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The reading list of the future

Abstract:

The reading list of the future

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Information systems that are fit for purpose are one of the key foundations to strategy 2020. To meet this need Information Services has implemented an online cloud-based Reading List Management System (RLMS) which will launch university-wide in trimester one 2017. Approximately 30 early adopters from The Business School and the School of Applied Sciences agreed to trial the system in the lead up to the full launch. Information Services chose Leganto, a relatively new RLMS developed Ex Libris, the same company responsible for both our Library Management System (Alma) and Discovery Layer (Primo, also known as LibrarySearch).

The reading list is traditionally recognised as a collation of printed materials, or even more simply, a list of titles. However, the transition from printed collation to digital collection has been quietly taking place in libraries and universities for a decade now, so much so that students now expect all their materials to be available online (Swain, 2006). The implementation of the RLMS would not have been possible without extensive collaboration across Information Services. Literature suggests that working partnerships between library staff, technologists, and technical teams is key to successful deployment of a RLMS (Cross, 2015). This was reflected in the composition of the project team, which drew on the expertise found across the department.

The new system delivers a number of strategic enhancements including the delivery of an excellent personalised student experience through technology-enhanced active learning approaches. It also represents a substantial investment in our digital learning environment. By implementing the system across the university we hope to enhance graduate attributes, in particular developing the digital literacy skills in our students that are needed for complex working environments. By enhancing our library collections we are maximising the value of existing information assets, particularly for distance and transnational students. Finally, this represents a wonderful opportunity to grow our academic reputation as innovators in learning – Edinburgh Napier University is the first university in Scotland to use Leganto.

While the RLMS hasn't been fully launched, we're already seeing some benefits. In practice the automation of reading lists represents a wonderful opportunity reduce the administrative burden of teaching staff. Reports from other institutions using this and similar systems indicate that we can expect to see an improvement in our National Student Survey scores as a result, particularly at the School-level (Royal Holloway University London, 2016; Upton,

2016). Metrics and time-saving aside, the RLMS will facilitate an improvement in student literacy and self-directed learning.

Areas for future attention include a skills training programme targeted at teaching staff, rolling out the RLMS across all modules requiring a reading list, and aligning library acquisition workflows to allow for more efficient use of all three interconnected systems.

References

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