Upskilling library staff

A brief overview of the Information Services Team’s response to a rapidly changing Higher Education and Research environment at the Glucksman Library, University of Limerick.

Donna Ó Doibhlin
Librarian, Education & Health Sciences
University of Limerick
Agenda

- Background to project
- Overview of information services
- Challenges of changes in library and information services in UL
- Opportunities to learn new skills
- SDTLS – projects 1 and 2
- Benefits of upskilling
Increased demands from library members

- Technological
- Immediacy
- Space
- Teaching and research support
- Self-service

... as compared to the days when libraries were mostly involved in lending books, organising storage of books, and showing people where to find the documents they needed. – if in fact they ever they existed.
Information Services @ the Glucksman Library, University of Limerick

- Supporting faculty, research PGs and students in the 4 faculties and the University Hospital Library

- 1 x Head of Information Services
- 5 x Faculty librarians
- 1 x Digital Initiatives and research librarian
- 1 x University hospital librarian
Information Services duties:

- Support academics and students.
- Develop IL/research skills modules and teach on these programmes.
- Manage QuestionPoint and Chat.
- Librarian on duty – fire evacuation duties.
- Collect reading lists, select and order stock.
- Support the newly amalgamated service desk – LOD with mobile phone.
Why do we need a staff development/training programme?

- Rapid increase in the demand for research support and information literacy classes
- Increase in complexity of library queries
- Introduction of self-issue system and security
Why? (con’t)

- Introduction of single service desk – for circulation and information queries

- Serviced by reader services library assistants (circulation desk staff) and one information services assistant

- No IS librarians sitting at service desk
Big increase in demand for research support and IL, therefore teaching larger groups

Increased demand for training for academics and researchers

Need to ensure quality of all classes

Experienced librarians – but few with formal teacher training – Are we any good? Have we feedback?

Specialist Diploma (PG) in Teaching, Learning and Scholarship
SDTLS Project 1

- Develop formal information literacy modules (with a view to accreditation)

- Module called: Finding research information and keeping up-to-date, developed and delivered.

- This main module was developed further by other IS librarians and we finalised a programme called Realising your research Value – this is currently being delivered to researchers in UL
Realising Your Research Value:

1. Finding research and keeping up-to-date
2. Reference management
3. Getting published and maximising your research impact
- Front of house staff training

- IS librarian held focus groups with desk staff to ascertain their satisfaction with new arrangement

- Where dissatisfaction was related to lack of confidence in knowledge/skills base, training was provided

- All IS librarians delivered subject/faculty specific training
Front of house staff training

Keys to success:

- During regular working hours.
- Always attended by IS librarian coordinating the project
- Staff surveyed following training to gauge levels of satisfaction
- Some in-house training
- Some external consultant training
- Opportunities for further training
Benefits of training

- Librarians more confident in teaching delivery
- Academics viewing librarians as colleagues
- A deeper understanding among Librarians of the procedures relating to developing and accrediting academic courses/modules
- More understanding between front of house staff and librarians
- A closer working relationship between desk staff and information services librarians.
- A more efficient service desk
So, were our endeavours successful?

... mostly, yes.
The feeling of elation at completing the first set of service desk training was shared among all the desk staff . . . almost 😊
(Pic is representative of service desk staff – not actual)
... as for the Information Services Librarians who completed/are doing the Teaching Diploma ... we always knew we could do it ... and we just proved it!
Thanks for listening.

Questions?

Donna
donna.odoibhlin@ul.ie