

# **ALISS** *Quarterly*

*Association of Librarians and Information professionals in the Social Sciences*

## **Libraries and COVID-19**

Evidence Aid's COVID-19 evidence collection;  
How to deliver effective library teaching online;  
experiences from University of Bradford;  
London South Bank University; Teesside University

## **Innovation**

Public library makerspaces Preliminary research findings  
Department for Work and Pensions eBook Service

## **Disability**

Kent Digital Accessibility Conference 2020;  
Disability - Higher Education, Libraries, Teaching and Learning.  
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# ALISS Quarterly

## Volume 15 no.4 July 2020

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## Editorial

Welcome to the latest edition of ALISS Quarterly. It has been published by ALISS (Association of Librarians and Information Professionals in the Social Sciences).

At the moment many libraries remain closed or are just gradually reopening after the lockdown. ALISS members have all been working remotely and their experience along with other social science colleagues has been recorded in this issue. Our chair Jo Wood has been seconded to manage Evidence Aid's COVID-19 evidence collection while other staff members at Teesside and South Bank have been offering online reading groups, 121 consultations and developing enhanced online training materials. For some librarians the experience has been challenging and others have learnt new skills which can be applied in the future. The article from the Open University offers good basic advice on the move to a mainly online learning environment which contains good guidelines for us all.

The second section also focuses on innovation, Phil Jarvis presents his research on Makerspace initiatives in public libraries while Naomi Lees describes the experiences of the Department of Work and Pensions in developing an enhanced eBook offering.

The final section contains materials on disability, a summary of the Kent Digital Accessibility Conference 2020 and the latest edition of the Disability - Higher Education, Libraries, Teaching and Learning Bibliography.

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We hope you enjoy the issue.

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## **Librarian in a pandemic - Evidence Aid's COVID-19 evidence collection**

*Jo Wood is the Knowledge and Evidence Specialist for Health Improvement at Public Health England. In April 2020 Jo was seconded to Evidence Aid on a part-time basis, initially to co-ordinate their literature searches. She is now the COVID-19 Project Co-Ordinator. Jo is Chair of the ALISS Committee and a Fellow of CILIP.*

In October 2019 I moved over to Public Health England for a new challenge. Having spent a decade as a library manager in a previous role, I wanted to focus on developing my literature searching and training skills, as part of a larger team in a health setting. I had just got comfortable with my new role when life changed for everyone. On Monday 16 March I delivered Endnote training to a team in person, in a meeting room. Three days later I delivered the same training to a different team over Skype, with everyone dialling in from home. At this stage I still had several health improvement-related literature searches to work on, but as everyone settled into new working practice and/or were pulled into working on PHEs COVID-19 response, I found I had less of my core work to do.

During a virtual team meeting at the end of March mention was made of a list of useful tasks that the team could do to support COVID-19 efforts within PHE and with external partners. I offered to help in any way I could. It turned out that the management team had something specific in mind that would use and develop my management and organisation skills. Evidence Aid is a not-for-profit organisation specialising in collating and summarising the best available evidence to effectively prepare for, and respond to, disasters and emergencies. Evidence Aid had received funding to create a COVID-19 collection of systematic review summaries and needed someone to co-ordinate a team of volunteer literature searchers. I was offered to Evidence Aid on a part-time basis (2-3 hours per day) from 1st April – 31st May 2020 to support them with Phase 1 of the project.

During an initial chat with Evidence Aid it became apparent that as well as co-ordinating the searchers, they needed someone to recruit new searchers and set up workflows and processes. I did that within a couple of days. Evidence Aid runs a core COVID-19 search every day looking for new systematic reviews, but they needed volunteers to perform literature searches on related topics of interest as well.

I did an Evidence Aid mini episode of the Librarians with Lives podcast and approached established groups for health library workers with a very clear message of "Please don't feel obliged to consider doing this work if you can't, focus on looking after yourselves and your loved ones". PHE have kindly allowed me to 'borrow' a couple of my colleagues to do searches, and a few other people answered my call for help. The people that stepped forward either have jobs in which they are already doing COVID-related work, have been redeployed and want to keep their hand in with searching, or want to develop their searching skills while they're working at home.

I have developed a small cohort of keen, committed searchers and I keep a careful eye on them. They are asked to consider whether they want to take on a search, not to worry if they can't, and to take care of themselves. I also ensure that they have realistic deadlines to work to and that these can be changed as necessary. More than thirty literature

searches have been carried out, and the results are analysed by screeners to determine which reviews are of most relevance to the collection.

Once the searching end of the process was set up and running smoothly, it became obvious that someone was needed to co-ordinate the other end of the process, the summary writers, as well. Once suitable systematic reviews are identified via searches, they are prioritised for summarising (the bar for inclusion is high and many COVID-related systematic reviews aren't of a good standard so are rejected early on), allocated to summarisers, edited by a small team, and added to the website.

Initially the summaries were written by two people and finalised by someone else, but this model of working was unsustainable. Evidence Aid put a call-out on the Cochrane Task Exchange and academics and students from all over the world offered their services as summary writers. Initially they were co-ordinated by the two original summary writers, but their workloads were huge and one of them was studying for exams, so I took over.

There was a lot of confusion about who was working on a summary, who wasn't, what stage a summary was at, whether it was a duplicate, who was editing summaries, and liaising with the summarisers. I created the workflows and processes so that a summary could be tracked from when it was prioritised for inclusion to when it was added to the portal. I'm the initial point of contact for the summarisers and keep a careful eye on their workloads. Draft summaries are sent to two people (a student and a health specialist) to edit, go to an academic for finalising, and are given the final go-ahead by another academic before being added to the website. I am now co-ordinating the work of c.60 people across the project, from 15 different countries.

After a lull towards the end of March and early April, the PHE health improvement work has picked up again and I have also carried out some COVID-related literature searches. When the Evidence Aid project was in its infancy my inbox was overwhelming and I spent most of my time dealing with email traffic and fighting fires. The project has found its rhythm now everyone understands their role and responsibilities. I want to make the volunteers feel welcome and valued. The relationship-building aspect of the work is key, as is the need for kind and constructive feedback. English is not necessarily the first (or second) language of the summary writers so I need to be mindful of how I communicate with them.

In May 2020 Evidence Aid received funding for Phase 2 of the COVID-19 project. It's been agreed that my part-time secondment will carry on until the end of October and I'll juggle my PHE work alongside. My original job title was Searching Co-Ordinator. In April I became the Searching and Summary Writing Co-Ordinator. I'm now the COVID-19 Project Co-Ordinator.

As of 12th June 2020, Evidence Aid has published more than 250 summaries of systematic reviews of relevance to the impact of COVID-19, including reviews of emerging research, as well as existing reviews of relevant interventions on health and other outcomes, the impact of the COVID-19 response on other conditions, and issues to consider for the post-pandemic recovery period. The summaries are plain-language, and have been translated from English into French, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic and Chinese (simplified



and traditional). An evaluation of the impact of the COVID-19 evidence collection will be carried out later in the year.

I am a very small cog in the international machine that is Evidence Aid. My main aim is to make the working lives of my fellow 'core team' members as easy as possible, and to ensure that the volunteers are valued. Although I obviously wish that none of us were dealing with a pandemic, I am grateful for the opportunity to use my library, management, and organisational skills to affect change during this time.

*Evidence Aid is funded by the H2H Fund, and supported by Queen's University Belfast, and the Campbell Collaboration. Evidence Aid works with the World Health Organization, Translators without Borders, Cochrane, the Centre for Global Health, Public Health England, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Oxford PharmaGenesis, among others. Huge thanks to the volunteers that give their time so generously to Evidence Aid.*

## Doing the COVID-19 Pivot: how to deliver effective library teaching online

*Fiona Durham, @FionaLibrary, Live Engagement Librarian, Open University*

*Hossam Kassem, @HossamKassem78, Live Engagement Librarian, Open University*

*Claire Wotherspoon, @Lib\_Claire, Live Engagement Librarian, Open University.*

### Introduction

The Open University (OU) is the UK's largest distance education university and OU Librarians teach almost exclusively online. In May and June 2020 members of the award-winning Live Engagement team led two one-hour events to share their practical experiences and top tips for teaching library skills online. The recordings and other learning material are available from the links at the end of this article.

