

The Bentley Library Responds to *14 Days to Have Your Say!* - 2012 edition -

Thank you to everyone who submitted their comments, suggestions, criticisms, and compliments during the the third installment of the *14 Days to Have Your Say!* blog, which was open to the Bentley community from October 10 to October 23, 2012. We wouldn't continue to run *14 Days to Have Your Say!* if we weren't committed to bettering the Bentley Library, and we appreciate your input on ways to improve!

In fact, we have made many changes to our facilities, resources and services in direct response to the feedback we received from the first two rounds of *14 Days to Have Your Say!*, which were held in 2008 and 2010. Over the past four years, in response to your suggestions, we have:

- increased both our normal operating hours and exam period hours
- adjusted our borrowing policies to allow better/longer access to our DVD collection and enhanced our communication by emailing due-date reminders
- improved the functionality of the group study room reservation system by providing off-campus access to the system and adding an edit/cancel feature
- continually worked to improve the physical facilities through such measures as upgrading lighting, installing extra recycling receptacles, adding more study carrels, signage, etc.
- worked to combat the problem of noise in the library by installing cell phone booths and adding a login-free, anonymous [Help Keep the Library Quiet](#) chat widget to the library's home page
- responded to student requests for access to coffee outside of the cafe's hours by installing a coffee vending machine
- worked with Sodexo to add a 2nd cash register to the Einstein's café, reconfigure the lines, remove the counter that inhibited traffic flow, and to expand the cafe's hours
- installed new equipment and technology - including "quick print/lookup" stations, color printers, and scanners - and increased the number of black & white printers to reduce wait times and lines
- conducted usability studies and focus groups to improve the usability of our website
- developed a mobile-friendly library website - the first mobile site at Bentley

During the time the blog was open, we refrained from commenting on the conversation, hoping to encourage a free and open discussion. Now that everyone has "had their say", we've identified the issues that arose most frequently (though be assured that we read closely *every* comment made!) and have strategized ways to address as many items as possible. If you have questions about anything you see (or don't see) here, please send an email to library@bentley.edu.

We'd like to remind you that you don't have to wait for the next *14 Days to Have Your Say!* to

voice your opinion or make a recommendation. Simply use the [Contact Us](#) form on the bottom of the library's website to send us your feedback anytime. Also, please note that we don't have unlimited resources (read: as a tuition-driven nonprofit educational institution. Ideally, we would LOVE to be able to hire overnight staff, add a new wing for additional study space, etc.)

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I. HOURS

There were numerous comments regarding library hours, with requests for later hours on Fridays and Saturdays, extended hours for midterms, and semester-long 24/7 access to the library. We are sensitive to these requests and we are constantly monitoring patron attendance to keep abreast of library usage trends. We accomplish this through daily tracking of our gate-count data and by taking headcounts during the evening hours. The library uses this information to determine when the building is most and least utilized.

We are constantly reviewing the data (and your comments) to attempt to best meet the needs of our patrons. This is evidenced by the changes we have made over the past four years:

- extending our closing time Sundays - Thursdays to 2:00am
- opening earlier weekday mornings (7:30am)
- instituting 24-hour library access during finals

We are also very pleased to announce that this semester we added an extra day of extended hours to our 24-hour schedule. 'Round the clock library access began the day before Reading Day (one day earlier than normal). This change was made in response to a request made via the *14 Days to Have Your Day!* blog, and we were happy to be able to immediately change our schedule to provide this service. We hope that you find the additional day of extended study hours to be helpful.

Our headcount information continues to demonstrate that we have fewer users in the library on Friday evening, early Sunday mornings, and on Saturday. We must weigh library usage against the significant costs and safety issues related to extending the hours of operation of a 60,000

square foot building. The bottom line is, that in order to increase our hours, the library would need to hire full-time and student staff to monitor the building for safety/security. Our budget simply does not allow for this at this time.

That said, we were hopeful that we would be able to provide 24/7 access during midterms. However, after much investigation, we have determined that there isn't a discrete midterm exam period in the same way that there is a final exam period. Students are scheduled for midterm exams, papers, and assignments over a four week period (vs. about 10 distinct days for finals). Even if we had the resources to pay for this length of time, our student workers note they are unable to work an overnight shift and then sleep in, as they can do during finals when there are no ongoing classes they need to attend the next day.

Lastly, it seems as if many of these requests are made by those who wish to have a quiet study space as opposed to actually needing access to the library's print resources and services (of course, our online offerings are available 24/7). We have noted the need for additional monitored, quiet study space on campus in the library's section of our 2013 NEASC accreditation report, and are hopeful that a solution can be pursued.

II. TEMPERATURE

The ongoing too hot/too cold conundrum! Somedays we feel like Goldilocks, trying to get it just right. In all seriousness, we have had an abundance of complaints about the chilliness of the library. In response, we have asked facilities to raise the building's set-point temperature by 2 degrees to ensure a more even level of warmth. Please let us know if you notice - or don't notice - a difference. If it's still too cold, we will continue to request additional bumps in the building temperature until the issue is addressed.

