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Inspire and improving access to libraries

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What we’ll cover today…

- Outline of Inspire and WELCOME!
- Barriers to using (other) libraries
- How Inspire model can address the barriers
- How to get involved in Inspire (or similar)
What is Inspire?

- Out of the “Empowering the learning Community” report
- Aims to:
  “provide a seamless pathway to the information and inspiration library users are seeking, wherever it may be found.”
- All libraries sign up to the “kitemark criteria”
Inspire Kitemark Criteria

- As a minimum, visitors will be allowed reference access to hard copy materials
- Service plans will be adapted to reflect commitment to co-operative working with Inspire partners
- Inspire will be publicised throughout the library/service and to the wider community where practicable
- Information on library collection strengths will be provided to be listed and promoted via the Inspire resource discovery web site
- A key contact or ‘Inspire Advocate’ will be appointed in each inspire library
- All staff will be briefed to ensure they have an awareness of the Inspire scheme
- Designated staff will receive in-depth briefing and have responsibility for cascading information about the scheme to other staff
- Inspire will be included in induction and on-going training programmes
- Qualitative and/or quantitative management information will be collected to assist in monitoring the impact of Inspire.
My take on the criteria…

- Allow reference access to hard copy materials (on your terms)
- Give Inspire a contact name and details of your library service
- Tell your staff about Inspire (and users / potential users if you want)
- Help Inspire continue by committing to co-operative working and gathering any information to show it’s working
How does it work?

www.findit.org.uk

Welcome

Welcome to find it! - a guide to library collections throughout England.

Whether you are pursuing a hobby, studying or doing research, find it will lead you to the right library and the right information in your region or beyond.

Just type in your subject and find it! will do the rest...

Andrew Walsh. UCR Event 2008
WELCOME! Kirklees & Calderdale

Local version set up before Inspire

http://welcome.hud.ac.uk
A few WELCOME! figures

- Our website averaged just under 6,000 hits a month in the last 12 months
- Over 26,000 visits to University library last year by external users
- External usage up by around 25% since scheme established
Barriers to using other libraries

What do you think?
My list of barriers - hard

- Opening Hours
- Borrowing Facilities
- Access to IT facilities
- Ability to gain entry
- Location of library
My list of barriers - soft

- Fear of the unknown
- Literacy & numeracy problems
- Lack of information retrieval skills
- Computer phobia
- Lack of confidence in using libraries
- Lack of awareness in using libraries
- Lack of awareness in what is available
- Lack of awareness amongst library staff (referrals)
What are the key reasons for choosing a library?

- Where the library is (including location, transport, parking, and proximity to home, work or place of study)
- The resources within the library (including books, journals, IT facilities and study space)
- When the library is open.
- Who staffs the library (their knowledge, helpfulness and approachability).
- How the resources within the library are organised (how easy it is to find what you want).
- The general library environment.
What barriers does Inspire address?

- Mainly the “hard” barriers
- Key soft barriers are “lack of awareness”

Also, addresses some of the “key reasons for using a library” – by trying to provide a “mix” of libraries.
If Inspire removes some of the barriers...

- What sort of involvement with the local community might you get?

- What would your worries be?
Questions?
References

- Empowering the Learning Community (2000), Library and Information Commision
- Inspire project site – www.inspire.gov.uk