CRIG Forum- 4th August 2005
(Annette Sullivan)
Learning Centres @RMIT

- Guided by University strategic objectives
- Assisted by University strategic funding
- Twofold objectives:
  1. PHYSICAL- To offer high-tech, collaborative learning spaces in an information-rich environment with staff offering integrated IT and information assistance and training to learners.
  2. VIRTUAL- To facilitate access to and delivery of digital information resources and services and be a gateway to online learning HUBs.
PHYSICAL spaces & services changes/challenges

- Approx 550 computer workstations across 6 locations (1 PC/105 students) + wireless
- Mix of benches, labs, group study, laptops for loan
- Lib catalogue & p/w management PCs
- Multifunction PCs - Internet /MS Office & some specialist software/Access to School and Student home directories/Learning HUBs
- MACs with multimedia s/w
- Adaptive Technology PCs
- Hotmail kiosks
PHYSICAL spaces & services changes/challenges

- Mostly redesigned space within existing buildings & some annexation of additional space.
- Architect designed with some building constraints.
- Space created by weeding Print, REF and PER collections.
- Reduced individual study spaces, more group study spaces to reflect changed usage patterns.
- Concept of zones introduced:
  - Collaborative
  - Quiet
PHYSICAL spaces & services changes/challenges cont..

- **Collaborative Zones**
  Talking allowed, Mobile phone friendly, Food friendly
  Training rooms with data projection, electronic whiteboards, doc-cam
  Recreational-lounge seating
  Group study rooms (with PCs) & tables
  Wireless enabled, Laptops for loan
  PC & MAC benches with scanners, CD-DVD burners, printers, fax
  Integrated service desks

- **Quiet Zones**
- Quiet & Silent study areas
- Collections
- individual carrells
- wireless connectivity

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PHYSICAL spaces & services changes/challenges cont..

- **IT Help**
- Some convergence of Library and IT computer labs and staff
  - Convergence of Lib Info and IT Help desks
  - Some IT staff but mostly upskilled lib. staff
  - Level 1 Helpdesk staff/ “Rovers”
  - Backup from central ITS staff (InfraActive Helpdesk s/w)
  - Student partnership placements
Physical spaces & services changes/challenges cont..

- **SOME ISSUES**
- Booking software considered- Pharos Sign-Up Vx (Not compatible with NDS login)
- Now considering ‘Utilization’ s/w to indicate ‘free’ workstations
- Look at increasing specialist s/w access by use of ‘Key Server’ technology to manage s/w licences and usage across University.
- Some HECS funding avail. to review spaces @ Bundoora & Swanston (Trend towards more collaborative spaces)
- Physical visits decreasing somewhat.
  - Library 2004 Physical visits: 1,960,435 ↓
  - Library 2003 Physical visits: 2,062,458
- Have we reached ‘saturation’?
- Need to survey student needs & stay abreast of needs.

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Virtual spaces & services changes/challenges

- Over 300 online databases
- Over 14,000 titles incl. journals, scripts, e-books
- Authentication using EZProxy (allows offcampus access)
- Using “Search-it” interface to e-resources (MetaLib/cross-database searching)
- E-query service
- Virtual usage – “booming”
- Electronic visits: 2004 – 4,655,789 ↑
- Electronic visits: 2003 - 1,785,976
- Physical loans: 2004 - 1,988,301 ↓
- Physical loans: 2003 - 2,006,510
Virtual spaces & services changes/challenges cont..

• SOME ISSUES
  • Offshore access needs to be factored into licenses
  • Public domain access under threat (Alumni??)
  • Digital lib resources reside outside DLS (Blackboard)
  • Is our interface to e-resources too sophisticated/time consuming?
  • Increase presence on web search tools like Google Scholar?
  • Need to integrate more multimedia (digital streaming!)
  • Explore Library BLOGS for info exchange/advice?
  • Explore improved e-query service