

ARLIS NA Space Planning Chat

Approx. 30 attendees

Adrienne: As you arrive in the chat, if you'd like to change your name, just type /nick and then your name

Karen & John: Karen and John will be on one keyboard

Heather K: Sounds good

Adrienne: We'll get started in a few minutes, but if you want to shed your presidentially-themed user names, just type /nick then your name

Heather K: Hi everyone! It's the top of the hour so I think we'll get started.

Heather K: On behalf of the Education Sub-Committee, thanks for joining our lunchtime chat! This is Heather Koopmans speaking (typing), Adrienne Lai and I are your hosts today.

Heather K: Today we're joined by several guests from the University of Calgary's recently redesigned Taylor Family Digital Library:

Heather K: Our guests are Marilyn Nasserden, Metadata Coordinator (Formerly: Head, Visual & Performing Arts, to October 2011); John Wright, Librarian and Director, Arts and Culture, and Karen Buckley, Associate Archivist, Arts and Culture

Marilyn Nasserden: Thank you everyone for joining us!

Heather K: We'll begin the session with a few pre-prepared questions for Marilyn, John and Karen, so they can tell us about their recent adventures in space planning.

Heather K: This will last approx. 10-15 minutes - Adrienne is keeping time

Heather K: After that we will have plenty of opportunity for open Q+A and shared discussion about redesign issues in general.

Heather K: So please hold your questions until the discussion period :-)

Heather K: Marilyn, John and Karen, are you ready?

Karen & John: Yes

Marilyn Nasserden: Yes

Heather K: Great! Would you start by providing a quick overview of the (re)design of the Taylor Family Digital Library.

Marilyn Nasserden: Bear with me as some of my responses may be somewhat long for a chat

Marilyn Nasserden: How did you know it was time for a redesign and what were some of the major factors that made redesign possible?

- Long-term strategic plan (as a huge capital bill). Along came a major donor – Taylor Family.
- Limited resources, e.g. to staff multiple desks while reference statistics declining and online use increasing
- Running out of space; old building infrastructure was out-of-date and required major renovations. Was too costly to run.
- Space was no longer suited to the needs/expectations of our users, e.g. digital world. Space planning is tied directly to program planning, that is, the services that you offer and the work that needs to be done to support those services.
- Priorities/“guiding principles” changed to:
 - commit to being digital;
 - highlighting unique resources
 - integrated discovery;
 - enhanced involvement in the research endeavour;
 - scholarly communication; and
 - converged archives, library and museum

Marilyn Nasserden: The TFDL Visual & Performing Arts unit is a merger of the old library Fine Arts & Audio Resources unit and the old Visual Resources Centre (VRC; originally not part of the library but part of Communications Media, an IT unit responsible mainly for videos to support teaching). Problems with the old spaces included:

- Both units were well-used with services highly valued by their users yet both units experienced difficulty staffing their respective service desks appropriately for open hours expected by library users.
- Staff in both units had to leave desk to use reference computers to help library users

Marilyn Nasserden: Fine Arts & Audio Resources unit was a relatively small but well-used separate library unit who worked closely with fine arts (including music) faculty and students.

- All media collections were staff-mediated so labour intensive for staff pulling and re-shelving material – and only the most proactive library user would use them (e.g. required listening).
- No browsing collections.
- Some of the collections weren't catalogued so no access.

Marilyn Nasserden: • VRC: was located outside of Library, in a facility not intended for public service:

- Main users were faculty who used videos and slides/digital images to support their teaching and students for required video viewing for classes.
- In a basement without natural light
- With preview rooms, video and slide collections rooms, and video viewing carrels not visible from main service desk.
- All collections staff mediated so labour intensive.
- Staff needed to leave desk unattended to assist users in preview rooms and at carrels or to pull or re-shelve videos from the video collection.
- Also a security issue for evenings and weekends when only one person worked.
- Infrastructure not set up to allow for a computer lab to access streaming video and digital images – or other library resources.
- No after-hours dropbox – which was deemed too expensive even though requested repeatedly by users.
- The VRC came under the umbrella of the Libraries and Cultural Resources a few years back.

Even so, many library staff, students and faculty didn't realize the VRC was part of library and many others didn't know it existed at all.

Marilyn Nasserden: John and Karen, would you like to add old space issues with archives, special collections, and museum?

Karen & John: Yes - coming up

Heather K: That's a very thorough summary!

Heather K: Karen/John - did you want to add something before we jump to the next question?

