

# Working together:

evolving value for academic libraries



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## Executive Summary

This study investigated the value of academic libraries for teaching and research staff. The academic library community has been dealing with the issue of how best to demonstrate its value for years, especially value to students. Yet although a good deal of evidence is collected, much of this is evidence of activity rather than evidence of value and impact, especially value to and impact on teaching and research staff.

The study showed that libraries are struggling to find appropriate, and systematic, ways to capture evidence of their value for teaching and research staff. Much work is needed to build an evidence base in this area. Libraries can show their value to teaching and research staff most effectively by describing this in terms of benefits, for example, staff time saved, increased quality of student assignments, increased contact hours.

The study found that librarians generally understood the needs of their users in very broad terms, and provided services to meet these needs. Embedded information literacy instruction is highly valued by teaching staff. Increasingly, this is developing into integrated teaching and curriculum development activities. Support for research appeared less well embedded, but there is evidence of successful partnerships between librarians and research staff in the areas of literature reviewing and data curation, in particular. Meeting research staff one-to-one and targeting services to meet specific needs was an effective, albeit time-intensive, way for librarians to raise their profile and value.

There are concerns that not all teaching and research staff appreciate the level and extent of the support available from the modern academic library. Working in partnership with teaching and research staff was found to be an effective way to promote the library, and to increase the perception of value.

### **A number of recommendations have been derived from the findings:**

#### **For individual librarians**

- Promote the relevance of librarianship skills to the digital information environment
- Reach out to users by improving communication, building personal relationships, using appropriate language, and following through to build on success
- Go beyond the comfort zone, for example develop skills in teaching and marketing

#### **For library managers**

- Support and promote staff development by providing appropriate training opportunities
- Collect evidence of the value of library services – qualitative as well as quantitative – and use it systematically with the full range of stakeholders in the service
- Document the processes and effective strategies for building partnerships with teaching and research staff, so that these can be replicated easily

#### **For institutions**

- Recognise the library contribution by engaging with the library at all levels, not just liaison librarians with teaching and research staff, but also at senior management level
- Uphold the status of librarians and information professionals on an equivalent level with teaching and research staff

# 1 Introduction

**Working together: evolving value for academic libraries** was a six-month research project, commissioned by SAGE to investigate the value of academic libraries for teaching and research staff. The objective was to provide the academic library community with a better understanding of the connections between academic libraries and academic departments, and to identify practical ways to enhance their working relationship. It built on existing research to identify how libraries can better market their services, and how they can improve perceptions with key decision makers.

In an increasingly tough economic climate for many libraries around the world, being able to demonstrate impact and value is crucial. This has become an important focus for research in recent years, and some excellent summaries (notably Oakleaf, 2010) have been published. There is recent evidence to suggest that libraries and librarians are not recognised as information resource providers in the research context, as they strive to make access to those resources as seamless as possible for individual researchers (RIN & RLUK, 2011). Research by CIBER in the UK on the use of e-journals and their value to higher education institutions brought new evidence of the value of academic libraries, finding that high levels of per capita expenditure and use of e-journals were strongly positively correlated with research performance (RIN, 2011). Less evidence is available concerning the value of libraries in teaching, although the Library Impact Data Project <sup>1</sup>, funded by the JISC in the UK, is one example looking at the link between student library use and attainment.

The concept of value can be defined in many ways, for example value to users, value to the parent institution, or economic value – return on investment. We have taken a global perspective on the issue of library value, focusing on the value of academic libraries to academic departments. To this end, the research explored the relationship between academic libraries and teaching and research staff, and how those working relationships might be improved. Two questions are central to this issue: firstly, whether librarians have a good understanding of the needs of teaching and research staff; and secondly, how librarians are promoting their resources and services, and whether this can influence perceptions of the library amongst those staff.

## 1.1 Study methodology

The research was primarily based on eight case studies, undertaken in three broad geographic regions, between January and May 2012. The intention was to investigate examples of good practice which might provide exemplars for others, and potential case study volunteers were invited to come forward; the research team also sought suggestions from the information professional community. The case study institutions selected, which included both research intensive and teaching intensive institutions, were:

Scandinavia: Karolinska Institutet, Sweden; Oslo and Akerhus University College, Norway

USA: Purdue University; Towson University, Maryland; University of Utah; Wake Forest University

UK: University of Nottingham; University of Sussex

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://library.hud.ac.uk/blogs/projects/lidp/>, accessed 25-5-12

The case studies were conducted via face-to-face and telephone interviews with library professionals, teaching and research staff, and institutional stakeholders.

In order to give an indication of how typical the case study experiences were, a series of triangulation surveys was carried out in May 2012. In each region where case studies were conducted, a survey was distributed amongst librarians, via various mailing lists and personal contacts, to ascertain the extent to which the issues and primary findings from the case studies resonated with their own experiences. In total, 630 responses were received from the target regions: 326 responses from librarians in the US, 237 from the UK, and 67 from Scandinavian countries. A further 156 responses were received from librarians in other parts of the world, although the survey was not actively promoted elsewhere; these have not been included in the analysis.

This report presents the findings of the research and offers some recommendations for librarians and senior managers in how to improve the value of academic libraries for teaching and research staff.

## 2 Evolving value:- evidence and perceptions of value

The academic library community has been dealing with the issue of how best to demonstrate its value for years, especially value to students; although the drivers for doing this may vary according to the student fee model in place in each country. Academic libraries collect numerous statistics to support this evidence of value to the student community. Demonstrating value to teaching and research staff is however a more recent issue, and one that seems to be difficult to evidence with the current data gathered by academic libraries. Universities seem to have more difficulty in quantifying their value to teaching and research staff, than to students.

