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## Deepening Ties Between the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru and the University of Vermont

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# DEEPENING TIES BETWEEN THE PONTIFICAL CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF PERU AND THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

by

Laurie Kutner and Fred Pond

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*This article is a follow-up to 'Forging New Library Connections Between Vermont and Peru' which appeared in the December 2015 issue (p.4) of [International Leads](#) and reported on our initial visit to Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (PUCP) where we began exploring library collaboration as an expansion of an institutional affiliation agreement between PUCP and University of Vermont.*

## Building relationships between university libraries

The umbrella affiliation agreement between the University of Vermont and PUCP, in effect since 2010, initially focused on the subject areas of biomedical technology and instrumentation. However, as relationships on the two campuses were built and strengthened, other collaborative opportunities beyond the original focus emerged, including with Engineering, Public Administration, and the Libraries.

In our first visit last September 2015, we highlighted use of library subject guides as tools to organize information resources in curated, focused ways. PUCP Libraries subsequently pursued this as a major initiative, and recently launched their thematic guides as a prominent link from their library [home page](#).

Kathia Hanza, Director of PUCP Libraries, expressed interest in facilitating our return in March 2016, to focus on development of library research guides as a mechanism to present library resources in contextually meaningful ways. When we did return in March, it was with a sense of familiarity and connection that allowed us to launch into more focused dialog and work. We were coming in with an understanding of both the institutional

infrastructure and the graciousness and collegiality of our Peruvian colleagues. It felt like a homecoming of sorts.

## Library Research Guides

By the time we returned to Lima, PUCP librarians had established a relationship with a vendor to manage library guides, and were already into the process of administering, conceptualizing, and creating prototypes for guides, as a pilot project.

Our first day, draft subject guides on Geography, Environment, Economics and Social Sciences were presented to us in small groups by the responsible librarians, with the intent that we would provide

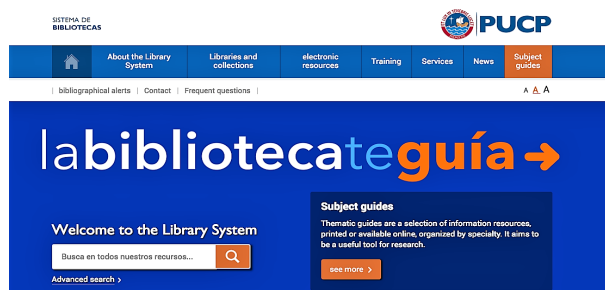
feedback and suggestions on both design structure and content. We were familiar with PUCP Librarian Ana Tarazona, coordinator of the library guides initiative, so we all felt comfortable offering comments and engaging in conversations.

We spent another day exclusively with the engineering librarians, reviewing library guides on computer science, electrical engineering, and telecommunications. Our library at the University of Vermont had just completed an extensive review of current guides, and in the process had created a list of best practices that was useful in conversations with the PUCP librarians.

The extent of the work that PUCP librarians had already done on their library guide development in a relatively short period of time was extremely impressive. The relationships that we had initially established and the work that we had all done getting to know each other and each other's backgrounds was, we believe, the single most important factor allowing us to comfortably engage in a high level of reflective discourse regarding their guide prototypes. In addition, the established model of presenting their draft guides to us and simultaneously to a small group of their own colleagues, complete with reflective explanations for content organization and selection, enabled a well-articulated thought process that facilitated the development of consistently high quality guides.

*(Continued on page 5)*

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PUCP Home page Featuring Guides, English

(Continued from page 4)

Ana Tarazona, Laurie Kutner, Antenea Kun Ugarriza



### Other meetings

Additionally, we were asked to take part in a wider general discussion on library trends, services, and resources, allowing us to engage with other librarians with subject expertise in Psychology, Education, Philosophy, Law, Environment, and Health Sciences. The discussion focused around collection development issues, managing workloads, and multiple ways in which to provide reference services. An interesting conversation ensued regarding the ways that our jobs are differently structured. At the University of Vermont, we work solely as Information and Instruction Librarians, so the amount of cataloging in each PUCP librarian's workload was a revelation for us. Correspondingly, our Peruvian colleagues were interested to learn the amount of focus that we have on instruction, working directly with classes and curricula, students and faculty through various forms of instruction, consultations, and reference work. As in our first visit, there was interest in the ways we offer digital reference services, especially through a chat platform.

During our visit we also met with Engineering Department faculty members, Angelo Velarde and Renzo Astorne, to discuss the ways that the University of Vermont library supports the senior Engineering capstone project. This meeting was arranged as a follow-up to interest expressed by Engineering faculty in our work during our first visit to PUCP. One faculty member, who had previously visited the University of Vermont as part of the PUCP – University of Vermont partnership, was interested in returning for another visit, in part to learn more about the capstone course approach for mechanical engineering students at the University of Vermont. University of Vermont Engineering Librarian, Graham Sherriff, works with students over the course of the academic year to instruct in finding, managing, and using literature and technical reports, patent information, and industry standards for their projects. He is actively involved in developing applied research skills through the entirety of the capstone curriculum.

Additionally, one of the faculty members was well-versed in information literacy standards, and we enjoyed a vibrant discourse about the efficacy of the ACRL Standards, the ACRL Framework, and the SCONUL models of information literacy to inform the work of telecommunications engineers.

### CIBU (Congreso Internacional de Bibliotecas Universitarias) Conference

Our work at PUCP coincided with the CIBU (Congreso Internacional de Bibliotecas Universitarias) conference, a conference bringing together academic librarians from across Latin America, and hosted this year by PUCP in Lima. It was wonderful to attend this conference. The three day conference focused on a range of topics common to academic libraries across cultures, including: developing digital repositories; teaching information literacy skills and competencies, developing specialized collections; analyzing services from the user perspective; supporting the research process, knowledge creation, and scholarly communication.

### Reflections and Future

PUCP Libraries have recently launched their thematic subject guides, which are prominently featured on their library home page. There are currently 32 guides, with excellent coverage across disciplines. The guides were designed using a well thought-out uniform template, with specific disciplinary adaptations. They serve as a curated entrance into library resources by subject, and were created in consultation with disciplinary faculty. The presence of these guides provides a new and user-friendly entrance into the myriad library resources that the PUCP libraries make available to their users.

We are proud to have been associated with this project from its initial idea through to its present reality. We believe that we have all gained much from the power of collaborative thinking, reflecting, and relationship-building across cultures and look forward to continued collaboration with our PUCP colleagues into the future.



Fred Pond, PUCP Campus Aside Inka Trail

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