NEW AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Open Content: from walled gardens to collaborative learning
Trove – one search, a wealth of information

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In the days before Christmas, media outlets across the country reported that traditional gifts were outselling electronic items, with 70 per cent of consumers buying books. This is great news from a social and economic perspective.

Post-Christmas, retail giant Amazon.com described how customers had continued to shop on Christmas Day, though for the first time ever the focus turned from hard-copy to electronic books. Amazon also said that its e-book reader, the Kindle, had become “the most gifted item in Amazon’s history”. This would suggest to me that a lot Kindles had been received as Christmas presents, then recipients needed to load something for it to be useful (a bit like the ‘remember the battery to go with the toy’ scenario). Either that or a whole swag of people had left their gift buying until the very last minute!

On New Year’s Eve, one of my friends waxed lyrical about a Kindle given to a mutual acquaintance. I was intrigued by her reaction: an avid reader and a visual artist I would have anticipated that an electronic book would have been too ‘cold’ for her, but it was in fact the tactile nature of the device combined with the availability (read: quick downloads via Amazon) which so appealed.

I shouldn’t have been surprised. My library gave itself a Christmas present of three different e-book readers and we too have been seduced. They’re currently being trialed by our staff so that we can get a feel for the medium, talk about them with some authority, and let our clients discover what all the hype is about. It has been suggested that the exercise is a case of ‘know thine enemy’, but should we see these as a threat or as a future we need to embrace? For does it really matter what format the book comes in? What is important is the role of libraries in making this and other enabling technologies available.

Speaking at The big issues: public libraries, learning technology and social inclusion symposium in Melbourne during November, Bill Thompson, one of the UK’s most popular and highly regarded technology commentators, warned delegates to ignore new technologies at their peril. He maintained that in an ever-evolving world to do so would leave us limited in our relevance. I would recommend time spent listening to his discussion. http://slv.vic.gov.au/programs/events/2009/big-issues/big-issues-in-libraries/

In the ‘slow’ time of January (I wish!) traditionally many of us have the luxury of being able to explore new tools and evaluate how these can be used to enhance and/or alter service delivery to our clients. Such exploration can no longer be seen as an indulgence or something limited to quiet times, but an essential, ongoing component of the development of our profession.

The map of where we’re going is constantly changing and to navigate a successful path for ourselves and for our libraries we need to relentlessly survey the terrain. Our world is an amalgam of the new and the traditional with the balance shifting from one to the other and back again. I’m currently reading Clotilde Dusoulier’s Chocolate and Zucchini, a book based on her website of the same name. In the introduction she explains why she pulled her web musings into a book:

the book … has a personality and a charm that a web site can never hope to achieve. It’s hard to take a web page into the kitchen with you, or curl up on the couch, a mug of tea by your side and the cat on your lap. You cannot scribble things in the margin of a web site, or accidentally smudge a little batter on it, forever marking that recipe as the stupendous cake you made for your sister’s birthday.

It will be interesting to review this musing in time. Already some of Clotilde’s ‘book pluses’ are possible in electronic form. The smudge I’m not so sure about!

The one constant in this changing environment is the importance of the physical library as a safe haven, a neutral space, and the living room of the community, whether your community is a school, college, university workplace, or public library. In considering new technologies we need to consider how we can build upon this reputation to offer trusted but exciting services.

I live in Orange on the NSW Central Tablelands. For us December through to April is backpacker season as young people from across the world are possible in electronic form. The smudge I’m not so sure about!

From my office I am afforded a wonderful view of the public spaces on the floor below. I can’t let talk of the library as the community living room go without reference to an incident which occurred a few days before Christmas. My attention was caught by a woman who had pulled together a couple of our large tables over which she had neatly laid navy fabric with pattern pieces pinned in place. Her sewing basket was on a chair nearby. Without fuss, and totally unaware of her amazed but approving audience she calmly set about cutting. Are our tables bigger than the domestic model, was it a Christmas gift she wanted to construct in secret, or was she a grey nomad who was taking advantage of our space? Who cares, I was just delighted that she felt comfortable enough to be able to do so.

If one of your New Year’s resolutions was to keep abreast of what’s happening in your Association, I remind you that there is an ALIA Board Blog http://www.alia.org.au/blog/. It’s a good place to go between editions of inCite to keep abreast of what’s happening.

Until next month

Jan Richards
ALIA President
jan.richards@alia.org.au
I had the opportunity to be invited by the Department of Broadband, Communication and the Digital Economy last December to represent ALIA at the Realising our Broadband Future Forum held in Sydney. It was an important event for library-related advocacy. Representatives from the ministry, government departments, both federal and state, IT & ISP companies, and individual stakeholders attended.

Attendees from the LIS sector included Jan Fullerton, who chaired the first session of the e-community stream, Frank McGuire, library advocate and speaker on the Hume Global Learning Community, Ellen Forsyth, State Library of NSW, and James Leech, State Library of Queensland far-north Indigenous Knowledge Centres. You can listen to the streams, including library comments during the e-Community section: [http://www.broadbandfuture.gov.au/](http://www.broadbandfuture.gov.au/)

Kate Lundy was an obvious supporter of libraries and her tweet (#bbfuture) at the end of the first day “There will always be a need and place for excellent public access points to the internet. Public Libraries: it is your time!” was a great comment. In the context of the draft National Framework for Public Libraries which ALIA will be completing in the first months of 2010, this forum and the comments and outcomes from it will be important. There were many discussions on the significance of the broadband network being a ‘nation building’ project. One of the stories I will remember was from Clare Martin, CEO of ACROSS (who also talked about her own connected ‘Broadband Family’) about the affordable and accessible broadband future, especially for the 2 million low-income Australians “I would like to introduce you to Bill. In his early 50s and unemployed for the past 3 years, he earns $275 per week (receiving single-parent assistance and some child support), she earns $488 per week and finds it challenging to keep up with her broadband and computer costs. How will people like this be part of, and afford, this exciting future?”

### Internet Filtering

Interestingly, just a few days after the Broadband Future forum, Minister Conroy finally announced the government’s decision on ISP filtering. ALIA released an initial media release with further work by the Executive Director and the ALIA Online Content Advisory Committee to commence in 2010. ALIA will also be conducting another internet access in public libraries report and will again be calling on the support of PLA, State Public Library Associations, and all public library staff to complete this survey. ALIA, on behalf of its members and the Australian library community, will be making a submission to the review of accountability and transparency for Refused Classification material by 12 February 2010.

