

SECOND MEETING OF THE ASEAN UNIVERSITY NETWORK INTER-LIBRARY
ONLINE (AUNILo) WORKING COMMITTEE 30 NOVEMBER - 2 DECEMBER 2005
THE GURNEY HOTEL, PENANG, MALAYSIA

**STATUS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AT
NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY (NTU) LIBRARY :
BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT QUALITY WORK**

1. ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

In June 2004, Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Library initiated a series of major organizational changes in response to the expansion plans of the University. Three new schools, namely the School of Art, Media & Design, the School of Physical & Mathematical Sciences and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences were opened in July 2005. In addition, a number of new programmes at undergraduate and post-graduate levels were also started, some in partnership and alliance with other well-known universities in other countries. At the same time, the University, together with the National University of Singapore (NUS) was also preparing for corporatization (expected in 2006). The university leadership also called for a stronger professor-centric and student-centric focus in our approach in serving the university community. There was also a significant change of senior management staff of the University, including the University Librarian. Against the background of all these changes were the relentless and tremendous advancement in the information environment and marketplace brought about by the information & communication technology (ICT) revolution. In turn, ICT has also created *higher expectations* and demands from students and staff in their learning activities, work and all aspects of their lives.

It was clear that the Library as it was structured in mid 2004 will not be able to function effectively if we want to serve our users well and contribute significantly to the value of the University. The last one and half year was therefore spent on restructuring the library organization to enable it to be more responsive to current and future changes. Happily, the University's clear directive on user-centreness is very much aligned with the traditional user-oriented values of the best libraries in the world. The user-centreness approach is in fact a key orientation of any quality service plan or strategy. Generally "quality" is defined in terms of the ability in meeting or exceeding users' expectations.

2. OVERALL FRAMEWORK

NTU's Library planning and implementation of quality services is based very strongly on our key strategy of "*focusing all activities on the user*". Over the last year, the Library has been putting in place a framework in achieving quality in our outcome and work processes. However there are still many areas that we need to develop good practices and quality improvement, particularly in the areas of quality assurance and measurement. For example, we do not follow any established quality programmes such as LibQual & ISO9000, though we are exploring these approaches in the next work year. The diagram (figure 1) below illustrates the broad framework on how we are moving towards a quality focused organization.

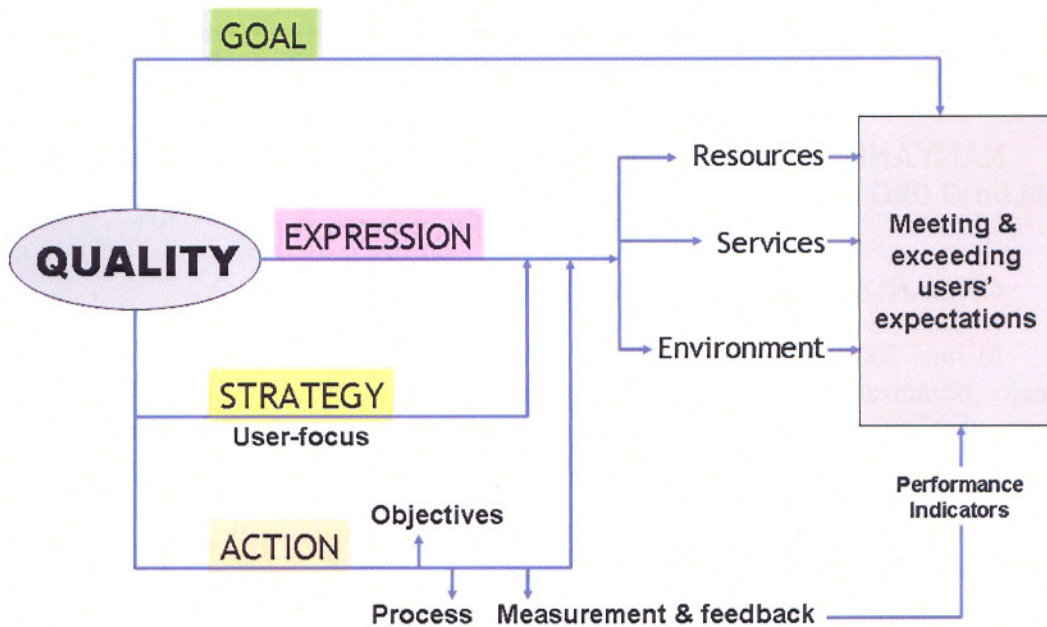


Figure 1

1. The goal of our quality orientation is broadly to meet and exceed our users' expectation. However users' expectation of the library depends on their degree of awareness of the services and potential value provided by the library. Many users, particularly undergraduates are not aware of the rich resources and services provided by libraries and are focused mainly on facility provision and loan services.
2. Quality is expressed through how well the library provides information resources, services and a conducive environment to support the activities of staff and students. These are the front-ends of the library's work, through which users make judgments on the effectiveness and quality level of the library.
3. The Library needs to have strategies to drive the quality desirables of the front-end services. The main driver is our user-focused orientation. Thus, all policies, services and action are examined through the point of view of the user before implementation.
4. Action refers to more detailed plans and processes to deliver the front-end services of the Library. This would also include regular measurement and monitoring of processes and outcomes. Our Library is lacking in this last aspect as we were focusing on implementing the overall framework in the last one and a half year. We will be exploring in greater depth and implement a more systematic quality assurance system over the next year.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

This section provides a brief overview of how the above framework is actually implemented in NTU Library.

