

Chapter 4

Development of Innovative User Services

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ABSTRACT

Higher education is continuously progressing toward globalization and openness, and models of teaching, scientific research, and learning are rapidly changing. Due to macro-environmental changes, academic libraries must actively adjust their functional positions and explore new methods for user services. To satisfy users' increasingly diversified needs for information, academic libraries are continuously extending user service functions, and gradually evolving from libraries that provide lending services to centers of learning, teaching services, knowledge, and culture on campus. Through functional repositioning, academic libraries are constructing more systematic and diversified user service systems by improving basic services, deepening support services, extending services in teaching assistance, boosting services for cultivating humanistic literacy, developing spatial services, and expanding new technical services. Throughout the above-mentioned development processes, there has been a clear trend of change in terms of the contents, marketing, and cooperation of user services.

INTRODUCTION

With the evolution of an information-based society, the development of tertiary education continuously progresses toward globalization and openness. Digitalization, intelligence, ubiquity, and mobility in teaching, scientific research, and learning are becoming increasingly prevalent, with rapidly-changing models and contents. Due to macro-environmental changes, academic libraries must face challenges, repositioning, and transformation in expanding both the objectives and functions of their user services.

This chapter first gives an overview of the repositioning of user services in academic libraries in Mainland China and the reconstruction of the service system framework in new environments. It then focuses on several cases of new types of services, concluding with a summary of the development trends of user services in China.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-0550-1.ch004

REPOSITIONING OF USER SERVICE FUNCTIONS

As we enter the digital era, information resources and services are becoming increasingly ubiquitous, which challenges the role of academic libraries as a traditional information center. To satisfy users' increasingly diversified needs for information, academic libraries are continuously extending user service functions, and gradually transitioning and repositioning from libraries that provide lending services for books and periodicals to being centers of learning, teaching services, knowledge, and culture on campus.

Learning Center

Along with the changes in higher education models, e-learning, blended learning, and collaborative learning are gradually on the rise. To adapt to this trend, academic libraries are integrating information resources, digital technologies, modern equipment, and multimedia services in order to create a functionally-powerful, one-stop learning center. Through these new services, academic libraries support group learning, as well as collaborative and personalized learning, with abundant resources, improved facilities, and powerful technical equipment and support.

Teaching Service Center

Traditionally, formal instruction at colleges and universities was solely performed by teachers, while libraries only played the role of passive literature providers. However, with the increasing need to cultivate innovative talent in higher education, academic libraries are gradually becoming part of the primary education process, and are providing increased support services for instruction.

On the one hand, libraries directly participate in the teaching process and the undertaking of pedagogical tasks, which includes opening elective courses related to topics such as information literacy and learning literacy. Libraries also provide information literacy training embedded in professional courses and information push services that support professional courses. Models of teaching include classroom teaching, open remote video seminars, massive open online courses (MOOCs), and more.

On the other hand, libraries provide instructors and students with powerful support services, such as reading rooms specifically for course reserves and service platforms for electronic course reserves, in order to facilitate access to reference materials. These services may also include providing teachers with courseware production services for their classroom teaching, flipped classroom teaching, and more.

Knowledge Center

Libraries fully fulfill their traditional functions through knowledge organization and knowledge services. Information resource construction has been implemented based on the disciplines of individual colleges or universities, and libraries establish knowledge systems with comprehensive collections according to the demands of the relevant academic disciplines of the colleges or universities. By collecting, preserving, and disseminating knowledge for the various disciplines, libraries are able to meet the demands of teaching and scientific research with regards to information resources. In addition, libraries provide teachers and students with powerful support for their scientific research and innovations by offering services such as research project consultation, sci-tech novelty search, citation retrieval for research

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