At the end of April 2020 one of our assistant directors noted that there was some interest in the sector around taking library teaching and training online and asked the Live Engagement team to look into running a webinar for colleagues in other institutions, through which we could share our expertise. We naively assumed that we would have maybe 100 or 200 librarians interested in the event, so we decided to use Adobe Connect as we are very familiar with this online tutorial system. However, as the Eventbrite invitation quickly became overwhelmed with hundreds of disappointed participants, we realised that we would need to use a different platform to cater for more than a thousand expressions of interest. We decided to run a second session in Microsoft Teams Live Events, which allows for greater numbers. This was a big learning curve for us, and for the OU Audio Visual Team who supported us, as it turned out to be the largest event they have ever run.

The event was based on workshops we have run recently about designing synchronous teaching of library skills online (Durham and Kassem, 2019). It was designed from the outset to be in three parts to allow for easy chunking of the recordings (OU Library, 2020). This is something to bear in mind when designing your own sessions, as the event can then be turned into learning objects to be re-used at a later date. Three members of the Live Engagement team each took one section as a practical look at an aspect of running online training and then finished with a summary of their top tips.

### Claire Wotherspoon: Technical considerations

For me, as a newer member of the team, one of the most daunting aspects of online training was mastering the technical capabilities of the teaching tool. Many organisations have an online teaching tool supported by IT, which may benefit you with technical support and existing user guides. Otherwise, to aid understanding of the tool, you may need to write and disseminate a guide for attendees prior to the start of your session. Allowing them to join early also provides an opportunity for familiarisation with the tool and resolving technical problems.

Considering the impact of lockdown on time and equipment, you can use interactive features such as polls and chats to create optimal learning environments. Short term

wins include using headsets and removing microphone rights for attendees, to reduce background noise and facilitate good quality recordings. Uploading recordings provides 24/7 access to sessions, so training can be studied at point of need. Using ethernet cables is more reliable than WIFI, and minimal webcam use conserves bandwidth. For long term changes this could involve research into study habits from home to create a schedule of events that work around other commitments.

In line with face-to-face teaching processes, it's always worth having a back-up should things not go to plan. Where possible, have an extra staff member available: this reduces the pressure of juggling the session with monitoring the chat, as the support staff member can respond to questions and comments, which will not interrupt the session's flow.

We also script our sessions, so that if someone is required to take over, they have the means to do so. Making the script available for download is useful for students to follow along with the session, as well as making it more accessible for students with disabilities or English as an additional language. Prior to our first run of this session I was notified of a power cut in my area, with an estimated recovery time of 10:30, precisely when our event started! It couldn't have been a timelier reminder of why we had written a script for the session so that backup staff could take over, fortunately I was able to swoop in at the last minute to seamlessly carry on.

### Top tips

1. Select a tool that your organisation supports
2. Timing is key
3. Use bandwidth saving techniques
4. Make use of the software features: chat, polls, screen share, whiteboards, breakout rooms, etc.
5. Produce/disseminate class materials and guide on using the tool
6. Inclusive practice from the start

### Fiona Durham: Designing for online

I have used online classrooms at the OU both as student and teacher for more than 15 years, and for me, when designing for online it's important to have clear objectives and learning outcomes, as concentrating online can be very fatiguing. We did several surveys of our students to ask them what they wanted from our generic online library tutorials and it was no surprise that they wanted them to be shorter than the one-hour sessions we were offering.

The most challenging aspects of teaching online are social presence and interactivity. Creating a rapport with the participants can be very hard without physical cues. In our sessions, we may use a webcam at the beginning or a photo to establish that we are real, and we introduce ourselves. We also use low stakes polls to start a discussion, something like 'what's the weather like where you are?' or 'how familiar are you with the online library?' This encourages a friendly atmosphere and allows the librarian and students to chat to each other and can also help the tutor to tailor the session.

No one wants to spend twenty minutes staring at the same slide while someone else talks,

it really doesn't work online. Interactivity is key to a successful, engaging session. Firstly, it is good to vary the medium of presentation, using not only PowerPoint slides but perhaps including some audio or visual materials, a whiteboard to write on, live demonstrations, and space to pause and assimilate every few minutes. Secondly interactivity needs to be built into the session, allowing for polls, emoticons, hands on practice, and mini research sessions, like investigating the author of a news article and reporting back. The students need to be engaged with the content rather than just hearing about it.

Finally, the importance of feedback can't be overstated. All our sessions have a link to a short survey, and over the years this has given us lots of rich data to support designing our sessions, allowing librarians to reflect on their practice and demonstrating our value to faculty.

### **Top tips**

1. Objective - be clear, be focused
2. Learning outcomes – stick to them,
3. Content – based on LO's, vary the medium
4. Social presence - need to be knowledgeable, friendly and interested
5. Interactivity- engage don't lecture
6. Feedback – find out what they really think and want

### **Hossam Kassem: Accessibility of online training**

The third part of our event focused on how to make online training sessions accessible. Whether face to face or online, we should always make our sessions accessible, however, online training can present extra challenges that need to be considered.

At the OU nearly 22% of our student population, (that is around 28,000) have declared a disability. This covers a wide range of conditions, such as visual impairment, hearing impairment, learning difficulties etc. It is often the case that we do not know in advance who is going to attend our sessions, so it is very important to make sure the learning materials are accessible and inclusive from the outset.

When you are designing the session make sure your slides have headings and check the color contrast. In addition, if you are using images to convey information then remember to add alternative text for users of screen readers. Avoid using animation and keep the slides simple. Claire mentioned preparing scripts; these scripts can also be useful for someone with a disability so they can follow the session.

At the delivery stage of your session there are things you can do to make things more inclusive such as sharing the slides and script ahead of the session. If you know in advance that a disabled student is attending, then ask them if there is anything you can help with. Make sure you speak clearly. Explain what you are doing on the screen and where you are clicking. Simple things like making the cursor bigger and darker can make a big difference. Recording the session would allow your students to review it again, which can be helpful to all, not just disabled students.

Finally, having delivered the session and recorded it you need to think about subtitling it and creating a transcript for the benefit of those who could not attend the session live.

It is always easier to ensure accessibility at the design stage; it will save you time and ensure inclusivity. A few simple adjustments can make a big difference.

### Top tips

1. Make your slides/session accessible from the start
2. Use Microsoft Office Check accessibility feature
3. Make slides/script available ahead of the session
4. If you know in advance that one of your students is disabled; ask them for their preferences
5. For recordings offer transcript and subtitles
6. Speak clearly

Running such a large event took a lot of hard work in pre and postproduction, including putting the recordings on our OU Library YouTube channel and editing the many questions we were asked. It was exciting, slightly terrifying (suppose things went wrong in front of 1000 participants) and ultimately very satisfying. So, where do we go from here? Live (synchronous) online teaching is only part of enabling students to gain the digital and information literacy skills they need in their studies. Most students at the OU encounter library content and skills in their online module material, asynchronously, which allows them to work through it at their own pace. Making these activities interactive and interesting is the work of our Academic Liaison and Authoring librarians who work with module teams to embed skills and content.

The Open University has produced a badged open course called 'Take your teaching online' (OU, 2020) which is more in depth, and while it is aimed at teachers there are many points relevant to librarians planning to deliver library skills online both live and asynchronously.

We would like to thank Sam Hazell from the OU Audio Visual team for supporting the Teams Live Event, Caroline Barratt from our Engagement and Insight team for the wonderful event title, Charlotte Castle from the same team for editing the recordings, and Manda Closier, Wendy Chalmers, and Geri Huzar for fielding hundreds of questions in real time, during the event.

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OU (2020) *Take your teaching online*. Free OpenLearn course. <https://bit.ly/3fDCh4d>

OU Library (2020) *Doing the COVID-19 pivot: How to deliver effective library teaching online* [Video] YouTube.

