

## **Why does Elearning suit library techs?**

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Library Techs work in a highly technological industry and online learning nicely complements skill building for the future. Students generally have few problems using webct to its full capacity and many necessary skills such as database searching skills and cataloguing are taught online mirroring workplace practices. It also offers the flexibility to study whilst working or juggling other commitments. Think about many demands on your time when you are working. Commitments such as children, spouse, running a household, finding time for exercise and trying to find that work life balance. Some enlightened employers may offer release time or study leave but often for workers further study does require an individual effort. Workplace experience can also make the learning so much more relevant to the student as knowledge is learned within the library context. Being able to access a course using communication technologies can enable the student to do their coursework when the opportunity arises such as lunchtimes and in the evening and weekends. To supplement the online learning weekend workshops are often offered to support student learning.

Gaining the most up to date qualification, the Diploma Library/Information Services can only enhance workplace performance and credibility with staff. Keeping skills up to date is of great importance.

## **What is Elearning?**

Content is put into the webct shell with learning activities and exercises and communication facilities such as message boards and email(see example below). We are trying to promote the feeling of a virtual classroom and being part of a group.

The screenshot shows a WebCT interface for a course titled 'BLB003A|BRAD02A(A): Research Skills 2'. The top navigation bar includes 'My WebCT | Accessibility | Help | Log out' and 'Build Teach Student View'. A left-hand menu lists 'Course Tools' such as Course Content, Announcements, Assignments, Calendar, Chat, Discussions, Learning Modules, Web Links, and Designer Tools like Manage Course, File Manager, Selective Release, and Grading Forms. The main content area, titled 'Your location: Home Page', features a header for 'SWINBURNE TAFE' and 'School of Business - Management and Administration' with subject codes 'BLB003A, BRAD02A'. Below the header, there are four resource links: 'Studying online with WebCT @ Swinburne', 'CUSRAD02A Conduct Research (35)', 'CULLB003A Research and analyse information to meet customer needs (80)', and 'Syllabus'. Each link is accompanied by a document icon and a brief description of the resource.

The great flexibility of this type of learning suits people who are working in libraries and need the qualification or to update their qualification.

Many students undertaking the course gain employment at some stage during the course and can't continue coming to class but wish to complete their study. Students who live in remote areas or on the outskirts of Melbourne and factor travel time and costs into the campus can reduce their commuting time. Current technology can create a "virtual classroom" with on and off campus students sharing this space. This mode of learning is economical and convenient as few postage costs and charges are same as for on campus students. No more queuing up at the post office!

Students from interstate or country Victoria can enrol and participate in the course as can students with disabilities.

Successful outcomes are dependant on a range of factors the most important being communication between the student and teacher. It is important that emails and phone enquiries are dealt with promptly. The webct platform has communication facilities such as email and message boards to enable communication not only with the teacher but between the students. Lively discussions are a great way to share ideas and experiences. We also use the webct to keep in touch with students whilst on work placement whereas previously we felt detached from them. The students keep an online journal recording and reflecting on their experience and the teacher can discuss their experiences with them.

