Idea Store – a revolution in public libraries
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A revolution in public libraries

• Development of the Idea Store concept
• Characteristics of the Idea Store Service
• The importance of the physical space in a digital age
The setting

Tower Hamlets
east London
A Growing Borough

- A young borough with a diverse community
- Population of 265,000
- Rapidly growing – high birthrate and new residents coming to Tower Hamlets
- All change – major regeneration
From a Tale of Two Hamlets...

- High levels of deprivation
  - unemployment
  - highest rate of overcrowded housing in London
  - higher reported levels of ill health
- Educational attainment
  - 64.7% of pupils achieve grades A-C in GCSE
  - 25% of working population holds no qualifications
- Diversity
  - ½ population from black and minority ethnic communities
  - home to Britain’s largest Bangladeshi community
To One Tower Hamlets…

- The rate of improvement in educational achievement is rising well ahead of the national average.
- A huge programme of housing regeneration is underway, bringing in private capital to help transform our housing.
- Together, the public and private sectors are gradually helping to create one Tower Hamlets, one that is more prosperous, confident and harmonious.
1998
Just 500,500 visits
Why?
Ask the people
Key findings:

- 98% considered libraries to be important
- More books
- More IT
- Convenient opening hours
- People wanted libraries to be located where they can combine visits with other activities - particularly shopping
The Brand
Idea Store 2016

Idea Store Bow 2002
257,817 visits

Idea Store Chrish Street 2004
412,721 visits

Idea Store Whitechapel 2005
573,989 visits

Idea Store Watney Market 2013
375,000 visits

Idea Store Canary Wharf 2006
212,092 visits

Local History Library & Archives (Bancroft Rd)
1,050 visits

Cubitt Town Library
71,796 visits

Shadwell Centre
119,430 visits

Bethnal Green Library
1,050 visits

257,817 visits
Impact:

Regeneration
Sustained Growth in Visitor Numbers

Annual visits 1999-2014

- Pre Idea Store: +59%
- IS B & CS open: +47%
- IS W & CW open: 1,971,584
- IS W & WM open: 2,047,788
- 2013/14: 2,224,646

1999/00: 500,000
2004/05: 1,343,752
Qualifications in ESOL & Basic Skills

Qualifications achieved in ESOL & Basic Skills

- 2013: 28 (11% of all IS qualifications)
- 2014: 213 (60% of all IS qualifications)
- 2015: 823 (84% of all IS qualifications)
Customer Satisfaction 92%

*CIPFA calculate the weighted overall satisfaction based on the number of visits to individual
Characteristics of Idea Store

Integration

Libraries Learning Information
Characteristics of Idea Store:

the place

The perfect spot
Characteristics of Idea Store:
the place
High specification
Characteristics of Idea Store:

the place

Retail model
Opening Hours:

Mon-Thurs    9am - 9pm
Friday       9am - 6pm
Saturday     9am - 5pm
Sunday       11am - 5pm
Characteristics of Idea Store:

the place

No barriers
Characteristics of Idea Store: 

the place 

Rules – why?
Characteristics of Idea Store

The place

A wide range of activities
There’s always something happening:

Prime Time, **Mums online**, Dads’ Club – Saturday morning club for fathers and children, **Aaj Kal – Bengali current affairs group**, film showings for adults and children, **Martial Arts for children**, Author visits, **Thames boat trips**, First click computer skills drop in, Legal advice, **Children’s Art Clubs**, Silver Surfer sessions, **Book Break – shared reading aloud**, Story time for under 5s every day, **Homework Clubs**, Sunday morning News Views with coffee and croissants, **Family reading groups**, Knit wits knitting club, **Pathok – Bengali book group**, Sleepovers, **Reading Ahead for adults**, Universal Children’s Programme, **Health checks**, Job clubs

All of these activities are FREE.
Characteristics of Idea Store: ways of working

- Finding the right people
- Flat hierarchies
- Working across the service
- Generic roles
- Empower, engage enrich
Characteristics of Idea Store:

ways of working

Thinking, listening, learning
Idea Store. A place for
High quality courses
Book loans
Free surfing
Great value DVD/CD loans
Safe children’s area
Magazines
So much more...

www.ideastore.co.uk
Tel: 020 7364 4332
Value of the physical space in a digital age

- Providing access to a wide range of services
- Giving our partners a chance to engage with local people
- Improving access to digital services
- Making a significant contribution to public health
- Greater employability for local people and support for local business
- Growing and strengthening the local community
- Fostering social cohesion
A third place

For our customers the environment in Idea Stores has many of the characteristics of a third place as defined by Ray Oldenburg who coined the phrase
Idea Stores – a third place

Idea Stores are a neutral space. People come here because they want to, not because they have to and they’re free to come and go as they please with no questions asked.

Idea Stores accept everyone on equal terms and place no importance on an individual's status in a society or how long they have lived here.

Idea Stores are open and accessible. Idea Stores provide a shared, free community space where people gain a sense of belonging to a wider community outside home.
Idea Stores – a third place

• Idea Stores promote social inclusion in a public space that is open to and shared by the whole community on an equal basis

• Idea Stores provide a home away from home “I feel at home here” Design specifications are high so that the stores are a good place to spend time in. People often feel a sense of belonging and identify strongly with the place.

• Idea Stores attract regulars who have been coming for years and also attract newcomers

• Idea Stores are anchors of community life and facilitate and foster broader, more creative interaction.
What Idea Store users say...

I like to come here to have a pot of tea and meet friends as I am on my own and like the company here does a great at integrating people also getting local people out of their houses to talk together so many people from different backgrounds which help us to reach each other no matter what religion we are This library is our heart of Bow It's a very diverse Idea Store catering for lots of people with different beliefs It is a wonderful place. A haven The library is really good and helpful. Has helped me to find work and helped younger siblings. Friendly abundant space. Feels modern + exciting it's great for the babies to crawl around & discover new books & meet other children This library is an important life-line to the community It's a place where you can relax I enjoy book group and the sense of community I feel really comfortable coming to this library very multi - cultural place Whitechapel Idea Store is like home for us we know books & use internet meet with friends sometimes. It's a good & relaxing place to be It has become an integral part of the community
Love the cafe at the top - ideal for peace & quiet & getting away from it all. Found it especially nice when I was ill for a considerable time. Came to read a book was very pleasantly surprised at the activities taking place in this library.

I work with people with learning disabilities. The staff members are very concerned to their needs. I think the Idea Store is a good innovative library that is both learning & knowledge resource and a community resource. It provides access to knowledge & place to study a place to meet people socially and is a great community asset. I come every day to knit + meet my friends. This library is amazing. I come here to work but also to chill out or if I need a quiet moment away from the busy-ness outside. I like the atmosphere because I come here with my disabled brother for him to just chill. The workers respect me and my brother.

Overall the library has been an amazing help as I am in temporary accommodation (bed sit). My 1 yr. old son has a great time been able to play freely and safely. good environment, feel it is a place of being refreshed. This library helps me with my depression.

Library is very good. Find everything here job searching computers everything here.
Idea Store: The next 10 years

- Improve the quality of core library and information services
- Improve the quality and scope of core adult learning services
- Expand the provision of high quality health information, advice and support
- Expand the provision of high quality employment information, advice and support
- Improve the provision of high quality, accessible ICT/ILT infrastructure services, training and support
- Strengthen inclusion and accessibility
- Co-locate cultural, leisure, and other council services where this will increase efficiency, effectiveness and value for money and enhance the Idea Store offer
idea
Library Learning Information

www.ideastore.co.uk