- Part 1 - Technical Considerations <https://bit.ly/2Cp3lGb>
- Part 2 - Designing for Online <https://bit.ly/2Wt273B>
- Part 3 - Accessibility <https://bit.ly/3hcNuci>

## Raising the library's profile through Research Bites

Alison Lahlafi, University Academic Librarian, University of Bradford.

### Why Research Bites?

In May and June 2020, the Library Research Support Group at University of Bradford ran a series of webinars aimed at supporting researchers. These had originally been planned as lunchtime researcher workshops to be delivered as face to face workshops on campus, with cake to entice and link into name of the workshop series themed “Research Bites.”

With a captive audience of academics, researchers and PhD students working from home due to COVID-19, it made sense to re-design the workshops as online webinars delivered through the VLE's online conference management system Big Blue Button.

Microlearning or short, targeted “bite-size” training is not new to libraries and the wider education sector. Tattersall, Beecroft and Freeman (2013) describe a similar approach to the face to face bite-size sessions originally planned at University of Bradford:

*20-minute professional development sessions run during the afternoon, pitched as ‘tea break’ sessions and based on two simple ideas: whilst individuals may not wish to spend hours training, they can spare 20 minutes to learn about potentially useful technologies.*

*Secondly, as the sessions are informal, we provide cake to incentivise attendance and enhance the ‘tea break’ concept, making the sessions more convivial.*

Online conferencing software, now at the forefront due to COVID-19, is ideal for online webinar style training. The Library Research Support Group at Bradford agreed that no-one likes staring at a computer screen for long spells as it is difficult to remain focused, and that 30 minutes including time for questions was the optimum length for the training sessions. Short sessions make it “easier to absorb and recall,” (Melvin, 2017), as well as “significantly removing the barriers of lengthy class times, expense, time out of office and content overload that often comes with more traditional approaches,” (Sandage, 2019).

Five bite size webinars were developed by the Library Research Support Group. A sixth longer webinar EndNote: beyond the basics was delivered by Clarivate who tailored the session at the request of library staff at Bradford to fit around Library FAQs on advanced use of EndNote at University of Bradford. Attendees of the EndNote session were asked either to be already familiar with EndNote, or, to review short recorded webinars introducing EndNote to researchers – these were new training materials developed to replace the usual on-campus EndNote for Researchers workshop. Attendees were not required to sign up in advance to webinars. Regular reminders were sent out to promote the series and highlight sessions coming up each week. The five bite size sessions with accompanying promotional information were:

1. Where to publish - Find the most appropriate journal for your publication. We will look at criteria, tools and techniques, including the evaluation of journal impact (the advantages and pitfalls of metrics). This session is complemented by *Where not to publish*.
2. Keeping up to date - Join us for a half-hour webinar covering a few suggestions for

keeping track of current research in your field, including database alerting tools, conference alerts, and social media tips.

3. Where not to publish - What is a predatory journal? How to spot predatory journals, and how to avoid them. This session is complemented by *Where to publish*.
4. Open Access in one bite - the Open Access publishing landscape is changing fast. Come along to hear the key things you really need to know about Open Access.
5. Raising your profile - a half-hour session with suggestions on getting your research noticed and joining academic conversations.

### **Raising the library's profile**

In total across all the webinars there were 155 attendees. This was far higher attendance than for previous on-campus lunchtime events run for researchers. There was excellent feedback from attendees both during the sessions and afterwards, and clearly the 30 minute sessions hit the mark for busy staff and research students:

*"Thank you also for the research bites session - please will you tell everyone involved that these are really good and worthwhile events. Another academic at your one also said that it was the best meeting all week. And just half an hour!! I went to the one in the afternoon also, and was so pleased that I did."* (Example of attendee feedback).

By promoting Research Bites through University staff bulletins, research network and Faculty and Research Committees, the library's profile was raised:

*"I have mentioned this before, but again - webinars that are organised have been really great - appreciated by our PGR students."* (Example of feedback from Faculty Board).

There was also evidence of the timeliness of sessions through feedback from the University Research and Innovation Service:

*"These are a great resource, so thank you for organising them. The recordings are proving very useful. As we had to cancel both our Writing Retreats this year we have been referring people who wanted information about where to publish and predatory publishing to these sessions."* (Feedback from University Research and Innovation Service.)

### **Conclusions**

1. The Research Bites sessions proved an easy way of building up good will in the university's research community and raising the profile of the Library Research Support Group. With planning ongoing for increased online delivery of library training sessions for the forthcoming academic year, the training series also gave librarians a timely opportunity to practise developing and hosting webinar skills and share tips for best practice.
2. The Library Research Support Group will carry forward lessons learnt to the redesign of our current 1 or 2 hour face to face library researcher workshops. Shorter sessions will allow library staff to really focus in on the key points and cut down on "waffle" or information overload, resulting in turn in a session where attendees can better maintain their focus. Recording of webinars means that attendees can revisit in their

own time, or watch if they were unable to make the live session. However, it is worth remembering that in May and June we truly did have a “captive” audience working from home, and that with a return to campus, longer term, we need to further consider whether a more blended model with a mixture of face to face and online sessions may be the best way forward to meet the needs of University of Bradford’s research community.

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## **Supporting students during Covid: the LSBU experience**

*Alison Skoyles and Peter Williams, London South Bank University.*

Library and Learning Resources (LLR) at London South Bank University (LSBU) started planning for the possibility of staff working from home a couple of weeks before it became a reality. We were all trained in how to access our documents and systems off-site, and given a crash course in MS Teams – we would all soon be living and working off Teams! The Information Skills Librarians (ISLs) in the Academic Liaison and Teaching Team (ALT) and the User Experience (UX) Team adapted their student-facing services to the new distant and online working environment.

### **The User Experience (UX) Team**

The UX team has particular responsibility for providing additional support to students with disabilities and for using student feedback to inform the development of new and existing services. While working from home, the team has adapted its service provision in a number of ways. Alongside other colleagues from the wider Customer Services team, UX team members have provided remote support to students, initially via online chat and email and now by phone through the use of a Softphone client. Students have responded positively to this continuity of service, providing appreciative feedback with comments such as “Very prompt and helpful, even during the Covid-19 closure” and “Very good, well done my University. Quick and efficient response”. Feedback is a key focus for the team who are working to develop a new page on the library website; ‘Your Voice Matters’, due to go live next month, will feature surveys, focus groups and monthly feedback polls to help chart and monitor student experiences.

The team have also worked with colleagues from the Communications and Publications team to update the webpage for Students with Disabilities, highlighting information such as the extended availability of certain assistive software products during the lockdown period. UX team members have liaised with assistive software providers and the Disability and Dyslexia Support team to co-ordinate and support this provision. In addition, they have adapted their usual assistive software training offer so that training in programmes such as MindManager and ClaroRead Plus can be provided remotely via the Teams platform.

At this time, more library colleagues have been involved in responding to a range of queries with which they may not have been previously familiar. UX team members have supported colleagues in this work, through creating and updating FAQs and standard answers. These can be used by colleagues across the Customer Service Team when responding to regular queries, some of which, such as those in relation to email hacking, have been a particular concern at this time.

While working from home, team members have continued to undertake CPD activities including attending online webinars and conferences on the themes of digital accessibility. As other departments in the University have looked to provide remote support, the team have also provided training for colleagues new to the University’s Live Chat platform. Staff from the UX team also enjoyed working alongside colleagues from other library teams at

the University's first virtual open day, which was a positive learning experience for team members. Several members of the team are also looking forward to the challenge of taking part in Clearing next month having volunteered to be a part of this vital operation.

### **Information Skills Librarians (ISLs)**

The Information Skills Librarians design and deliver information literacy and research skills sessions to undergraduate and taught post-graduate students. We also provide 1:1 support for students who need additional support with research and referencing.

We knew that we were going to rely heavily on MS Teams to maintain our high level of service, and we managed to pull together a plan before we all started working from home. We increased our 1:1 provision because students would not be able to come to the research helpdesk in the library. The LibCal booking system remained the same, but students would only be able to book phone or MS Teams appointments. These have worked well; students have been grateful and positive that we have been able to maintain this service.