### 2.1 Evidence of value

Findings from the case studies, in all three geographical areas, indicated that there is no systematic evidence collected which shows the value of academic libraries for teaching and research staff. Institutions are aware of the need to gather such evidence, and most have started to do so, but none have yet found a systematic way to collect the evidence, nor have they found a way to assess the impact of the services provided by librarians into the teaching and research of members of academic staff/faculty.

Drivers for collecting evidence of value to teaching and research staff are primarily internal. Firstly, libraries genuinely want to do well and serve their community of users. Secondly, they need to support their annual budget allocation claims with evidence, preferably numbers – although the US case studies showed a greater interest in using ‘success stories’, rather than quantifiable evidence, to show value to the upper leadership of the university and faculty, compared with the UK case study libraries which seemed more anchored in the use of statistics.

Beside the purpose of benchmarking each institution against others in the country/region, which all case study institutions saw as a healthy exercise, external drivers for collecting evidence of value included research quality assessment audits and student satisfaction. These seemed to be stronger in the UK, with the NSS (National Student Survey) and 2014 REF (Research Excellence Framework) at the forefront of librarians’, and university senior managers’, minds.

## 2.2 Perceptions of value

Many of the librarians in the case studies were reluctant to comment on the value placed on their library by users, suggesting that we should ask the users. They receive positive feedback about the support the library provides, but there is a perception that academic staff do not really know how to use all that the library can offer. In the survey, we asked librarians how highly valued they thought their library was by senior managers, teaching and research staff, and students, on a scale from 1 to 10. The average responses are shown in Fig 1 – the differences between the average scores for perceived student value were significantly different between the three countries ( $p < 0.01$ ).

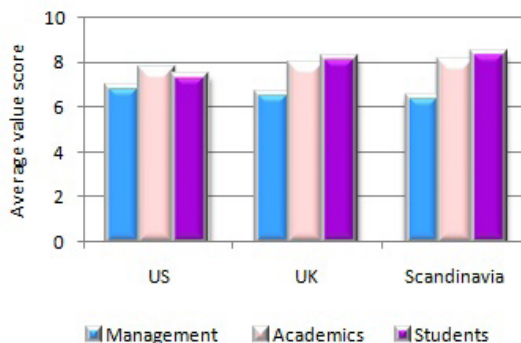
### Box 1: Librarians' views on their role

*'We are too successful in providing seamless electronic access. Faculty and students often do not even realize that the library is responsible for making the resources they access for their research available for them.'* (US)

*'Teaching and research staff often fail to realise that it is the Library that provides key resources, on behalf of the University.'* (Scandinavia)

*'Staff never cease to be amazed at what we can actually provide/help them with.'* (UK)

Fig 1: Librarians' perceptions of value



### Box 2: Faculty impressions of their library

*'... I feel confident that if I need something, e.g. if I was to do an interactive thing for a course and I wouldn't be too sure how to do it myself I know that I can contact them and get help...'* (Karolinska)

*'The library always tries to work hard to get what academic staff request'. (Nottingham)*

Quotes from the case studies

There was considerable concern from case study librarians that academics do not understand or appreciate all that the library can offer, to them as well as to their students, which was confirmed by comments in the survey (Box 1). In the case studies, academics as well as librarians were all generally very satisfied with the services provided (Box 2). Some did comment, however, that they were not sure that they were necessarily representative of their department, expressing concern that not all colleagues knew how to use the library or the librarians' expertise fully. Others supported the librarians' own perceptions – an academic from the University of Nottingham noted that at times some members of academic staff may lack consideration for librarians – *'They know the library matters but they don't approach it in the right manner...I'm not sure that the faculty as a whole appreciate what librarians do or understand what they do'*.

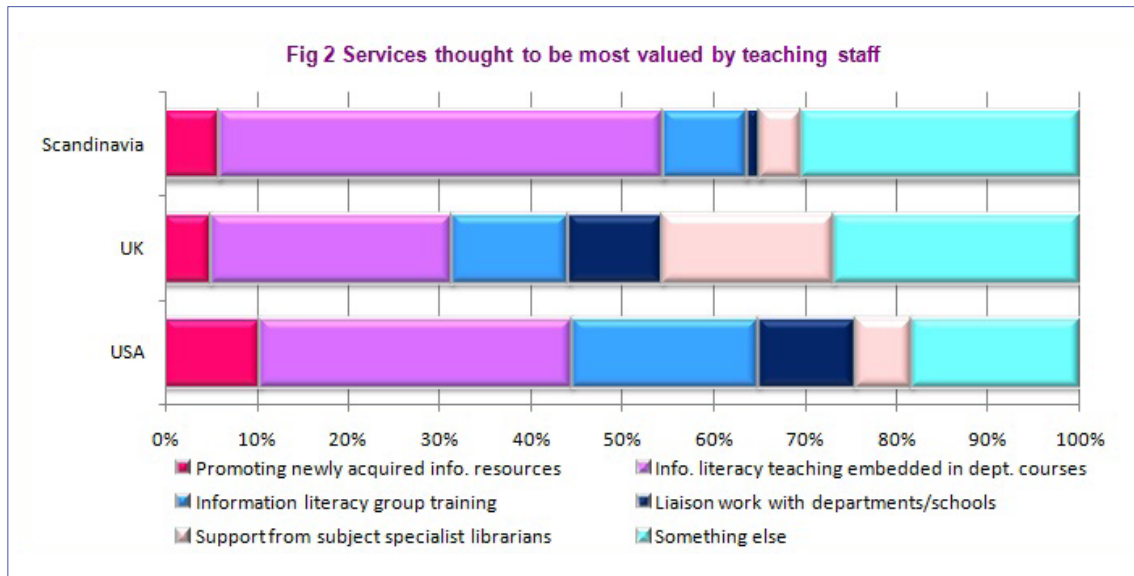
A separate issue relates to the changing role of the library. The physical library is increasingly geared to meeting the needs of students, with cafés and social space provided alongside information resources and other services. Some academics find it difficult to reconcile these two roles, preferring a quiet library to work in, with not too many computers, the opposite of what pleases the students. At the University of Utah, a recent survey showed that many teaching and research staff regarded the library as simply a large undergraduate study hall. With material available online and document delivery directly to offices, many never came to the library building. *'I don't think it would be unfair for me to say that most faculty really do ignore us or take it for granted, while most librarians think that we are a central part of the faculty's mission'*.

