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A Review and Evaluation of Services and Resources to Engineers: A Case Study of Outreach and Marketing, Assessment, and Future Directions in a Research Library (in press)

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Abstract

Engineering student and faculty populations present a beneficial and unique challenge to libraries and the information science community. The literature, activities, and resource needs of this group provide insight into a demographic that is often among the early-adopters of new technologies, tools, and methods of sharing information. Despite the often non-bibliographic nature of their research efforts, there are numerous elements of the traditional service model that remain relevant and integral to the engineering research patron base. New methods of live and virtual instruction, the improved promotion of research consultation, and data management are prime targets for efficient and effective service updates. This article will seek to outline the current engineering research environment, using a large research institution as a model for evaluation and future planning for outreach and service marketing.

Introduction

The literature and research on the acquisition of knowledge by science and engineering faculty scholars have demonstrated a number of clear and effective methods of self-promotion and library partnership with academic populations. Even the limited resources of a single subject specialist can provide advanced individual and group research services in concert with the requisite other professional librarian duties, such as collection development and library instruction. Improving the perceived value of these offerings in the eyes of the engineering researcher requires a comprehensive review of the literature and the current environment, enhanced by specific examples from this author's personal experiences at a large public research institution. This effort is not a flowchart for guaranteed success, or a sad parable of failure, but a simple blueprint of service design and assessment for continuing improvement to this specific community of users. The focus of this publication is the examination of the current promotion of library information and research services to the engineering clientele, as well as a brief discussion on possible future improvements and applications.