Before the lockdown was enforced the ISLs had research sessions booked in for various cohorts. We liaised with all of the lecturers to see what they wanted to do about their teaching. Most lecturers cancelled their sessions, but a few did still go ahead. We had not used MS Teams to teach classes before, and we attended webinars and livechats from other universities and institutions to see how others had implemented this.

We have now all delivered online sessions, which has increased our confidence and skillset. It has also enabled us to develop processes for Semester 1 teaching. We intend to have two ISLs per training session where possible – one to deliver the session, and one to facilitate any questions. This has naturally impacted upon our training capacity, so we decided early on that we would be unable to deliver inductions live and in-person. Instead, we will create School-level induction videos that can be sent to any lecturer who requests one, and they can show it to their students and upload it into their Moodle sites. This has freed up the ISLs to focus on live teaching.

Academics book library training via a pro-forma that was sent as an email response to every request. The lockdown fast-tracked the adaptation of the email pro-forma into an online form. The link to this form is on the staff intranet and can be sent to any academic that wants to book a library session. The online version of the booking form allows for statistics to be easily collected and analysed, and stream-lines the negotiation process with academics.

As soon as the lockdown was announced, the ISLs created a new libguide where resources could be stored for students' easy access, the Enhanced Content Lockdown Libguide, and a link to it was placed on every subject guide. The libguide brings together entertainment, cultural and educational resources on one site. We also put the numerous extended offers from academic publishers on this guide so that students can access these wider collections.

## **Moving Forward**

We feel confident that we can support students online in Semester 1. The ISLs do not intend to do any on-site teaching before Christmas. We are working on how to provide our research helpdesk service, which is a drop-in service that students find very useful. We are also designing our non-embedded workshops so that they are available in an interactive format online.

The LSBU library at our Southwark site, Perry Library, opened to students in July. The LLR and Estates staff at LSBU worked really hard to open the library in a safe and compliant way. There are 100 bookable places available Monday to Friday, books are currently available to click and collect.

We have learned a lot about our own adaptability and capacity to change our way of working. We have all learned new skills, and developed new ideas. We are determined to provide as good a service as the circumstances allow for our students, and we feel that we can take what we have learned since March and apply it to the busy-ness of Semester 1.

## **Supporting students in the time of Covid at Teesside University**

*Fran Porritt, Academic Librarian, Social Sciences, Humanities and Law  
Teesside University, Student & Library Services.*

Lockdown happened suddenly and we found ourselves at home with our i-pads and laptops and sometimes erratic internet connections, trying our best to engage with students who were now also working from home. Most importantly our emphasis has been to reach out to students in many different circumstances: some who were now working towards their dissertations without resources that we had taken for granted, battling with home schooling and often without a suitable study environment.

This article describes the first phase of our strategy, which we labelled the Transition phase. We had to swiftly adapt and migrate to remote working. Globally, we had to get used to an online world. We had to adapt to the limitations of our hardware, with only two members of our team having University supported laptops, and the rest of the team using i-pads. We found some software had a reduced capacity working with these constraints. We didn't have our ergonomically adjusted office chairs, and furniture and workspace continues to be a problem. Time management presented challenges, especially for those with caring commitments.

Our first focus was on the continuance of our service and offering support to students, who had abruptly found themselves in a very challenging, and dare I say unprecedented, situation.

The provision of online service and support is described below

### **Tutorials**

Tutorials were offered via emails or Teams. We continued with online booking for tutorials, but gave students the choice of a video/audio call, or using e-mail. Personally I found the email option hugely frustrating because of the time delay when either of us was typing a response. Demand was strong for tutorials, especially for those with help for academic writing.

### **Library Life Blog**

We began a blog, Library Life <https://blogs.tees.ac.uk/slssupport/> which in its first iteration had themed days: Monday Masterclass, Tuesday Top Tips, Wellbeing Wednesday, Tutorials on Thursday and Fun Friday Finish.

The usage statistics could be higher but they give us an insight to see where viewers are and how they use the site. The fact that the blog is public without requiring subscription probably affects visitor numbers as they need to actively go looking for content rather than receiving email triggers.

### **Learning Hub Live!**

We relaunched our enquiry service, Learning Hub live! enabling students to submit queries via Padlet, MS Teams and the original route, the generic Learning Hub email. We

found the new routes weren't as popular as our original offer, but it is definitely worth trying different methods to find out which ones work best for students.

### **Succeed@Tees workshops**

Our biggest success was moving our Succeed@Tees academic skills workshops online via Blackboard Collaborate. Sessions were recorded and then uploaded to our website <https://libguides.tees.ac.uk/workshops>. There were many benefits to this: increased numbers of participants, with the first workshop, 'Writing a Literature Review' having over sixty attendees. We also noticed that participants were very happy to participate in the chat discussion, where previously they have been more reluctant to participate in face-to-face discussion.

### **Enhanced subject support**

We also enhanced our subject specific support, an example of which is some of the Libguides have a new FAQ page with new MS Sways offering support <https://libguides.tees.ac.uk/computing/research>.

Another example from a different subject area is a new Sway on Chicago referencing, which has been well received. More referencing styles are in the pipeline. [https://libguides.tees.ac.uk/english\\_and\\_creative\\_writing/reference](https://libguides.tees.ac.uk/english_and_creative_writing/reference)

### **New Resources: Asynchronous learning**

At Teesside University, our academic skills portal/service is called the Learning Hub. Since September 2019, many resources on the Learning Hub website had already been re-written to allow asynchronous learning, so we were well placed in terms of online support materials.

Some new resources were created including a LibGuide on Group work. In addition, we embarked on a co-creation initiative, with a student creating a video on online presentations. This has been added to our Libguide on Presentation Skills. [https://libguides.tees.ac.uk/presentation\\_skills](https://libguides.tees.ac.uk/presentation_skills). We aim to continue with this approach and co-create much more content

### **Coronavirus Libguide**

On a departmental level, we produced a Coronavirus LibGuide that contains links to all of the online services and support available. This resource is updated frequently and one section of it offers an up-to-date list of the enhanced content that publishers and suppliers provided in response to the pandemic. <https://libguides.tees.ac.uk/coronaviruslibraryupdate>.

This Libguide also feeds into the University's **Team Teesside** site, dedicated to supporting the University community through the crisis <https://www.tees.ac.uk/sections/about/university/teamteesside.cfm>

### **Virtual Reading Group**

We moved our monthly Reading group face-to-face meeting to a fortnightly session

using MS Teams. We have had new members join who commented that the face to face meeting had not been at a convenient time for them, so the online offer made the group accessible for them.

A challenge has been selecting books that are accessible, and we have had lengthy discussion within the group about whether to move to e-books only. We decided against it, but do look for titles available in all formats, including audio as they prove to be very popular. The current book, *Girl, Woman, Other*, was luckily serialised on Radio 4, albeit in an abridged format.

### **Wellbeing and Creative Writing**

We have just started a Wellbeing and Creative Writing group. Working with a PhD student, we have created a MS Teams site and have a monthly workshop, and then a catch up in the middle of the month. We were given homework on daydreaming (lovely!) after the first workshop on journaling, with the forthcoming workshop focussing on nature writing.

### **Virtual Wellbeing**

We have a Wellbeing Co-ordinator in our Student and Library Services department, and she has offered weekly sessions for students and staff, '**Keeping Active Ideas**' and '**Food and Nutrition Ideas**'. These were co-led by the co-ordinator with other professional staff, including a qualified nutritionist. Other resources have been created, for example infographics of short workouts to get people moving during the day.

### **Faith and Reflection**

Another important section in our department is our Faith and Reflection service. A number of online events have been hosted during the pandemic for students and staff, including '**Take a break with Brengle**', the therapy dog. The Co-ordinating Faith Adviser has done a brilliant job with activities for the department's staff to engage with such as a weekly quiz, and running and walking challenges. Our next challenge is a team run/walk/cycle/swim the distance from Land's End to John O'Groats. In fact we are going to be covering a large part of the way back again, with enough miles pledged to take us back to Middlesbrough.