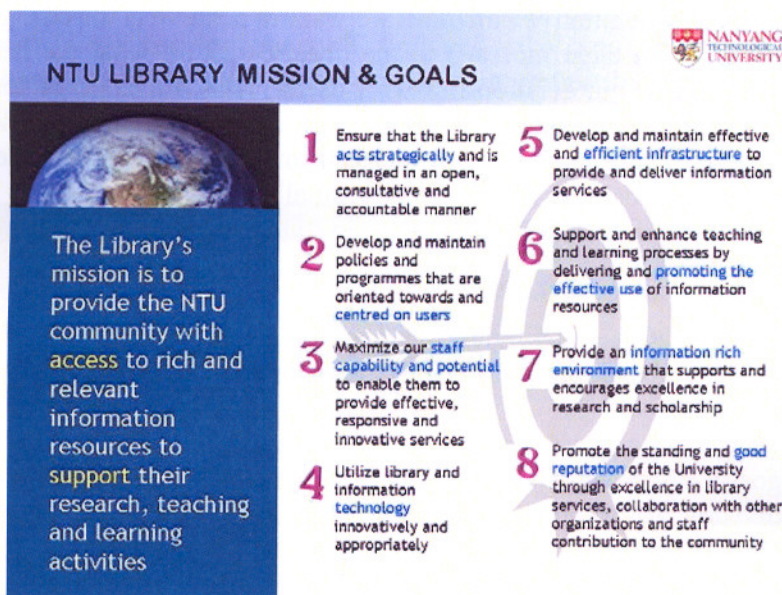


Figure 2

The quality goal is a general statement that is implicit in all the work that we do. Our basic reference is the Library mission and the 8 goal statement that we set ourselves (see figure 2). We expect that these goals and even the mission will undergo some changes as we function in a highly fluid and unpredictable information environment.

Our key strategy in achieving our mission and goals is “*focusing all activities on the user*” (see figure 3 below). The organizational changes in the last year were based primarily on this single focus. Thus all librarians, including some heads of departments were given subject responsibilities that include collection development, instruction, promotion, reference and liaison work, in addition to their respective operational responsibilities. The objective is to re-orientate our focus to real users’ needs instead of on internal library technical processes and efficiencies.

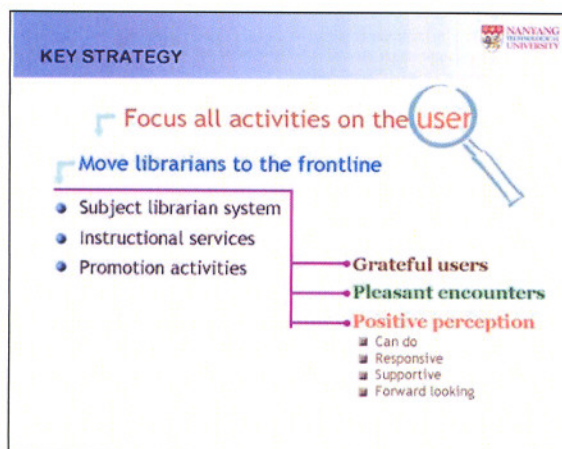


Figure 3

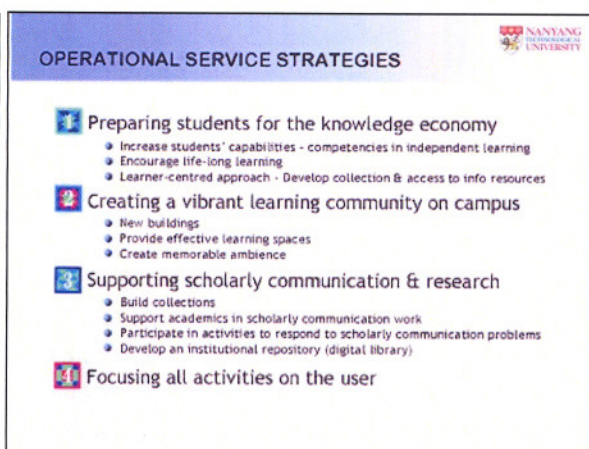


Figure 4

Instructional activities were given high priority and a new Library Promotion Services Division was formed to create and sustain high level of awareness of library resources and services among our students and staff.