### 3 Working together:- services for teaching and research staff

As well as the delivery of core traditional services, such as reference, instruction and the provision of teaching and research materials through collection management and development, libraries have been ‘reinventing’ themselves and their services in order to reinforce their support for academics in their teaching and research roles. The following sections provide examples of such reinvention as identified from our case studies.

#### 3.1 Embedded information literacy instruction

Information literacy instruction is commonly delivered in higher education institutions as ad-hoc sessions, run either by the library or by the academic department. Increasingly, librarians are trying to embed such information literacy sessions within specific programmes or courses. Embedded information literacy instruction requires librarians to work with teaching staff to design, plan and time the librarian’s interventions within a course. The objective is to make information literacy training relevant to the content of the course, so that students immediately see the benefits of such interventions. In our survey, of 12 services listed, library teaching embedded in departmental courses was felt to be the most highly valued by teaching staff in all three regions (Fig 2), and in Scandinavia it was also thought to be the most important to the library.



This practice seems to be particularly successful in departments covering vocational subjects, such as nursing, physiotherapy and occupational therapy. An explanation of the success of embedded information literacy instruction within those departments, put forward by the librarians at the case study institutions, is that teaching in those departments is primarily geared towards an evidence-based approach, for which the assistance of librarians is highly valued. Embedded information literacy instruction is not, however, confined to the medical and health sciences. At the University of Nottingham, embedded teaching is now being implemented in non-health sciences departments (Box 3).



### **Box 3: Embedded information literacy**

A successful collaboration between the Department of Classics (Arts Faculty) and the library at the University of Nottingham allows librarians to develop and deliver the teaching of information skills in joint sessions, i.e. as an integral part of modules and alongside academic staff. Information literacy content is developed to support the learning outcomes of a course, and information literacy outcomes are assessed alongside academic outcomes. The success of these embedded library interventions has led the library to investigate rolling them out to other departments and schools.

For the library, embedding information skills instruction into academic modules in this way represents an important culture shift. The library is no longer reacting to ad-hoc requests from departments to provide information literacy teaching interventions; librarians are now pro-actively trying to approach academic staff to embed library interventions into courses. Academics can easily see the value of what librarians provide and the impact this has on the quality of the work they receive from students. Embedding librarians into modules also helps to increase formal contact hours for students – this is an important driver, as students demand more for their fees. Previous ad-hoc teaching did not count towards this.

However, one of the issues with embedded information training, which was recognised across the eight case studies, is that this is an extremely time-consuming support service. Some libraries were not actively promoting such initiatives across all academic departments, knowing that they did not have the capacity to deliver them on a large scale. Some libraries were cautious, not wanting to raise faculty expectations if they felt they would not be able to deliver embedded information skills training as a standard service. These, and other, new library service developments with respect to teaching and research support are increasing pressure on librarians' time. As a consequence, it is important to review current processes to free up librarians' time to accommodate the new demands, e.g. streamlining book selection and order processes, or dedicating less time to reference desk queries (Williams, 2009).

### **Box 4: Co-teaching in practice**

One co-teaching partnership, between the Library and the College of Health at the University of Utah, started with developing curricular content with a member of academic staff. The collaboration goes beyond traditional information literacy skills teaching to include use of information technology, software teaching, helping students with their presentations, reviewing students' PowerPoint presentations before they present, and proof-reading their work.

## **3.2 Integrated teaching services**

Some of the US institutions in our case studies had taken embedded information literacy teaching a step further. At both the University of Utah and Purdue University, three levels of information literacy delivery are offered: one-off sessions, embedded sessions and co-teaching. Co-teaching, or integrated teaching, is gaining strength in the US, but it is still a developing area and take up is variable. In this configuration, the member of teaching staff and the librarian collaborate closely together to develop the content of a course.

In the case of co-teaching, the librarians' input is not limited to the teaching of information skills. Librarians are fully involved in the design of the course – they contribute to the content,

workflow, and assignments (both in terms of content and information literacy). They are also fully involved in the teaching – they review the research process, both in terms of content and research methods, and grade course assignments (Box 4). Some liaison librarians have subject expertise (PhDs) but co-teaching is not necessarily linked to a librarian’s level of subject expertise. Its success depends very much on the librarians themselves, their personality and willingness to teach, as well as their relationships with members of academic staff in the departments they work with. Co-teaching is generally focused on information literacy skills for research, and is often associated with courses that include research projects. The member of teaching staff provides subject content and expertise whilst the librarian helps with the pedagogy aspects of the course, i.e. planning, designing and implementing information literacy and critical thinking.

As with embedded teaching, some disciplines are thought to be more receptive to co-teaching than others. This started in health science, where evidence-based research is well-established, and is now trickling down to other departments on campus, such as social work. The vocational aspects of health teaching, particularly in departments such as nursing, for example, is seen as a facilitator to build and develop partnerships with librarians more easily. Two reasons have been suggested to explain the success of co-teaching in those departments: their evidence-based approach often requires librarians’ assistance; and those departments have a tradition of working in partnership with external partners.

Co-teaching is seen at both Purdue University and the University of Utah as an excellent example of the library working in partnership with teaching staff. Teaching partnerships are successful if there is a recognition that both instructors provide value to the course, and as long as there is a clear definition of each person’s role.