### Memorandums of Understanding

ALIA has a range of agreements with other associations and organisations. We recently signed an MOU with Friends of Libraries Australia (FOLA) and the Australian Law Libraries Association (ALLA). We look forward to collaborating more with these organisations. We are also updating our agreements with AGLIN, ASA, SLA, and COLT. [http://www.alia.org.au/governance/affiliation.html](http://www.alia.org.au/governance/affiliation.html)

### National Office staffing restructure

2009 has seen many National Office staff re-evaluate personal priorities and move on to other things. As most NO positions are administrative, ALIA, like other not-for-profits and small businesses compete in a very difficult talent market due to the high salaries and benefits of the public service. This is one of the identified sector issues in the Productivity Commission’s report into the not-for-profit sector. The Board of Directors has also re-focused on the priorities for the next few years as part of the Planning 2010–2015 exercise, with more information available on the web in February at [http://www.alia.org.au/governance/planning/](http://www.alia.org.au/governance/planning/) for all members to view. These future directions have also informed plans for the staffing of the National Office. With all this in mind, a new management structure for National Office has been approved and will be implemented during 2010. Results of the survey of members in 2008 and statistics throughout 2009 have indicated a decline in the number of industrial relations enquiries. Heather Nash, ALIA’s Industrial Relations Advisor has accepted a redundancy. The IR service will be co-ordinated (in the first instance) by the Executive Director, and will be outsourced to legal experts, so members get the best, most-targeted advice possible.

### Your local ALIA contact

LLOs are ALIA representatives in each state/territory. Their duties include being a point of contact for members and non-members.

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**Ellen Forsyth, Kate Lundy, Sue Hutley and James Leech at the Realising our Broadband Future Forum**

**Internet Filtering**

**Memorandums of Understanding**

**National Office staffing restructure**

**Your local ALIA contact**

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**Daniel Ferguson (FOLA), Jan Richards, and Sue Hutley sign the MOU**
Your voice

Dear Editor,

On Thursday 17 December 2009 I attended the allawest-Kanopy screening of the film “The Hollywood Librarian”. For me the topic had long been of interest: It formed my Honours thesis (2005) and led to an article in inCite (2007, December). The significance of image to fellow professionals was shown by the large turn-out for this 2007 documentary, which covered the history of cinema’s portrayals of the LIS profession. The cliché of the bun, prim clothes, and ‘shushing’ was prominent, provoking much laughter from the audience.

Fortunately, not all movie depictions were unflattering – for instance librarians and their supporters were shown crusading against censorship, book destruction, and narrow-mindedness in Storm Center (1956), Cleopatra (1963), Fahrenheit 451 (1966), and Soylent Green (1973).

Importantly, fictional characters were countered by interviews with real librarians like the vibrant Nancy Pearl and the powerful Eugenie Prime. Recent librarian activism, dedication, and selflessness were shown, such as a small-town librarian battling inadequate resources and others trying to reopen libraries in Salinas, California. Other segments featured a range of citizens – including prison inmates – speaking of the positive influences of libraries and their staff on their lives. (Perhaps in Australia we could film something similar?)

Though some progress has been made, the issue of the image of librarians remains relevant in 2010, with the public and media’s ideas lagging behind our current profile. There is danger in inaccuracy, as the subsequent undermining of our respect and the demeaning of our skills threatens the sustainability of our sector. I urge all of us to continue proving our diversity and rebuitting the stereotype.

Here’s to a more accurate New Year!

Leith Robinson
Curtin University PhD student
ltkrobinson@bigpond.com

Note to Members

We welcome letters on any issue of relevance to the library and information sector. It is important to note that the opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are those of the authors and not necessarily the official policy of the Australian Library and Information Association.

Deadline for letters is available on the website and they should be no longer than 250 words. Please include your name and postal address as anonymous correspondence will not be reproduced.

Introducing…

…the new New South Wales Local Liaison Officer: Alyson Dalby

Alyson has a background in medical and business libraries, and has seven years experience working for member-driven professional associations. She has been active in ALIA since her time at library school, and was the NSW Coordinator for the New Graduates Group where she organised many events for ALIA members in Sydney. In 2006 she was the Co-Convenor of the New Librarians’ Symposium in Sydney, and was named as the Special Libraries Association Information Professional of the Year for Australia / New Zealand. She is currently a member of the New Generation Advisory Committee, and received an ALIA Silver Pin earlier this year. Alyson is looking forward to helping members get the best out of their ALIA membership. She can be contacted anytime on 0404 655 319 or at alyson.dalby@alia.org.au

…Carol Newton-Smith, the new Western Australia Local Liaison Officer

Carol has worked in a range of positions in her librarian career. She is currently library manager at The University of Western Australia Medical and Dental Library in Perth. Previous to that her librarian positions have included outreach reference librarian, database trainer, online search consultant, academic teacher, and special librarian in Perth, Brisbane, and Darwin. Carol has been a member of ALIA since she graduated with her professional qualifications and has served in many capacities (in several states) including two years as an ALIA Director. Her professional passions are evidence based practice, staff development, and mentoring. Carol is excited to become the ALIA Local Liaison Officer (LLO) for Western Australia and can be contacted on 08 9381 5674 or carol.newton-smith@alia.org.au.

OCLC is pleased to announce the appointment of Susie Thorpe as Product Manager, Amlib.

Susie will be based at the OCLC office in Perth, WA. Susie comes to OCLC with over 22 years experience working in and with public, school, special, academic, state, and national libraries, throughout Australia, New Zealand, and South East Asia. OCLC is thrilled to have Susie on our team to provide expert knowledge on library systems.

Professional development

In 2010 ALIA is offering more Professional Development opportunities for everyone in the sector. We have already introduced our members-only eCourse ‘Writing to Selection Criteria’ by Dr Ann Villiers and had an excellent response.

Dr Irena Yashin-Shaw who delivered an excellent presentation at the 2009 Library Technicians conference in Adelaide is developing a teleconference course on building confidence in public speaking. This unique course includes analysis with individual feedback of a 1–2 minute speech.

ALIA has negotiated easy access to selected online courses provided by WebJunction. The topics cover a broad range from ‘Weeding your Library Collection’, ‘Planning Story Time for Children’ and ‘Introduction to Power Point’.

Library managers, provide your staff with easy, anytime access to the training they need. With online courses from WebJunction, you can deliver effective, relevant training right now.

We are also developing face-to-face workshops with Adam Le Good in ‘Managing Challenging Clients’, ‘Leading Others through Change’, and ‘Stepping up to Supervision’.

FOLIOz will be back again with courses covering lobbying and advocacy, management skills, and evidence based practice.

We are also developing two new online courses with an Australian provider on library budgeting and promoting client access to a wide range of literature.

We are maintaining our library partner competitions with ARK, PIcS, and Lyrasis. They are offering new and relevant topics in 2010.

