



**LIBRARY &  
LEARNING  
SERVICES**

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

# **Poems, Proverbs & Play: The Enduring Power of the Physical**

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**‘Academic libraries are undergoing significant transformations to meet the evolving needs of users in a digital era characterized by technological advancements and changing educational paradigms’ (Oyedokun, 2024)**



# Going Digital: What's changed lately?



Journals Usage Requests- 2022-2023 - 3,624,302  
Journals Usage Requests - 2023-2024 - 4,179,499



Ebooks (Purchased, pre-existing + free) - 2023-2024 - 1,074,308  
Ebooks (Purchased, pre-existing + free) - 2022-2023 - 1,065,923

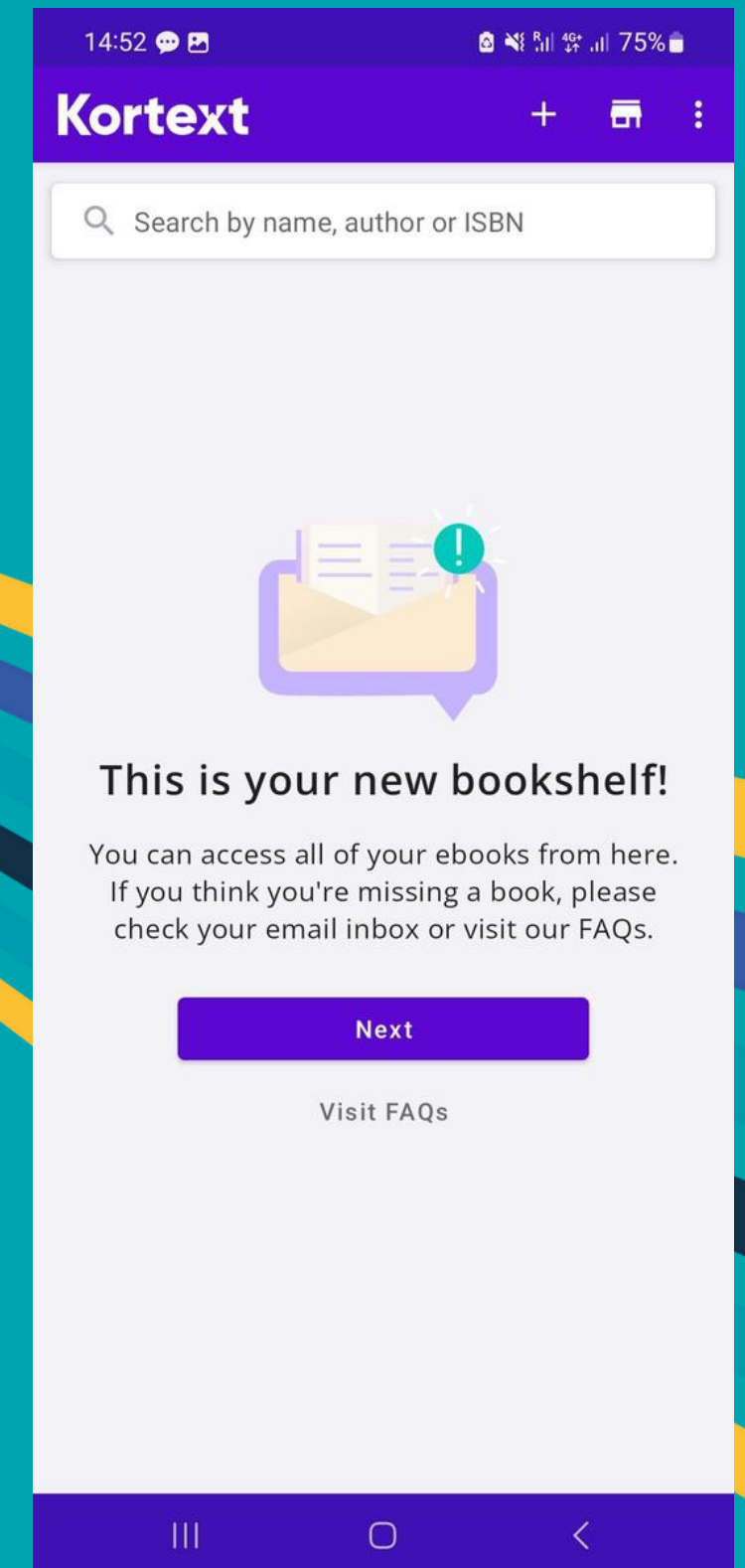
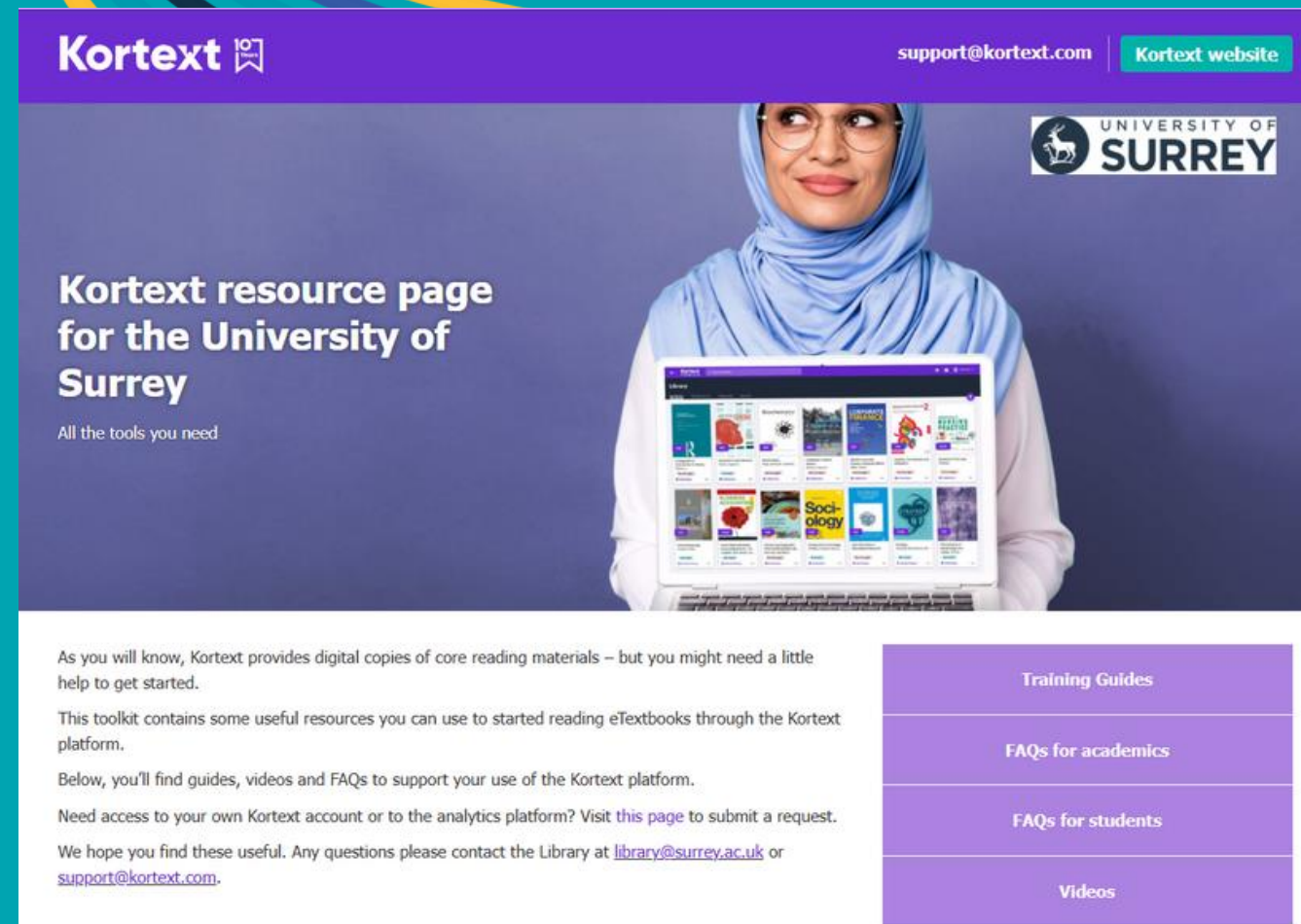




