Understanding Student’s Use of Technology and Space in Milner Library: An Investigation of Study Habits and Library Use

An Ethnographic Study

By Torii More, Colleen Zwanzig, Rachel Ruona, Jim Stomberg and Aaron Borkgren

Ethnography, Fall 2009
Why Study Milner, and study areas on and off campus?

- Milner is a highly used space on campus.
- We seek to find
  - how students use Milner’s space
  - How spaces around campus are used for studying and
  - How advances in technology have affected the role of the traditional academic library
- Digitalization of information is more prevalent today changing the way students use and view libraries.

What role does Milner need to fill now?
A Brief History of Milner Library

• The current Milner Library opened its doors in 1976.
  • Construction flaws

• 1980-1990
  • computers introduced,
  • card catalog phased out

• ISU was becoming a new campus, no longer a quiet space for independent study

10/19/10
Methods of Research

• 9 interviews
  • Students
  • staff
• 2 surveys
• 11 observations
  • Milner
  • Coffee shops
Our Data: Multi-Purpose Milner

• What are students doing at Milner Library?
  - Commons uses
  - Individual vs Group (Quiet vs Social)
  - Milner's usage changes at different times of the day.

• Shadowing a student researcher

• Provided services
  - Students think they know more than they do
Checkout Statistics

- **Main Circulation Desk Charges:**
  - Sept 09 13,706
  - Sept 08 13,901

- **Laptop Charges:**
  - 30 available Sept 09 1,156
  - 15 available Sept 08 636

- **Course Reserve Charges:**
  - 2,974
  - 2,465

- **Gate Counts:**
  - 2009: 71,772
  - 2008: 63,241

- **New ILLiad Users:**
  - 2009: 191
  - 2008: 200
Outside Milner Library: Cafes and Eateries as Study Spaces

Places observed

Fusion Brew
The Cage II
McAlister's Deli
Bone Center
Coffee House
Reflection/Conclusion

• Milner is multi-purpose
• Use changes depending on many factors
• Many services are provided that are useful, some that students don’t even know about
• Not all students use everything at Milner