2010 is shaping up to be an exciting year in PD! With our new logo and broader program we hope to support your professional development goals. Keep up to date with PD postings and our webpage http://www.alia.org.au/education/pd/pd.services/

For questions, please contact
Judy Brooker
Professional Development and Careers Manager
judy.brooker@alia.org.au

InCite

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National Simultaneous Storytime

We are very excited to announce the National Simultaneous Storytime book for 2010…

Little White Dogs Can’t Jump

By Bruce Whatley and Rosie Smith

Illustrated by Bruce Whatley

© Farmhouse Illustration Company, 2001

National Simultaneous Storytime will be held on Wednesday 26 May at 11:00am

Join the hundreds of locations and thousands of children across Australia in this fun, rewarding event which promotes reading and literacy for young people!

ALIA Access 2010 Conference

1–3 September

Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre

THE ALIA event of the year

(you wouldn’t want to be anywhere else!)

HAVE YOU VISITED THE CONFERENCE WEBSITE?

The ALIA Access 2010 Conference website has now been launched. The website provides up-to-the-minute information about the conference including the program, abstract submission, social functions and registration details.


CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Access all areas. The ALIA Access 2010 Conference program is structured to provide delegates with a multi-choice stream of rich content. The only problem will be choosing!

Confirmed Conference Streams

• Public Libraries: a surprise on every page
• What next! Practical information to enhance the career of a new information professional
• Collective wealth, global sharing, global resources
• Hidden treasure: finding the gold in professional development
• The Acquisitions Continuum: where are we in 2010?
• TAFE – surprisingly innovative libraries!
• Special Libraries: demonstrating our value
• LibraryCamp

• Creating and sustaining a culture of performance: library leadership
• Information literacy and web 2.0: a paradox?
• LIS Education seminar
• Access health librarianship - mapping, scoping and developing the health librarian of the next decade
• Sustainable libraries

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Save the date! Conference early-bird registration will open on Thursday, 1 April.

You will go home from the conference feeling inspired. And why wouldn’t you, with an abundance of new knowledge, new friends, new perspectives, and new dreams!

SPONSORSHIP & EXHIBITION

The Sponsorship and Exhibition prospectus has now been released. Exhibition spaces are filling quickly – so don’t miss out!

Are you an institutional member of ALIA? Receive a 10% discount from the price on the cost of exhibition booths.

Interested in supporting more than one ALIA event? Multi-conference packages are available.

For more information regarding the opportunities available contact the conference organisers, ICE Australia on 03 9681 6288 or email alia2010@iceaustralia.com

Follow us on twitter and comment on the conference. #ALIAAccess
90 people head to the top for Sixth ALIA Top End Symposium

Around 90 delegates attended the 6th annual ALIA Top End Symposium, held in Darwin, Northern Territory, 2-3 October 2009, at the Charles Darwin University. Professor Barney Glover, Vice Chancellor, CDU, officially opened the symposium and welcomed delegates warmly, noting that he was pleased to continue the university’s support of the Symposium. He congratulated the local library community for such a sustained and ongoing commitment to the professional development of the profession.

The theme, Exploring Library Spaces for Learning and eLearning, was chosen because of its topical nature and relevance to all types of libraries. Many libraries around the globe are rising to the challenges of developing new learning spaces and elearning environments, and our invited speakers set the scene with keynote addresses from their various perspectives: Kathryn Greenhill (Special Services Librarian, Cottlesloe/Peppermint Grove/Mosman Park Library, WA), Jennifer Peasley (Deputy University Librarian, Macquarie University Library, NSW), Pip Hankin (Coordinator, Huon LINC, Community Knowledge Network, Tasmania), and Graham Black (ALIA Vice-President and Director, Division of Library and Academic Learning Services CQUniversity, Queensland).

Delegates were impressed particularly by the plans for new library spaces – the innovative and sustainable public library in WA; the elegant ‘next generation’ Macquarie University Library; as well as ideas about flexible community hubs and Huon Linc’s combining information services/lifelong learning programs.

Some of the evaluation comments were about changing roles of libraries:

- learning is a responsibility of libraries and librarians are very engaged with the topic of ‘learning’

- in this technological age Information Management specialists, educators and IT specialists need to ask themselves questions about their roles

Participants were stimulated and challenged in different ways:

- sustainability is the new buzz word in library design; there are reasons why we should go in that direction and build ‘eco friendly’ libraries;

- library spaces are important for social inclusion across many levels; spaces can be designed to be culturally safe, and there are complexities of dealing with Indigenous cultural issues in learning and training.

A committee member commented about the web 2.0 approach to planning and presenting the conference, noting that delegates were encouraged to twitter during the conference and to provide questions via text messages, which contributed to the e-learning aspect promoted by the Symposium.

The Symposium was a huge success, with strong local participation, engagement, and support of the wider library community, and vendor sponsorship, including RMIT/Informit, Wavesound, Raeco, and Proquest. As one of the main events for the year, it is a large commitment for a small group of people, but well worth the effort with significant benefits in terms of the learning and the collegiality the event engenders. My personal thanks go to our 12-member ‘willing and able’ committee who performed magnificently and pulled off a very polished and enjoyable event.

Papers from the Symposium are available from: http://www.alia.org.au/groups/topend/
At about this time every New Year, as I scrape the remains of the Christmas ham into the neighbour’s wheellie bin and contemplate a slue of earnest resolutions, the keen amateur futurist in me tries to imagine what kind of world next year’s festive pork product will leave behind.

I would particularly urge everyone to dip into AnnaLaura Brown’s socialnetworkinglibrarian.com blog. Her Top 10 Social Networking in Libraries Trends for 2010 are worth summarising here:

1. Increased use of mobile applications for library services
2. More ebook readers and increased demand for those already on the market
3. Greater usage of niche social networking sites with spill over impacts on libraries
4. More Google applications and increased usage by the great unwashed
5. An end to the Google Books saga and thus greater usage by library customers
6. Library websites becoming more ‘socialised’ and customised
7. Libraries making more use of open source software and social networking sites to save money
8. More libraries using podcasts and variants to communicate with customers
9. More libraries offering training in social networking to customers
10. In short, social networking in libraries will be viewed as both a ‘given’ and a way to save money rather than simply something fun to explore for library marketing.

AnnaLaura’s predictions for the year brought to mind Steve Abram’s observations about technology adoption curves and the challenges libraries face trying to remain relevant. We all serve diverse markets – from tech savvy teens through to tech phobic seniors. Or worse, tech phobic teens and tech savvy seniors!

A new technology normally starts with a few creative innovators who inspire a small following of early adopters; giving rise to the Early Majority and eventually the Late Majority. Laggards are last in the cycle and typically adopt a technology just in time to get a really good deal on their local computer super store.

Libraries are urged to try to be ‘one category ahead’ of their customers. This worthy goal poses a fundamentally important question though – do we know where our customers typically sit on the curve? In my experience, the answer is usually no.

Now consider for a moment: without that knowledge, should we expend precious time and dollars to be innovators and early adopters? I think not.

