

A Total Transformation
**How One Medical Library Took Charge
of its Physical and Digital Space**



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Introduction

The medical library is more multifaceted now than ever. The space and its resources not only cater to a diverse group of users, but must also meet their modern expectations – both in terms of user experience and in the physical location. But what if your medical library is far behind in meeting those expectations? What if it is struggling to be a modern center for learning and information? What if the physical space is out of sight and therefore out of mind? And how, as the administrator of these resources and space, do you ensure there is cohesive flow between the library, graduate medical education and clinical education? This was the exact set of problems which faced Julie St. Martin, Manager of Clinical Education, and Carrie Cuchens, Library Information Specialist, at the University Hospital & Clinics Medical Library.

Located in Lafayette, Louisiana, University Hospital & Clinics (UHC) is a premier teaching hospital affiliated with Louisiana State University (LSU) and is part of Lafayette General Health (LGH). LGH is a regional health system which serves the south-central areas of Louisiana (population served is approximately 240,000). UHC has been partnering with LSU since 1982 in providing training and medical education. As a result, UHC medical library caters to a variety of users including physicians, faculty, residents, medical students, staff and even attorneys.

Meet Julie and Her Vision

The UHC Medical Library is located within the hospital. A small space totaling 604 square feet, the medical library serves diverse users and covers a range of medical specialties. Julie St. Martin, the Manager of Clinical Education, inherited management of the library in 2016 when the medical librarian took leave. Julie and her department are progressive in their approach to clinical education: they believe they need to be continuous learners, and they are true seekers of knowledge. The education staff has a core belief that teaching isn't about them — it is about the learner. It is this fundamental belief that motivated Julie to reassess the medical library and to transform not just the physical space but the digital resource “space” as well. When Julie inherited the library, and realigned it underneath the clinical education department of the hospital, she knew its antiquated status would need to be addressed and updated to have a lasting impact on users and to reflect the goals of her department. Julie's vision was to create an environment that was comfortable, navigable and more user-friendly.

A Forgotten Space With Unused Resources

The medical library is an information entity that can have a lasting impact on professional development and learning, can contribute to better patient care and outcomes for those who need treatment and can assist in employee retention. Information is one of the most powerful elements for clinicians and medical students, and the delivery of this information is a critical component — that is where the medical library comes in. But, if your medical library has a poor reputation or, worse, no reputation at all, significant opportunities and advancements could be missed, patient care could suffer and staff could leave for organizations that promote continuous learning. Julie understood this and was motivated for the change. There were two areas of the medical library that needed transformation. One was the physical space itself, and second was the “digital” space including technology and electronic information resources. In her initial assessment, Julie found that purchased resources either had low usage or no usage at all and that the physical space was poorly planned and contained outdated technology which would not meet the expectation of today's Millennial learners. She decided the best place to start the transformation was with some research on how a fellow medical library was operating.

UHC Medical Library Stats

Location: Lafayette, LA

Areas of Coverage:

- Audiology
- Cardiology
- Coumadin Clinic
- Dermatology
- Ear, Nose and Throat
- Endocrinology
- Geriatrics
- GI Clinic
- Gynecology
- Infectious Disease
- Nephrology
- Neurology
- Obstetrics
- Oncology/Hematology
- Ophthalmology (Eye)
- Orthopedics
- Pediatrics
- Primary
- Pulmonology
- Rheumatology
- Urology

Library Users:

Physicians, faculty residents, medical students, staff, attorneys

Total Library Users: 800

Sometimes Research Needs Research

The basic notion of creating a user-friendly library environment is what sent Julie to the New Orleans Medical Library. She saw firsthand that only about 1/5 of the large space is dedicated to physical books and journals and that all other resources are electronic. In addition, the physical space of the library reflected a strong technology presence but also had a comfortable atmosphere. Spaces included seating with table tops, charging stations, USB ports and TVs, and there was a familiar “living room” feel to the spaces. These gathering spaces in the library allowed users to utilize either the library’s technology or their own. Julie realized this was the aesthetic she wanted for the UHC Medical Library.

In terms of the digital resources, Julie took a dive into what was available in the library and found through her assessment that there were many subscription resources that had low or no usage. In addition, she found that the digital resources were in disparate locations, with too many vendor access points and too many logins to easily navigate the content. Julie wanted to streamline access to these resources under the “same cyber roof.”

With research into of the physical and digital elements completed, Julie knew that for the medical library to be successful its reputation needed to change as well. It needed to be recognized as an active medical library which could support employee education. In order to become this recognized place, the library needed marketing and major operational updates.