### **Evaluation of the strategy**

Data was collected on the number of attendees at online events, the number of tutorials, the number of queries answered and views of the Blog. Informal feedback was collected from online events. Several of the LibGuides have had feedback boxes added to certain pages and the new Sways have feedback forms on them, so we can make changes based on student feedback.

We are now planning for the new academic year in this very uncertain environment. There is so much to do to ensure that the pivot to a hybrid model works effectively for our students and staff. However, the transformative process has been hugely satisfying and we have achieved a lot in a short space of time.

Finishing with some of the things we have learned from this: we'd talked about some of our new developments before lockdown but hadn't put them into practice. Lockdown changed our ways of working, but it also gave us time and space to become more creative in our thinking.

The challenges of the pandemic for students have reinforced the need for us to consider how we can support their wellbeing, not just their information literacy.

When we introduced some of our online lockdown practice, we thought of it as 'second best' compared with face-to-face provision but students have actually preferred the ease of access, for example to workshops or the reading group. This has made us rethink what we will offer when we return to campus and we're planning for those developments now.

## **COVID and the University of Bedfordshire**

*Jo Myhill, Head of Academic Liaison, Learning Resources and Service Excellence, University of Bedfordshire.*

The requirement to work from home in March to manage the Covid pandemic saw change at a rapid rate and a move into emergency contingency plans that many felt was often just a paper exercise.

### **Creating a home working environment**

In the immediate aftermath of going into lockdown we had to make sure that staff had appropriate hardware to deliver remote support, and that students were informed on how they could interact with the library. Staff took equipment home and received training on how to access the University network.

A key decision early on was to loan laptops to students from our collection and additional resource from the University to facilitate access for students completing assignments and exams.

Engaging in technology for meetings, team communication and teaching was a steep learning curve for library staff including the Academic Liaison Librarians (ALLS) who I manage.

The Library Development team were key in supporting staff in implementing their “home office” in relation to hardware and accessing University networks. The use of Microsoft Teams to cascade messages to the whole service and report problems was vital and is a sharing communication tool that will continue to be used.

### **Team Management**

Line managers were (and still are) asked to connect with their teams daily to check on work related issues of delivering services remotely.

It was also important to maintain contact with teams from a health and well-being perspective. This has evolved over lockdown from workstation evaluation, checking on Covid symptoms within their immediate and family bubbles.

Time management options were explained to help with the stress of working in isolation and the fatigue aspects on working online. I have encouraged staff to take regular screen breaks, stretch their working day if they wish to take a longer lunch break, start earlier, or finish later so that down time can be taken. The team (Academic Liaison Librarians) have a morning Fika coffee break get together online. We use this as a social networking opportunity, any team issues are reserved for weekly team meeting unless urgently important. We've had fun activities like quizzes, top five lists and we share what's good on Netflix, what have you been reading, what did you do on the weekend etc.

### **Staff and Student communication**

Cascading of information to both students and academic staff was essential.



A list of service and resource FAQs were created and made available on the library web pages (<https://lrweb.beds.ac.uk>) along with University Covid pages. The FAQs acted as a quick one stop approach where we could signpost students to current information pages and provide updates as lockdown eased.

To keep academic staff informed of the changes to service and support, we were asked to create weekly newsletters for the faculty and cascaded to academic staff via their weekly faculty newsletters. The focus was on the FAQs and how academics could use with students and to push digital material and its inclusion on reading lists. The newsletters were well received, and the ALLs also used directly with academics when they asked by how they could support student learning.

The team and I have also seen improvements in liaison during lockdown. We are finding doors for team meetings and development days discussing teaching more open and we are able to offer practical advice and guidance on how identifying resources, reading list development, abiding by copyright and teaching and learning formative tasks on information literacy skills.

### **Resource access**

With the physical libraries shut accessing resources in a digital format became imperative. For some subject areas this would be a fundamental change. For the library, it was a welcome push to force engagement with academics.

With agreement with Deans and ADSE's the ALLS began to immediately add ebooks in the collection onto reading lists. We felt this would be a quick win for and would demonstrate to students that resources were available.

We added publisher open access content to the catalogue where it supported the subjects taught. The resources were promoted via the FAQs rather than on reading lists as we knew at some point the resources would have to be taken down and we didn't want to raise expectations of continued access to these "extra resources". The usage statistics we are now getting from these additional resources is helping to identify potential purchase priorities for the next academic year.

Engagement with ebooks and digitised content has been a mixed success like many institutions, some subject areas engage wholeheartedly and some still struggle with having their content choices and its format / availability being questioned. The move to remote learning and a stronger directive from the University in terms of provision, student satisfaction and avoiding mitigating circumstances has forced the issues and given the library more leverage than it has ever had.

As part of our reading lists annual review, we identified units with 30% or less digital content and made those units a priority for improving digital content. The ADSEs endorsed the proposal and have encouraged unit leaders to engage with reviewing their reading list.

To support academic staff who didn't feel confident in identifying ebooks we provided handouts on how to search the library catalogue and Collaborate tutorials to find items in

stock. We also provided Dewey based lists from our ebook provider

### **Outsourcing ALL tasks**

It was quickly identified early on that some library teams would not have enough of their normal work to do at home (direct face to face student support, print resource purchase and processing, in house digitisation)

The demand for guidance and support from students on how to access digital resources, information literacy and academic skills tuition was increasing. This coupled with academic demand for help in providing digital resources for courses was placing pressure on the ALL team.

The Reader Services team who deliver the front of house Customer Services support to students had a large element of their on-site support taken away with lockdown. This “freeing” of time allowed the ALLs to redirect work in relation to reading lists to that team for checking. Two key projects were identified and successfully delivered to allow the ALLs to undertake liaison activity on improving digital content on reading lists.

This “needs must” change in activity to ensure staff have work during lockdown and continued work from home has provided an opportunity for Reader Services staff to engage in more varied tasks and understand the workflow of reading lists. It is also hoped that further evaluation of this temporary addition of duties may inform service review in the future.

### **Going forward**

The University of Bedfordshire like many others are beginning to develop strategies for delivering semester 1 teaching online. We will be opening our campuses (depending on local lockdown measures) to allow students to come on site to use IT, participate in socially distanced interaction with fellow students in seminars and workshops and experience campus life.

For the library that means a continuation of remote learning for information literacy and academic skills and supporting students to use the physical library space according to socially distanced and cleaning protocols. There will be a continued focus on identifying and promoting digital resources via reading lists.

How long we will have to continue operating remotely is just not known. The forced change in practice, has given the Library an opportunity to try something different, to let go of established behaviour / process and reflect on how we deliver service and resources in this changed world.

## **What are the challenges of UK public library makerspaces? Preliminary research findings**

*Phil Jarvis, Librarian, Oxfordshire Libraries.*

Originating as a concept from the “maker” movement in the United States, and subsequently adopted in public libraries such as the Fayetteville Free Library makerspace (McCue, 2011), makerspaces have appeared in UK public libraries over the last few years and provide an opportunity for self-directed learning, promote digital literacy and are an example of the “not just about books” approach some libraries are adopting to offer Science, Technology, Mathematics and Engineering (STEM) provision. A small number of academic libraries are also creating makerspaces in campus libraries, with Coventry university one example of this.

### **What is a makerspace?**

There is no set definition of a makerspace, and there are a variety of models of what events and activities can occur in one. Even the name “makerspace” is often absent in libraries that provide a service or a set aside room for self-directed learning with technology and crafts. This flexibility allows libraries to mould the makerspace offer to whatever budget the library service has, and ideally, to the demand and interests of the local community.

### **Examples of makerspaces**

A static makerspace in a library is a specifically designed room catered for the makerspace. There is a variation in what happens in a static makerspace.

#### **Technology focussed**

- Static makerspace with computers, robots, virtual reality headsets, drones, 3D printers and computer printers. The space can also be available to be hired by local charities and businesses. Some of these makerspaces may have software on the computers to enable music production, animation projects, film production editing and podcasting.
- Static makerspace with cupboards containing technology and a 3D printer. Examples of the events you may regularly encounter in these makerspaces include code clubs and other clubs using the equipment and space. Some equipment may be loaned to the makerspace.