Librarians often see their teaching role as essential for them to remain relevant in the new information age, on top of their more traditional role of collection building and care. A lot of opportunities for teaching partnerships seem to arise from conversations, personal connections liaison librarians have with teaching staff, or through word of mouth. Sharing successes and word of mouth are seen as the best ways to promote teaching partnerships and get the buy-in of teaching staff, though not necessarily the quickest way – *‘when you work with someone and you have a successful class and a successful partnership the word of mouth from other faculty within the department or in other departments is worth a lot’ (Purdue University).*

### 3.3 Other teaching support

The case studies indicated that additional ways in which libraries supported staff in their teaching included the library’s contribution to curriculum design and assistance with information technology tools.

The library’s input into curriculum design is appreciated and generally well received by both senior managers and teaching staff. A notable example was found at the University of Nottingham (Box 5). Such support goes beyond co-teaching – early involvement in curriculum design and planning enables librarians to show teaching staff how they can contribute to the learning outcomes that have been set, and how they can help students develop information literacy skills and become competent practitioners. Through their participation in curriculum design, librarians can tightly integrate information literacy sessions within courses from the outset, thus making them more relevant to the content of the courses, and develop embedded instruction as an integral part of the curriculum, rather than as an afterthought. They can explore with students the wide range of resources the library offers as well as include some critical thinking workshops, supported by examples from the literature to illustrate the argument.

### **Box 5: Support for curriculum design**

Driven by national changes to nursing education requiring all nurses to be educated to degree level, The University of Nottingham developed a new nursing course with a high level of blended learning. The health science librarian was directly involved in its design from the outset, over an 18 month development cycle, identifying relevant resources for this new degree level course and developing information skills elements.

With respect to information technology tools, some of the case study libraries, such as Wake Forest University and Karolinska Institutet, were also offering specific assistance for teaching staff to help with the use of relatively new information technology tools, e.g. podcasts, wikis and blogs, in teaching for their courses, as well as with developing fully web-based courses.

## **3.4 Integrated research services**

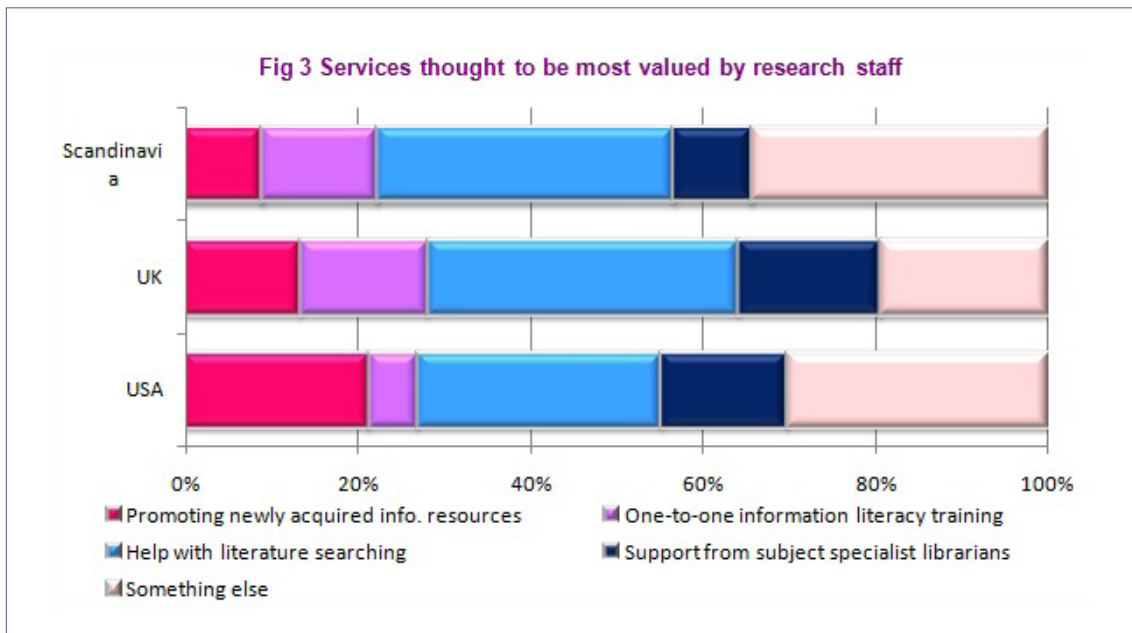
Our case study institutions and survey respondents included both teaching intensive and research intensive institutions. Support for research was generally in line with the overall mission of the university, with research intensive universities naturally offering greater library support to researchers. However, all the case study libraries, whatever their current level of support, felt that research support was not as well developed as teaching support, and more could be done in this area, although they were not always sure of the sort of support that researchers needed.

Research staff often project a self-sufficient image, and librarians do not always feel confident to approach them to offer their help, and do not always know how to articulate relevant skills to support research staff, beyond the traditional roles of collection development and information skills training. Research support services widely available include help with open access publishing and/or self-archiving (institutional repositories), bibliometrics, and literature searching. Although literature searching is something that is well-developed in medicine and health sciences, notably with initiatives such as the Cochrane review<sup>2</sup>, librarians supporting other disciplines recognise that very few members of research staff actually come for assistance with this. Findings from the case studies indicate that one of the main issues with research support is that it is very much dependant on the relationships librarians have established with academic departments, or even at individual level – *‘the level of support we provide for their own research is in some ways dependant on the strength of that relationship between the librarian and the faculty’* (Wake Forest). Stronger relationships between librarians and researchers, both in terms of communication and marketing, would provide more opportunities for partnerships with researchers. As reported by Jubb (2011), researchers who use the services of specialist librarians (whether subject specialists or research support librarians) value their assistance, but in most cases librarians and academics are not sufficiently well-connected to move towards a greater collaboration in the form of research partnerships.

