



THAT'S WHY YOU'RE AN ARCHITECT AND I'M A LIBRARIAN



Situated in the Perth suburb of Bentley, Curtin University Library completed a major building upgrade in 2014. It was three long years in the planning followed by a year of noise, mess, smells, vibration and disruption for our clients, but, oh my, was it worth it! LYNNE VAUTIER tells us more.

Curtin University Library is now a place that university and library staff are very proud to work in, is open 24/7 during semester and is being used in increasing numbers by clients.

The fact that it turned out as well as it has is a credit to library staff and a great team of architects, builders and contractors. The title of this article refers to the number of times we had to take a leap of faith and trust this group ('You really want to cut a hole in our ceiling and put in a bridge?'). It evolved into a genuine partnership, in which library staff provided advice on client needs and how we operate and, in return, we benefited from the expertise of the architects.

A new staircase linking the first two floors not only provides better access, but it also leaves a striking impression as you enter the library. The new entry provides swipe card-controlled entries, making it possible to extend opening hours to 24/7 during semester. Integration of the café into the library allows clients to use library resources within the café and alfresco dining areas without borrowing them. The café area is available whenever the library is open, so students can study alfresco at midnight if they so desire.

The refurbishment has allowed us to provide a safe, well-supported study environment with more client computers, group study tables and casual seating, and collaborative social spaces with good technology support. It also permits us to make better use of experimental technology, such as augmented reality. Our social learning spaces foster active learning and social interaction and create a sense of belonging and community among our students – outcomes we know are associated with retention and better learning.

With over 1.8 million visits to Curtin's Robertson Library expected this year, clients (especially students) can now enjoy a contemporary and colourful library experience in a space designed to provide bright, customised and adaptable places to suit their study and research needs.

But we didn't stop there! Since the formal refurbishment was completed we have provided new, brightly coloured furniture, added an improved entrance to our high-use collection area and upgraded the lighting to LED (freeing up lots of electricity to allow more clients to power their mobile devices). We added a Makerspace and, most recently, two energy pods, which our clients love.

Of course, we're already planning what to do next! 🌟

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