

Technology People first: How client-centered are our libraries?

27-28 October 2005

It is appropriate to characterise the present time as being "the age of the information customer" for at no time in the history of librarianship and information services has the authority of the customer been so recognised and so respected. But, most of us who are involved in actually delivering services have some difficulty giving that concept its due (Rajesh Singh, 2003).

Having extensively covered aspects of information and communication technology (ICT) developments that have influenced the library and information sector in recent years, this symposium deliberately aims to shift the focus to the people for whom technology is being developed and deployed in the first place.

Technological changes have provided the library and information profession with attractive and economic means of delivering knowledge to the client. Many new tools and services, and traditional tools, such as the catalogue, have been developed and enhanced by librarians to effectively support teaching, learning and research. It may be argued that technology has enabled librarians to provide better service than ever before. But it is not technology alone that has changed. The demographics of learners and the needs of information clients have changed as well. Combined, these factors have created a new market for library services with a new type of client. The result is a demand for high quality services that are quick, convenient and reliable. It also evokes the question whether library services have been sufficiently redefined to fully serve clients.

The purpose of this symposium is to discuss the shifting paradigms and emerging issues in the library and information services profession which affect customer relationship. Ultimately, it also hopes to celebrate the client as the pivot on which all services, technology and its applications hinges, and to explore ways to meet our challenge and obligation in the knowledge society.

[View presentations here](#)

Programme

Day 1 : Thursday, 28 October

SESSION 1

Chair: Johan Engelbrecht

Welcome and Opening

Prof Walter Claassen, Vice Rector (Research),
University of Stellenbosch

Keynote address: The challenges of the Google Age:
delivering library collections and services at the point of
need

Ms Phyllis Spies, OCLC, United States of
America

**SESSION 2 : THE NEW WORLD OUR CLIENTS WORK IN -
INSIGHTS INTO THE HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE**

Session Chair: Robert Moropa

The changing higher education environment in South Africa: some implications for university libraries	Prof Antony Melck, University of Pretoria, South Africa
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eResearch - Opportunities for researchers and challenges for librarians, or vice versa?	Mr Roy Page-Shipp (Consultant), South Africa
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The quest for virtuality and the fight against invisibility	Prof Julian Smith, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa
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Discussion

SESSION 3

Session Chair: Elda Nolte

The "me"-generation and information overload - are libraries catering to the needs of up and coming information users?	Mr Lourens du Plessis, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa
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Only browsing, thanks	Ms Hilda Kruger, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa
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The role of the Library in Academia: Perspectives of a user	Prof Chris Aldrich, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa
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Discussion

Day 2 : Friday, 29 October

**SESSION 4 : DELIVERING ON OUR CLIENTS EXPECTATIONS -
INSIGHTS INTO THIS "BRAVE NEW WORLD" OF INFORMATION**

Session Chair: Berta Els

New services, roles and users: Challenges for the university library	Mr Kurt de Belder, University of Leiden, The Netherlands
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The unusable library: Urban myth or user reality	Prof Derek Law, University of Strathclyde, Scotland, United Kingdom
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Discussion

**SESSION 5 : SO, NOW WE KNOW WHAT OUR CLIENTS WANT,
BUT CAN WE DELIVER?**

Panel discussion	Mr Roy Page-Shipp (facilitator)
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Closure