In most libraries and their parent organisations, resources are limited – we fight for every dollar. I argue that it’s more efficient, more economical, and ultimately more useful to position ourselves conservatively somewhere between the early majority and the late majority – doing what libraries have always done best: interpreting technologies for customers and providing free or subsidised access to new services as they become relevant to the communities we serve.

If you’re still not convinced, ask yourself this question: do our communities really care if their libraries are not among the early adopters of Google Wave, Chrome OS, or Augmented Reality? If you’re unemployed and need help with a podcast to prepare for a job interview, Google Wave is at best irrelevant. Thus the critical questions for libraries are do we understand what our customers do care about in terms of technology, and how do these preferences fit within the context of our wider communities and services?

In addition to being one of the prettiest towns in the New England region of NSW, Glen Innes has found its tourist niche chasing tartan-wearing, Enya-listening types with an annual Celtic festival and the Australian Standing Stones.

Visiting the stones for the first time last year, I couldn’t help but notice how incongruous they seemed within the the Australian bush setting. Framed by tall eucalypts, the stones bear witness to a palpably different culture and technology than that indigenous to the area. It occurred to me that libraries are sometimes like local tourist boards – spruiking ‘attractions’ that don’t always sit comfortably within their adopted context.

Are we at risk in libraries in 2010 of building lots of little stone circles – interesting to look at and fun to show the visitors but incongruous and potentially irrelevant to the people we serve?

Much has been written of online gaming in libraries as a means to attract young people. While I applaud any initiative that creates a new library user, I wonder how many resources have been wasted along the way by libraries trying to project a hip image?

Libraries typically strive to lead the technology adoption curve. It is a strategy born in part of our professional temperament but also our desire to overturn negative stereotypes. In a bygone age of mainframe computers and mediated online searching, this strategy served us well. We could and did lead the way often.

Social networking has changed the game though, and with it comes both opportunities and choices – too many choices, I would argue, to be sustained by limited library budgets and skill sets. We have to be more discriminating and accept that it is ok in 2010 for the local office supplies store ‘geek’ to know more about wireless networking than us.

Trying to be the hip kid on the block with the latest ‘next big thing’ is more likely to bring libraries undone by taking our focus away from core business – finding ways to help people.

Some weeks ago I re-discovered an old friend – Edward De Bono’s book Six Frames for Thinking about Information. De Bono’s technique helps to focus our attention in order to better notice things and understand what we see. The frames encourage us to more clearly see purpose, interest, and value in not just raw information, but ideas, assumptions, conclusions, and, potentially, technologies.

As the bright shiny gizmos of last year gather dust on a shelf, I challenge us all to look ahead to 2010 with a renewed commitment to exploring new technologies that actually fit our library to library exploring, relate to where our customers are on the technology adoption curve, and thereby return real value to our user communities.

On the Edge aims to be a conversation-piece, promoting discussion, engagement, and interest in the monthly theme. The opinions expressed in On the Edge do not necessarily reflect those of the Australian Library and Information Association.
Open Content: from walled gardens to collaborative learning

The 2009 Horizon Report for Australia and New Zealand lists Open Content as one of the key emerging educational technologies in the next two to three years. While Open Content appears to be relatively straightforward it faces many challenges, such as a lack of creators and features that enhance accessibility. UTS Library is overcoming these challenges by providing open access to Information Literacy tutorials in our InfoSkills (Learning Objects) database, and improving findability through descriptive Metadata and Search Engine Crawlers.

Why Open Content?
In recent years, we have undergone a shift in content delivery from a top-down approach towards a decentralised model that includes user-generated content such as blogs, wikis, and folksonomies. This shift converted previously passive consumers of information into active creators who can gather and disseminate information to a global audience. Because of this shift, we are beginning to see content not as a commodity, but something shared freely and remixed.

The benefits of sharing and remixing content have spurred the Open Education resources movement, encouraging educators to open up their materials to the world. Educators benefit by reducing repetition and saving time by reusing and remixing their colleagues’ work. For students, open access helps overcome the rising cost and inequitable supply of education around the world. It levels the playing field, providing just-in-time lifelong learning personal development.

InfoSkills Bank
InfoSkills Bank is a database of information literacy materials sourced from both within UTS and the wider education community. It contains lesson plans, class handouts, presentations, and online tutorials in a range of formats, all located centrally on UTS Library’s website. InfoSkills Bank is aimed not only at making it easier for students to locate Information Literacy Materials, but also with the intention of saving library staff time preparing and managing teaching materials and to foster sharing of ideas and personal development.

Increasing findability
UTS Library made a decision early on in the process not to limit access to InfoSkills Bank to UTS users. We also wanted to make our material easy to find, while keeping the content visible to students within the library’s website. In order to do this, we used a combination of descriptive metadata and search engine crawlers.

We give Learning Objects metadata during their upload into InfoSkills Bank. This metadata includes title, learning object type (e.g. demonstration, lesson plan), Faculty, experience level, learning time involved, links to related records, and space for free text tagging. This makes it easier for students to locate learning objects in the database itself and provides excellent material for search engine crawlers. Crawlers (also known as robots or spiders) automatically crawl websites indexing new or updated information. All we had to do was make sure our website was open to crawlers, and they did the work for us.

This simple combination of crawlers and descriptive metadata enables people from anywhere in the world to find our Learning Objects.

Evaluating the idea
We have used Google Analytics to track the progress of the InfoSkills bank and found that opening our content has significantly increased UTS Library’s worldwide exposure. In the six months since InfoSkills Bank came into the world, it has received 3972 visits from 475 cites in 80 countries. Over 44% of our traffic comes from external search engines, 40% of that is from Google alone. An analysis of the data tells us that we are not only reaching communities beyond our borders, but also suggests that we are reaching our own students who may automatically lean towards a search engine rather than the library’s website.

Future: supporting social learning
We recently integrated InfoSkills Bank into our new discovery-style catalogue, built on the Endeca Platform. The new catalogue provides a more user-friendly interface for InfoSkills Bank, which makes searching and browsing easier through refinement options and a tag cloud. This move has meant that our Learning Objects have temporarily disappeared out of Google and other search engines as we rewrite the allow/disallow rules for search engines, but that will be fixed in time for Autumn Semester.

We are currently developing InfoSkills Bank even further by improving usability through the implementation of web 2.0 features, which will allow users to tag, rate, share, and favourite objects. This will open a conversation between library staff, our clients, and the world.

With all of these features, we are moving away from institutional walled gardens towards a worldwide participatory community of learners.


Trove – one search, a wealth of information
The National Library of Australia has combined eight ‘national online discovery services’ developed over the past 12 years into one free service, Trove (http://trove.nla.gov.au), which allows researchers to find information held in Australian collections, including books, theses, reports, research articles, book chapters, sheet music, conference proceedings, papers, records, maps, photographs, artworks, postcards, videos, musical sound, sound recordings of interviews, full text of selected Australian newspapers, copies of significant Australian websites no longer available online, and information about specific people and organisations.

