

“Better together” ...

Building an alumni library service through effective partnerships

Cranfield
UNIVERSITY



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Background on Cranfield and Alumni Library Online

- 70 years in operation and 58,000+ alumni
- Cranfield sets up Alumni Library Online in 2007
- Free online service via alumni portal
- Access to 8 subscription databases plus selected quality websites



Subscription databases included

- ABI-Inform
- ASME Digital Collection
- Business Source Complete – EBSCO
- Emerald Engineering and Management Journals
- Emerald Management First
- IEEE ASPP
- Sage
- Sustainable Organization Library



Engaging with alumni - Why would we want to?

Benefits to the institution:

- Enhances the “student experience”
- Builds a community of brand ambassadors
- Opens up new business opportunities
- Supports us with recruitment activities
- Engaging with research ideas
- Philanthropy



So what's stopping you?

Time to check the
poll results!



Some common barriers we have noticed

- Authentication issues
- Licensing issues
- Cost
- Support from university
- Worried about skills – especially negotiating
- Lack of awareness of what resources are currently available



But these can be overcome!

Begin with what you CAN do

Not as hard as you think to provide a basic alumni service...

- repackage your existing visitor service as an alumni page
- provide links to free quality resources, such as
 - DOAJ, OpenDOAR
 - subject-based websites
 - JournalTOCS
- check with your existing subscription vendors – they don't all charge for alumni access...e.g. SAGE



Make your alumni feel *special*

Making it happen - key to successful growth

Engage with **other key people**

- Alumni Office
- Library staff who negotiate licences
- Each other – keep library staff informed
- IT / Learning Design Staff
- Academic staff
- Careers staff
- Vendors
- Other libraries



Alumni Office / ALO Partnership: What we each bring to the party

ALO Service



- Joint meetings
- Contribution to achieving objectives of Alumni Strategy
- Attendance at key alumni events
- Contribution to alumni e-bulletin

- Continuing the excellent relationship built with students
- Knowledge of what alumni want
- Expertise in resources

Alumni Office

- Joint meetings
- Direction of service through Alumni Strategy
- Organising alumni events
- Provide communications opportunities: e-bulletin, social media, etc.
- Good relationship with all alumni

- Knowledge of what alumni want
- Support for new resources (e.g. IEEE ASPP, ASME)

Alumni Office / ALO Partnership: What we've learned so far

- Greater understanding of what we each do
- Information flow in joint meetings
- More joined-up enquiry service to all alumni = better customer service
- “One University” approach – good for senior management
- Budget – better purchasing power



Alumni Office appreciate the value of ALO to alumni

Alumni Office view of ALO:

“It is regularly cited as one of our most useful and valued alumni resources. Combined with our broader alumni relations offering the Alumni Library Online helps deliver our commitment to providing a lifelong range of services.”

Rachael Harris, Head of Alumni Relations, Cranfield University.

Library staff

- ALO Working Group
- Licence negotiation
- Information specialists
- Service Desk Staff
- Senior staff who can say “Yes”!



Other University Staff

- IT Staff
- Learning Design Staff
- Academic staff
- Careers staff



Vendors

- Start considering them as partners!
- What can you do to help each other
- Establish what you can get access to now at little or no extra charge
- Change in attitude towards alumni access (UKSG experience)
 - Springer, Taylor & Francis, RSC, **ASME, ASTM**, ACM, IOP, Wiley
- More targeted approach: establish a wish-list



Vendors – we are not being clear

Comments from a couple of vendors on providing alumni access:

“...the main reason being that we’ve not really thought about it, **as a request hasn’t come in for it yet.**”

“...we would not consider this as a business model as **institutions are normally not interested in paying for alumni to have access...**”

Alumni as partners

- Consider students as alumni from the beginning
- Trial feedback
- Find out what they really want (manage expectations)
- Marketable quotes / talking heads – they can sell the service for you



Other libraries

Talk to each other! Sharing ideas and issues

- JISC Mailing list: [LIS-ALUMNI](#)
- Help from the Alumni Library Forum
<http://www.alumnibraryforum.com/>



The Alumni Library Forum

The **Alumni Library Forum** seeks to encourage and advise the development of alumni library services by:

- Providing an annual conference – **ALF 2016, 10th May LBS**
- Highlighting and discussing relevant issues
- Research into alumni library services
- Relationship-building with vendors
- Licence negotiation and circulating new deals



Alumni Library Forum

ALF membership benefits

Sign up **free** to enjoy the following:

- Case studies of alumni library services
- Start-up advice on how to set up your own service
- Advance notice of ALF events
- Previous ALF presentations
- List of resources already licensed for alumni



In the pipeline:

- Access research on alumni library services
- More guidance – influencing vendors

Let's keep talking!

- Any questions for us today?
- Feel free to contact us after:
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- Can we contact you? Help us expand our knowledge of alumni library services
- Thank you for listening!

