

KAREN FOLEY: Welcome back to Student Hub Live. Well I hope you're enjoying today's programme. My next guests are going to tell you all about the online OU library. One of the things we often talk about when we show students the library - and indeed many students go to the library in Milton Keynes - is they say, I'm in Scotland. I can't go to the library. One day I'd like to go. But the wonderful thing about the OU is it has the best online library.

So Ute and Claire, thank you for joining me today. You're both looking very glamorous. And students love meeting the library team. You do so much to really make our students feel very relaxed and at home and give them some essential skills. So first, can I ask you, Ute, to tell us about what the online OU library is all about?

UTE MANECKE: Yes, of course. Hello, Karen and everyone else. We have got a really big range of resources in the library. So yes, the library does have a physical presence in Milton Keynes, where you can go, and you can use the study spaces and borrow books. But as Karen has just said, you can find all the materials online that you need so you can study wherever you want. It doesn't have to be anywhere near Milton Keynes.

And our online subscription resources are actually what constitutes the online library. And that is, for example, collections of newspapers, online e-books, sound and image databases, and then, of course, many, many research journal articles, all that. And as you can see now, there is a slide, which we're displaying.

If you want to explore the resources, on our home page we've got a big discovery tool, which is Library Search. So you just type in some keywords, and then you will find some resources on the subject you are looking for. You can also try and find a particular resource by typing a title in. And here on this particular slide, you can also go to the Library Resources tab.

And this is quite useful if you don't want to just search across almost all our resources, as in Library Search, but if you want to go to specific resources which are very much on your subject. So you can see a link here on that page. And that says selected resources for your study. And that is preselected material, whether it's e-books, databases or journals. And you can, if you want, just browse and have a look what we've got here.

KAREN FOLEY: That's wonderful. And there are many, as you say, not only journal articles, but also books and various other sources, all of which have been carefully selected by, often, the module and qualification teams. So that's wonderful, Ute. So thank you for showing us around that. And we subscribe to many, many top journal articles, so you can often find things at The Open University that you may not be able to find at other institutions.

Now, one of the things that the library do so well, in addition to resources, is helping students with referencing. And Claire, many new students come to University and say, I'm really worried about referencing. And they need not worry, because there is so much support the library offer. So how do students have to reference in their assignments? What can you tell us?

CLAIRE WOTHERSPOON: Yeah, thank you, Karen, so great to be here and meet with the students remotely. So, once you've found all of these wonderful resources using the online library, you need to reference them if you're using them in your assignments. So at the OU, we do have a few different referencing styles that we use. But the main ones come out of the Harvard system of referencing.

So different universities use slightly different versions of Harvard. So at the OU, we have two systems. One is OU Harvard, and the other is Cite Them Right Harvard. So Cite Them Right Harvard is a new guide, which the University is slowly rolling out to all of the modules for this academic year and the next.

So at the moment, if your module requires you to use Cite Them Right Harvard, you'll be expected to follow that particular guide. And this will always be signposted on your module website and is found on the library web pages as well. So if you're a student that where your module is OU Harvard, you actually have the choice this year of whether to use OU Harvard or if you want to switch over to Cite Them Right Harvard.

Both guys are available on the library website. And the two systems are quite similar. So if you're used to OU Harvard, and you're switching to Cite Them Right Harvard, you'll only notice some quite minor differences. So your module website is the place to go to check which guide you need to use.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. That's wonderful. Thank you, Claire. So we asked people at home whether or not they'd been to the OU library yet. Half of them have. Half of them haven't. And then we've also asked them whether they've used OU Harvard or Cite Them Right. Fifteen percent have used OU Harvard, and Cite Them Right five percent, and neither, because we've got lots of brand new students, eighty percent haven't used any particular type.

Now, students could get very hung up on referencing. And one of the things that I love that the library do is not only show you how it's a reference, but it's also when to reference, which is, of course, more important than remembering where the comma goes in the first place. This is one of the things I think that students really need to focus on. As it's not necessarily how to do it. It's the most important thing to do when you're citing something that isn't your own work.

But nonetheless, these conventions and differences can often be confusing. So what support and training have we got the students, with the new Cite Them Right referencing style?

CLAIRE WOTHERSPOON: So the library currently provides referencing workshops. They include both OU Harvard and Cite Them Right Harvard. So if you go to the library's Training and Events page, all of the upcoming workshops are listed there. You'll also find previous recordings for sessions that we've run on a previous occasion. So if you can't make that time, there's recorded sessions that are available too.

So in addition to these sessions, there are guides on YouTube channel as well. So they're always worth checking out, and they go into detail about how to use the Cite Them Right Harvard guide. And of course, you're always welcome to speak to our library help desk, which is available twenty-four/seven, even on Christmas Day. So if you don't have anything better to do but to reference your work, you're welcome to speak to a librarian for help.

KAREN FOLEY: Well you never know. There are those assignments due in, in January. And actually, jokes aside, I've often found Christmas Day quite a nice time to get a bit of study done on my own, doing something I really want to do, when other people are out and about visiting, et cetera. But that's great to know that there is that sort of full-time contact available for people.

Now, Ute, many people here are brand new to The Open University. So what support is there in store for new students who may need some help navigating the huge range of stuff that's in the online library?

UTE MANECKE: Yes, we have got quite a bit of help and support. So we have got a help and support page on our library website. And that helps with how to find resources for your assignment. And that can be pretty much anything from journal articles, to e-books and databases. And that guidance talks the students through it.

