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From Books to Binary: Migrating from a Traditional Library to an Electronic Information Center

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From Books to Binary

Migrating from a Traditional Library
to an Electronic Information Center

Summer of 1998

The Agriculture Library at the University of Kentucky will cease to exist. In its place will be the Agricultural Information Center.
Agricultural Information Center

- Hybrid of corporate and academic information enterprises
- Focus on information services and satisfying the client
- Designed to meet changing user needs

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U.K. Agricultural Library

Traditional Facilities

- Reference/Reading Room
- Information Desk
- Individual Carrels
- PCs for Information Use

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Traditional Library Services

- Reference Service
- Access to Electronic Databases
- Document Access and Delivery
- Reserve Book Option
- Book Check in/out
- Information Literacy

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Non Traditional Facilities

- Interactive training room
- General microcomputing facilities
- Group study rooms wired for video delivery
- Ample network connections (either hardwire or wireless) for laptop use

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Enhanced Services

- On Site Training
- Information Profiles
- Information Pointers
- Aggressive/Proactive Training
- Desk Top Delivery of Resources
- User Input into Services

March 1989

- Discussion of a new library for UK
- Chancellor of the Medical Center approaches the Dean of the College of Agriculture about a Life Sciences "wing" in the new library
- Idea put on the back burner for two years
February 1991

Ag. Faculty Committee appointed
Committee is representative of all areas of the College

The Committee Charge

...to provide advice on matters relating to library planning
June 1992

→ Dean holds an open forum to solicit input from the College
→ Poorly attended

February 1993

→ Strategic Plan for Library/Information Planning submitted to the Dean
→ Plan includes:
  → User driven services
  → Better group space to foster collaboration and interaction
Strategic Plan

- The Collection go to the new library
- Services to be maintained in the Agricultural Information Center
- Expanded electronic access
- Space for individual/group work
- Electronic training facility

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August 1994

- Second Committee appointed to look at the plan
- Committee is representative of the College

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May 1995

Concept Paper Drafted
- Committee wanted to be sure the plan would work
- Committee reaffirms the plan and ratifies the Concept Paper
- Concept paper submitted to the Dean

Concept Paper

- Outlined
  - The functions
  - The staffing
  - The services expected

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October 1994

- Second committee endorses the plan
- Begin fleshing out the plan

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June 1995

- Plan shared with the 11 Department Chairs in Agriculture
- Chairs buy into the plan

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July 1995

- Plan made available to the entire College
- In paper on reserve in the library
- Electronically on the Ag. School Gopher

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November 1995

- Feedback solicited from the Undergraduate students through the Agricultural Student Council

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January 1996

- Concept paper formulated into a plan detail
- Each function outlined in the concept paper allocated in the existing space
- Designers begin working on the plan

March 1996

- Feedback solicited from the Graduate Students through the Graduate Students Organization
June 1996

- Feedback solicited through department seminar circuit
- Continuing activity

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July 1996

- Plan is loaded on Agriculture Library Homepage

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September 1996

- Discussion begins on the integration with the William T. Young Library

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February 1997

- Report on the project given to the Dean's Council
- Compilation of the current journals list begins
  - Lists sent to Departments
  - List circulation among Ag. Library Staff

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April 1997

→ Design approved by the Agriculture Library Staff
→ Design passed on to the Ag. Faculty Library Committee for review

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May 1997

→ Design approved by the Faculty Committee
→ Plans sent out to all Department Chairs and Extension Area Directors

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May 1997

→ AIC Update presented to the Dean's Council
→ Development Portfolio developed

July 1997

→ Staffing decided on for the Center
→ Display about the Center done for the Library Window
November 1997

→ Staff work on re-engineering themselves for the information center environment
 → Tasks and time to do them outlined

February 1998

→ Current Journals List Compiled
March 1998

→ Aggressive PR plan developed
→ Draft organizational chart for the center devised

April 16, 1998

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Draft Organizational Chart

AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION CENTER
PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Agriculture Team
Collective Decision Making

Access Services
Materials Access
Database Quality
Serials

Support Services
Electronic Support
Administration
Account Clerk

Information Services
Information Desk Coordinator
Training
Information Specialists (3)

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April 1998

- Negotiations begin on service positions
- Interlibrary loan a particular problem

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Where are We Now?

- No money for renovation
- Working on Plan B
  - Construction of the infrastructure
  - Use surplus materials to construct area
- Reorganizing staff positions
- Working on an aggressive public relations/information campaign

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Observations about the Process

→ No matter how much you involved people you will still have complaints
→ Many people did not pay any attention to the PR
→ Will always have people “surprised”

Success Depends on

→ Listening to the constituency
→ Keeping people involved
→ Reminding people things are going to change
→ Keeping a positive attitude
Working Together is the Key to Success

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