Since the new building opened, the library is busier than ever - usage of the library has increased by 20%.

The University of Leeds, a Russell Group University, has been investing to enhance the student learning experience and other aspects of student life - the quality of the campus, the accommodation and the environment. The aim is to provide a first-class experience for the University’s student "customers".

Group study has become an important part of student education, as it prepares graduates better for the world of work, but there are not many places where they can work together in groups, so flexible study space is always in demand. There is also a trend towards friends doing the same course studying together side by side. This informal collaboration is very popular and also creates demand for study rooms.

With so much need for private study space where students can work together, the University provides study rooms for groups of up to ten people. They are usually full, so they can be booked in advance. Some of the rooms have an IT infrastructure that allows several laptops to be linked to one screen.

The Laidlaw Library uses the Telepen Juno Room Booking System which allows students to book the rooms they need directly. The system has small wall boxes located by the entrance to each study room, and students can book online or at the entrance to the room.

Students can book slots of two hours at a time and they can book particular periods. They are emailed a PIN, which secures their booking and allows them to enter.

The boxes have a graphical display which shows an orange door if the room is booked and waiting for someone to turn up – this will turn red when someone puts in their PIN number and enters the room. If it flips to green, it means that the room is free. The system is flexible – it can specify any two hours on a particular

CASE STUDY: The Laidlaw Library at the University of Leeds

The new Laidlaw Library building at the University of Leeds has won many awards for its amazing, sustainable architecture. It even has bumble bees on the roof!

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day. If a student doesn’t turn up, the system allows ten minutes, and then the booking is cancelled.

Hazel Lee, Customer Services Team Leader at the University of Leeds Library has this to say: “The boxes are very neat, and they blend in well with the mood and feel of the modern library. We sit at the enquiry desk, and can glance across and see the display showing the red, amber and green doors, so we know if the rooms are occupied, without having to leave the desk.”

“Students like the system, because they can manage their bookings themselves, and they don’t have to go and talk to the librarians! Academic libraries tend to use a lot of self-service equipment for taking out and returning books, printing, copying and so on, and this leaves the librarians free to help students with their academic research, which is what we were trained to do.”

The system is particularly useful when the library is busy. If the system was not there, the library staff would have to manage the room bookings and all of the work that would entail - mediating when there are arguments about the rooms, printing out lists and dealing with people whose time has over-run, and those students who make a booking, but don’t turn up.

The system provides reports which show the library the levels of occupancy for the rooms, and other useful statistics, such as the number of bookings that have been made but not taken up.

The system is popular with students because they can self-manage their bookings, and the library’s IT team has linked the system to their interactive floor plans so that students can see exactly which rooms are free, and when.

Students are finding the system easy to use. At the start of the year, when the new students arrive, the library places cards by the boxes, explaining how to use them, but they find that the system is very intuitive to operate, so the cards are only needed for a short period.

The Telepen Juno Room Booking System is shortly to be installed in another library within the University - the Edward Boyle Library, which has 25 bookable rooms. This means that students will have exactly the same experience in all of the libraries at the University of Leeds.

Concluding, Hazel Lee says: “Telepen are involved in both library refurbishments, and we view them as a valued partner in the services we provide.”