of new librarians. Newcomers have benefited from the experience of their mentors, and mentees have shared knowledge in areas of expertise such as new technologies. Further, over the past year librarians have received increased encouragement from management to apply for 3-5 week research leaves. Traditionally, the library would only see one librarian take advantage of research leave in a given year. In 2007, seven librarians seized this opportunity. The support for conference travel and participation has also increased significantly over the past year. Finally, we continue to have series of staff recognition events, including milestones lunches and, this year, our first annual summer barbeque.

VI. DEVELOPMENT

Our library development functions are performed by one full-time designated library staff member with additional clerical assistance available when necessary. In 2006, our cash receipts were \$1,175,000 and gift-in-kind receipts were approximately \$400,000. Primarily our support comes from alumni and faculty, and to a lesser extent, other individuals and parents. We actively steward all donors to the library through an annual donor event, mailing of a holiday greeting card and

mailing of a library newsletter. In addition we steward our most generous donors through personal visits and correspondence. We also hold two other annual events that build relationships with future donors, such as library retirees and student assistants.

We are currently participating in a university-wide comprehensive campaign, *The Campaign for McMaster University*. Two campaign priorities are assigned to the library:

Learning Commons at Thode - \$4 million

Based on the success of the student-centred Mills Learning Commons, the new Learning Commons at Thode will enhance student learning and promote innovative teaching in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Features of this "high tech," "high touch" environment will include state-of-the-art facilities and advanced technologies such as computer workstations, powered tables with wireless access, electronic classrooms, video conferencing and streaming, interactive touch screens and studio space that will make learning more interactive and experiential. The welcoming, vibrant atmosphere will make it a popular gathering place enhanced by a café, group study rooms, and comfortable, mobile seating to encourage interaction and collaboration among and between faculty, students and library staff. The Learning Commons at Thode will be designed and equipped to support new teaching/learning programs and strategies developed through the Innovative Learning Initiative.

Innovative Learning initiative - \$6 million

Today's students share many characteristics, some of which are unique to this generation of young adults (e.g. digitally literate, always "connected," experiential, demand immediacy and highly social). Consequently, they process information, communicate and learn in a different way. The challenge is to develop and implement new strategies for educating these technology-savvy students in order to prepare them for the 21st century. The Innovative Learning Initiative will address this challenge by incorporating digital technologies such as social networking (Facebook, blogs, wikis etc.), multimedia creations, mobile computing (iPods and other handheld devices) and emerging technologies (educational gaming and virtual worlds) into the teaching and learning process. The program complements the Learning Commons @ Thode project and will utilize the innovative facility's advanced technological features for its novel initiatives.

Recent Achievements

- Raised almost 25% of goal for Thode Learning Commons
- Significantly increased spending on books in history and religious studies
- Refurbished study areas in Mills
- Purchased laptops for loan to students
- Created quick-access area in Mills Learning Commons (stand-up stations, laptop zone, copier/printers)

Other current fundraising initiatives

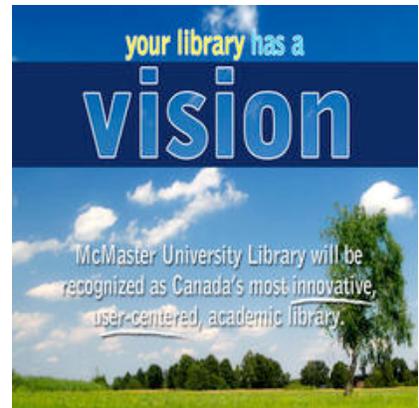
- Endowment to fund an annual undergraduate research award
- Reunion gift to fund refurbishing of 3 group study rooms

VII. MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS, OUTREACH

Despite our breadth and depth of resources, services and initiatives, users were often unaware of the opportunities available to them and a misperception persisted that the library was mainly a storage site for books, one with many rules and regulations.

In order to combat this image, a librarian was hired to organize and implement library outreach, promotional activities and communications.

- Even before the arrival of the marketing librarian, we developed an award winning library **poster campaign** which featured student athletes and award winning faculty members.
- We have been using **Facebook** (FB) to promote library services and spaces over the past two years. We've purchased ads to promote both the late night access and our IM chat service. We've also been using FB groups as a communication tool to improve attendance at focus group sessions on the topic of future library renovations.
- After an audit of **library signage**, the volume of signs was significantly reduced and negative, rule-driven signs were removed (e.g. No Talking, No Eating, No Cell Phones).
- Though parent events are relatively uncommon at Canadian institutions, we held a **Parent Night at the Library** for parents of first year students to introduce them to the resources available on campus to help their sons and daughters achieve academic success. In addition to discussing library topics, we invited our partners from the Centre for Student Development to speak about academic skills and peer mentoring.
- To replace our outdated print paper suggestion box, we have developed an **online suggestion board** which allows users to submit comments, view earlier comments/responses and, similar to a blog, comment on other people's suggestions.
- We continue to use the **library desktop backgrounds** for promotion, including the promotion of the library's new vision, mission and values.
- We purchased two **plasma screens** to display library news items from our blog and a tickertape banner with changing messages. The screens also display current world news from a satellite feed.
- Together with Hamilton Public Library, we purchased 1,400 **water bottles** showcasing the library URL and logo and gave them away at September first-year orientation days.
- A **publications task force** has been established in order to take stock of library publications and provide an attractive and consistent look to all library publications.
- To promote the Peace and War in the Twentieth Century project, we created a **promotional calendar** which featured some of the fantastic digital images from the project. These calendars will be used as giveaways for donors and will also be sold at the campus bookstore.



