

in the Elstree VT Library. It should also serve to remind NSE's Editor and the Elstree Resources Manager of its importance to the programme.

Future developments

Whereas the amount and nature of library footage being used in the programme in the future is unlikely to change significantly, the method of retrieving it will probably alter radically.

Greater user access to the Elstree VT Library catalogue and collection will undoubtedly occur. In the near future reporters are likely to be able to call up the catalogue on their terminals in the Newsroom. In time, the actual pictures themselves will probably be available on-line as well, thanks to digital technology. The new generation of computer literate, multi-skilled journalists will come to expect such sophisticated systems.

Newsroom South East will almost certainly start using digital cameras when it moves to its new base in central London in 1997. This may well act as the catalyst towards a fully digital library service, with consequent far reaching implications for the Elstree VT Library staff and users.

References

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A comparative analysis of marketing management in British and German university libraries: the results

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This research was originally introduced in this publication in 1994 (issue 61). It focused on a comparison of marketing management in British and German university libraries in the context of their respective environments.

The project consisted of an extensive literature review of all aspects of marketing management, which served as a framework for a set of interviews with library managers in both countries. These respondents were chosen by using a stratified random sampling approach. Ultimately, 23 in-depth interviews with senior managers in both countries were conducted.

The most prominent result of this research was that the differences in the practice of marketing management in British and German university libraries were not nearly as great as the literature review suggested, particularly when the differing environmental conditions were taken into account. One of the more surprising aspects in this context was the extent to which east German libraries had caught up with their west German and British counterparts. Although they have to work under very difficult conditions as far as buildings and provision of space are concerned, they achieve performance standards which are comparable with western libraries.

A large amount of English language literature on all aspects of marketing management for libraries has been published, but only comparatively little has appeared in Germany. However, in practice, concerns and problems in British and German universities were often similar, although in some areas attitudes and solutions varied substantially.

The areas in which practice in German and British university libraries differed most were promotion and financial management, but there were also substantial variations between the two countries in some areas of service provision.

As far as financial management is concerned, German libraries were using more traditional budgeting methods than their British counterparts, and costing services was extremely limited in German libraries. In many ways, the German way of funding libraries functioned as a disincentive for income generation because many libraries had little or no chance of retaining extra income for themselves. However, funding structures in Germany are presently in a state of flux, and these changes might ultimately lead to the adoption of different, more innovative, cost management techniques in Germany.

Another area of considerable differences was promotion. The German libraries visited for this research were far more active in promotional activities geared at the general public - which is partially related to the regional role that university libraries have in Germany - but British libraries were, on the whole, offering more and more extensive user education.

As far as services and service delivery are concerned, the most pronounced differences were found in opening hours, and the provision of text book collections. German libraries were open substantially fewer hours than their British counterparts, the difference mainly being the result of shorter evening and weekend opening hours. The main reasons for these shorter opening hours were a lack of demand (as perceived by the managers) and insufficient cooperation by the personnel council.

It was also found that most German university libraries in this sample offered student text book collections, in contrast to the British libraries. This might reflect the need to cater for the traditionally higher student numbers in German universities.

However, it seems that financial management and promotion are the two areas where a comparison is most useful. With increasing flexibility in financial management, German libraries might be able to successfully adopt some of the more innovative and effective approaches such as cost-centre and zero-based budgeting and costing of services generally. British libraries, (and British universities as a whole) could look to their German counterparts and improve the intra-institutional cooperation, and promotional efforts directed towards the general public.

This research has shown that a marketing approach to management can be a useful contribution to

library management. The emphasis on the systematic and effective deployment of resources to the benefit of users and library staff offers a valid alternative to traditional management approaches. This is particularly true in a time of rapid and fundamental change in the environment in which university libraries are operating.

However, this study also found that although marketing strategies were widely used in both countries, the concept of marketing is still frequently misunderstood. Consequently, marketing strategies are often used neither systematically nor coherently. Constraining factors in Germany seem to be rigid budgetary structures, and a system of staff representation with extensive veto rights. In contrast, the most important restricting factors in Britain are a lack of resources and rapidly changing higher education policies. The latter has made forward planning and even reacting to these changes difficult. In both countries, marketing management in university libraries is limited by a lack of specifically trained staff, and this lack of training poses particular difficulties in the area of financial management and of performance measurement.

This research also indicated that the awareness and knowledge of marketing has increased in both countries in recent years. However, some misconceptions about marketing prevail, and prevent some library managers from reaping the benefits which their services could gain from a fully implemented marketing approach. In a time of decreasing or stagnating funds, a marketing approach to management can be a tool for using available resources effectively in the best interest of users and library staff.

Intelligent information retrieval from the World Wide Web using fuzzy user modelling

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Introduction

The ever-changing nature of information sources, coupled with the increased demand on dwindling academic resources, led librarians and other information professionals to recognise the need for information retrieval (IR) systems that can incorporate the expertise of the information professional and gather knowledge about the user's experiences and preferences (Werckert & Cooper, 1989). The explosion of available information resources brought about by the development of the Internet and the World-Wide Web (WWW) has strengthened this need. The goal is to produce an 'intelligent' IR system which would work with the user to satisfy their information needs, so the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) techniques seems a likely approach to the problem (Morris, 1990).

Attempts to incorporate intelligence into IR are numerous, have met with limited success, and involve many facets of AI (Mooney, 1996a). Many of these attempts rely on knowledge of the structure and content of the database (information store or knowledge 'space'). They are systems for performing dynamic, ie changing, queries on static databases and require extensive knowledge about the databases upon which they are to search. Even if developed only to aid IR from fixed databases, their success has been limited (Shoval *et al.*, 1990; Zegher *et al.*, 1993).