**Annual Conference on “The Future of Libraries”**

**Poster Abstract (New edit)**

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In the midst of the Covid-19 crisis many of us are having to confront a new reality of remote working and preparing for the future of library services. An integral part of our jobs is to interact with the student body and staff enjoying a rapport along with providing our service. However, with the move to online working during the pandemic, the digital divide and the varying situations of our users this core part of our roles has become significantly more difficult. Despite our dedicated communications team advertising information and services available via social media, the intranet, and student emails, this period has created a disconnect between us and some of our students, both from those who may not have access to wi-fi and/or a computer device and those with different digital skills, confidence and ability.

This digital divide and the challenges of working from home has also impacted on staff. Some of the challenges for colleagues have been technology and a balance of work and home life, dealing with home-schooling, looking after vulnerable family, and focusing on work. To address these issues, we have had to draw on innovative advancements to reconnect and support both staff and students.

This poster shows how UEL library services used different approaches to maintain communication and interaction for both staff and students during the pandemic and to attempt to overcome aspects of the digital divide. Until recently remote working and access was not a well developed aspect of our service, so this was a real opportunity for us to grow and improve in an area which would really benefit our users. By creating an informal library space on Teams to keep and develop interactions with students and staff, reviewing our approaches to communication and taking new approaches to working practices, we have aimed to address some of the core barriers to working and engaging with the library in these difficult times. While we haven’t finished or perfected our work, we are proud of the steps we have made and the future paths we have laid the groundwork for.