An increasing effort is generally made at research intensive institutions to provide support with issues such as open access, bibliometrics and data management, but this is not yet done in a systematic manner. Our survey found that support for open access publishing and particularly for self-archiving were relatively more important to Scandinavian respondents than those in the UK or US, although such services did not feature as being amongst those thought to be most highly valued by research staff (Fig 3).

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<sup>2</sup> Further information about the Cochrane systematic reviews can be found at: <http://www.cochrane.org/cochrane-reviews>



Liaison/subject librarians in our case studies generally found it difficult to strike the right balance between teaching support and research support, and felt that research support was often sacrificed to provide more teaching support.

### 3.5 Research partnerships

One area of research support which libraries are particularly keen to develop is research partnerships, i.e. collaborative research or collaboration in the writing of grant proposals and academic outputs. The creation of library/scholar partnerships is also one of the key strategic points developed in the ARL Strategic Plan 2010-12 (ARL, 2010). This has been achieved with some success at the University of Nottingham in the area of medicine and health sciences (Box 6). There was an awareness that libraries need to build up towards such levels of partnership – one key issue is the librarians’ confidence to do this, as some see themselves as support providers rather than partners in research. Academic staff had mixed views about establishing research partnerships with librarians. Some of the researchers interviewed found it difficult to see what the contribution of the librarian would be in such partnerships, whilst others would welcome initiatives aimed at partnering up with the library, despite some concerns about the lack of time to engage in such partnerships – *‘but you can only get a certain amount of that ...everybody is so busy, they use the library and collaborate when it’s important to do so, otherwise they’re all doing their own endeavours’* (Wake Forest).

#### **Box 6: Research partnerships – systematic reviews**

For the University of Nottingham, the involvement of subject librarians in systematic reviews is of particular interest. The librarians’ time is costed, and documented as part of the research proposal at a high level, to develop robust search strategies. The expertise of subject librarians in systematic reviews is recognised by research staff, who are willing to pay for librarians to conduct the systematic literature search. Librarians contributing to systematic reviews are also cited as co-authors on the publications.

Purdue University has taken a proactive approach to research support with the creation of a Data Services Specialist position. This is the result of a significant amount of groundwork done by the library over the years to understand the needs of research staff in terms of data handling and sharing. Data management was identified as a growing area of concern for research staff at Purdue University, which is primarily oriented towards science and technology disciplines. The role of the Data Services Librarian is to help research staff to get more value out of their data through the organisation, description, dissemination (in ways that feel appropriate to research staff), and preservation of data. The Data Services Librarian works closely with liaison librarians to build on existing relationships with departments, and to approach members of research staff who work with data. This data service allowed Purdue Library to set up a significant number of research partnerships, particularly to secure grants, through the incorporation of sound data management plans into proposals, which are increasingly required by funding agencies.

The success of this approach at Purdue relies on the library's effort to *'frame [the service] from a faculty perspective rather than from a librarian perspective'*. The library has long recognised that the general issue of data management and curation was not of immediate interest to researchers when proposed as training sessions, awareness raising sessions or research collaboration. However, individual conversations with researchers, based on their research, enabled librarians to identify individual data needs and offer a response to those very specific needs. Although the end goal is the same, i.e. getting researchers to think about the management and curation of their data, the approach taken to achieve it differs, in that the service is no longer presented as yet another library training, for which researchers have no appetite, but as an individual response to a researcher's specific need. Although this approach is based on one-to-one conversations, and thus requires considerable amounts of the librarians' time to meet with researchers, the library is hoping to develop a reputation as a valuable partner in this area and so build trust and credibility amongst researchers. The success of this approach is based on the fact that buy-in from research staff is increased as researchers see the library responding to their very specific needs. Purdue Library considers it essential that librarians engaged in research support *'present themselves as someone who can solve a problem research staff are having directly,'* to facilitate engagement and interaction between research staff and librarians.

## 4 Raising the visibility of the library and library services

The disintermediation of information brought about by digital technologies has led to the modern academic library struggling with visibility. The changing role of librarians and their success in providing seamless remote access to digital information has engendered a growing disconnection between librarians and teaching and research staff. Raising awareness of what the library can do to support teaching and research staff, as well as students, and of its contribution to the wider institution, is a key component of demonstrating value. What is required, and the best ways of achieving this, will depend to a certain extent on the starting point – how is the library perceived by its users, do they know what is on offer, and the resources available to deliver the service. Raising awareness and promotion of new services requires time and enthusiasm from library staff, not just to develop and maintain effective lines of communication, but also to be able to deal with the potential increased demand which may result (Box 7). As one US survey respondent noted, *'One or two bad experiences, ..., and the faculty disappear forever from librarian interaction'*.

