

International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU) Librarians Group meeting 2016

Background

The International Alliance of Research Universities Librarians Group met at the ETH Library in early June.

The program included a range of presentations from ETH and members, discussion on the comparative data that is being collected annually and project activities for 2016-17.

The attendees were:

Australian National University: Roxanne Missingham

ETH Zurich: Rafael Ball

National University of Singapore: Ean Cheng Lee

Peking University: Quiang Zhu

University of California, Berkeley: Jeff Mackie Mason

University of Cambridge: Sue Mehrer

University of Cape Town: Gwenda Thomas

University of Copenhagen: Kira Stine Hansen

University of Oxford: Richard Ovendon

Yale University: Susan Gibbons

University of Tokyo did not attend.

ETH Library

ETH University Library supports mostly science, engineering, computer science, agriculture and architecture. The university has a relatively small reading room for general users as students and HDR students have significant accommodation for study within their faculty buildings. The main library collection of around 3.5 million volumes is a closed stack arrangement so that material needs to be requested and picked up from a branch library or the collection service point at the main library to be used. Open stacks are only available in the small branch libraries.



Main Library collection desk



Main reading room, bottom level (note it is directly under the Cupola in the main building)

There is a special collection reading room which provides access to original and historic material





A large digitisation operation is a part of the library service – based behind the special collections reading room. Approximately 13fte are digitising original material including non library research resources (printed material and photographs). They digitise over 2 million pages a year.



There is also a print and drawings collection with a great exhibition area. We were delighted to see a lovely Rembrandt drawing and a large Picasso print.

The reading rooms had good furniture – much newer and more modern than at ANU.

Benchmarking

ETH University have collated benchmarking information for the past three years.

The report for 2014 had been compiled and was discussed.

How does ANU compare?

While the statistics were not provided by all libraries, the data shows perhaps not surprising results for ANU. The major results are:

- ANU library has the lowest staffing
- Opening hours are the longest – we are the only to offer 24x7
- ANU has the second highest Licensed electronic journals
- Low ebooks (third lowest)
- High attendance at training, although most did not report online training attendance.

Note these are 2014 statistics.

Summary of issues from verbal reports

Themes that appeared in a number of reports were:

- Significant programs to increase digital access to special material in collections
- Overall transformation from p to e continuing
- Libraries are supporting digital scholarship through a rich range of initiatives
- New learning spaces have been built for most libraries.

Gwenda Thomas provided a presentation on the particularly challenging year that the University of Cape Town has experienced. The #feesmustfall, #endoutsourcing and #rhodesmustfall campaigns have led to considerable conflict on the campus.

Formal presentations and discussions

Topics included:

- Using design thinking for creating library spaces (ETH)
- Yale University – thinking of a Digital humanities/digital scholarship lab
- Tour of ETH digitisation center – see <http://www.library.ethz.ch/en/ms/DigiCenter>
- Presentation on benchmarking (this activity will move to the University of Copenhagen)
- Challenges and chances in text and data mining – very interesting presentation by Prof. Dr Albert Wiechselbraun, Swiss Institute for Information Research
- Visit to Print and drawing collection
- Bibliometrics and scientometrics
- Proposal on leadership development and mentoring
- Discussion on posters and future collaborative activities
- IARU research administrators possible collaborative projects– presentation by Agatha Keller
- Research data management and data life cycle

Agreed activities

A small working group was established on a mentoring/Associate Director development of leadership skills.

A report will be prepared on the following issues:

- Open scholarship
- Cultural record/curation
- Digital competency development.

The website to be further developed.

Attachment. Images showing interesting use of printed material and display at the University of Zurich museum