#### **Craft focussed**

- A “Messy makerspace” is where the space is specifically designed with air filters to extract dust that has been created from the activities in the space.
- A craft focused static makerspace that can feature equipment such as kilns, and can also have, for example, pc’s, virtual reality headsets, t-shirt printing, computer printers and 3D printers.

## Mobile makerspace

- Often a companion to a static makerspace established in a library, a mobile makerspace service allows the library service some flexibility by having technology go to different library branches to run events and activities with. For example a drone or robotics workshop.

## What challenges have UK public library makerspaces encountered?

I have been researching what challenges public library staff have encountered whilst running or working in a makerspace for my MA dissertation. Here are some of the preliminary findings that have come up over the course of the interviews I conducted in 2019.

### Equipment

- What type of makerspace? What equipment? Who to consult, the general public? Other library services? Is the makerspace too noisy and off putting?
- The barriers that council IT departments enforce as the IT department wants a standardisation of IT across the service. This approach can conflict with the experimental nature of a makerspace when the makerspace wants to use a range of computers and technologies.
- Technology on loan. Sometimes this method is used as a way to sidestep barriers from IT departments. This can bring short term benefits, in the long term this can lead to complications as the technology needs updating, but either the terms of the loan contract doesn't provide cover or there is no budget allocation to replace IT stock in the library service.
- How can a makerspace keep relevant and be future proofed? Technology is always changing and it can be a challenge to keep up to speed with updates and new tastes. The makerspace runs a risk of losing public interest if technology is out of date.

### Perception

- Changing the public's perception of a public library. How to advertise the makerspace to attract people in. Perception of libraries being "uncool" can hinder attempts to encourage teenagers into the makerspace.
- Library managers may not understand the makerspace concept, and this could also be the case with stakeholders in the organisation such as councillors and other departments, like the IT department, that the library service works with.

### Measuring success

- How to measure success with a makerspace? What metrics should be counted and what's the best way of doing so?

## Funding

- A lack of money in the library service and allocated for makerspaces, and sustaining an organization's interest in the makerspace and the financing of it. Relying solely on grant money could make the longevity of makerspaces precarious.
- Should a makerspace charge for events? Would charging prohibit people from the local community accessing the events and activities in the makerspace? Equipment such as 3D printer filaments can run out quickly and the price to replace the equipment can be expensive, so some makerspaces do charge a nominal fee to regroup some overhead costs.

## Staffing

- Staff anxiety regarding using new technology. Library assistants overstretched in roles already. Use of volunteers and how to recruit them? Knowledge retention issues.

## Recommendations

A dedicated team working on the makerspace would benefit the running of a makerspace and enable someone to coordinate regular events and one off workshops. Library staff can then be given regular training to feel confident and empowered to run and create their own events. Ideally, to not be reliant solely on volunteers, but to work in collaboration with library assistants and librarians. Outreach and partnership work with local businesses, charities and schools can also be coordinated by a dedicated team working on a libraries makerspace.

Establish a way of recording success so it can be disseminated across the organisation and hopefully convince sceptical stakeholders of the makerspaces relevance. Having support from stakeholders in an organisation is beneficial to the library service generally, but with a new concept like a makerspace, having the support of a councillor could help a makerspace.

If funding for makerspaces could be ring fenced it would give the staff running and coordinating the makerspace the ability to future proof the makerspace.

## Conclusion

Social justice ambitions such as community cohesion can be met through the use of a makerspace but it requires a dedicated and motivated person or ideally, a team, to coordinate and build effective partnerships that can commit to meeting the needs of the community a library serves. There have been some excellent examples of community engagement with makerspaces. I recently attended a webinar (CILIPS, 2020) on North Ayrshire libraries, with craft activities in a makerspace in North Ayrshire partnering school children working together with Syrian refugees housed in the community. The funding came from a grant from the Scottish government.

It is important to acknowledge that along with successes, there have also been static makerspaces that have quietly folded, with the rooms turning into hired venue space and the technology purchased going on loan to schools and across the authorities libraries. This could reflect changes in priorities by that organisation, and perhaps from encountering a number of the challenges raised in this article. The issue this poses is that makerspaces may become a missed opportunity by public libraries to embrace digital technology and opportunities to encourage new avenues of self-directed learning.

The hope is for this work to be used by library staff considering establishing a library makerspace and what challenges to potentially prepare for. Makerspaces are constantly needing to evolve to stay up to date with technology and the needs of the communities they are in. A small selection of potential future research topics could explore the following areas:

- What skill gaps are there in services providing a makerspace?
- Evaluating the role of public library makerspaces during the covid-19 pandemic.

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Phil Jarvis is a librarian for Oxfordshire Libraries and is a MA distance learning student at the University of Sheffield's Libraries and Information Services Management course. He is currently writing his MA dissertation about what are the challenges of makerspaces in UK public libraries.

## Improvements to the Department for Work and Pensions eBook Service

Naomi Lees, E-Resources Librarian , Department for Work and Pensions.

The Department for Work and Pensions uses Ebook Central as its main eBook platform. We have a model whereby users can read titles free for 5 minutes, after which they need to request the title. All requests are reviewed in line with our collection management policy.

We carried out a short survey with users to find out how they were using Ebook Central, and what issues they faced. This helped us identify what was working well, and where improvements needed to be made.

### What did we find out?

85% of people found it easy to **set up an Ebook Central account**. It was good to know this wasn't a barrier to people using the system.

72% of people said it was easy to **browse or search for books**. Also good to know that people were happy with the search and browse functions.

71% of people were able to **find relevant titles**. It was reassuring to know that users were able to find relevant titles, as Ebook Central doesn't really cover the titles we buy in print. I half expected users to tell me they were disappointed with the selection and unable to find what they needed, so it was good to find this wasn't the case.

60% of people said it was easy to **view books online**. However, there were complaints around the 5 minute reading time on non-owned titles, and confusion about requesting titles for purchase.

60% said they had tried to **download books** from Ebook Central, however, there were some frustrations:

*"I never managed to successfully download anything from the site, I only tried a couple of times and gave up trying to use it."*

*"I once tried to download about three books but couldn't progress this as I was asked to pay for it, or that what it seemed. If there was another way of downloading, this wasn't clear."*

Only 8% of users had made **request for books** to be purchased. People were unsure what they could request:

*"Always edgy when requesting a purchase as I don't want to suggest something that only I will find useful"*

*"I am never sure under what circumstances I can request books. Do I need approval to request any books, does it have to be related to my current role, or can I use it to learn about different fields?"*

Only 16% had tried to use Ebook Central on a **mobile device**, with just over half of these users saying they were satisfied with the experience. However, some said it didn't work on mobile, whilst others found using the Adobe digital reader fiddly.

## What have we changed?

### Simplified the user guidance

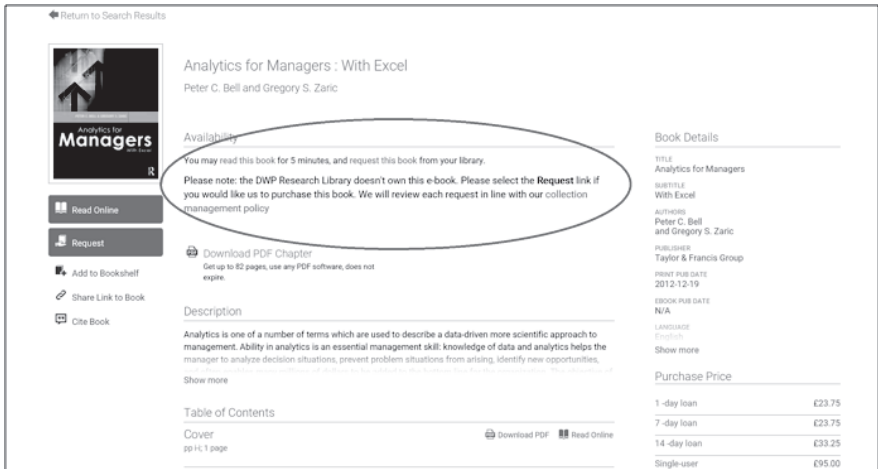
We felt that there was too much guidance on using Ebook Central, both on the platform itself and on our intranet. The guidance was simplified to reflect the five main things users wanted to do: set up an account; find a book, request a book, download a book, and use on a personal device.

