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### **The shape and form of the modern academic library**

Traditionally, libraries have been aggregators of knowledge in its print form. With the advancements in information production and dissemination brought on by technological advancements, 'libraries have grown much broader and are now inclusive to any medium that makes access to knowledge and information possible' (Tise & Raju, 2012: 7). Academic libraries, being at the 'forefront of accommodating advances in IT and the internet' (Kim & Lee, 2010: 76), are faced with the challenge of developing and growing virtual space to house these developments.

This paper reports on a study that explores the advancements of academic libraries globally by reviewing literature that is then supplemented by surveying and interviewing library staff to establish where UCT Libraries is in the continuum in establishing itself as a modern academic library. Themes emanating from literature include open access, digital curation, digital humanities and research data management. With this in mind, first and foremost the purpose of a library is to serve the community in which it is situated. Thus, finding out the expectations from the library user population was necessary and done through online questionnaires. While the paper discusses developments in the modern academic library, there is also focus on the readiness of staff to accommodate advancements and the capabilities of staff to adapt to the changing environment of the academic library. Consequently, this study is supported by the theory of organisational learning. According to Danielson and Wiggenhorn (2003: 17), 'today's progressive corporations have moved from treating [organizational] learning as an obligatory cost factor to regarding it as a weapon in the battle for competitive advantage'. A qualitative approach and a case study research design is employed by the study. The study concludes that academic libraries, globally, are adapting their services according to user demands and users' use of current technology; that UCT Libraries is currently in the process of establishing itself as a modern academic library; that the prevailing culture of organizational learning in UCT Libraries bodes well for constantly adapting to new technologies; and, that users are generally satisfied with the Library services. Although the case of UCT Libraries was used in this study, in many ways this case is typical of academic libraries in other parts of South Africa as well as in other parts of the world and hence this study of the shape and form of the modern academic library has relevance to other academic library contexts as well.