



Preferred Library Future Scenario Penultimate edition

What is a Scenario ?

Scenarios rely on the imagination to direct us to the future. Albert Einstein said: "Imagination is more important than knowledge". In planning the future of our library we wanted to think before we acted. We did not want to be deterred by the instant thought that a possibility is indeed not possible. Most scenarios are possible; they just require planning and dedicated staff to achieve them. At PolyU Library we have both capacities in abundance!

The 'Preferred Scenario' provided below intends to describe a future three years into the future. It describes the kind of library which the variety of users consulted in this process would want for this library. This is not a strategic plan but is rather the step beforehand. The final future chosen by the University for its library will then form the target which the strategic planning will be designed to achieve in 2008.

How was the Preferred Scenario drawn up?

The Preferred Scenario in this document has been established through the work resulting from the Scenario Planning Construction Workshop held on October 18, 2007. The Workshop had before it the outcome from the range of Expert Groups of Academics and Researchers, Undergraduates and Post-Graduate students as well as all library staffs professional and general.

The Preferred Scenario describes the way in which the Workshop participants saw of the future shape of the Library. All of our experience is based in what we know and experience rather than knowing what could be.

What are we asking for?

The University Library is very much interested in your reaction to this Preferred Future. Do you see it being a good future for the Library in three years' time to aim for? Are there any comments you might have about it?

PREFERRED POLYU LIBRARY SCENARIO

The 'LEARNING HUB'

The PolyU Library in 2011 continues to be located on a land-locked campus, in the middle of one of the most densely populated parts of the world, but is now *everywhere else* at the same time. Its strong reputation for being busy is still true but it has successfully fused the information and study worlds; fused the physical and digital into one; fused locally produced and the commercially produced information for the benefit of the University research community. This is a seamless world of quality information from the web, large sets of digital books and journals as well as great collections of books. The information is now even more digital and wherever possible print materials are delivered digitally. This is what is now called the LEARNING HUB for the students and researchers. The Library has focused its services more on outreach than previously. In reaching out it is both visiting the University community wherever it is and also bringing more of that same community to the re-vitalised Pao Yue-kong Library building. In this future, the traditional functions of the Library have been re-defined and re-focused to facilitate the growth of knowledge, collaborative learning, reflective thinking and institutional visibility.

A more comfortable and dynamic learning environment has been created to achieve the best problem-based learning situation whereby students can relax in lounge-type chairs to learn in relative comfort. These new facilities also encourage discussions and interactions between students in the same and differing discipline groups. It is a meeting place of *'people and minds'* which now includes both a quality coffee shop and small bookstore. This has created a new sense of energy and excitement. Exhibitions, performances and events also make this area a cultural hub of the campus. The Library's merging of information and people has made the campus a more vibrant place.

The lighting in many study carrels has now been tailored for the individual, thus creating a personalized study environment. Previous complaints about noise have been addressed in 2011 with the creation of more targeted discussions and interactive spaces. The study patterns and habits of each discipline are encouraged and supported in a library environment which has been architect re-designed with as many of the study needs in mind as possible. In all of this the Library has sought to be carbon-neutral, reducing its use of energy in many ways including programs to reduce the consumption of paper and genuinely staying electronic. The Library and its users are leaders in this movement and have adopted and embraced the motto: *'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle'*.

Not content with only the physical meeting spaces the Library has created new *'Facebook'*-type social spaces on the net in which information is being communicated and exchanged. Like its commercial cousin, the *'PolyU Library-book'* digital site has proven to be enormously popular as a *space* in which to navigate through in search of information. It is very relevant and in tune with the emerging groups of students who think, study and communicate very differently to the previous cohorts of students. Through this new style of library the students are finding masses of information which are both exciting and assisting their studies. The Library serves as an information gateway to staff, students, alumni and the wider community. It is difficult not to recognise the extent of the Library presence across the

University. Virtual Librarians or avatars '*roam*' the Library web presences providing instant assistance. These 'Avatar Librarians', fluent in Putonghua, English and Cantonese, are instantly available to users on computer screens both on campus and remotely in the digital virtual information world. They have taken up the important role as information mentors. Information Literacy programs, delivered both in physical and virtual space, prepare students for research at the University level, and to become successful life-long learners.

The Library has succeeded in creating boutique web spaces for each Faculty which are friendly and responsive to discipline interests. This has been especially well received in the lead-up to the creation of the 3-3-4 program. The users from each discipline feel that they have *a space or a place* to go to where they will be directly understood as they can speak their discipline language. The physical spaces in the Library have been made more personal, more conducive to learning and less anonymous.

The Library is very cognisant of the new students and has adjusted its systems to meet these new fluencies. A reputation has been gained by the Library for its anticipatory use of future technology, communication systems and devices. The LEARNING HUB lends itself now to a more active role in assisting learning and in partnering with different learning agencies on campus such as the Educational Development Centre. Informal discussions and collaborative group work are also more effective for the different study zones which have been created within the physical fabric of the Library building with the enhancement of Level 7. Those with learning disabilities find even more support.

The information available through the Library continues to be in both print and digital although the digital resources have grown very sharply from 2007. Support of the University's research effort has been focused more in close consultation with Faculty and University policy makers. As a knowledge hub, the Library also collects all the research output of the University's Faculties and, in turn, highlights this work digitally to the University and importantly the World. The scope and richness of the important but lower-use research materials have increased markedly with the development of JURA as a HUCOM jointly-owned research repository. PolyU Library has strongly contributed to this important research centre. Hong Kong has maintained its strategic position as the regional information lighthouse. No country in this part of the world is able to match the academic resources now so readily accessible to Hong Kong academics.

This LEARNING HUB Library in 2011 is very much the kind of Library which was needed and sought by the members of the University community. They are proud of this new style of Library and the leading example it provides in Hong Kong and internationally.

Scenario Planning Working Group
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