

Letter From the Editor: Change is Constant

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The hybrid teaching and learning environment continues to evolve at the Michener Institute. And constant changes and emerging trends in academic libraries are informing how the Michener Learning Resource Centre is evolving to better engage with students and to provide an improved user experience.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, academic libraries – like the LRC – were able to transition to virtual delivery quickly as we already had a fully functional digital environment supporting the services of the library. And the “new normal” that has emerged is a hybrid information environment where “digital first” will likely prove to be the best lens for the foreseeable future. The pandemic forced a focus on accelerating the shift to digital, resulting in libraries adopting digital-first policies, providing virtual library instruction, and demanding increased content in digital format from our industry partners. Such shifts have yielded new perspectives and innovations in how Librarians approach delivering services, supporting student success, managing physical spaces, embracing new technology, and managing data. This open access journal, MICH, is just one of the ways we engage with our students virtually and provide a digital platform for them to experience the publication process.

The pandemic has heightened the importance and significance of delivering information resources and tools in a virtual learning environment. Clearly, the ability to operate, work, and deliver library services in a hybrid environment has been cemented as a result of the pandemic. And we can expect to see further

developments and trends in this area. Library spaces is another big trend – but it is the re-thinking of digital services that will inform key changes for the future. For Michener, we see this “digital first” concept emerging as the Learning Resource Collaboratory: a centre without walls in which the students can study, interact, and collaborate with their peers, access information, e-resources, tools, and the services of a Librarian without regard for physical location. The Learning Resource Collaboratory will focus on our digital services being delivered via our rebuilt and revitalized website we’ve called the Virtual Portal with the Learning Resource Centre still the key in-person destination as part of the Learning Resource Collaboratory.

Accessing content, resources, services, and tools digitally – whenever and wherever they need them – is simply more convenient for students. And the shift to digital delivery is likely to continue as libraries look toward the hybrid future. Just-in-time delivery of library services to students is critical to meeting their expectations of their academic experience.

The Librarians of the Learning Resource Collaboratory will continue to assess trends based upon the needs of Michener. One thing is certain: change is constant.

Juanita Richardson

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