

Database Work Group Report for Cambridge Library 21 Committee Members

The purpose of this database is to:

- Record recommendations from different groups in different areas of the city
- Enable the public to know that their views are included
- Collect and organize the huge amount of input that is included
- Collect recommendations that can be used by the library staff in the future
- Collect recommendations that can be used by the city to plan other things
- Be a model for other cities to use enabling them to learn from us

The information on needs, contacts, organizations, has been included in a Library 21 database in Microsoft Access. The "needs" table includes the expressed needs of the neighborhood work group minutes, the organizational focus group minutes from city departments and other non-city organizations, and findings from the symposium, tours, meetings, letters and notes the Library 21 Committee has received.. The database will include the findings from the other work groups, advice from other libraries, and other relevant data. This database can be a working document to be continuously added to for library planning and is open-ended.

Flexibility of the database enables any committee member to use it to ask questions about key words and topics of interest to them, for example, all references to books on tape, or computers, or videos, or Internet. The data can be flexibly structured in various query formats depending on the needs of committee members. Members can also ask for specific combinations of information, for example, all requests for materials on science which occurred in different library regions of Cambridge, or for "access," a question which Emily West asked and which is attached. There is no particular categorization system for the database. The raw data remains separate from the categories, and field or structured queries. Committee members are now looking at various categories or fields to use to look at the data.

This database is not currently a tool for quantitative analysis but for qualitative analysis to enable us to begin to envision a wide variety of ideas, to "cast a wider net."

We welcome ideas on how to use the data. We wonder which questions we would like to bring to this data to enable us to analyze it and to have it be a more useful tool for Library 21. Committee members are now looking at various categories or fields to use to look at the data. Among the categories or fields which might be used for analyzing the data are:

- (1) Main / branch configurations
- (2) Content of library,
- (3) Multi-cultural content
- (4) Neighborhood centers for library, homework, performance, meetings, special interests, etc.
- (5) Staffing and training issues
- (6) Where the resource exists already
- (7) Collaboration with groups

- (8) Technology
- (9) Multi-media
- (10) Location/space issues
- (11) Interior space
- (12) Career/college/job banks and resources
- (13) Opening hours
- (14) Cambridge collections
- (15) Noise and quiet concerns.

This database or a section of it will be available on the Cambridge City web pages.