### **Box 7: Raising awareness of library services**

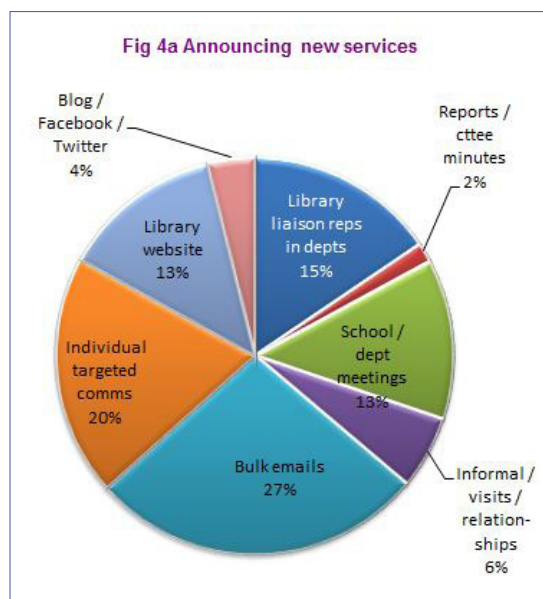
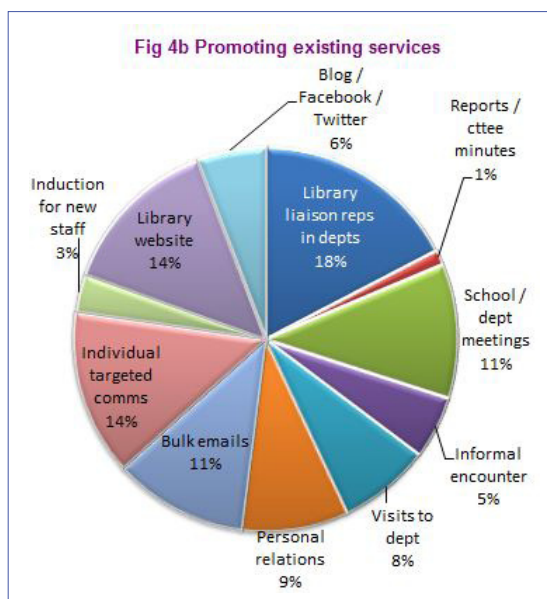
One initiative to raise awareness found in the case studies was the University of Sussex's Research Hive Seminar Series – seminars on a wide range of topics of interest to the research community, such as impact, data management, bibliometrics, public engagement etc.

## 4.1 Communication

Communication channels used by librarians to reach out to teaching and research staff vary, with different means of communication being thought appropriate for different messages. Librarians rely heavily on traditional channels, such as library newsletters, the website and emails to departmental library representatives to communicate with teaching and research staff about general library announcements, information about new resources and new initiatives undertaken by the library. For more specific information, such as a new database potentially of interest to a particular department, liaison librarians would email teaching and research staff directly, if they felt confident enough to do so. Although this practice is seen as part of the normal role of liaison librarians, findings from the case studies show that not all liaison librarians feel comfortable emailing teaching and research staff directly, without passing through the departmental library representative.

Our survey asked librarians which of a variety of methods identified from the case studies were most effective in different situations. For making general library announcements, bulk emails to all staff were thought to be most effective (40% of respondents), followed by the library website (26%). When trialling new information resources or services, individually targeted emails were first choice (45% of respondents), followed by bulk emails (19%) and via library liaison representatives (16%). Respondents from the US were more likely to report the effectiveness of library liaison representatives, whilst those from the UK were more likely to report individual communications, than those from the other regions. There was greater diversity of opinion when it came to announcing new resources and services, and even more when it came to promoting existing services (Fig 4).

We also asked about barriers to more effective communication, and although a variety of issues was raised, the majority centred around time constraints, particularly for teaching and research staff (Box 8). Other issues appeared to be more institution-specific, related to the location of the library, institutional culture, or the perceived status of library staff relative to teaching and research staff.



### Box 8: Biggest barrier to promoting library services to staff, examples from the survey

*'Time. It is difficult to secure faculty time to talk about library resources and services. I have found that we have to be proactive and persistent if we really want to get the word out about something.'* (US)

*'Lack of time: for library staff to have time to promote resources to individuals; for academic staff to read and digest emails or other communications.'* (UK)

*'Teaching and research staff are really busy and don't see the use of prioritizing communications with library staff.'* (Scandinavia)

## 4.2 Building relationships

Relationships with teaching and research staff vary greatly between academic departments and from individual to individual. Departments are described as having their own disciplinary culture, as well as different ways of doing things. Librarians need to understand such disciplinary cultures, and the way knowledge is produced throughout the research life cycle and transmitted. In our case studies, seven of the eight libraries had subject liaison librarians, whilst the eighth had moved to a structure supporting teaching & learning on the one hand, and research on the other. Attendance at departmental meetings at relevant times throughout the year was seen by liaison librarians as a great opportunity to improve the visibility of the library, talk with teaching and research staff about issues of immediate interest, such as open access, and to remind them what librarians can do for them. However, this was not always easy – as one survey respondent commented, *‘Hard to get invites/entry to their meetings; they don’t seem to think the library has relevant services to them personally and therefore they don’t consider the library as relevant to their meetings.’* (Scandinavia)

Faculty outreach relies on very good personal relationships between teaching and research staff and librarians; but even those librarians that have good relationships with teachers and researchers recognise that they do not reach all staff equally. Some academics do not use the services offered, and the difficulty for librarians is to determine whether this is because the services are not needed, are inadequate, or are not known by academics. Teaching and research staff sometimes project a ‘self-sufficient’ image – *‘I think a lot of time we assume that the faculty that aren’t approaching us are doing that because they don’t need us... and it may be that they just don’t know that we can help them with the particular thing that they’re doing.’* (Wake Forest)

Personal relationships are seen as essential in the work of liaison librarians, with one describing this as *‘the most interesting part in my work’* (Oslo & Akerhus), but they are also extremely time consuming. Personal relationships can easily get sacrificed because of the lack of time to carry out the rest of the job, however– *‘those that have really invested the time in those relationships see the pay-offs.’* (Wake Forest)

Librarians need to build trust with the academic community they serve. One way to build this trust is to take a proactive role and engage with new members of academic staff as soon as they arrive on campus, over the summer before start of term; working on relationships at an early stage is important *‘because I think it is the way you get them to bring their students to you, to recommend you to their students and to see you as an expert that can help them with their own research’* (Wake Forest). At Towson University, there is a formal library presence within some departments – librarians associated with an academic department have office hours within that department, both to raise the visibility of the library amongst members of teaching and research staff and to foster interaction. This was particularly valued by members of teaching and research staff.

