

# **“The Integrated helpdesk”**

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## Background

- Loughborough went live with its RFID self service in September 2008
- Prior to that date we had two separate desk services which were staffed by two distinct teams: the circulation desk on the main level and the information desks on all three levels
- Since then we have had one integrated service on each of the levels

## Information and circulation pre-2008



## Division of roles pre-RFID

### Information desks

- Answer any subject enquiries
- Take payment for print credits
- Answer IT queries

### Circulation desk

- Issue/return books
- Take payment for fines
- Take payment for print credits
- Administer lost property
- Answer subject & IT enquiries!

## Staffing of desks pre-RFID

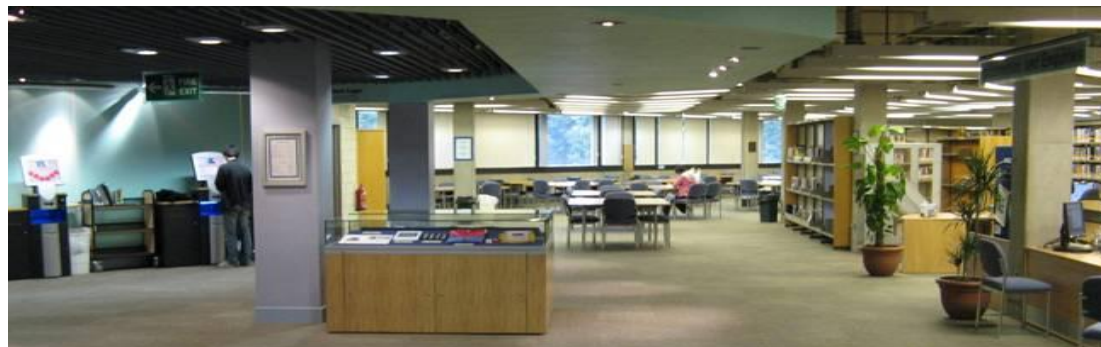
### Information desks

- Academic librarians & team leaders
- Faculty team SLAs & Las
- ITSOs (IT Support Officers)
- Support Services Librarians
- Service Development Manager

### Circulation desk

- Circulation staff

# Post RFID implementation



## Post RFID division of roles

- Everyone is expected to be able to answer questions on any topic ranging from simple subject enquiries to circulation enquiries to IT troubleshooting whatever their full-time role in the Library.
- BUT: there is no shame in not knowing the answer – if staff are not sure, we encourage them to refer to specialists in the area

## Post RFID staffing of desks

- Reception desk: staffed by a full time LA from the old circulation team during office hours
- Information desks on all three levels staffed by a virtual customer services team ( a combined rota drawn from staff from faculty, IT and circulation teams)

## Why change?

- RFID self service meant a dramatic reduction in the workload of the circulation team, so we needed to find alternate work for them to do
- Greater job satisfaction for circulation staff – not just seen as second class employees there to just handle books
- The addition of the circulation team to the information desk rota meant less desk duties for faculty team staff, freeing up their time to do other things
- Students don't know who we are – they just want their question answered

## Training to succeed -1

- Half day session out of Library facilitated by Staff Development to encourage bonds between the teams

## Training to succeed-2

- Aleph training: scenarios were posted on the Library staff blog, FAQs were produced ; drop in sessions were arranged for faculty team staff

## Training to succeed-3

- Use of University's VLE "Learn" to host supporting materials and a staff forum: "39 steps and still puffing"

## Training to succeed - 4

- Annual refresher training days opened up to all Library staff where sessions on reference interview techniques and customer service were held

## Training to succeed - 5

- Online database tutorials released every month for staff to work through in their own time

## How successful has the project been?

- It has taken a couple of years but the changes are starting to pay dividends
- Staff satisfaction is high, especially amongst evening/weekend staff and circulation staff
- Academic librarians gain a useful insight on how students/staff use our service
- High scores in NSS and THES awards (third in 2011 results after Sheffield and Oxford)

## Lies, utter lies and statistics

- 89% increase in enquiries at the weekend
- 125% increase in enquiries in the evenings
- More subject enquiries asked in evenings/weekends than during the daytime
- Approximately 50% of enquiries are circulation, only about 7% are subject enquiries

## Would we do anything differently?

- More training
- Don't start at beginning of academic year
- Don't link two major changes at the same time

## The future

- Simplifying services – a university-wide project
- Review of desk structure
- Library Staff Forum – replaces annual refresher training

**Any questions?**

## Contact details

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