A New Hire

Part of the operational updates was hiring someone who understood the needs of today’s Millennial learners, who could implement the right changes in the physical space and optimize the digital resources of the library to ensure the library succeeded. Recognizing the need for a forward-minded, tech-savvy person to lead the way in the library, Julie knew exactly who was perfect for the job. In September of 2017, Carrie Cuchens, Library Information Specialist, was hired to complete the remaining evaluation of digital resources and to partner with Julie in bringing the physical space back to life.



“She (Carrie) was able to dive into the obstacles and carve a path to success that positively impacted everyone in the system.”

- Julie St. Martin, Manager Clinical Education

Transforming the Physical Space

Up first for Julie and Carrie was transforming the physical library space and bringing it “to a standard to meet the needs of today’s Millennial learning.” For the team, that meant decluttering, optimizing the small space and bringing in new technology.



“I likened the physical space to the junk drawer that many of us keep in our kitchens. While there are items in that drawer that you may one day need, no one needs 270 bread ties. Julie and I had to identify what was needed and used and determine from that if it really needed to be housed in the library.”

– Carrie Cuchens, Library Information Specialist

Three core physical elements in need of change within the library were identified:

1. Technology
2. Physical Resources
3. Workspaces / Furniture

Technology

When it came to technology, Julie and Carrie knew they needed to meet the expectations of the Millennial learner. To do that they implemented elements which would allow for collaboration and would help students streamline access to information and each other’s work. Examples include:

- Apple TV® so that students could airdrop projects without interrupting others in the library
- Access point installed to strengthen Wi-Fi signal in the library
- Promethean® Board (an interactive touch and whiteboard)



“The Promethean Panel is an interactive smart board that allows for study in a singular or group activity. One of our clinical educators also uses this board when teaching our Comprehensive EKG Class to our nursing staff. The nursing staff appreciate the interactive displays when reading the sample EKG strips displayed.”

Physical Resources

Again, meeting the expectation of today’s users is what drove the updates to physical resources in the library. That meant a trial-and-error strategy in identifying which physical resources – such as books and journals — needed to remain in the library and which could be removed.

“This process went on for approximately three months. One of the first things we did with this part of the project was to move the books completely out of the library. The books were moved to a location within the facility and were kept under lock and key. We found out pretty quickly that this did not work for our patrons. We listened to our patrons and understood the validity of their concerns. We identified a way to bring the books back in to the library.”

Pairing down to the most vital physical resources freed up space for technology such as the Promethean Board and created new spaces for up-to-date furniture and workspaces. It also meant that the team could put a bigger emphasis on digital resources.

Workspaces / Furniture

To facilitate collaboration, Julie and Carrie opted for round tables and modern (and more comfortable) chairs. This also created a feeling of greater space within the small room. In addition, they added a color copier as well as new charging stations for computers and mobile devices to meet user needs during their stay in the library.

Even with a limited budget and resources, Julie and Carrie could transform the physical space into an area of research, learning and collaboration. But the transformation is never done. There is a plan to move into a larger space to accommodate more users and to become a learning cornerstone. "For other libraries facing the challenges that we faced/face – don't be hesitant to start simple and take one step at a time. Sometimes the simplest and the most basic changes can have such a positive impact without you even realizing."

Transforming the Digital Space

The main motivator for reevaluating digital content was a result of content usage analysis. Julie discovered that many paid online resources had low or no usage, and that they came from multiple vendors with multiple platforms and required separate logins. The need to improve this experience and optimize the value of the library's "information dollars" was another reason that Julie brought Carrie into the fold. With her expertise, Carrie took over the remainder of the evaluation to determine the best way to access information and positively impact all users' information needs.

The only cross-content search platforms available to library users were PubMed and Google Scholar. After users located an article of interest on these platforms, library staff would then have to request articles through DocLine, a separate document delivery platform. Julie and Carrie realized that their teaching hospital needed to provide better "on demand" service to drive usage of the library and its resources. They investigated a single-search solution and chose *EBSCO Discovery Service™*.



"Julie knew that a user-friendly, on-demand search platform was a necessary component for bringing this library back to life. Julie also realized after a bit of shopping around that EBSCO provided a lot of bang for the buck. EBSCO could build our site, walk us through how to use it and provide support after we launched."

– Carrie Cuchens, Library Information Specialist

EBSCO Discovery Service (EDS Health) is a one-stop medical research platform that enables users to search all the library's content in one click. A user-friendly search solution, users simply enter their term into the search box and the most relevant results are returned. EDS Health also includes features and functionality which allow a medical library to further customize the search experience to better fit their users' expectations or information needs.



