Delighting our customers:

Building services collaboratively with students at a distance

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The Open University

• Open to People, Places, Methods and Ideas
• The UK’s only university dedicated to distance learning
• Over 173,000 students
• 30% of new OU undergraduates are under 25
The Open University Library

- Over 600,000 books, 65% digital
- Over 135,000 serials, all digital
- Team of 74 colleagues
- 24/7 virtual Library Helpdesk
Eat your greens
Cultural change
Dispersed communities
The Student Panel

- Annual rolling membership of ~500 students (representative)
- Two intake points per year
- Preferences for engagement sought
- No more than four research activities a year
- Communication loop
Student Panel research

- Expectations
- Impact
- Product specification
- Usability
Research at a distance

Methods
- In person focus groups
- Online Focus Groups
- Love/break up letters
- Cognitive mapping
- Telephone Interviews – directed story telling
- Surveys
- Usability Testing
- Menu Structure Testing
- Card Sorting
- Wire Frames

#lac16
Discovery Service Procurement
No longer fit for purpose
Re-thinking research at a distance
Outcomes

• Tendering criteria
• Technical specification for actual interface
• Requirements documentation for design

Built by students, for students...

• Continual improvement
Library Services Impact

Case Study 2
Library role in the study journey
Organic interviews

- Expectations at study start
- Role of Library during studies
- Use (or non use) of Library
Key themes

- Earlier introduction to Library Services
- Uncertainty around what to expect from an online library
- Increase library visibility
- Value of online access

2016
Using the findings

Introducing your online library

This short animated video introduces you to the OU Library.

A new OU student gets some useful advice from fellow students:

Show transcript
Student case studies

Library Services student case study 15

Sasha Rawlinson

Module
DU311: Earth in crisis - environmental policy in an international context

Study goal
En in international studies

I started her OU degree to change her career path and acknowledge she has achieved this because the course and qualification she is studying in closely link to the organisation she is now working for.

Library impact
Having access to a broad range of sources offering differing viewpoints has helped her put forward a balanced argument in her assignments.

Student use of the library

Library Services student case study 13

Linda Treadwell

Module
Becht. Critical perspectives on self and others

Study goal
MBA

I work as a project professional and want to expand her business knowledge and obtain the relevant qualifications to progress her career. It is the first time she has studied with the OU.

Library impact
Having the online library integrated as part of her course has been invaluable in helping her find resources and develop her study skills.

Student use of the library

www.open.ac.uk/library
Lessons Learnt
Has it worked?

General sample: 3000

- 8% response
- 240 responses
- £1.88 per response

Student panel: 500

- 80% response
- 400 responses
- £1.28 per response
What we’ve learnt
(so far)
What we’ve learnt (so far)

“Talking to you is an incentive and knowing that the OU is willing to put in that resource and to get someone to do what you’re doing is quite encouraging”

(OU Student)
Added benefits
Where next?
Thank you!

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