Informal communication, seeking out staff at university events, conferences, etc., promotes visibility, which in turn promotes the services of the library to staff who may not know all that they offer. The case studies also identified some more innovative ways in which libraries were engaging with teaching and research staff outside of the library setting, to promote the library and its services, for example:

The library at Wake Forest University organises an annual Faculty Author Dinner, in collaboration with the Provost’s office (which funds the event), to show recognition for significant faculty academic achievements. It is described as one of the great events of the year and gives an opportunity for academic staff to meet with each other, as well as with librarians. From the library’s perspective, it helps liaison librarians to build stronger relationships with their respective faculty, as they get to know more about the research they conduct, as well as meeting with their families – *‘the outcome for the library is not countable, it is much more in the form of good will and a reminder that the research people do [is facilitated by] our resources and services at some point.’*

The library at Towson University provides a co-curricular programme to support events being held on campus. For example, during a film festival devoted to women, minorities and the media, one of the films shown was adapted from a book, so the library organised a reading group to discuss the book, and so promote the film show. The initiative for such events can come from the library, but increasingly departments are making the initial approach.

The library at the Karolinska Institutet seeks to engage with academic staff via a series of lunchtime lectures on popular scientific themes, with external speakers. These are free, and lunch is provided. *'The aim is to get people in the library ... because teachers and researchers may be only using the digital library.'* Attracting academics to these lectures has been challenging, however, with lack of time cited as one reason why more do not attend. One of the aims is to show teaching and research staff that the library can be used for purposes other than just studying. This is a work in progress and the library is keen to carry on because it is felt that this initiative is good for the library's image.

### 4.3 Marketing

General marketing of the library will raise its profile amongst teaching and research staff, and is increasingly seen as an essential activity. One senior library manager summarised this as: *'our role has evolved to marketing as well in terms of making sure that people are aware of what the library has to offer because it has changed so much over time that it's important to get the word out'* (Utah).

Some libraries now have dedicated marketing teams, but this is far from universal. At Purdue University, for example, the library marketing group is responsible for high-level, library-wide communications, as well as helping to promote specific services. The survey did not specifically enquire about marketing, but many respondents raised it spontaneously as an issue, particularly in connection with communication. Poor marketing was seen as a barrier to good communication by respondents in all three regions (Box 9). Much of the communication which libraries have with users can be seen as marketing – announcing new resources and services being a prime example – but using this as a label can change the emphasis, and lead to a broader promotion of the library as a whole. Having a designated marketing role within the library can also help to package the library message, to prevent over-notification and to be more strategic in communication. It provides time for library staff to plan and implement proper marketing events targeted at teaching and research staff.

## 5 Recommendations

Building on the evidence of this report, some suggestions are made for libraries, and librarians, who would like to increase their value to teaching and research staff. Much of this is concerned with the perception of value – on the whole, academic libraries offer the services their users want and need, but these are not always fully appreciated. As one librarian commented, it was not until she became part of the library at the University of Utah that she had any inkling of the kind of support that she had been missing.

### **Box 9: Marketing the library, librarians' comments from the survey**

*'The library needs to market itself more as I still meet academic staff who are unaware of the services we offer'. (UK)*

*'Market ourselves better, so that we show how we are relevant, and how we can help them' (UK)*

*'We need to market what we offer in anticipation of their specific needs, not their wants or what we as librarians think they should have'. (US)*

*'Personalized communication and marketing of services and materials is perhaps the only effective way to encourage the vast majority of faculty to value and use the library and its resources'. (US)*

*'... our library is bad at marketing and advocacy so that the staff doesn't know what we can offer'. (Scandinavia)*



## 5.1 Individual librarians

With increasing pressure on librarians to support teaching and research staff, the acquisition of new skills and knowledge – beyond the traditional librarianship skills – is essential for librarians to provide this support in an effective and timely manner. Auckland (2012) provided a thorough review of the skills needed to support the evolving information needs of researchers. Replicating such a thorough analysis of librarians' skills requirements is beyond the scope of this study. However, by providing examples of good practice in working in partnership with teaching and research staff, this study touched upon the development of new skills for librarians. Based on the interviews with librarians and the survey findings, the following recommendations are made to librarians to help them raise their profile, improve their services and increase their perceived value to teaching and research staff.

**Develop teaching skills:-** Embedded teaching and co-teaching are extremely valued by teaching staff, who can observe the benefits in the quality of the assignments they receive from students. One recurrent comment from teaching staff was that not all librarians had appropriate teaching skills to make this collaboration successful. Helping librarians develop their teaching skills would improve the quality of their teaching, as well as the quality of the interaction with the students and the teacher. Librarians' lack of motivation to teach was also raised as a barrier to integrated teaching by some members of teaching staff. As motivation is often linked to confidence, developing librarians' teaching skills may help boost their confidence and so their motivation to teach alongside teaching staff, as a full member of the partnership.

**Build confidence in librarianship skills:-** Librarians' skills, which were developed for the printed word, might be considered, by some, to be obsolete in the digital world of instant electronic and networked communications. Librarians need to show that their skills are still relevant in the 21st century, particularly in the area of information literacy where the skills of librarians are more important than ever, to navigate through the sea of information, and find and evaluate relevant sources.

**Communication:-** Communication is an area where individual librarians can make a difference to the perceived value of their library. One is to be proactive in engaging with users, although it is appreciated that it takes two to communicate! Many librarians are already doing this, and this report has examples of some of the innovative ways in which librarians are reaching out to teaching and research staff. Particular consideration should be given to the following points:

**Personal relationships:-** Librarians use a wide range of communication channels to reach out to teaching and research staff. The study highlighted the difference personal relationships can make in the collaboration of librarians with teaching and research staff. Personal relationships are essential to put the library on to academics' radar, as well as building trust and raising awareness of services. Librarians need to 'get the word out' about their services, and not only through formal communication channels, which can easily get ignored by busy members of teaching and research staff. Going to academics' offices during their office hours or by appointment to talk with them about what the library can do to help, and approaching them outside the library's environment, such as at events taking place on campus, are just some examples of how to build personal relationships with members of teaching and research staff.

