

Creating a 21st Century Library Service at Cardiff University

By the time of an extensive Review of the Library Service in 2005, both the Arts and Social Studies Library and the Trevithick Library were struggling to provide learning environments to match changing technological and pedagogical advancements. The Wolfson Foundation funding has enabled two library refurbishments with very dramatic results.

The Trevithick Library refurbishment project

Built in 1990, the Trevithick Library services a community of more than 3000 students, plus staff, from the Schools of Engineering, Computer Science and Physics and Astronomy. By the time of the Review, the Trevithick Library did not provide the facilities its users required or an environment that inspired learning:



- researchers wanting quiet study areas competed with students required by their curriculum to work in groups
- staff and students often complained about the lighting and lack of ventilation.
- Trevithick Library suffered from a lack of identity

Redesigning the Trevithick Library

The architect's brief was to create a prestigious facility: visually attractive, comfortable, efficient, well-stocked, well-equipped and above all carefully zoned to encourage a variety of learning styles.

Key elements of the redesign include:

- a new PC room
- computer bar
- four group study rooms
- open study spaces
- informal areas to browse journals and meet with colleagues

The building work took six months during which time the entire library stock was moved twice.



Arts and Social Studies Library refurbishment project

The Arts and Social Studies Library was opened in 1976 and serves 8 academic Schools, including Psychology, Welsh, Law and History, with over 5000 students between them. The award-winning building was in need of rejuvenation to meet the expectations of our 21st century users.

The project strands

The lower ground floor space has been reconfigured. It previously housed the Bindery, Graphic Services area and a PC Room. This was a busy and noisy area, not conducive to research, learning or relaxing.



The refurbished (and renamed) Wolfson Floor now offers a collaborative learning space with wireless access, a range of different seating, networked PCs and three study rooms. The area now has cohesion and purpose and will provide an inspirational environment to fulfil the changing needs of our users.



A new Humanities Bookstack with mobile shelving has also been installed as an addition to the Special Collections and Archives (SCOLAR). This has allowed older and more fragile items previously held in both our main collections and in our Library stores to be relocated. These collections are now more accessible to our researchers and improved environmental conditions assist with the long-term conservation of these often unique collections. The entrance area to the Wolfson Floor has also been enhanced, providing SCOLAR with more display space and a plasma screen to highlight SCOLAR holdings and events.

The top floor of the library has benefited from the replacement of part of the static shelving with mobile shelving to house our Humanities and Salisbury (Welsh collection) journals, allowing room for expansion and easier use of the collection. The History Research Collection has relocated to SCOLAR, a beneficial move for our researchers.



The transformation

Cardiff University Information Services fully recognises the impact that the Wolfson Foundation's contribution to these refurbishment projects has made.

Both libraries now benefit from better access to collections and radically improved environments in which students can research and collaborate.