

Achieving ongoing technical innovations in libraries

Frank Seeliger

Technical University of Applied Sciences, Wildau, Germany



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Abstract:

The Technical University of Applied Sciences Wildau has about 4000 students and is located near Berlin. More than ten years ago we moved into a new attractive building, a listed factory hall where rail cranes disassembled locomotives some decades ago. Founded after the reunification of Germany, we first introduced a Library Management System (ILS) in the 90s and some years later we endowed the first computer cabinet for clients. We now also work with open source applications like Koha to support our city library and use other tools to present book covers and so on.

As an early adopter of RFID technology we have developed features like an inventory tool to measure the usage of current and non-circulating issues of journals, and to locate items on book-return tables waiting to be shelved. Following the German expression 'Technik die begeistert' – technology that excites – we also developed a smartphone app based on iBeacon technology where users can see their location and find information on availability of a group room or carrel. In 2016 we obtained a child-sized humanoid robot and plan to develop various applications including supporting staff and service during opening hours especially in unmanned library.

However, based on more than 10 years of library experience I strongly recognised that we needed to keep up with technological developments. In 2015 we developed our own Master degree program as a distance learning course held over 4 terms and in 10 modules. A group of experienced librarians between ages 30 and 50 learned to work with databases, search engines, and computer science in general. Lifelong learning is our opportunity to recruit and retain IT-educated staff and new professionals to continue our technology development and guarantee our cutting edge level.

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