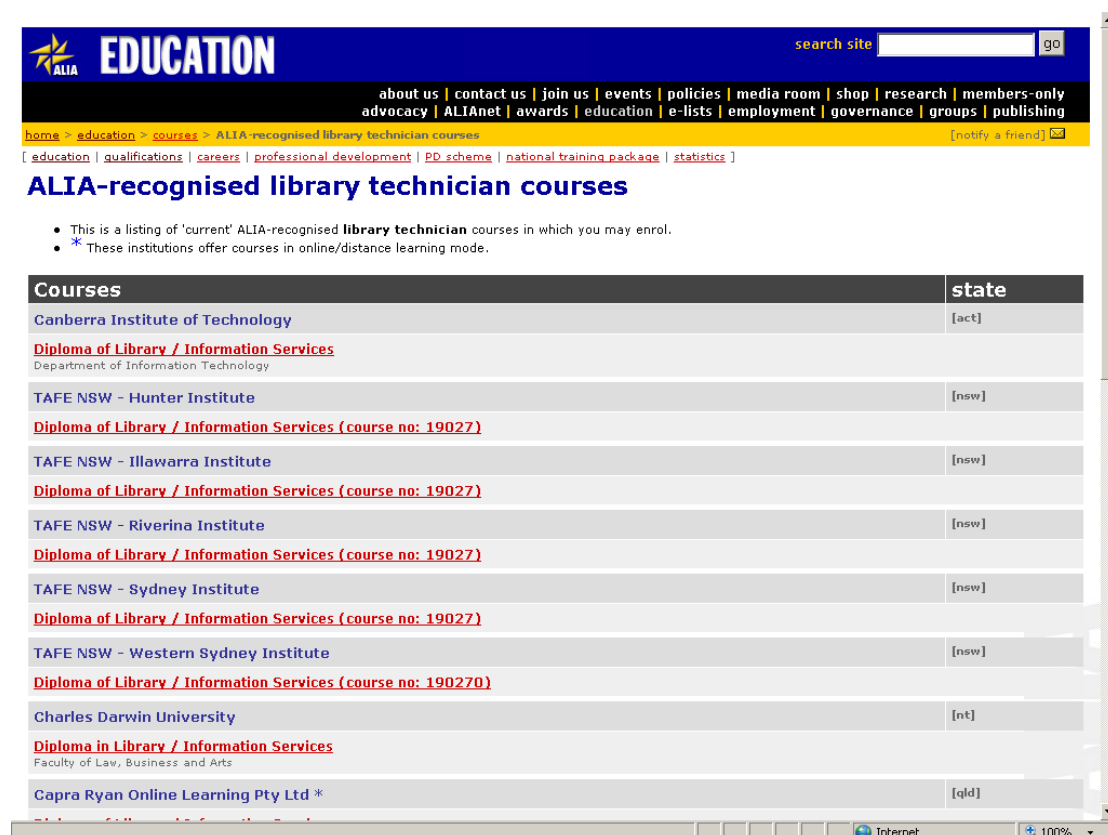
ELearning enables teachers and students to access the most up to date resources and link to relevant websites with ease.

## Sustainability

Elearning is very environment friendly as it cuts down on the huge amounts of paper consumed by educational institutions. Considering the amount of resources needed to produce one sheet of A4 paper this should be an important consideration. Students have the option of reading online or printing off their learning materials. It is possible for the student to submit their assessment online and the teacher assesses it online therefore eliminating the use of paper!

Currently many providers of library training offer Elearning and to find out more look at the ALIA education web page.

<http://www.alia.org.au/education/courses/library.technician.html>



The screenshot shows the ALIA Education website. The header includes the ALIA logo and the word "EDUCATION" in large blue letters. A search bar is located in the top right corner. Below the header is a navigation menu with links: about us, contact us, join us, events, policies, media room, shop, research, members-only, advocacy, ALIANet, awards, education, e-lists, employment, governance, groups, publishing. A breadcrumb trail reads: home > education > courses > ALIA-recognised library technician courses. There is a "notify a friend" link. Below the breadcrumb is a list of links: education, qualifications, careers, professional development, PD scheme, national training package, statistics. The main heading is "ALIA-recognised library technician courses". Below this heading is a list of bullet points: "This is a listing of 'current' ALIA-recognised library technician courses in which you may enrol." and "\* These institutions offer courses in online/distance learning mode." Below the list is a table with two columns: "Courses" and "state". The table lists several institutions and their respective states: Canberra Institute of Technology (act), TAFE NSW - Hunter Institute (nsw), TAFE NSW - Illawarra Institute (nsw), TAFE NSW - Riverina Institute (nsw), TAFE NSW - Sydney Institute (nsw), TAFE NSW - Western Sydney Institute (nsw), Charles Darwin University (nt), and Capra Ryan Online Learning Pty Ltd (qld). Each institution entry includes a link to the "Diploma of Library / Information Services" and a course number (19027 or 190270). The footer of the screenshot shows a browser window with "Internet" and "100%" zoom level.

Courses	state
Canberra Institute of Technology <a href="#">Diploma of Library / Information Services</a> Department of Information Technology	[act]
TAFE NSW - Hunter Institute <a href="#">Diploma of Library / Information Services (course no: 19027)</a>	[nsw]
TAFE NSW - Illawarra Institute <a href="#">Diploma of Library / Information Services (course no: 19027)</a>	[nsw]
TAFE NSW - Riverina Institute <a href="#">Diploma of Library / Information Services (course no: 19027)</a>	[nsw]
TAFE NSW - Sydney Institute <a href="#">Diploma of Library / Information Services (course no: 19027)</a>	[nsw]
TAFE NSW - Western Sydney Institute <a href="#">Diploma of Library / Information Services (course no: 190270)</a>	[nsw]
Charles Darwin University <a href="#">Diploma in Library / Information Services</a> Faculty of Law, Business and Arts	[nt]
Capra Ryan Online Learning Pty Ltd *	[qld]