

# Academic libraries for the Google generation

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Academic libraries in the United Kingdom are currently going through a process of radical change, both to their buildings and to the services they offer. The main drivers for these changes are the decline of print-based learning materials with the transition to digital media and the need to support a wide range of student activities related to blended, experiential and technology-enhanced learning. Since 2003 a number of highly influential library buildings have been completed in the United Kingdom, bringing in concepts such as Internet café-style learning spaces, Information Commons and technology-rich digital laboratories. The traditional library roles and services are also being reshaped to meet the needs of young people born since 1993 – the “Google generation”. This paper provides an overview of the main trends in academic library design over the last five years and analyses the findings to identify the key factors that will influence future developments. Three case studies are used to illustrate the main themes: the Saltire Centre at Glasgow Caledonian University, an influential high-concept design completed in 2004; the Learning Grid at the University of Warwick with its focus on student-centred learning enhanced by new technologies; and the recently completed Social Learning Zone at the Avril Roberts Learning Resource Centre, Liverpool John Moores University, which provides a visually stimulating, informal learning environment designed to support the full range of collaborative learning activities.

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