Karen & John: John: We also added a new wing at our location in the Military Museums. This added a reading room, archival and special collections storage capacity, a service point and an art gallery to our functions. It was a big change

Karen & John: John: We went from an by appointment service to a regularly staffed and service library and archives

Karen & John: Karen: There are three archives at the UofC:
Canadian Architectural Archives (CAA), University Archives (UARC) and Special Collections

Types of materials include: architectural plans and drawings, photographs, slides, films...
... textual records, models, manuscript collections, rare books and other book collections

Karen & John: Karen: The volume or extent of materials we are moving is...
...CAA – 9,016 boxes 1.4 miles/2.2 kms...
...UARC – 9,877 boxes or 1 mile/1.5 km + an additional 3.5 kms offsite...
...Special
Collections 7,585 boxes + 830 metres of books or 2 kms/1.2 miles

Karen & John: Karen: those are just some stats to start with. Our issues were very much like Marilyn's - lack of visibility and lack of knowledge from students about the collections.

Adrienne: (We have about 4-5 min left for this introductory part)

Heather K: Thanks Adrienne - perhaps we can move on to the next question -

Heather K: What are the primary improvements that the new design provides (compared to the old library)?

Marilyn Nasserden: What are the primary improvements that the new design provides (compared to the old library)?

Marilyn Nasserden: • Newer, more appropriate infrastructure
• Better suited to our new organizational structure
• Incorporated digital technologies
• HDL (High Density Library) being built at same time to house collections at a lower cost; many

of these materials were lower use items.

- Items previously stored in multiple locations across several cities brought together (archives)

Marilyn Nasserden: Visual & Performing Arts improvements included:

- Better, more prime, location so collections and services more discoverable
- Longer open hours than either unit had before without an increase in staff
- Library staff, as well as students and faculty, are now clear that the video and images resources are part of the Library
- Browsable collections are VERY popular by everyone, including partially uncatalogued LP collection. All collections more discoverable. LP collection has become VERY popular to browse and listen to.
- More interaction with students than previously in VRC - perceived as a student space
- Digital piano VERY popular
- Self-checkout with RFID tags for non-reserve items and which unlocks collections. Save staff time.
- Open plan where staff at reference/circulation desk can see listening/viewing stations, preview rooms, workstations and tables, and semi-mediated collections to monitor more easily
- Natural light in staff and public areas
- After-hours dropbox
- Synergies with adjacent Media Commons forthcoming

Karen & John: Karen: more available storage space, the melding of collections and staff, availability of presentation rooms close to the collections and the Reading Room Some photos to come...



Karen & John:



Adrienne:



Adrienne:

Marilyn Nasserden: I have quite a few photos - which I'll post at the end if there is interest

Marilyn Nasserden: Pardon my spelling!

Heather K: No problem!

Heather K: Anything else to add before we move on to the final "intro" question?

Karen & John: John: At the Taylor Family Digital Library we gained new capacity to bring out and used our rare texts and artefacts in class room settings within our security and environmental protections zones, as well as new technology to work with them like Smart Boards and their cameras

Karen & John: John: At the Military Museums we were able to unpack our collections and provide browseability, and as this week circulation of high demand items

Adrienne: Heather, do you want to squeeze in the last question? I'll be lenient on time ;)

Heather K: Ok! One more -

Heather K: What was your own role in the redesign and did your permanent responsibilities change because of it?

Karen & John: John: PS We were also able to move our Museum to a high profile location on campus and have its art and heritage holdings integrated with the visual arts and archive materials

Marilyn Nasserden: As two units merged in to the one, the staff of each of these units needed to learn the jobs of the other. Then, with the proximity of the Media Commons, they also learned to field basic media questions. Part of the job of the Head, Visual & Performing Arts involved overseeing fine arts and media cataloguing and processing projects - which moved out of this job and over to Collections/Metadata Development

Marilyn Nasserden: Of course, as we re-organized and the Centre for Arts & Culture was created, we also needed to learn more about and work with the archivists and curators.

Karen & John: Karen: I've been primarily responsible for moving the University Archives and Canadian Architectural Archives which has taken up the better part of the last two years. I'm looking forward to the end of the move - there has to be life beyond this!

Marilyn Nasserden: Of course, a lot of my time over the past few years has been spent on space planning and programmatic changes to VP Arts. The TFDL planning started way back in 2001!

Karen & John: John: For many of us the building design and accompanying organizational change has meant some reemphasis in our positions towards public service. Also, some new positions, such as the one I now hold, were newly created for the building in order to help integrate some functions. We are now starting to move from move planning to longer term planning, but the overlap is quite difficult to juggle. Only so many hours in a day.

Adrienne: Any last thoughts on this before we open up the floor to questions?

Karen & John: Nope - we're good to go

Marilyn Nasserden: I agree

Adrienne: Great!