So there is also a link, Getting Started with the Online Library. And that goes more specifically into - well it's basically an introduction to what e-books actually are, and what databases are, and what journals and journal articles are. Especially if you are quite new, you might get a better understanding if you have a look at this.

And there are also some videos on that page as well, which might make it a little bit more entertaining and a bit more visual. Then we've also got our Being Digital collection, which has just been updated, so it's brand new. And these are activities which you can work through yourself at your own pace and are only about five to ten minutes long for the most part.

And it's on a range of skills areas. And a lot of it is very much focused on to provide the different online skills which you actually need. And then, of course, there is more help and support at a help desk that was just mentioned, and yes, twenty-four/seven for the web chat.

So there is always someone available. But if you don't want to use the web chat, of course, you can also drop us an email, and we respond between nine and five to emails. And you will find the details for the help desk on every page of the library website.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Thank you, Ute. We have some questions. HJ, you've been very super busy back there. How's everything going?

HJ: It's going really well. And a lot of us are worried that although it's online, you still might get lost in the library. But a few questions that we'd love to go in the chat. So Rifat asked, can you use Boolean logic in the library search?

UTE MANECKE: Yes, yes, you can. So we can use Boolean logic, not just on databases, but you can very much use the Boolean operators. If someone isn't familiar with it, Boolean operators, Boolean logic is based on connectors like and, or, and not. And that's a way of connecting different search terms. And I would very much recommend you using them, in fact.

KAREN FOLEY: That's wonderful. Thank you, HJ.

HJ: Fantastic. I know Craig as well, just wants to know; do you have any advice on any particular referencing software should we use? Or is that something not to worry about right now?

CLAIRE WOTHERSPOON: I'll take this one. So, I think while the library will offer a little bit of a helping hand getting to understand what these referencing tools offer, we can't really offer too much in the way of technical advice for using them. And it also depends what you're

using it for. So some of the free ones are actually really useful, like Mendeley and Zotero, for example.

The reason for this is you can actually continue to use them if you sign up with a personal email. Even after you finish your studies with the OU, you can continue to collaborate. And they store your PDFs. You can annotate them. But it really depends on what you need it for. And we do have a training session on introducing you to some of these different referencing tools, so I would recommend, if you can, pop along to that or watch a previous recording.

KAREN FOLEY: That's lovely, Claire. HJ, more questions?

HJ: Yes, we've got quite a few. So Leanne is wondering, she's seen some library sessions running at seven AM, but she can't make them. Are there other times that they're offered?

UTE MANECKE: Yeah, I can take this one. Most of our library training sessions are actually in the evenings, so if you go to the Training page, you will see at what times they are listed. Yes, there was one at seven AM. But that's the minority. It's just some students, especially when the new academic year starts, like it quite early.

But most of them are in the evening, and we have actually got quite a few lunchtime sessions as well. And also, there are the recordings if you really can't make it, and the materials like the slides, you can access as well. And they're being repeated on a regular basis as well.

KAREN FOLEY: Fantastic. Ute and Claire, are you able to go into the chat afterwards and talk to people with other questions?

UTE MANECKE: Yeah, sure.

CLAIRE WOTHERSPOON: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: That would be fantastic, because I just had one final one, very quickly. Actually, I wanted to show you, we've asked people at home which resources they would use, bearing in mind that a lot of people are brand new to the OU. But this, I think, it's from lots of our current students.

They say that journals and e-books are the key things that are there. But they're also using dictionaries, databases, they're looking for help and advice as well, resources, newspapers, training events, so lots and lots of different things coming up here, athens, some search databases as well. So some people are saying it's new to me, so there's plenty to look at.

I just wanted to ask, many people study with The Open University with a disability. And we're very mindful of making sure that all of our material is accessible for people. So I just wanted to ask, finally, what you are doing, Ute, around accessibility and students who may need additional support in using the library.

UTE MANECKE: Yeah, yeah, we do quite a lot, actually. So when we work with module teams, we are making sure that any library materials which are going in there are accessible. If we find any which are not immediately accessible, we convert them so they will become accessible. Also, if students have a print disability, they can use a service called SensusAccess. And this is a service which allows them to convert material themselves.

So for example, they could decide to convert it into an audio file, or even Braille, which is great. And then there is also a training session, which helps as well, which should help you to get a bit of an idea on how to make OU materials a little bit more accessible as well.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Ute and Claire, thank you so much, and thank you for going into the chat, because we're out of time now, but I know people have a lot of questions. And also we all love chatting to the library. So Ute and Claire will come into the chat and join you, so make sure that you get all those questions about the library answered.

Let's just take a quick look at our map and see where everybody is, because we've been having people fill those in. It's all looking absolutely amazing. So far not everyone has filled this in, because we've got over four hundred people in the chat right now. But we've got lots of international students as well here, as well as people all over the UK and Ireland and as far as Australasia, Asia, and I know we've got colleagues in India also as well.

So it's wonderful to have such an international and diverse range of students here. My next live session is with Jason about keeping safe online. It's a really important session in this age with digital security, and online security is so super important.

So I'm just going to show you a quick video. This is a time when I could get to the library. This is what it looks like at Milton Keynes. So let's meet some of the library team and see the physical library at the OU. And then I'll be back for that next session very soon.