One of the key qualitative outcomes we want to achieve is the change in perception of our users. We send a clear message to the library staff on what the Library sees as a satisfactory situation in our relationship with users. Thus we hope to reach a situation where many users are grateful for the library services we provide. We want every user encounter with our library staff to be a pleasant and productive one. The user must go away with something positive, no matter how small. We also want users to think of the library in positive light, that we have “can do” attitude, is responsive, supportive and forward looking.

A set of operational strategies was also developed to provide pathways to move towards our goals (see diagram 4). These strategies focus on deliverables to users and the university community.

The goals and strategies are further translated into a series of outcomes for each operational division and subject librarians (see diagram 5 below). These provide more detailed guide posts for library divisions to devise their action plans.


FUNCTIONS, SCOPE & OUTCOME OF LIBRARY DIVISIONS (Oct 2004)				
Revised 11/8/05				
CONTENT				
1. Acquisitions Division 2. Serials Division 3. Bibliographic Services Division		4. Digital Resources Division 5. Circulation Services Division 6. Information Services Division 10. Subject Librarians		7. Instruction Services Division 8. Library Promotion Division 9. Project & Development Division
DIVISION	AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	FUNCTIONS		OUTCOME
1. Acquisitions Division 	Notification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinate all new publication notifications and disseminate them to respective subject librarians and other appropriate channels ▪ Maintain systems and procedures to allow subject librarians and other relevant staff to receive new material notification quickly and regularly ▪ Ensure that the University community has a number of channels through which they can request for the purchase of library materials ▪ Ensure that the Library staff has access to a comprehensive and up-to-date acquisition tools and resources to support sourcing from a wide 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff members with responsibility for selecting materials for the library are well informed about new publication output worldwide in the subject area of interest the university community

Figure 5

To execute concrete action plans and ensure that each division’s work is coordinated, the Library prepares a Work Plan before the beginning of the work year. The work plan of each division is derived from the outcome statements as well as the Library overall strategic and operational goals for the year (see diagram 6). Presently the Work Plan acts as a guide and monitoring device on the progress of our work and not so much as a hard and fast list of deliverables.

Underlying the whole framework is the encouragement and implementation of a more open, communicative and consultative organizational environment supported by a flatter organizational structure. The goal is to give greater empowerment to individual staff members, particularly to professional staff at this stage, and later to other line staff. This is an important initiative as we believe that it is people, and only people who can make things happen. If we develop our staff well and give them the power as well as the required resources to act as individuals as well as in groups, innovation and responsibility will naturally follow.

TYPE	WORK PLAN & SCHEDULE FY05/06 ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMME (ver 01 - 21/05/05)	STATUS	TARGET YR/Mth	PUBLICITY	LEAD DIV	SUPPORT DIV
3	Tidy e-book records (add tags to identify e-book providers)	Done	05-04		BSD	DRD
1	Endnote workshop Series 3-04/05		05-05		ISD	
1	ISD workshop - Infosearch skills-Yr 2 (MAE)		05-05		ISD	SL
3	Collection development policy (General) - Development		05-05		ACD	
3	Migration of CATME to CONNECTION		05-05		BSD	
3	Staff training plans		05-05		DUL	
3	Instructional programmes - Calendar on teamsite/homepg		05-05		ISD	SL
3	E-resources awareness workshop for library CSOs		05-05		ISD	
3	Instructional programmes - Feedback process & form		05-05		ISD	DRD
4	Auto-payment kiosks - upgrade with cash card top-up	Done	05-05		CSD	
4	SIRSI - Upgrade	Done	05-05		DRD	CSD
2	Loan policy matrix & membership & loan policy		05-06		CSD	
2	Policy review and documentation - Staff & organization		05-06		ULO	
3	EDI implementation		05-06		ACD	
3	Library promotional materials - plans		05-06		LPD	
3	Serials workflow - Review		05-06		SL	
3	Collection development - Subject profile approval		05-06		SL	
3	Recruitment of new staff		05-06		ULO	
4	Director's workstation implementation		05-06		DRD	CSD
4	Ezproxy implementation (full)		05-06		DRD	
5	SADM Library - Planning & design		05-06		LDC	SL(acm)
6	Library budget Monitoring system		05-06		ULO	

Figure 6



Figure 7

An important pre-requisite to a more open, consultative and responsive organization structure is the need to democratize knowledge and information. Staff members, from the lowest to the highest levels should be provided with all the information necessary for them to plan, act and reflect. To this end, an intranet-like system (call Teamsite, see figure 6) was implemented to deposit library management information for all to access. Minutes of meetings, reports, plans, policies and procedures are readily available to all (from clerks to professional staff) at the click of a button. Information is given on a “good to know” rather than “need to know” basis. In addition, regular communication sessions in different formats (whole library, divisions, small groups and individuals, within and across work units) are held over the year to disseminate information, discuss issues and motivate staff members.

4. CONCLUSION

Through the processes described above, the Library has put in place the skeleton of a framework that will enable us to continuously add on to in delivering quality services as well as imbue quality in all the work that we do. Our next steps are to fill in all the areas in the framework that needs attention (e.g. outcome measurements, finer performance indicators, quality assurance programme, etc).