Library Project Management– examples of the kind of initiatives where a project management approach would be adopted

These examples represent a range of projects in different libraries from different sectors.

They are all real projects and are included to give you an idea of the range of different types of activities which would benefit from a 'project management' style of approach

Example 1.
Making DVDs available as Short Loan items in a University Library

Project definition and goal

To expand the Media services offered by the University library in response to requests from library customers and to make these collections more widely accessible to the user population.

Benefits of the Project

The benefits expected from the project were:

- Changes in the Media Services workflow. Audio-visual materials available for loan were previously only issued either at counter services or on self service machines, although customers can still choose to watch DVDs in the library.

- Greater flexibility for the user population. Using and borrowing the DVDs would be less restrictive in terms of when and where the items can be viewed.

- More opportunities for customers to request DVD items, particularly those recommended by lecturers and in heavy demand. Previously, the system operated largely on a first come first served basis which was not always helpful for some users, including part time and distance learning students.

Example 2. Library Portal Project: restructuring the library portal to synthesise with the University portal

Project definition and goal

To provide both external and internal sites that are customer focused on the relevant target audience. To create a library web presence on the University Portal that meet quality, branding, consistency and maintenance standards.

Benefits of the project:
There would be a more user friendly facility for library customers to access. Previously, separate login requirements for the University Portal and Library Portal created unnecessary barriers for library users. Now a single login process, using individual network usernames and passwords, allows access to all University electronic information, including library services.

Example 3.
Public Library Schools Visits Project

Project Definition and Goal

The main aim of the project was to develop appropriate library services to schools that would improve children's use of their public library.

Benefits of the project
A successful project would improve visitor targets, increase the active borrower count and increase book issues. This would also help to improve the satisfaction rating during the children's satisfaction surveys.

Example 4.
Reclassification Project: reclassifying the main book collection (approx. 53,000 items) of a departmental library in an old university to the Library of Congress Classification scheme (LCC).

Project definition and goal

The goal of the project is to create an up to date collection, with growth space for new material, arranged by Library of Congress (LCC) an easy to use, internationally recognised classification sequence.

Benefits of the Project
This aims to make the collection easier to browse, as books should be grouped in a more systematic fashion. It also aims to make individual items easier to search for, as the classification will end in a 3-letter code, taken either from the author's name or the title, included in the shelf mark, thus limiting the number of titles that can have the same shelf location.

The majority of the University's libraries have already reclassified to LCC, or are in the process of doing so. By bringing the Education Library into line with the rest of the University, it should help our many users who use more than one library, as well as making life easier for those who were already used to LCC at a previous institution.

Finally, it should also mean that the classification of most new material can be done by library assistants as part of the general book processing stage, as class marks can generally be found in the MARC records of the Library of Congress' online catalogue. This will reduce subjectivity and make the workflow much more efficient.

Example 5
School Author Visit Project: organizing an author visit for a school library

Project definition and goal

The goals of the author visit were:
- To promote and encourage reading within year 7
- To engage pupils in a short creative writing workshop, enabling them to develop their own skills.

Benefits of the project were to:
- encourage reading
- develop questioning and answering skills
- develop a wider understanding of publishing and ways in which to get work published regardless of age
- develop creative writing skills.

Example 6.
Self Service Project: staff changes on the Service Desk as a consequence of self service machines in a University Library

Project definition and goal

To encourage customers to use the self issue machines for routine transactions, including issuing, returning and renewing items. This would enable staff at the service desk to focus on more involved circulation enquiries.

To re-organise the staffing patterns on the counter service, including reducing the number of people on evening teams and the staffed opening hours of the counter.

Benefits expected from the project include:
The project would enable the provision of more flexible services and facilities for customers, including part time and distance learning students, in particular people who access the library in the evening.
It would also reduce the frequency and length of evening working sessions for library staff in keeping with the overall use of the counter services after 7.30. During consultations, a large number of staff had expressed the opinion that the low use of the counter service after 7.30pm did not warrant having teams of staff working.

Example 7
Volunteers Project: to recruit, train and supervise volunteers for a data entry project for the local studies service of a public library

Project definition and goal

To recruit, train and supervise volunteers to undertake a data entry project for the library's local studies service.

Benefits of the project

- To recruit further volunteers to add building plans to a database
- To ensure that these plans could be found for enquiring library users and that the information on them was recorded for the purposes of preservation
- To reduce pressure on existing library staffing by using volunteers as a project of this scale was not possible within current library staffing capacity
- To add value to the organisation through the use of volunteers, providing an opportunity for community engagement and for complementing the work done by paid staff.