Heather K: Does anyone have questions for our speakers today?

monroe8370: Can you speak a bit about other departments/entities sharing the Library space? For instance, other than having the Museum share space with the Library is the Library doing anything cooperatively with the Museum or vice versa?

Marsha: I would like to hear more about the High Density Library. What collections did you move? How controversial was it?

moira: To Marilyn: So were these new spaces or reconfigured existing spaces? Did two separate spaces get merged into one or did one relocate to join the other?

TeresaB: I would like to hear a little more about the security zones or overall improvements/challenges with security.

Karen & John: John: To be clear, at TFDL, the Nickle Galleries museum is part of Libraries and Cultural Resources, and this move physically brought them in. At The Military Museums we do share functions but not space

Marilyn Nasserden: The VP Arts space was a new space which both of the previous units moved into. Old spaces were abandoned.

Brynne: Was it difficult to get support for the idea/funds from the administrations?

Karen & John: Karen: re High Density - for the three archives, there were very long meetings to decide what went where. For University Archives, if you look at the stats above, 2/3 of our collections are already offsite, but the other two archives had some issues with the thought. We chose materials according to value and usage.

Karen & John: John: answer coming for TeresaB

Marilyn Nasserden: security: The VP Arts area is a semi-mediated area so library users are monitored somewhat when they enter and exit however can browse and use collections freely within the space.

Adrienne: Marilyn, if a user exits with a book, does the RFID automatically check the book out to them?

Karen & John: John: Security and Environment were improved greatly. However, creating an integrated security and environmental zone for storage and display had an effect on public

service, our items were more removed from the service point than before and we had to change our delivery times for requested archive and special collections retrieval

Marilyn Nasserden: Security: VP Arts media collections are being moved to lockable DVD and CD cases. We have noticed some items missing however this used to occur even in our previous staff-access only collections. We have no way of knowing whether there are more materials going missing right now.

Karen & John: John: Also, meeting the environmental standards was a long education process for the designers and project managers, it took a lot of time and effort to endure the rigorous standards required for accreditation were met. We chose to delay moving items rather than compromise on those standards

Karen & John: John: answer coming for Brynne

Marilyn Nasserden: Adrienne, No, the RFID tag does not automatically sign out the media/music to our users. We know that this is possible but our set up does not do this.

Karen & John: Capital campaigns took a long time and a lot of planning to complete. But the issues was not raising funds it was spending them correctly

Karen & John: John: Also on money, the costs of inflation in Calgary during a boom drove up the construction costs faster than the building could proceed, this meant constant revision of the planning and introduced compromises that had to be made

Adrienne: John, how did you decide on where to make compromises?

Marilyn Nasserden: HDL Marsha: We moved books that hadn't been used in a number of years and with publication dates before about 2003 into the HDL. Originally we thought that more of our collections would fit into the TFDL; when this wasn't the case, we ended up with a larger percentage of the collection going to HDL - I believe ~60% now.

jefferson52738: can any of the speakers talk about they ways in which they publicized the new spaces to patrons?

Karen & John: Karen: Security for archives - since nothing circulates from our collections, our challenge has always been having adequate space for researchers, and being able to access the materials. Our collections are now 3 floors away, the Hold Room is stuffed to the ceiling. The Hold room is also down the hall from the Reading room so that the room is frequently left vacant.

Marilyn Nasserden: HDL: All of our print journal where we have electronic holdings went to the HDL as well as analyzed serials which met similar criteria to books that hadn't circulated for several years and had publication dates before ~2004.

Karen & John: John: For TFDL, it was a campus project so all stakeholders were involved. Those decision were taken by our Vice-Provost in consultation with the engineers, the project managers, the University on advice sought from the affected library programs

Heather K: (Great question Jefferson, I was waiting to ask the same thing.)

Karen & John: John: For our Military Museums build, I was structured into the construction oversight committee. Compromises were usually made on a cost/engineering basis. When functionality was dramatically affected we would have to work to make those functions understood to force further changes. That took considerable effort, particularly where additional costs was involved.

Marilyn Nasserden: The VP Arts collections, previously in the two merged units, were NOT sent to HDL. Instead, compact shelving (expensive) was funded so I could keep the video, CD, LP, music scores, Fine Arts reference and art booklets (mostly exhibition catalogues requiring slotted shelving) in the TFDL

Karen & John: John - Publicity: we used our liaison network; we held open houses; we are working on developing course specific tools to integrate use of our spaces.

Marilyn Nasserden: I was also given new attractive filing cabinets for our art and theatre vertical files. I'll send photos shortly

Adrienne: John - what's the process for developing course-specific tools, and would you be open to sharing them? I know a lot of folks here at NC State who would be VERY interested in hearing about them.