### Requesting books

Users were confused about requesting books. Could they request a book? Who would pay for it?

We now have a clear statement on all non-owned titles that states:

- a) The Research Library doesn't own this particular title
- b) Titles can be requested for purchase
- c) All requests are reviewed in line with the library's collection management policy, with a link to the collection policy

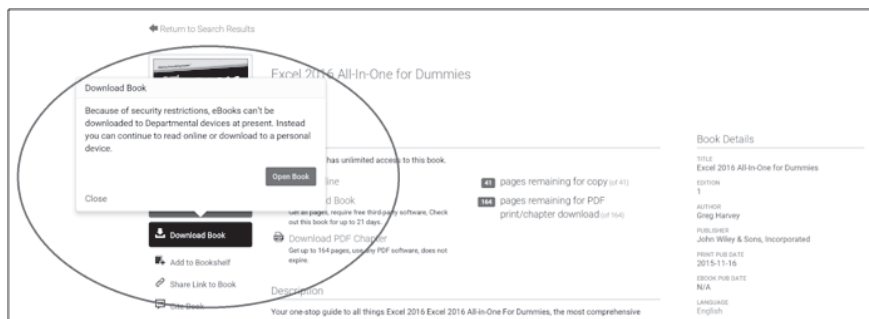


### Downloading books

Users were unsurprisingly frustrated by the barriers to downloading books. We have tried to clarify our messaging around this and provide alternatives. This did take some fiddling with in the Lib Central admin settings, but thanks to some help from Marie @ ProQuest, we were able to get there!



There is now a pop up on the Download button to alert users to Departmental security restrictions on downloading eBooks to work devices and letting them know about alternative methods of accessing books, either by viewing online or downloading to a personal device.



### Mobile and personal devices

We have highlighted the fact that Ebook Central can be accessed on personal (non-work) devices, both in our user guide and on the Ebook Central platform.

### What we will be doing next

1. Publicising the fact that Ebook Central **can be accessed on personal devices** and seeing if there is an increase in the number of users using personal devices to access Ebook Central.
2. Improving the experience for **mobile users**. Feeding back to suppliers on any issues with using the Adobe digital reader.
3. Measuring the number of **new book requests** and **book downloads** to see if clearer instructions and messaging have improved things.

### Further information

For further information, please contact [naomi.lee@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:naomi.lee@dwp.gov.uk)

## **Kent Digital Accessibility Conference 2020**

*Heather Dawson.*

Kent Digital Accessibility Conference 2020 took place online in June.

Links to all video recordings, presentation slides and questions and answers from the conference sessions. <https://www.lexdis.org.uk/kent-digital-accessibility-conference-2020/>

It covered a wide range of areas ranging from managerial implementations of strategy, legal regulations, to practical tips from major suppliers and experiences from users of services.

JISC provided a very good overview of strategy.

Strategic Approaches to Implementing Accessibility by Kellie Mote & Mark Ayton, Jisc

<https://kent.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=8df4a3aa-911d-42eb-85ca-abe9011f2d21>

Major suppliers who spoke about the features of their products included Google and Microsoft. They both have many built in features as they take the approach that to be inclusive means to embrace disability from the very beginning: from the earliest planning stages of a product, to its launch, to its latest updates. Accessibility should always be built in rather than bolted on.

Accessibility in Google Products and Designing with Accessibility in Mind by Sara Basson, Google

<https://kent.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=41eed81-8417-4b1d-8015-abea008aa823>

Accessibility in the Microsoft Product Suite by Robson Smith, Microsoft UK

<https://kent.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=ba9c8665-f5f2-4ce1-aab1-abe9011f5984>

I found this particularly useful as it highlighted the Microsoft Accessibility fundamentals website which has a number of free modules where you can explore existing features

<https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/learn/paths/accessibility-fundamentals/>

Key among these are:

### **Windows 10 Accessibility Features and Tools**

Keyboard shortcuts for Windows 10 mean that only need to memorize a single set of tools. This reduces the amount of mental mapping required to operate Windows and the number of keystrokes necessary to complete a task. Keyboard shortcuts can be especially useful for people with mobility disabilities and people with low vision or who are blind and use a screen reader.

### **Dictate in Windows 10**

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/dictate-in-microsoft-365-eab203e1-d030-43c1-84ef-999b0b9675fe?ui=en-us&rs=en-us&ad=us>

Dictation is a speech-to-text software tool in Windows that lets you input text using a microphone rather than a keyboard. The voice recognition technology can help users who have difficulty typing with a regular keyboard to write documents and compose e-mails. This tool is a useful option for anyone seeking to avoid unnecessary keystrokes, including people with temporary disabilities like a broken arm.

### **Narrator**

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/22798/windows-10-complete-guide-to-narrator>

is a screen reader built into Windows 10 that describes what's on your screen so you can use that information to navigate your device. Controlling Narrator with keyboard commands lets you use your PC without a mouse. This makes it easier for people who are blind or have low vision to complete common tasks such as navigating apps, reading text, and interacting with user interface elements like buttons. Narrator can also be used with braille displays.

### **Colour filters**

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/4344736/windows-10-use-color-filters>

can also be found in the Ease of Access menu. This setting can make photos and colors easier to see by applying a colour filter to your screen. Colour filters such as Grayscale can make it easier to see elements on the screen. There are also specific filters to make colours more distinct for people with colour blindness.

### **Focus assist**

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/27930/windows-10-make-it-easier-to-focus-on-tasks>

Focus assist allows you to turn off notifications in Windows anytime you need to focus. People with mental health disabilities such as anxiety may benefit from the enhanced ability to get things done without distractions that Focus assist provides. When enabled, this feature blocks alerts and notifications from any of your installed apps.

## **Microsoft 365 Features and Tools**

Like the Windows 10 operating system, Microsoft apps offer features and tools to help people of all abilities access and navigate technology.

### **Microsoft Teams**

Microsoft Teams is a messaging app for virtual conversations, meetings, and collaboration. Accessibility tools are built in to make communication and teamwork more inclusive.

Live captions, can make your meeting more inclusive to participants who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, people with different levels of language proficiency, and participants in loud places by giving them another way to follow along.

The Microsoft Learning Tools feature Immersive Reader is also available in Teams. Changing the appearance of text with Immersive Reader options such as Line Focus and Spacing can promote focus and remove distraction. This can be useful for everyone but

especially helpful for people with learning or mental health disabilities. Immersive Reader can also read text aloud, which can make it easier for people with low vision to read Teams chat messages and posts.

The conference closed with the session

**Accessible Student Journey by Ben Watson, University of Kent and Kent student Paul-Georg Ender**

<https://kent.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=d6737261-c126-48b3-ade9-abe901197469>

I would recommend anyone to view this if they want to gain insight into the lived experiences of students with visual disabilities and the difference good library support services can bring. It really was an inspiring end to such a well designed and delivered conference.

## Disability- Higher Education, Libraries, Teaching and Learning. Bibliography – May/June 2020

### Teaching and Learning

Graham Coiley (June 2, 2020)

#### **Disabled Students' Allowance during a pandemic**

Retrieved from: <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/disabled-students-allowance-during-a-pandemic/>

**Abstract:** A survey conducted by the Association of Non-Medical Help Providers explores the Covid-19 experiences of students in receipt of Disabled Student Allowance.

Ehlinger, E.; Ropers, R.(2020)

#### **“It’s all about learning as a community”: facilitating the learning of students with disabilities in higher education classrooms.**

*Journal of college student development*, 61(3), 333-349

Moriña, A.; Perera, V. (2020)

#### **Inclusive higher education in Spain: students with disabilities speak out.**

*Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*. 19(3), 215-231. DOI: 10.1177/1538192718777360.