The new service was initially released as a prototype in May 2009 for comments and suggestions from the public. Trove, from ‘treasure trove’, was then launched in November 2009. Trove supplements what search engines provide with reliable information from Australia’s memory institutions, and provides a single point of access to over 45 million items, across both metadata and full text content.

Trove provides FRBR (Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records) grouping of related items and exploits thesauri. It supports relevance ranking — the retrieved records which are

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http://trove.nla.gov.au
shown first will be those most relevant to your search, and is easy
to navigate, refining by format, availability, keywords, author,
decade, language, and by Australian content.

Researchers can also engage through annotation services. Users
are welcome to add comments and tags, correct newspaper text,
split or merge works, and give feedback about the service through
the contact form available on the website. User-contributed
information will be searchable in Trove, and users will be enabled
to move a record from one collection view to another, and to
amend the work and edition groupings.

As an example, through a single search for information about
Frank Hurley, it is possible to access

- books by and about Frank Hurley, with information on the
  location of those books in Australian libraries
- the full content of books, where they are out of copyright
- articles, conference papers, theses, and other research
dealing with Frank Hurley, including content from university
  open access repositories and articles in e-journals
- pictures of Frank Hurley held by libraries, museums and
  archives, including digitised pictures and information about
  the location of pictures not yet digitised
- archived websites that refer to Frank Hurley
- information about archival papers, letters, diaries and other
  records relating to Frank Hurley
- biographies of Frank Hurley from sources such as the
  Australian Dictionary of Biography Online
- music, sound and video relating to Frank Hurley
- maps relating to Frank Hurley
- newspaper articles about Frank Hurley from digitised
  Australian newspapers 1803 – 1954

Trove was developed by a project
team in the National Library,
and is the product of more than
three years of planning. Library
staff have a passion for meeting
the information needs of all
Australians, and now anyone
anywhere can access and enjoy
the benefits of one simple
search to discover a multitude of

Mary-Louise Weight
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“How do I print this photo off my phone?”

New and emerging technology in remote community libraries

Networking with Bluetooth, video editing, and DVD authoring are just some of the queries that trainers receive when they conduct training in public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centre’s (IKCs) throughout Queensland’s remote indigenous communities.

With the Telstra Next G network extending as far north as Saibai Island in the Torres Strait, a rapid uptake of mobile phone ownership has followed. The use of phones extends beyond communication. Music playback, digital photos, and video recording are all features that have led to a significantly higher rate of adoption than personal computers or fixed line telephone services.

The State Library of Queensland has been helping public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres to provide public internet access and improve digital literacy through projects such as Taking I.T. On and Online Public Access in Libraries (OPAL).

Training has been highly responsive to the interests of participants, setting up emails and exploring social networking to stay in touch with family members. The use of existing equipment in communities including cameras and mobile phones has helped to reinforce the creative use of available technology. In some cases the community educates the trainers. PJ and his friends at Pormpuraaw recorded their own short dance video using two mobile phones – one phone was used to record video while the second phone provided the audio.

Low upfront costs using phone plans or pre-paid accounts, portability, and personal ownership may see the ‘pocket computer’ leapfrog desktop computers and laptop ownership as the online device of choice throughout Queensland’s remote Indigenous communities.

Low cost equipment such as Flip videos enable community members to experiment with video recording and sharing via their own YouTube pages or the IKC blog (http://ikcnetwork.blogspot.com) to share their projects. Participation within mainstream and emerging social spaces ensures that the ideas and opinions of Queensland’s first people continue to be shared, experienced, and valued.

Closing the Gap: National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Public Internet is a new initiative funded by the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy. The State Library of Queensland is partnering with the Department of Public Works over the next four years to provide improved public internet access through libraries and IKCs. Building on previous training and support, this four year commitment will ensure that ideas from Indigenous Queenslanders living in remote communities continue to permeate today’s digital realm.

Providing the skills and equipment to create and share material should go hand-in-hand with the knowledge and processes required for preservation. Looking back to 2010, will our descendants be able to access a rich tapestry of information or will it be patchy with substantial gaps? The emergence of digital cameras represents the pros and cons of digital media. How many digitally literate photographers can be confident that copies of their collections will still exist to be passed on to their grandchildren?

Along with the creation of new content, staff in IKCs are learning to develop and manage their own local collections. Through the Keeping Culture Strong initiative, the State Library will pilot the local management, ownership, and sharing of digital collections using the Ara Irititja system developed by the Pitjantjatjara Council in South Australia. It is hoped that these locally managed databases will be able to take advantage of the technical integrity of the centralised storage network while still maintaining individual ownership and control over the content with appropriate levels of access chosen by the local community.

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“I don’t know how to use this thing”

Charles David came to OPAL training with his own laptop. He wanted help connecting to the internet. When questioned on how he usually connected to the internet, he said he had never connected to the internet, though he had a Telstra Next G modem. He bought the modem from Cairns, but the salesperson showed him only briefly how to use it and he had not tried since for fear of breaking it.

Within five minutes, he was shown how to connect to the internet via his modem. Needless to say, Charles was ecstatic and a little amazed at how easy it was! Charles runs his own small business selling live crayfish, and was excited that he could now access information to assist his business from anywhere on Iama in the Torres Straits.
Digital skills for artists

Artists at Erub in the far eastern Torres Strait during OPAL training in May 2009 setting up email and instant messaging to better stay in touch with family members.

The artists also learned about digitising artworks which lessens the reliance on storage space and greatly increases the ability and ease with which the artists can communicate their artworks to others.

“That man there is my twin brother”

Kubin Indigenous Knowledge Centre (IKC), located on Moa Island, 40km north of Thursday Island in the Torres Strait, hosted Online Public Access in Libraries (OPAL) Training. One of the first to attend was Father John Manus, former Deacon in Kubin Village. Father Manus, 79, was most interested in accessing family history resources on the internet.

It was on viewing a particular photo from the Picture Queensland website that Father Manus commented “That man there is my twin brother”. Further discussion between the group revealed that the photo was taken at the old Church at Poid village on Moa Island. This church was dismantled and rebuilt in Kubin village, leaving behind the walls and foundations.
From a distance: using emerging technology to organise a study about emerging technology

A fortunate series of events and happy coincidences in October 2008 resulted in CAVAL Ltd, Dominican University (USA), and CityLibraries Townsville agree to partner in a research project that would see Dr Michael Stephens appointed as the CAVAL 2009 Visiting Scholar, and make a five week trip to Australia in September/October 2009.

How to go about organising a multi-faceted research project, a five-week international visit, and three speaking engagements when you’re over 14 000 km (as the crow flies) and 16 time zones apart?

**MS:** The aim of the research project is to evaluate the impact of Learning 2.0 programs in Australian libraries. Learning 2.0 (also known as 23 Things) is all about exposing staff to new and emerging technologies. We used a variety of new and not-so-new electronic and web-based tools ourselves, to communicate, share files, and organise the research materials. Have you thought about why we used what we did?