Julie, Carrie and the EBSCO team discussed the information needs of the library and outlined implementation and key dates for the launch of EDS Health. The team remained a phone call or email away and helped launch EDS Health a full two weeks before the proposed launch date.

With EDS Health live, library users now had quick access to many essential medical databases, and Julie and Carrie were tasked with educating users about available resources and making sure they stood out to users when they started their search.

“We built out a section in EDS Health that we called ‘Key Resources.’ This section provides the user with a quick and easy way to navigate from our website to PubMed, *Nursing Reference Center Plus*, *Medline Complete*, *UpToDate*, *CINAHL Complete*, Google Scholar, and an ICD-10 Database. Our faculty, residents and medical students are either students or employees of LSU. UHC is a separate entity and doesn’t have access to the LSU programs and databases. However, we provided a quick link in our Key Resources section for these individuals to be able to access those sites. The feedback for this has been nothing but positive.”

EDS Health was also configured to display current health news, and a branded library visual helps better connect the library with its users.

“We post things like healthcare-related podcasts, articles or the virtual tour of our library. We have also designated a spot for a visual element -- a jpeg of our choosing -- and often include a healthcare-related funny or a visual that deals with the news of the day or week. For example, during Hospital Week, Doctor’s Day and Administrative Professional Day, we created visuals that directly related to those occasions.”

On the back-end, EDS Health allows for the team to measure usage of their resources. They can simply run a report and get a good idea of the ROI they are seeing with their information resources.

Creating an Identity

With the right medical resources in place and a positive response from users, the team decided that marketing initiatives and operational updates would add an extra boost to the library’s reputation and complete Julie and Carrie’s vision. The library needed to have its own

TIP! How to Promote EDS Health to Your Users

Provide handouts on how to access EDS Health and what content/features EDS Health provides. Make these specific to each department: If there is a list of rheumatology journals available in your EDS Health, provide this list to your Rheumatology clinic staff and physicians.

distinct identity within the hospital, and several initiatives helped accomplish this, including creating a unique email address for the library and selecting uniforms for the library staff.

“The creation of uhcmedicallibrary@lgh.org helped with name recognition, and new uniforms helped with visual recognition. This was a quick and inexpensive way for our patrons and other staff to easily identify who we are. When employees notice the logo on my shirt that says ‘Medical Library,’ they stop me in the hallway and say, ‘Oh I didn’t know we had a medical library,’ or, ‘Where is the medical library?’ The uniforms have been a great internal marketing tool.” - Carrie Cuchens.

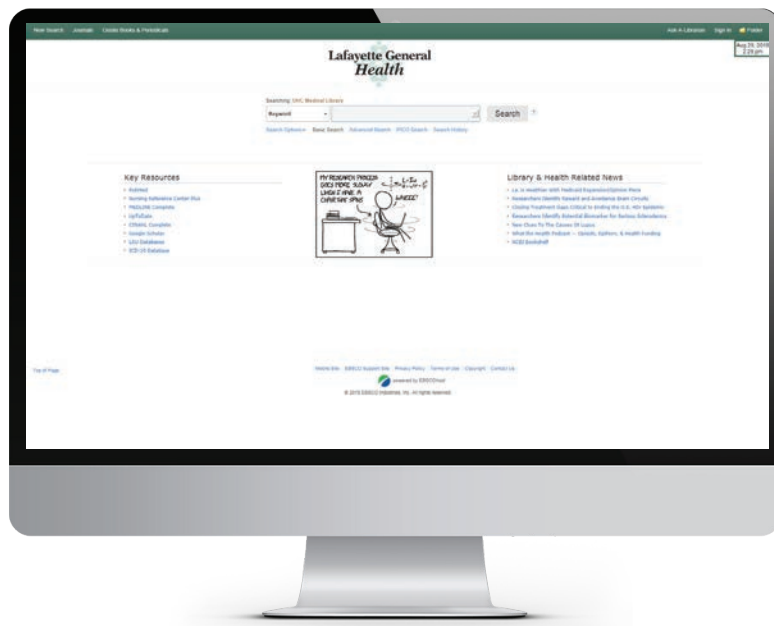
In addition, the library staff launched a digital archive project which covers 80 years’ worth of the hospital’s history. Documenting the importance of the hospital within the community has helped to connect staff to the importance of the institution and create a sense of pride.