# Digital Textbook Schemes & AI Coffee Mornings

We have recently moved to a new digital textbook provider Kortext, which has better app functionality, as well as allowing students to make online notes, annotations, bookmarks etc. Also available in different languages and expanding accessibility.

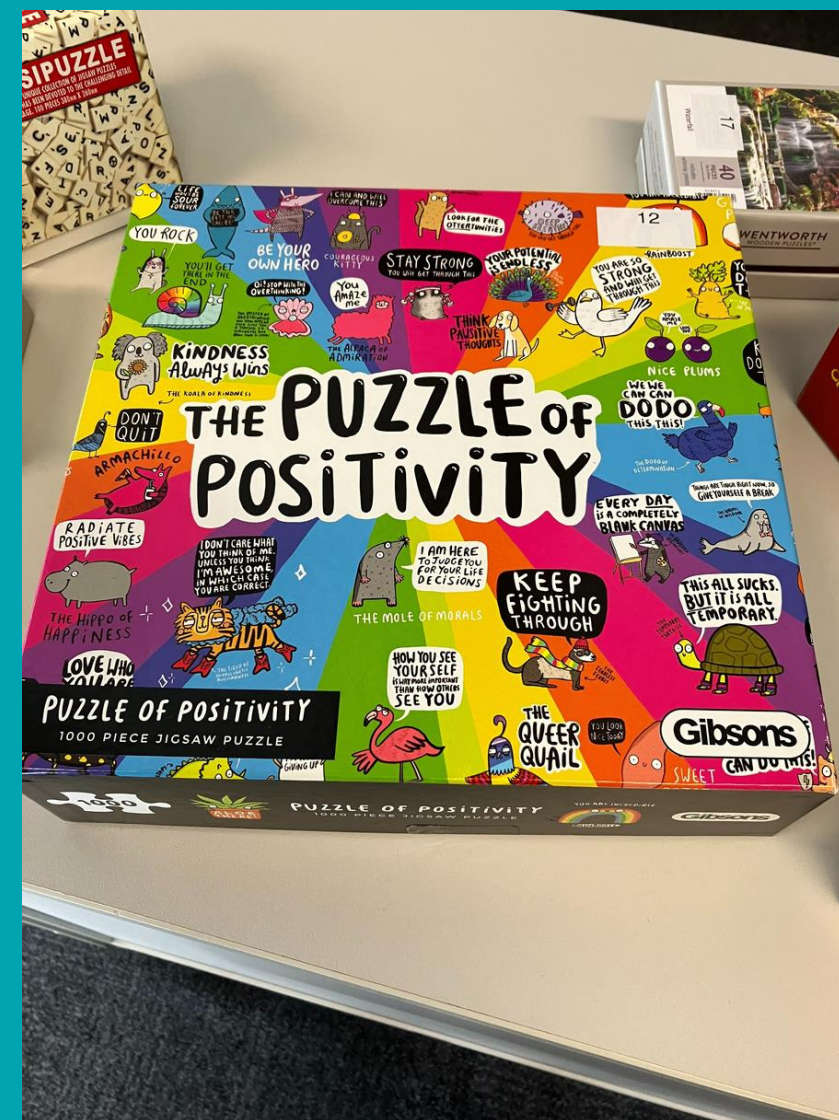
We also host AI coffee mornings to explore the uses of tools such as ChatGPT, discussing how to use it in our work and the big questions surrounding its use.





# Physical Media: What Have We Done?

At the University of Surrey, we are strong champions of wellbeing and mindfulness, and while there are many useful online resources and apps (Surrey Moves+, 'This is sand', Headspace etc.) that we promote, we find our students respond most to the tangible, touchable media and spaces boldly fostering collaboration.







# Student Curator Projects

In the foyer of the Library, we have developed a 'Curator's Corner'. Students approach us with their ideas for projects and we help them build it into a week or month long display, including curating reading lists that reflect the theme e.g. LGBTQA+, Neurodiversity Awareness, Black History Month, Sustainability at Surrey, Working Class Writers, Decolonising the Curriculum and many more. These allow our students to have a direct impact on our service and for us to connect on a deeper level with what students care about. There are usually prize draws, freebies and interactive elements, which greatly increases participation and feedback.

We keep an archive of previous projects via our Student Curator webpage: <https://my.surrey.ac.uk/library/student-curator>







In addition to the Student Curator Projects, we host our own displays, again striving to make the spaces interactive, welcoming and with a focus on wellbeing. From our Welcome Week displays to inclusive Valentine's Day Give & Take Wall to ensuring any student in the building on Christmas Day gets a small gift.









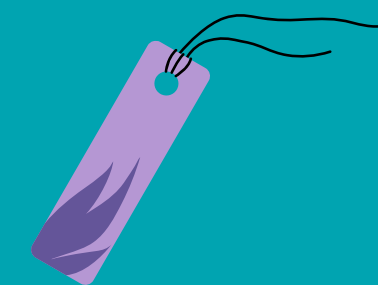
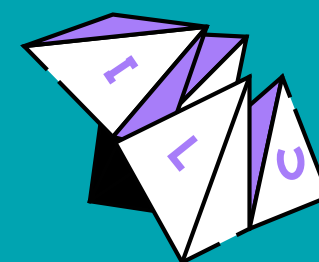
# And why does physical media matter?

The digital revolution means you can view art, write notes, read books etc on a singular device, any time and anywhere. This is convenient, practical and enticing - however, physical media still has a vital role to play.