III. NOISE

Excessive noise in the Library continues to be a hot topic and it is a problem that we take seriously. We find ourselves reiterating our plea that, *as a community, we must commit to a culture of quiet in the Library and work together to enforce it.*

First and foremost, be courteous of the people sitting around you. They don't want to hear your conversation or the music thumping from your headphones. Please be aware of your voices and actions.

Second, don't hesitate to let us know when there is a problem. We realize it might feel uncomfortable to point the finger at a peer or a classmate, but you can discreetly send us an

anonymous IM (no need to even log in!) using the [Help Keep the Library Quiet](#) chat widget on the library website to let us know about someone being disruptive. If you aren't worried about being anonymous or losing your study spot, then just come to the Reference/Research Assistance or Library Services Desk. A full-time library staff member will never hesitate to address a noise complaint.

Of course, there will always be a certain amount of noise in the front of the main level, as students are entering the library from two directions, asking questions at the two service desks, etc. The 10 minutes between classes can be especially noisy in this part of the building, as streams of students pass through the library and cafe, often to the main floor printing stations.

IV. STUDY SPACE, or, “WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO TO GET A SEAT AROUND HERE?!”

It's fairly obvious that during certain times of the semester we are bursting at the seams. During our busiest times, we have witnessed students working on their laptops or studying their notes in the stairwells and even inside the stacks. We feel we have utilized every square inch of the usable space. When the study space/computer lab next to the Help Desk was replaced with Client Services staff offices last year, we relocated each of those study carrels and computers to ensure we didn't lose seats. We agree with many students, who suggest the best solution would be to expand the library's square footage through a building addition.

Some have commented about students sitting at a library PC while not actually using it. We recognize that students are taking any seat they can find, regardless of whether or not they need to use a library computer. We advise anyone who needs to use a computer to talk to a library staff member, and we will do our best to move people around to arrive at a solution.

In a similar vein, we received comments about students “saving seats” for long periods of time. This is very frustrating to those who are stuck circling the library looking for a place to sit. Most students do get up at some point to use the restroom or get a snack, which makes our monitoring these “seat savers” a challenge (and places us in a position of liability if we were to go around removing personal belongings). Of course, we urge all students to please be courteous and respectful in their use of study seats for only those times when they are actually studying. Beyond this common decency, “seat savers” should know that theft of laptops, iPhones/smartphones/cellphones, textbooks, and personal items is a regular occurrence in the library.

V. STUDY ROOMS

We received some excellent suggestions about adding new equipment to the study rooms (such as video conferencing equipment) and about improving our existing equipment (such as the problematic PolyCom phones). We are looking into ways to introduce webcams securely (they will walk otherwise) and replacing the conference phones.

At least one person mentioned they wished for a way to “sign out” of their room reservation early. We’re happy to say that there already is! When you leave the room, simply touch “Adjust” on the touchpad, then adjust the reservation to immediately end the booking and free the room for someone else to use. We are also pilot testing new touchscreens in the lower level in January that make ending a reservation even more intuitive. Should the test be successful, we will be replacing all touchscreens in early 2013.

Additionally, we’d like remind you that you can edit or cancel a reservation online, even from your smartphone or mobile device! Go to the [study room reservation page](#) and click on Edit/Cancel. Please note that when using the edit/cancel screen prompts, you must always click on the buttons; just hitting enter on a keyboard will not work!

VI. LET THERE BE LIGHT (AND POWER)

Despite several lighting upgrades and new light installations it seems there are still some dim spots in the library. We will continue to work to improve this as our budget allows.

There are literally hundreds of electrical and data ports in the library. The only way we know when an outlet isn’t working is when you tell us it isn’t working. PLEASE don’t hesitate to notify a staff member when you encounter a power outlet, data port, or any piece of equipment that isn’t working properly. Stop by the Library Services desk on the main floor or go to the [Contact Us](#) web page and either use the email form or the Chat With Us IM widget. If you don’t already see an “out of order” sign you can assume that we are unaware of the problem.

VII. ALL THAT AND A BAG OF CHIPS

Food and drink are readily available at the library. In addition to the options provided by the Deloitte Cafe (Einstein’s), we also provide snack, cold beverage and hot drink vending machines. We are exploring the possibility of providing access to a microwave (perhaps in Einstein’s) or Keurig machine in the library. Students may heat food and water using the microwaves in the lower cafeteria in LaCava, located next to the library.

This year we received a number of requests for new filtered water dispensers that can be used with water bottles. We think this a great idea, and are working with Facilities and the

Sustainability Office to install at least one unit for testing in 2013.

VIII. FUN WITH BOOKS & DVDS

As an academic library, our primary mission is to provide access to resources (databases, journals, books, and other media) that support coursework and research. But, we also take pride in our excellent popular DVD and book collections. With the recent addition of a downloadable ebooks/audiobooks service ([Overdrive](#)), we have increased access to new releases and bestsellers. If you would like to recommend a book or DVD, or suggest that we increase our collections in a certain genre or by particular author, just let us know! Use the [Suggest a Purchase](#) form on our website, talk to a librarian, or give us a shout on Twitter or [Facebook](#). It probably goes without saying that there are a number of book and film aficionados (dare we say geeks) working here, and we love to get requests from and talk to those who are using our popular books and movies.