**WC:** It seems to have been a combination of things. Tools like email and instant messaging were well established tools that we both used, so were quick and easy ones to get the conversations going.

**MS:** Leading up to the trip, we used Skype for a lot of conversations with Richard Sayers from CAVAL. I appreciated how I could be anywhere: on campus, at home, on holiday in northern Michigan, and still check in via voice and video. Sitting in front of my iMac at home with the speakers going, it was almost like we were all in the same room having a meeting. The power of hearing a voice so clearly without using the phone is amazing.

**WC:** Corporate firewalls and rules prevented me from using Skype on my work computer, so we managed to install it on a public internet computer in the library instead. Skype proved to be very clear and easy to use for three-way conversations and was a great aid to planning Michael’s research trip. Just recently I discovered Skype as a portable application, which I can run off a USB thumb-drive from most PCs, which is very convenient.

**MS:** Were there any other tools we used that were new to you? How was the learning curve?

**WC:** I had heard about Dropbox but had never used it. It only took me a few minutes to realise how incredibly useful it is, and a day to become an ardent fan! We were able to share files quickly and easily by saving them to a shared Dropbox folder, accessible via the web or as a folder on my local computer’s file list.

**MS:** The use of Dropbox to share documents and easily host a file on the web made it invaluable to me. I had many files I wanted to keep safe but with me at all times during the travel. One thing I did was use a folder in Dropbox to sync all of the travel documents provided to me from CAVAL or the airlines/hotels. I could access the files from my Mac, any web enabled computer, and even with my iPhone on wifi!

**WC:** I know you are a huge fan of the Apple iPhone. How did it go as a travel tool in another country?

**MS:** I opted not to be on one of the very expensive data plans for international travellers via the iPhone’s sole provider in the states, AT&T. I could still use it as a phone with international calling but data was crippled and I have to admit I felt really disconnected from my usual patterns of use. Of course, I could connect to free wireless if it was available and use the phone for data but that didn’t happen often. One night we struck out on a dining choice and without wifi I realized I couldn’t just Google for vegetarian dining in Perth. It’s amazing how I’ve come to rely on my device – and that’s why I highlight mobile use in my talks about trends and tech. It truly is a game changer for information consumption.

**WC:** Our methods of technology-enabled communication certainly did go way beyond email.

**MS:** I’m also thinking about all the times we used Twitter to check in with each other with news or updates. We also did a lot of sharing of our steps and planning with our followers.

**WC:** Did you use any specialised electronic tools during the focus groups?

**MS:** We actually used an application on the Mac called GarageBand to record all of the focus group sessions. It made it very easy to use the Mac for this purpose instead of carrying another dedicated device like a digital recorder. GarageBand mixes down the files to MP3s that can be loaded into iTunes for review after the focus group concludes. I saved the files to Dropbox for sharing with Richard and the transcriptionist.

**WC:** Thanks for posting pictures of your Australian travels on Flickr. Apart from the simple act of sharing photographs, are there deeper uses of Flickr? Has it enabled you to work more effectively, or meet people via photo sharing?

**MS:** I relied on Flickr for many things. To share with friends and family back home, but also to discover what sites and scenery lay ahead as we travelled around Australia. I also use Flickr for Creative Commons images for my presentations and prepping for ASLA and QPLA conferences, including finding some wonderful Australia-themed pictures to make the slides more local.

I also relied heavily on sites like TripAdviser for user contributed reviews of hotels, dining options, and attractions. Pair that with Google Maps for seeing where a hotel might be located in relation to RMIT or the Perth convention centre (complete with street view in many instances) and you have a dynamic trip planning mechanism.

**WC:** All of these things helped the trip and research run smoothly. We’re looking forward to presenting the first results of the research at VALA2010.

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Technological innovation
to illuminate the shadows
of our past

“One of the main scholarly tasks of the last half century has been to
to retrieve women’s history from its ‘unspokenness’, from the
shrouds of silence and obscurity.”

With these words Quentin Bryce, Australia’s first female Governor
General, re-launched the Australian Women’s Register, http://
www.womenaustralia.info/, on the 13 October 2009 as part of
the 50 year celebrations for the Baillieu Library at the University
of Melbourne. While the Australian Women’s Archives Project
(AWAP), a collaborative initiative of the National Foundation
for Australian Women and the University of Melbourne, has been
developing the Register as a central part of its strategy to encourage
the preservation of women’s archival heritage and to make it more
accessible to the community since early 2000, the re-launch
marked a significant milestone in its development and provided
recognition of its role as national information infrastructure.

The Australian Women’s Register is a specialist
central access point to
information about
Australian women and
their achievements and
the multifarious resources
in which varying aspects
of their lives are
documented. It provides
a gateway to archival
and published material
relating to women held
in Australian cultural
institutions as well as in
private hands. A series
of small and large grants
have contributed to the
development of the content
of the Register and the
technology in which it is captured, managed, and made available
to as wide an audience as possible via the web.

The latest of these grants, an Australian Research Council
Linkage Infrastructure Equipment and Facilities Grant (ARC LIEF) awarded
in 2008, has allowed the Australian Women’s Register to play a
part in emerging technological innovation in the provision of
resource discovery services. With the National Library of Australia
as a key industry partner, the grant allowed for the establishment
of a mechanism for harvesting Encoded Archival Context (EAC)
records, using the Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata
Harvesting (OAI-PMH), so that rich biographical and contextual
information from the Register is incorporated into the NLA’s
exciting new Trove discovery service.

This builds on two strengths of the Australian Women’s Register,
namely the granularity of its description and its coverage.
Resources, particularly archival material, relating to women
tend to be very fragmented and dispersed and are often found
buried deep within collections. Library catalogue entries and
institutional finding aids generally do not extend to this level of
description for a variety of reasons, not least of which is the
resourcing implications. The Register provides this fine-grained
description of archival and other resources linked to biographical
information about the women, women’s organisations, and events
to which they bear witness. It also extends coverage to resources
held outside of traditional archives and collecting institutions,
identifying and documenting material held in community and
personal archives that are otherwise very difficult to come by.
Harvesting this information into Trove significantly augments
traditional catalogue records, not only enhancing the experience of
users searching for resources in the distributed national collection,
but also in support of collection development and reference
activities for information professionals in a variety of institutions.

Establishing harvesting capabilities is a first step in exploring
their implications for all those associated with the creation,
maintenance, and use of source material for historical research
in all its contexts. The ability to exchange content between Trove
and the Australian Women’s Register means that the focus can be
on adding value to existing biographical and resource descriptions
rather than manually re-creating them.