VIII. AWARDS, HONOURS AND RECOGNITION

We have been very fortunate over the past year to have many of our staff and some of our library initiatives recognized by various awards honours.

- User-Experience Librarian Amanda Etches-Johnson was named a “2007 Library Journal Mover and Shaker” in the category of 2.0 Gurus. Amanda is a highly sought-after speaker and teacher with interests in emerging technologies, social software, educational web design and user interface design.

- McMaster's Library Director for Business, Jeannie An, was named as one of 19 fellows of the Association of Research Libraries' Leadership and Career Development Program. An, who has been at McMaster since 2004, is one of only two Canadians awarded a 2007-08 fellowship.
- University Librarian Jeff Trzeciak was appointed to the EDUCAUSE Advisory Committee on Teaching and Learning, which consists of professionals with extensive experience using innovative technology to create new learning environments. Trzeciak is the only librarian and the only representative from a Canadian institution on the committee.
- The Mills Learning Commons Project was the 2007 recipient of the McMaster Students Union's Rudy Heinzl Award of Excellence which "recognizes an outstanding one year achievement which improves the lives of McMaster students."
- The Mills Learning Commons was also recognized by the Project Management Institute (PMI) as GovSIG Project of the Year in fall 2007. The PMI is the leading management association for project management with 240,000 members in 160 countries.
- The Health Sciences Library won the City of Hamilton Architecture Award in 2007 for its renovation project.
- In addition to the above awards and honours, we have been selected to host ACCESS 2008, the Canadian conference for technology in libraries.



IX. PARTNERSHIPS/MEMBERSHIPS

McMaster Partnerships	Memberships
Centre for Student Development Centre for Leadership in Learning University Technology Services	Association of Research Libraries Canadian Association of Research Libraries Ontario Council of University Libraries Centre for Research Libraries
Community Partnerships	Canadian Research Knowledge Network Alouette Canada (large-scale digital sharing initiative)
Hamilton Public Library High School Students As Researchers	Canadian Library Association Coalition for Networked Information

Mohawk College Evergreen/Conifer Project	International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions Virtual Worlds Alliance Consortium of Ontario Academic Health Libraries
---	--

X. ASSESSMENT

Before 2006, we had never participated in a large-scale formal evaluation of library resources, services and spaces. We relied on a number of print suggestion boxes located in the different campus libraries and we had created and implemented several in-house surveys on topics of interest. However, we realized that our methods were not based on a sound research methodology nor could they be viewed as statistically significant.

We recognized that creating a culture of assessment was important in terms of developing as an institution and being able to measure success. Equally important was becoming accountable to our users, and driving change based on evidence and not solely on instinct or emotion. In addition to undertaking the following activities, we are simultaneously conducting an environmental scan of our assessment needs.

Topical surveying

We have organized focus groups and surveys around a number of topics recently, in order to help guide our decisions regarding spaces and services. We implemented a survey in order to get feedback about offering extended late night hours; we polled our users after opening the Mills Learning Commons and made changes as a result of the responses; we collaborated with the McMaster Students Union to do a survey on library spaces and resources; and finally, we recently organized a number of focus groups for undergraduate students, faculty, graduate students and staff to get feedback on initial plans and architect's conceptual drawings for the Thode Library renovation project.

LibQUAL®

McMaster University Libraries first participated in LibQUAL® in 2006. In 2007, we participated again as part of the Canada LibQUAL® consortia, benefiting greatly from being able to make a comparison to other Canadian universities. We are currently creating an assessment webpage and preparing a presentation in order to share our results. We have been able to implement change based on our users' priorities, addressing areas where we are not meeting needs and building on our successes and strengths. Overall it was clear that improving library spaces was a priority for our undergraduate population, and improving access to electronic resources was a priority for faculty and graduate students. We are responding by improving spaces and services through the Thode Learning Commons and by continuing to make the acquisition of electronic resources a priority (i.e. CRKN, CRL).

SAILS (Standard Assessment of Information Literacy Skills)

Thanks to a grant received by the DeGroot School of Business, 468 McMaster commerce students participated in SAILS in winter 2007. A consortium was set up with the nearby University of Guelph in order to compare results. The results identified that students were underperforming in seven of the eight skill sets tested.

As a result of the testing, both short term and long term goals were identified. Library Director for Business Jeannie An is reviewing the library instruction program for business students; the library

research guides were modified; and six online tutorials were created to help students learn about specific business databases. As well, the library was involved in a new first year non-credit but mandatory commerce course. The two library sessions incorporated clicker technology in the classroom and had required quizzes administered via WebCT.

A long term goal to eventually develop an Information Literacy program at the DeGroot School of Business (and possibly the entire McMaster campus) has been established. Finally, faculty members from three Canadian institutions, including McMaster, applied for and received a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) grant to pursue the topic of "Assessing Learning Outcomes of Information Literacy Information at Canadian Business Schools."

XI. CONCLUSION

Above all, we have become a library not afraid of change, not afraid of risks and not afraid of putting aside our own habits and traditions to embrace a culture which focuses on our users and responds to the changing role of the library at an academic institution. This has resulted not only in a huge organizational shift, but it has also changed the lives of our users and staff. We believe that we have come to represent excellence in academic libraries.

** This application was created as a Wetpaint wiki, involving seven contributors. **

Latest page update: made by [bairdca](#), Today, 9:34 pm EDT ([about this update](#) About This Update – [complete history](#))

Keyword tags: None ([edit keyword tags](#))

More Info: [links to this page](#)