



Overview:

Himmelfarb Library underwent a major space renovation during the summer of 2005. Administration and librarians felt the need to modernize the environment to better reflect the needs of the users of a 21st century library. The project was driven by an increase in electronic resources, plans to create a single Service Desk, and modifications in both users' and staff's working styles. Our challenge was to create these innovations with a small library budget.

Objectives:

As part of a 2004-2005 Strategic Planning effort, the Space Committee was organized with individuals from diverse areas of the library. These areas were Reference, Circulation and Access, Library Operations, Library Facilities and the AV Study Center. The Committee was charged with a first floor renovation that would address:

- An increasing need for collaborative study space.
- A demand for increased availability of computer options to utilize a growing number of electronic resources.
- A demand for wireless access in study areas.
- The need to better use space made available by reduction in the number of print journals.
- The need to better utilize critical space taken by rarely used print indices now available through current database subscriptions.
- Staff desire for a combined Circulation and Reference Desks.

METHODS:

The Space Committee employed a variety of methods to determine staff needs. During strategic staff planning sessions, staff was asked to identify areas where improvement was needed or desired. Administration was also asked for their input. Over several months a basic plan, which addressed the above objectives, was developed.. Staff was asked to review preliminary plans and provide input as a variety of drawings were considered. A final floor plan was approved by the administration. With that approval, the committee moved on to looking at designs for a combined reference and circulation desk, new casual furniture and shelving for the Reference Collection.

Pictures: Old Circ Desk and area which is now browsing area.



Changing Space Needs and Electronic Resources Migration: Moving Towards A Library For the 21st Century

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Results:



Space Changes:

- Most of the library furniture was redeployed; the only purchases required were a new joint User Services Desk and some additional casual seating.
- Old index materials were completely removed if available online.
- Indexes with no online equivalent were relocated to another floor.
- The Reference staff moved into space previously used for current journals.
- The remainder of the space was dedicated to new collaborative study space.

Journal Changes:

- A “core” collection of journals, entitled the Browsing Collection, was retained in both print and electronic formats.
- A commitment was made by staff to transition as many of the remaining print subscriptions as possible to electronic format.
- Pre-1980 journals were moved offsite which permitted an extensive journal shift. The shift made room for the current journals to be shelved together with the bound journal volumes.

Staff Changes:

- Staff participated in a change management session to attempt to minimize anxiety.
- Staff was involved in the design of their work space and the public area.
- All relocations were accomplished using furniture already in the library.
- Relocation permitted the Reference staff to be reunited for the first time in many years.



Outcomes:

- Expenditures were kept within the budget.
- The main library floor was opened up to more light and easier movement by removing tall Reference Collection shelving from the center of the floor.
- Staff involvement in their work space design helped everyone “buy into” the renovation process.
- Collaborative space and computer space is arranged to make both areas more useable.
- Unexpected challenges were experienced in the following areas:
 - Data and telephone lines were more difficult to arrange in the new office configurations than was anticipated during planning.
 - Despite planned communication efforts, users were still confused about journal locations.
 - While the timeline seemed very reasonable, more time was actually needed to accommodate changes in delivery schedules.
 - Since the success of the project required significant coordination among movers, electricians, telecommunications, and furniture vendors, when one was delayed, disruption occurred in each area.

Conclusions:

- Library users have been overwhelmingly positive about the changes.
- Staff dynamics and work flow were enhanced in the new and improved work areas.
- Our vision of improved, more useable collaborative study areas was demonstrated as soon as classes began.
- The increased number of comfortable seating areas has facilitated use of the Browsing Collection and provided student conversation areas.
- In spite of some unanticipated difficulties, the renovation was highly successful.