And since the library moved under the department of education, there were opportunities to include an overview and a tour of the library as part of onboarding new employees.

When it came to marketing, the team created materials to help keep the library top of mind. This included a library information pamphlet, bookmarks, a virtual tour video and even a commercial for the library. They also provided educational sessions as a great marketing tactic to educate while simultaneously promoting the library.

Carrie conducted seminars for a variety of departments including the nursing staff of Oncology, Cardiopulmonary, Case Management and Outpatient Clinic Nurse Leaders and Office Coordinators. Users were particularly impressed by the rich medical content found in *Nursing Reference Center* and *CINAHL Complete*. “They were also very excited about the Evidence-Based Care Sheets that are built into these programs. I describe them as the ‘Cliff Notes’ of healthcare illness and disease. These are great bedside tools available to the staff at just a click of a button. They are descriptive but not lengthy and provide the staff with a wealth of information including but not limited to the ICD codes.”

“These educations are informal and short,” noted Carrie. “For the Cardiopulmonary Department, I provided a picture tutorial; and for the Outpatient Clinic Nurse Leaders and Office Coordinators, I provided a 15-minute web page tutorial at their monthly meeting. These staff educations have provided tools that the staff were not previously aware of. I feel confident that as we continue to educate more and more staff the benefits to our patient population will increase.”



Utilizing Advocates

Another tactic the team employed was tapping their existing library committee for their ideas and feedback to ensure the success of the library for end-users. The diverse committee consists of Chief of Internal Medicine, Chief of Family Medicine, a Family Medicine Physician, Director of Graduate Medical Education, CNO, CEO and the Academic Research Coordinator. Creating a committee allows the library staff to better understand the cross-functional information needs of each department and to continue to communicate beneficial changes and enhancements to the library.

To continue advocacy, the library staff is currently cataloging all articles written by hospital faculty. The goal is to highlight and demonstrate the significant work of those at UHC while simultaneously educating medical students on the publishing process.

Conclusion

The library has seen increases in traffic to both their physical and digital resources. Cuchens notes they have seen a significant increase in research requests since relaunching the library. For example, according to the report of requests filled from January to December of 2017, the library staff filled 116 research requests. From January to mid-June of 2018, they filled 650 research requests. In addition, the library has seen increased foot traffic and positive praise from a variety of staff members.

Education sessions available from the library are helping to carry out its and the mission of the Clinical Education Department while allowing the library to stay top of mind with its users when it comes to researching the latest in healthcare and patient care information.

The team and the library are not finished. Both Carrie and Julie see the library as an ever-evolving entity for the hospital and its users. They have plans to move the library into a larger space, extend their marketing to engage untapped users such as physician groups in their community, develop

How to Set Up a Library Committee

- Invite a variety of contacts from different departments
- Hold meetings in a reasonable time frame (e.g., every 2 months for 1.5 hours)
- Set and send a clear agenda
- Organize the agenda into consistent sections
- Take meeting minutes and distribute after the meeting

The Medical Library and Resource Center at UHC is one of our hidden assets, and I feel fortunate to be a part of the Library Committee. The library staff has personally helped me procure research materials for a recent article that my team and I are writing for American Family Physician, the journal of the American Academy of Family Practice. The staff provided over 50 high-quality articles for our project within just 24 hours. All information was emailed and printed for our convenience. The amount of time and effort that the library staff saved us was invaluable. They have continued to be available to us for any additional requests throughout the writing process."

- Linda K. Ogé, M.D., Section Chief, Department of Family Medicine and Clinical Assistant Professor

interesting content such as guest blog posts and social media to further engage users, and of course to consistently review and add new information resources.



"I don't want to ever get stuck in the 'it's all done' phase because my personal belief is that it isn't ever all done. I want to see this library continue to grow and evolve for our patrons."

– Carrie Cuchens, Library Information Specialist

Praise for the Library

**Dr. Mark Carreras,
First year resident**

"The [easy access to] resources makes it really easy to find any type of journals or articles that normally would be restricted elsewhere – this saves so much time."

**Callie Callais,
RN Clinical Educator**

"We use the library a lot and work together to bring modern technology to the faculty and staff. The library staff is an immediate resource that can assist and train on different computer programs."

**Dr. Nick Sells,
Section Chief of Medicine,
Director of Infectious Disease**

"In just a short time we've made great leaps and bounds in terms of our library's available resources, as well as personnel. It's super helpful to know we can get full-text articles and use our library staff to help provide research assistance and services for special projects like videoing education for us and creating tools to track and trend data."

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