**Use appropriate language:-** Teaching and research staff understand the concept of 'information literacy', or 'drop-in sessions', for example, but are not necessarily familiar with the terms. At the University of Utah, faculty coined the term '21st century competencies' to describe the broad concept of information literacy. Teaching and research staff can also be resistant to being 'trained' in anything – at the University of Sussex, 'awareness raising', as opposed to 'training', sessions are arranged for electronic resources, often in academic departments, rather than the library, to overcome this.

**Follow through:-** Related to this is a need to translate the outcome of library interventions into terms which relate to academic outcomes, such as better grades or student retention. It is also important to use the successes in one area to promote similar services in other areas.

**Use marketing strategies:-** As well as better communication, there is clearly a need for more marketing in many libraries, but there is also a perception (on the part of librarians themselves) that libraries are not good at this, and that staff need better skills. Hand in hand with this is the confidence to approach teaching and research staff, and a need to have this done by staff who are comfortable doing it. Even the most shy and retiring of librarians can better promote their services with an awareness of effective marketing strategies. This includes knowing your audience, matching their needs with your services, and getting the timing right. An effective marketing strategy also requires librarians to better articulate their offer by moving from a librarian perspective to a teaching and research staff perspective. Librarians should change their framework and learn to articulate their services in terms of the benefits for the teaching and research staff community (e.g. contribution to general academic learning outcomes, savings in teaching/research staff time) – rather than simply describing their services – to achieve successful buy-in from teaching and research staff. This is a slow and iterative process, but one that is thought to be necessary if libraries want to demonstrate that they provide value-added and cost saving services: evaluate what works, and what doesn't, and build on that.

**Know your audience:-** While many liaison librarians will have a broad understanding of the academic disciplines within which they work, a little preparation before meeting teaching and research staff can pay huge dividends in terms of relationships with individual staff and with departments. This is particularly important where library staff are seen as a service, rather than an academic partner in teaching and research.

**Go beyond the comfort zone:-** As set out in the ARL Strategic Plan 2010-2012 (ARL, 2010), there is a need for librarians to acquire new skills in relation to scholarship, particularly e-scholarship (or e-science). It is essential that librarians gain a better understanding of the research process and develop a research mentality to embrace new roles and developments aimed at supporting researchers in their research endeavours and contributing to the process of scholarship, particularly with hot topics such as open access and funder mandates, data management, and bibliometrics.

## 5.2 Within the library & its management

Library managers can also do key things to promote the value of the library.

**Staff development:-** It is important that library managers assess the skills and knowledge needed and provide support for staff to take on the more proactive role described above, and to develop the requisite interpersonal skills and confidence. If staff are to be used to their best advantage, they should be able to develop and use their existing skills, and be encouraged to develop in areas that interest them. This means providing relevant staff development opportunities, and allowing staff time to attend courses.

**Review tasks and streamline processes:-** as librarians take on new roles, on top of their existing roles, and develop partnerships with teaching and research staff, there is a definite requirement to free up their time to accommodate new demands, developments and services. It is good practice at this point to review current tasks and duties in order to identify which tasks and processes can be streamlined, e.g. book selection and order, presence at reference desks etc.

**Collect and use evidence of value systematically:-** This again requires resourcing – collecting evidence of value is not a trivial task, as it needs more than the management statistics which come from library systems. Individual librarians should be encouraged to collect testimonials, which, when collated, can provide a powerful body of evidence of value, as well as collecting broader, quantitative, evidence by means of user surveys, training assessments etc., and qualitative methods such as focus groups. Using the evidence effectively means building on success, letting users – and managers – know when the library has contributed to the success of others as well as publicising its own successes. Libraries should make this a specific responsibility for a senior member of library staff, with a team appropriate to the size of the library.

**Document the process of building partnerships:-** Keeping a record of successful strategies to build partnerships with teaching and research staff – for instance via a shared community-based platform such as a wiki – can help librarians to identify patterns of success, and the successful strategies leading to the setup of teaching and research partnerships. Such records would identify the key elements for librarians to engage with academics – the information that librarians need to provide to teaching and research staff; the strategies for approaching staff that seem to work best when connecting with faculty; recurrent questions and concerns from teaching and research staff that librarians need to be aware of and prepared for; and disciplinary needs, for example. This would help librarians adopt a proactive attitude to partnership building and help them be prepared and confident when approaching members of teaching and research staff about teaching or research partnerships.

### 5.3 Wider institution

There are three, interconnected, areas where the wider institution can make a significant contribution to the perceived value of the library.

**Recognise the library contribution to the wider institution:-** The findings showed that the engagement of the library with teaching and research staff should be multidimensional, i.e. the engagement of the library should take place at all levels of the institution – not just librarians with liaison staff in departments, but senior library managers with senior faculty and the head of library at the top institutional level. This is seen as an important means to raise the profile of the library, and demonstrate its value to the wider institution. Many universities clearly hold the library at the centre of their operations, but for others this is not so apparent.

**Uphold the status of librarians and information professionals:-** Those libraries where staff had an equivalent status to teaching and research staff found it easier to promote their services, as they were seen by those staff as partners in the teaching and research process. In turn, this resulted in better perception of the value of the library – communication was facilitated and library services were more highly valued. Where libraries were seen as a service department, responding to the curriculum, they appeared to be less highly valued by teaching and research staff.

**Promote culture change:-** The size of culture change which might be required to achieve the above objectives may be daunting, and must come from institution-wide support from senior managers in conjunction with improved marketing by the library, to foster good personal relationships between the library and teaching and research staff.

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