It is illustrative of how digital and networking technologies change
the roles and relationships of scholars, information professionals,
universities, and the wider community in order to build greater
capabilities, connectedness, robustness, and resilience into
historical/archival/humanities information systems. Above all it
asserts the value of scholarly principles, re-visioned, re-imagined,
and re-distributed for the digital and networked age, and places
women’s history firmly in the mainstream rather than being
consigned to the margins.

The Governor General’s speech from the re-launch is available

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Video games bring history back to life

Video games are the latest complementary resource to hit library shelves. Video games have been popular for more than 30 years, and three generations have grown up gaming. It’s not just something for kids either, with the average age of today’s gamer sitting comfortably at 35-years old, and the fastest growing group of gamers are older Australian’s – aged 60 plus.

“We have found that by adding board and video game formats to library collections we are providing users with tools to build strong literacy practices while sharpening technical and critical thinking skills,” said American Library Association (ALA) President Dr. Camila Alire. Last year, libraries across the United States actually participated in the largest simultaneous national video game tournament ever held. Kids were able to compete against players at other libraries and track their score while playing at their local library.

According to Michael Pachter, videogame analyst for Wedbush Morgan Securities, video games with a historical genre have made up about 10 per cent of overall sales over the past year.

The best examples of these historical games are Ubisoft’s Assassin’s Creed titles, renowned for their detailed narratives and historical settings. The latest game, Assassin’s Creed II, launched in November 2009, brought a detailed reconstruction of renaissance Italy into the homes of millions.

Set in a time of considerable change across politics, architecture, art, and the creation of modern war and diplomacy, the game introduces key figures, buildings, and historical events of this era with painstaking accuracy through the eyes of hero, Ezio Auditore. As players progress through the game, they interact closely with a young Leonardo da Vinci who helps Ezio in his quest with various contraptions and gadgets – including Leonardo’s flying machine.

“Most people picture an older, bearded man (made famous by his early 16th century self portrait), however our game begins in 1459 and ends in 1499 so the Leonardo players encounter and interact with is much younger,” said Corey May, lead scriptwriter for the game at Ubisoft Montreal.

“Our Da Vinci is vivacious and manic, full of youthful exuberance and delighted by every new discovery he makes,” added May. “He’s still a genius – the very definition of a Renaissance man – but he’s not perfect.”

As with the original game that was set in the Middle East during the Third Crusades and sold over 9 million copies, Assassin’s Creed II transports gamers into a fictional story that is rooted in real history and has been recreated with painstaking accuracy.

Marcello Simonette, historian and writer, served as tour guide for Ubisoft teams in Italy, who took over 30 000 pictures of buildings and iconic features to then recreate back in the studio.

An in-built ‘wikipedia’ or database enables gamers to walk up to any character or building, and access a history and information database that gives information on topics such as the medical practices of the time, the history behind the collages of the wooden Rialto bridge, or the creation of the breathtaking St Mark’s Basilica.

“We worked a lot on the proportions of the Basilica to give the impression that it’s as big as in reality. Only when players set foot in Sain Mark’s piazza will they understand the grandeur of the basilica” says Mohamed Gambouz, Art Director.

Ubisoft also engaged Margaret Meserve, Assistant Professor of History from University of Notre Dame to help developers create an accurate game world – from architecture to social practices, banking systems, and clothing.

“I’m intrigued by their reconstruction of Renaissance cities like Venice and Florence. The opportunity to walk through those urban spaces, as they were at the time of the Renaissance, is really appealing,” say Meserve.

In Assassin’s Creed II, game missions are also based on actual historical events such as the Pazzi Conspiracy – when the Pazzi family tried to replace the Medici family, the rulers of Florence during the 15th century – on April 26, 1478.

“The conspiracy culminated in a botched assassination attempt during mass at the high altar of Florence’s cathedral – it was a hugely scandalous event,” says Meserve.

By paying such close attention to detail, and delicately balancing historical narratives with the freedom of game play, developers like Ubisoft are giving growing, new audiences a unique way to engage with and immerse themselves in history like never before.

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How we learned to stop worrying and love web 2.0

On Friday, 11 May 2007, five Library Assistants left Charles Sturt University Library as Acquisitions, Circulation, or Distance Education assistants, and returned to work on Monday morning as Library Officers in the new Information & Liaison Services Section.

An organisational restructure had created a number of exciting opportunities for us in this previously ‘librarians-only’ domain, and we were taking up positions in the redesigned section along with Information and Faculty Liaison Librarians, Team Leaders, Web Developers, and the Section Manager, many of whom were also new in their roles. The whole library was also adjusting to the new structure with the four functional groupings of Business Services, Development, Operations, and the Divisional Office.

We could write pages on how our information and reference skills developed, how we adjusted to a more autonomous self-directed style of working, and how the Information & Liaison Services Section accommodated us in our new roles. However, this article will focus not on the process of integration into a new team, but on the expanding use of technology in our work.

When we first started we had little thought of the role that technology would have not only in the work that we did, but also in helping us adapt to our new roles. Back then, the duty statement read like a foreign language to us, talking about wikis, blogs, and RSS feeds. Web editing, providing virtual frontline information assistance, and developing online resources were new and unfamiliar tasks for us.

We had been successful in our applications due to our experience and willingness to learn new skills, but most of us had little or no knowledge of the software and web 2.0 technologies we would be using in our work. Added to that, we were based at different campuses, which made it hard to support and learn from each other.

So how did we make our way? It helped that we were joined by two young digital natives who were recruited externally. Then face-to-face training in the software, Dreamweaver, for the web-editing component of our job gave us an early foothold. As well as being an opportunity to meet, go out to dinner, and get to know each other, learning to use Dreamweaver was great for building our confidence and optimism about our positions. Along with a newfound support network, we now had a valuable skill, and with a total revamp of the library website planned, there was the promise of lots of web editing work to come.

However, the plans to re-develop the library website involved us in more than web editing. Two thirds of the student population of Charles Sturt University study through Distance Education and a decision was made to end face-to-face classes for undergraduate students. Information Literacy training was to be made available online and embedded in the curricula. Preparation of online self-help resources in various media was needed, and so we became involved in creating podcasts using Audacity, and screen capture video tutorials using Camtasia and Captivate software.

With growing confidence in our ability to learn and use new software and applications, we then began to work with many of the other technologies and media used in the section. We have pretty much taken over the library’s blog to post interesting news and resources, we use delicious bookmarks to add the latest resources and useful websites to the library’s Subject Support pages, and we’re starting to explore the microblogging tools, Twitter and Yammer.

This year saw Information & Liaison Services trial and implement a successful instant messaging service. The library officers were involved in all aspects of this, from participating in the project team and advising on the software to use, to being rostered to answer queries. Because we use the free, web-based software Meebo, only one staff member can be rostered at a time, and it is not unusual to be managing multiple reference queries at once. It is a sign of how much our confidence has improved and how our skills are respected that we work alongside the librarians in providing this service.

