Post Occupancy Evaluation
Case Studies

Rolex Learning Center

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EPFL Library

LIBER LAG 2018, Wien, 19.04.2018
A growing international community

112 nationalities
40% foreign students
60% faculty from abroad

Total number of students

1990: 3'500
2000: 10'000
2018: 112 nationalities

40% foreign students
60% faculty from abroad
A growing campus

Rolex Learning Center 2010
Central services building 2013
SwissTech Convention Center 2014
Quartier Nord 2014
ArtLab 2016
The Rolex Learning Center: a scientific project, a location, a building...
Factsheet

**Architect firm SANAA**
Kazuyo Sejima
Ryūe Nishizawa
Pritzker Prize 2010

**Nickname**
The Rolex (RLC)

**Opening**
22.02.2010

**Library**
5 100 m² on 2 levels

Minergie-Standard
Footprint: 20 200 m²
Overall surface area: 88 000 m²
The Rolex as opened in 2010

- Student association, Alumni Association
- Career Development Centre
- Center for Digital Education/Lab Computer-human interaction in learning and instruction
- University Publisher
- Library
- Auditorium
- Bookshop
- Restaurants, snack-bar
- Bank
- Parking
- ... and a lot of empty spaces with beanbags
Seamless network of services

LIBRARY
- Student + Alumni associations
- Career centre
- Bookshop
- Bank
- Newspapers
- Bar
- Rare books
- Self-service restaurant
- Restaurant
- Underground parking

SERVICES
- Main entrance
- RLC welcome desk
- Multi-purpose hall

CATERING
- Teaching lab
- EPFL Press

OFFICES
- Library offices

COLLECTIONS
- Working spaces

WORKING SPACES
The project

• «Openness»
• Interdisciplinarity
• Modularity
• Interactivity
• Fluidity
• Creativity

«Intimate public space»

(and by the way: merge of 10 libraries...)
April 2018: almost 10 years after the opening, where do we stand?
Let’s give the floor to the students...
An iconic building…

for the City of Lausanne

for our School

for Switzerland
(2015 Iranian nuclear negotiations)
Main changes since the building opening

- Improvements of **photocopying, scanning and printing facilities**
- **Main reception desk** not run by the Communication Service anymore
- **Closings**: the self-service restaurant, the banking agency
- **Movements**: the Teaching Support Centre, a half of the MOOC factory
What about attendance?

No statistics about the whole building

Estimation for the Library:

Around **1.3 M** every year

**3’500**

daily average incoming visitors

peaks: **6’000** entrances
Print collections

10% of document expenses

258’000 books (380’000 in 2010)
4’564 journals (5’200 in 2010)

E-collections

90% of document expenses

102’000 ebooks (20’000 in 2010)
19’823 ejournals (11’000 in 2010)
Self-service loan

Open 7 to midnight /7

Fully accessible collections
Post-occupancy evaluation: the staff point of view

POSITIVE ASPECTS

- Many, many users
- Tranquillity and beauty
- Open space, uncluttered style
- Restful atmosphere
- Design furniture
- Light
- Photogenic background

NEGATIVE ASPECTS

- Not enough seats
- Not enough work rooms (group study)
- No classroom
- Limited modularity, little flexibility (slopes, furniture...)
- Temperature regulation, shutters, windows
- Carpet’s degradation

Cohabitation between students from various schools?
In 2017, EPFL Library was mandated to propose user space improvements for the whole building.
Assessment of the building use:
- frequentation survey,
- seating usage study ("seating sweeps")
- meetings of the building's occupants

Students needs exploration:
- survey of the EPFL BA-MA students (users and non-users)
- meetings: services involved in academic and student life, students associations, representatives in the EPFL Assembly

Analysis of innovative experiences
(literature review, benchmark, visits)
Seating sweeps results (nov. 2017)

A busy spot, whatever the day
(especially at the end of the afternoon and during week-ends)

Library and other silent areas: people working alone
Meeting-bubbles, restaurants area, informal spaces: people socializing and working in group
Slopes: people chilling out, resting and eating

The lack of seats: a legitimate complain!
About 12% seats occupied by belongings.
Especially true in the Library.
Seating sweeps results (nov. 2017)

- **Preferred tables:**
  - near the glazed walls
  - small square tables, rectangular tables and seats in a row

- **Meeting bubbles:** highly used, sometimes by people alone

- **3/4 of users study alone.**
  1/4 study communally or collaboratively, especially in unsilent zones and meeting bubbles.
  Mostly in **groups of 2 people**.

- **80% of visitors use technology equipment:** laptop, Ipad...
When EPFL students express their needs (spring 2017)

Overall **45% come to the Library at least once a week**, whereas 50% never come.

Library attendance declines as the curriculum progresses:
When EPFL students express their needs (spring 2017)

Criticisms:
- individual work: lack of available seats, distance
- group work: speak out loud

Most requested evolutions:
- more seats
- additional group study rooms
- low technology equipment
- relaxing area
- free access fablab...
A living building: our projects
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<th>Priority needs</th>
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<th>More seating positions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Working easily in groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Various furniture according to needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>An operational and comfortable helpdesk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Storing belongings in lockers</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Working in silence</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reserving and using meeting bubbles easily</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bigger desks</td>
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<td>Environments in a good state of repair and cleanliness</td>
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<td>Recharging electronic devices</td>
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<th>Isolating oneself among the others</th>
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<td>More screens, borrowing laptops at any time</td>
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<td>Soft seating zone</td>
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<td>Being well-informed on the building</td>
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<td>Collecting requested items autonomously</td>
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The Library proposals
Additionnal **tables**. Various configurations: for 1/2/4 people, high tables, adjustable desks...

**Seats**: chairs, high stools, armchairs, highback seats and sofas.

**Mobile** furnitures, tables dividers, partitions, alcove sofas.

**Group study rooms** with screens and rewritable walls.

Individual study carrels.

New library **helpdesk**.

Small equipment. Multi socket towers.

**Self-serve laptops kiosk**. More screens.

Additional lockers. Scooters and skates racks.

Better **signage** (silence, lockers, zones...).

**Concierge** at the helpdesk on evening and week-end.
What consequences for the EPFL Library to be in the Rolex Learning Center?
Outside of the institution

- Great business card
- Attracts visitors
- Argument used by the institution to invite students to come studying at EPFL
- Appealing for librarians to come working at EPFL Library
- Stimulating!
Within our institution

• Library identified as a place for the students
• Location a little bit outlying on the campus ...too far for some users
• Challenge to be undertaken= be recognised as a Research library, too...
• Trapped in a too exceptional building?
• Reorganization of the Library
• Librarian training
• Liaison librarians
• New tasks taken in charge (publishing support, data management...)
• Communication/marketing
Towards ourselves

• Virtuous cycle:
  - an innovative building...
    - for innovative librarians
    - for an innovative library
    - and innovative library services
The uses and needs of our users will continue to change, so will libraries and librarians. So will the Rolex Learning Center!
Thank you for your attention!
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