Physical media allows connections with information, history, cultures and experiences that students might not otherwise have come across - there is so much joy to be found in tangible happenstance that digital media can't replicate.

Holding something means something. It creates a connection. That's why so many of our students prefer physical books to their online counterparts despite all the offered practicalities - a page, a bookcover, a browse through the shelves, offers an experience and a chance to 'unplug' from the unrelenting digital landscape.

It also can't be removed. We are becoming increasingly aware of the longevity of digital media, how access and rights can be removed at a push of a button or in the case of Universities, a budget cut means subscription reviews. A physical media is there in front of you, in your hand, offering you a permanent connection, a link to a memory, an opportunity to learn.



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Dr Sarah Payne @drsarahpayne.bsky.social · 2mo  
Absolutely love that our University of Surrey library does this for our students - hands out "Take a Break" packs. ...just need them to come into staff offices randomly too, to encourage us to have those breaks as well ;)

### Wellbeing Activities to Support Our Students

As part of our efforts to encourage students to keep their wellbeing in mind while they study, we regularly hand out "Take a break" envelopes to students working in the library.

These packs encourage students to take a screen break and offer some mindful activities for them to enjoy when stepping away from their computers.



*"Absolutely love your 'take a break' pack I picked up in the library today! The colouring was really a great way to get me off my phone and help me feel relaxed! I'm looking forward to having my Green tea in the morning too :) Thank you so much for this! I really enjoyed reading the booklet as well and found it helpful." - Student Feedback*



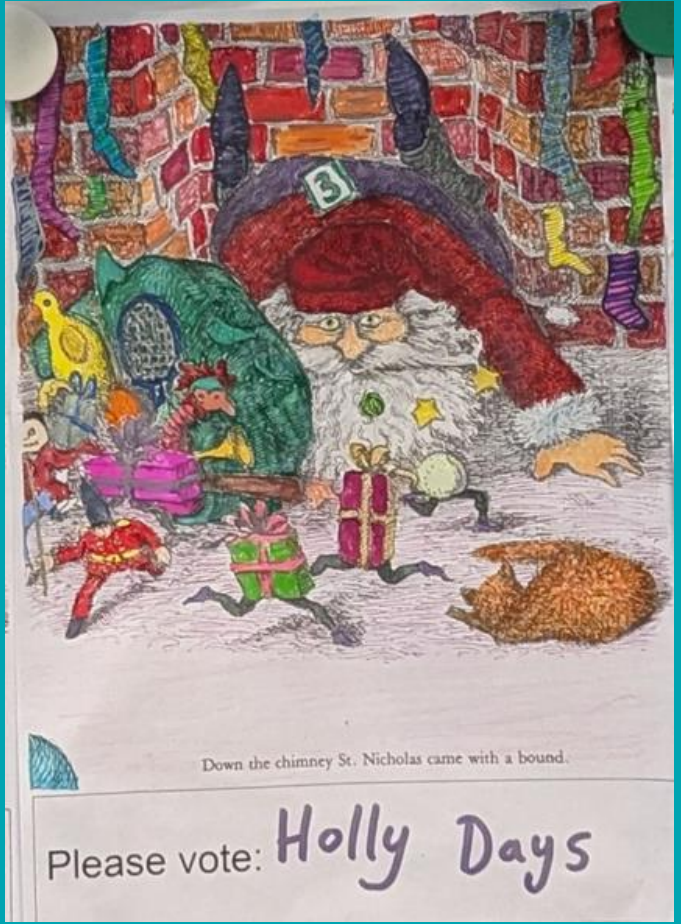
# Feedback





# And it's not just for students!

We have a very active staff social well-being team who have hosted wreath-making classes, crochet sessions, Wellbeing bingo, staff room photo displays, summer treasure hunts, bulb planting, all of which fosters staff relationships, promotes positive mental health and gets us away from the screens!



*Spring*  
**LLS Wellbeing BINGO**

Thursday 13th March - Thursday 11th April

Go for a lunchtime walk 	Play a game with a colleague 	Eat your lunch outside 	Make some origami 
Coffee/tea break with a colleague 	Have a walking meeting 	15 minutes of lunchtime reading 	Spot 5 different flower types on campus 
Spend 15 mins on an office jigsaw 	Play table tennis on campus 	Add a photo to the staff-room display 	Do some mindful colouring 

How many can you complete? Cross the box out with a pencil.  
Complete all activities to win a prize!





Q&

A



# Works Cited

Oyedokun, T. T. (2024). Navigating the dynamics of present-day academic libraries: An in-depth analysis of strategies, challenges, and emerging trends. *IFLA Journal*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/03400352241291907>