

Parallel Sessions B
B2 – Who Uses the Internet and Why?

Friday, September 20, Room C, 12.00

Totally Virtual: Is it a Reality? Experiences and Ways Forward in Providing Library Services to Support the Health Services Management Function in the UK

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The Health Services Management Centre (HSMC) provides library and information services to a wide range of users - academic staff, postgraduate students, NHS management trainees, and NHS managers. Most library users spend little time based at HSMC from where more traditional library services are provided. This means that a "hub and spoke" approach to the provision of library services, enabling access to the evidence, virtually, has had to be adopted. Based on a survey of our NHS management trainees (MTS students), this paper will examine issues related to the use of the internet as a means of providing access to health management-related information, virtually. It will offer suggestions as to the way forward in best meeting the library and information needs of those involved in health services management, within both an academic and NHS environment. It will show how a totally virtual approach is not considered a reality in the short term, but how strategies which emphasise external access to the evidence need to be developed if we are to respond successfully to users' needs. It will emphasise the vital role that the information professional needs to adopt if a "hub and spoke" approach is to succeed.