Karen & John: John: For the building as a whole 0 it was such a big build publicity was not the issue - we were swamped from day one with interested people and continue to be heavily subscribed. What surprised us was the demand, and I think we could have been better prepared for setting expectations among our users. We focused so much on the build that I think the narrative might have been better developed on use. We have caught up now. The demand and success was a surprise when we opened on day one

Karen & John: John: Karen and I and the other archivists are going through a series of meetings where we are planning from general principles down to specific targets

Karen & John: John: So we identify a general goal, such as getting something into a course, then we identify courses, link those to materials, look at what would be applicable, what format we might want to present - e.g. would we want to scan and put something up in an electronic course pack or is this something we want handling and experiential learning on. We are now identifying two or three foundation course, one in architecture in particular, and we are developing materials and lib guides and beginning to talk to the instructors.

Karen & John: John: We are also looking at similar means to engage and present donors to talk to prospective or future donors about their experience - linking their experience and information to the holdings of theirs we have

Adrienne: Can you all talk about the cross-training that was required for all these different units occupying the same/adjacent spaces? Was it a challenge to get staff with very specialized skills to learn new, and public-service-oriented skills?

Adrienne: Also, we have about 5 minutes left, so if you have any lingering questions, now

Marilyn Nasserden: View of VP Arts semi-mediated area with vertical files in centre: Visual & Performing Arts improvements included:



Leah: Can you also comment on how many staff members usually work at one time?

Marilyn Nasserden: In which areas? VP Arts or Arts & Culture?

Leah: in vp arts

Karen & John: John: Yes. It is a challenge. Particularly where we are living with both the old and the new until we are fully moved in. We are all public service oriented professions and there is lots of good will. Many of the challenges stem from the professional requirements of the different staff members (librarian, archivist, curator) - their responsibilities to their professional standards. Often this requires interpretation. A pause and clarification can never be overstated as valuable

Marilyn Nasserden: One person is one desk in early morning and two thereafter to 4:30 pm. One student in the evenings. During the day, staff are called from the back staff area regularly as needed, e.g. Drama Specialist for subject-specific reference...

Karen & John: John: Also the straightforward challenge of having to do one's job in a new environment, learn new spaces as well as learn new procedures and some new bodies of knowledge. It is a bit like trying to run before you can walk

Leah: Thanks!

Adrienne: If you all had any one piece of advice to give folks before undertaking a major re-(or new)design of their spaces, what would it be?

Marilyn Nasserden: Reference/circulation desk:



Heather K: Great question!

Karen & John: John: We are starting to assimilate the new stuff and revisit our procedures. We knew we would have to adapt and understand before we could create final procedures



Marilyn Nasserden:

Marilyn Nasserden: Self checkout:



Marilyn Nasserden: John and Karen just got disconnected. Please be patient while they reconnect

Adrienne: I got kicked out too

Adrienne: in the meantime, do you want to share your one piece of advice for re-designers, Marilyn?

Heather K: I think we are almost at the end of the session - Marilyn any thoughts or words of advice to fellow space designers (as we wait for John and Karen to come back in?)

Karen and John: John: Big lessons: Space planning ahs to accommodate building codes, contractual agreements and financial constraints. Architects and designers and stakeholders do not understand functionality and you have to be vigilant to make sure your needs are heard so money is not spent unwisely

Marilyn Nasserden: VP Arts Compact Shelving: some complaints about waiting to use however preferably to have collections onsite than sent to HDL -



Adrienne: Form follows function!

Karen and John: John: Pay close attention to your specs, after a building is commissioned these are what count as to how corrections are taken care of. Engineering solutions in specs may not meet functionality. For example, the wrong draft blocker was used in our doors, it met the air specs but did not bloc insects

Karen and John: Thanks for letting us participate!

TeresaB: Thanks very much for sharing your experiences and insights

Marilyn Nasserden: Our needs changed over time and the external designers changed as well. Space planning is based on function so it is important to ensure your planning allows for flexibility as your programme and technology changes. It seemed like we needed to reiterate time after time what we needed and why.

Marilyn Nasserden: Thank you everyone!

Heather K: Thanks to everyone who showed up!

Adrienne: Yes - there is tons of info here to digest, and I'm sure we'll hear LOTS about the TFDL experience over the next few years

Adrienne: Thanks everyone!

Heather K: And thanks to John, Karen and Marilyn

Marilyn Nasserden: You're welcome

Karen and John: And sorry for the typos

Heather K: We'll post a transcript on the ARLIS website soon for anyone who would like to re-review.

Marilyn Nasserden: There's a session on our media program at the upcoming ARLIS/NA conference in Toronto

Marilyn Nasserden: Bye

Karen and John: Bye