**Abstract:** This study examined the barriers and supports to inclusive education identified by university students with disabilities in Spain. A qualitative methodology is used. Students identified several organizational and architectural barriers and supports in completing their degrees. The conclusions go back to the main ideas analyzed to discuss previous works; likewise, proposals for improvements are provided, such as the need to train faculty in inclusive education and universal design for learning and the importance of redesigning learning environments to make them more accessible. [ABSTRACT FROM AUTHOR]

NADP (2020).

#### **‘Covid-19: disabled students in higher education: student concerns and institutional challenges’**

Retrieved from: <https://nadp-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/NADP-Report-Covid-19-Disabled-Students-in-Higher-Education-Student-Concerns-and-Institutional-Challenges.docx>

**Abstract:** Covid-19 has created a challenge for everyone. Higher education institutions are no exception and have rapidly moved much of their teaching and assessment online. Most universities have included their disability service managers as part of their emergency response team which has ensured that disabled students have been

considered from the start of arrangements. The aims of this report are to enable the good practice developed within higher education institutions to be shared more widely and to highlight areas where more work needs to be undertaken urgently.

Office for Students (2020)

### **Supporting disabled students during the crisis briefing note**

Retrieved from: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/coronavirus-briefing-note-disabled-students/>

Packham, A and Hall, R (2020, 19 May)

### **We're being fobbed off: why disabled students are losing out in lockdown**

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/may/21/were-being-fobbed-off-why-disabled-students-are-losing-out-in-lockdown>

Disabled students need extensions to their deadlines and extra equipment, but are finding it hard to get them

## **Assistive Technology**

### **Clear communication helps with transition to online learning.**

*Disability compliance for higher education*, 25 (11) p2 DOI: 10.1002/dhe.30852

**Abstract:** Tracey Forman, Assistant Director of Disability Resources at Texas A&M University, led an effort to share information students with disabilities needed during the rapid move to online instruction resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. She shared her unit's process for creating resources. [ABSTRACT FROM AUTHOR]

### **Doing the COVID-19 pivot: how to deliver effective library teaching online Part 3 accessibility**

Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWQRpk3DlxM>

Librarians from the Open University Library ran an event around taking your teaching online on 21st May and 3rd June.

### **Kent Digital Accessibility Conference 2020**

Retrieved from: <https://www.lexdis.org.uk/kent-digital-accessibility-conference-2020>

**Abstract:** Resources relating to the Kent Digital Accessibility conference including slides and recordings

NAPD (2020).

### **NADP guide to ensuring your webinars are accessible**

Retrieved from: <https://nadp-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Ensuring-your-Webinars-are-Accessible.docx>

Tweed, A. (2020, May 20).

### **Five ways to approach online learning during lockdown and beyond**

<https://abilitynet.org.uk/news-blogs/five-ways-approach-online-learning-during-lockdown-and-beyond>

## **Blind Students**

Hewett, R (2020)

### **Balancing inclusive design, adjustments and personal agency: progressive mutual accommodations and the experiences of university students with vision impairment in the United Kingdom**

*International journal of inclusive education*, 24 (7), 754-770,

DOI: 10.1080/13603116.2018.1492637

**Abstract:** This paper proposes a framework of support for reducing barriers to curriculum access for students with disabilities in higher education (HE), by drawing upon findings from a unique longitudinal qualitative study. The 'Longitudinal Transitions Study' commenced in 2010 and followed the transition experiences of a group of 80 young people since they left compulsory education, 32 of whom went into HE. Interviews were conducted with participants at several key stages of their time in HE and supplemented by focused case study work with seven of the participants. The analysis provides original examination of how appropriate balance can be achieved between broad inclusive practice and individual adjustments meeting specific needs. Key curriculum access issues identified in the study are outlined with examples of how these were overcome through 'inclusive practice', 'individual adjustments' and 'individual agency' of the student. Drawing upon a Bioecological Model of Inclusive HE, a framework of support is proposed for achieving appropriate balance through the notion of progressive and mutual accommodations to facilitate learning environments which enable students with disabilities to become independent learners. The paper has broader significance for educators and researchers concerned with promoting inclusive teaching in HE and ensuring equality of opportunity for all students. [ABSTRACT FROM AUTHOR]

## Deaf Students

Thompson-Ochoa, D. (2020)

**Retaining students of color who are deaf or hard of hearing in higher education.**  
*Journal of Negro education*, 89 (1) p38-47, 10p

## Wellbeing / Mental Health

Bradley, E; Tugade, M.(2020)

**Mental health in higher education: can a digital strategy help?**

*Educause review* 55 (2) 8-9

Retrieved from: <https://er.educause.edu/articles/2020/5/mental-health-in-higher-education-can-a-digital-strategy-help>

**Abstract:** The percentage of college and university students reporting mental health disorders has risen precipitously. Technology-based interventions could revolutionize mental health care in higher education.

House of Commons Library Briefing:

**Coronavirus: loneliness (2020)**

Retrieved from <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8514/>

**Abstract:** The House of Commons Library has published a briefing on loneliness looking at the Loneliness Strategy for England and outlining the situation in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The briefing includes information relating to the impact of loneliness on young people and care leavers and the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on loneliness.

Office for Students (2020).

**Supporting student mental health: briefing note**

Retrieved from: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/coronavirus-briefing-note-supporting-student-mental-health/>

Working with universities, colleges and other stakeholders, the Office for Students (OfS) is producing a series of briefing notes on the steps universities and colleges are taking to support their students during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic



Schoeps, K.; de la Barrera, U.; Montoya-Castilla, (2020)

**Impact of emotional development intervention program on subjective well-being of university students.**

*Higher education*, 79 (4), 711-729.

DOI: 10.1007/s10734-019-00433-0.

**Abstract:** The present study aims to determine the effects of an intervention program based on Mayer and Salovey's (1997) model of emotional intelligence. A total of 250 university students participated in this study (mean = 21.89; standard deviation = 2.60; 75.20% women), who were randomized to experimental group (number of subjects = 63) and control group (number of subjects = 187). The emotional education program comprised seven 2-h sessions during 2 months. Participants completed the trait meta-mood scale, basic empathy scale, satisfaction with life scale, scale of positive and negative experience, mood questionnaire, and depression anxiety and stress scale. Results showed that the intervention program significantly increased emotional intelligence, empathy, and positive mood, as well as subjective well-being at post-intervention. These changes disappeared at follow-up. No significant moderators were found, neither demographic variables nor initial levels of emotional symptoms. Implementing intervention programs at universities for developing student's emotional competence might be beneficial for their subjective well-being and mental health.

Smith, K. J.; Haight, T. D.; Emerson(2020).

**Resilience as a coping strategy for reducing departure intentions of accounting students.**

*Accounting Education*, 29(1), 77-108

**Abstract:** This study evaluates the influence of resilience as a potential coping strategy to help reduce student departure from the accounting major. We collected data from 443 accounting majors at four geographically disbursed U.S. universities using a battery of psychometric instruments. With these data, we analyzed the relations between role stressors, psychological health, burnout, and departure intentions, and assessed the extent to which individual resilience levels served as a positive influence by enhancing health, and diminishing burnout and departure intentions. We found sources of role stress to have significant negative associations with psychological health, and significant positive associations with academic burnout (direct), and departure intentions (indirect). However, resilience counteracted those associations through its direct positive association with psychological health, and direct negative association with burnout. Resilience also had a significant indirect negative association with departure intentions through its direct associations with psychological health (positive) and burnout (negative).


Young Minds (2020).

**Coronavirus: impact on young people with mental health needs.**

Retrieved from: <https://youngminds.org.uk/about-us/reports/coronavirus-impact-on-young-people-with-mental-health-needs/>

**Abstract** :Discusses the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on the mental health of young people. A survey of 2,111 young people with a history of mental health needs found that 32 percent agreed that the pandemic had made their mental health much worse. Key factors that young people said had affected their mental health include: concerns about their family's health; school and university closures; loss of routine and loss of social connection.





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