We have also learned to use Communicator, our internal instant messaging software, for many purposes. Its immediacy makes it the perfect work tool to liaise with other staff, ask a quick question, or to explain things, while its informality has also helped us feel much more connected. Using Communicator is almost as good as being together in person. In the same way, our desktop sharing software, Bridgit, has been invaluable in enabling us to work and learn together despite being based at different campuses.

So where are we now? These days we are all busy – there’s always something interesting to do. Every day sees a wide variety of interactions with library users and other staff members and new technologies to explore and evaluate.
RFIDs in libraries

Mention of new and emerging technologies in libraries tends to conjure up images of web 2.0/3.0 applications, but there are significant changes in the ways we manage our physical collections, with the roll-out of RFID or Radio Frequency Identification technology. RFIDs are small chip-based devices that can store data, which can be used to provide a unique identification for objects or types of objects. The technology itself is not new. It is traced back to radio frequency transponders, attached to allied aircraft during World War 2 in order to distinguish them from hostile aircraft.

An object that contains or is tagged with a RFID can be detected, categorised, and tracked as it moves from one location to another. The data can be read from fixed or mobile devices at high speeds and without the need to have a line of sight between the object in which the RFID is incorporated and the reading device. This makes them considerably more effective and versatile than conventional barcodes although their cost is currently higher.

RFIDs are divided into two main types: active and passive. Active RFIDs have their own power supply and can transmit over significant distances, typically up to 100 metres. Passive RFIDs are generally smaller and rely on converting energy transmitted from reading devices into a signal that can be delivered over a short (up to 5m) or very short (up to 60cm) range. Data storage capacity varies from a few bits to several kilobytes but library applications normally use tags with 256 bits, with 2048-bit tags also available.

RFIDs are reported to bring benefits to a range of enterprises, with the potential to minimise physical handling of goods and to reduce or eliminate errors throughout the supply chain. There are many benefits for libraries, including improved stock management, enhanced client self-check, smart-sorting of returns, expanded security, reduced rate of repetitive strain injuries (RSI), and ability to scan boxed material such as archives. In some libraries, RFIDs have replaced barcodes as a result of their additional functionality.

Some consumer associations have pointed out, however, that, while many RFID applications are neutral with respect to the consumer, others could have adverse effects. Areas of concern include: privacy (tracking, profiling, and discrimination); security (for instance, identity theft in the case of e-passports); health (EMF emissions); and freedom of choice. There are well-publicised cases in which consumer groups have successfully stopped or reversed the implementation of specific applications: for instance, Benetton’s abandonment of plans to embed tags in the fabric of its clothing.

In the library environment, issues have also been raised, particularly over privacy. Since RFIDs are active away from the library, state agencies could access information on users without necessarily having to tell the library. At the moment the librarian stands between the state and the information object/client link, but RFIDs change this by making the link visible to anyone with technology as good as or better than the library’s. Surveillance is limited, however, by the range of the tags currently used in library applications.

A few years ago, the public expressed concern over the San Francisco Public Library Service’s proposal to tag its book stock. Concerns revolved primarily around the potential for inferences to be made about life-style, sexual orientation, politics, and so on, based on people’s reading habits. The SFPLS demonstrated a proactive approach to determination of the ethical and other issues related to the adoption of RFIDs, with the establishment of a Technology and Privacy Advisory Committee. The Committee anticipated many benefits in RFID adoption but also identified potential disadvantages, including concerns that RFIDs might contravene the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights (based on First Amendment rights). Ironically, one of the benefits identified was enhanced client privacy (since self check-out could be supported).

In 2006, the ALA adopted a set of guidelines regarding RFIDs and privacy. These include commonsense practices such as limitation of bibliographic information stored on a tag to the unique identifier; the continuing security of bibliographic and client databases from unauthorised use; secure connections for all communications with Library Management Systems; and relevant staff training. The National Information Standards Organization in the USA has developed a substantial Recommended Practice document, while the International Standards Organisation (ISO) is addressing the issue of interoperability; a project to which Standards Australia and Australian libraries are expected to contribute (http://www.alia.org.au/rfidproject).

Library directors considering RFID implementation need to consider ethical dimensions as well as the technical ones and ensure that appropriate management strategies are put in place.

Some consumer associations have pointed out, however, that, while many RFID applications are neutral with respect to the consumer, others could have adverse effects. Areas of concern include: privacy (tracking, profiling, and discrimination); security (for instance, identity theft in the case of e-passports); health (EMF emissions); and freedom of choice. There are well-publicised cases in which consumer groups have successfully stopped or reversed the implementation of specific applications: for instance, Benetton’s abandonment of plans to embed tags in the fabric of its clothing.

In the library environment, issues have also been raised, particularly over privacy. Since RFIDs are active away from the library, state agencies could access information on users without necessarily having to tell the library. At the moment the librarian stands between the state and the information object/client link, but RFIDs change this by making the link visible to anyone with technology as good as or better than the library’s. Surveillance is limited, however, by the range of the tags currently used in library applications.

A few years ago, the public expressed concern over the San Francisco Public Library Service’s proposal to tag its book stock. Concerns revolved primarily around the potential for inferences to be made about life-style, sexual orientation, politics, and so on, based on people’s reading habits. The SFPLS demonstrated a proactive approach to determination of the ethical and other issues related to the adoption of RFIDs, with the establishment of a Technology and Privacy Advisory Committee. The Committee anticipated many benefits in RFID adoption but also identified potential disadvantages, including concerns that RFIDs might contravene the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights (based on First Amendment rights). Ironically, one of the benefits identified was enhanced client privacy (since self check-out could be supported).

In 2006, the ALA adopted a set of guidelines regarding RFIDs and privacy. These include commonsense practices such as limitation of bibliographic information stored on a tag to the unique identifier, the continuing security of bibliographic and client databases from unauthorised use; secure connections for all communications with Library Management Systems; and relevant staff training. The National Information Standards Organization in the USA has developed a substantial Recommended Practice document, while the International Standards Organisation (ISO) is addressing the issue of interoperability; a project to which Standards Australia and Australian libraries are expected to contribute (http://www.alia.org.au/rfidproject).

Library directors considering RFID implementation need to consider ethical dimensions as well as the technical ones and ensure that appropriate management strategies are put in place.

Based on a forthcoming paper by Forbes Gibb, Stathclyde University; Clare Thornley, University College, Dublin; John Weckert, Charles Sturt University; and Stuart Ferguson, University of Canberra.)

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QR codes and the mobile web

Australia is experiencing a massive increase in the use of mobile devices and clients now expect to access library services and resources immediately, in context, when it is most relevant or bookmarked for later use. QR codes are a simple way to achieve this by connecting the physical and digital worlds using a mobile device.

What are QR Codes?

QR codes are barcodes for the 21st century that can be scanned by a web-enabled mobile device and link you to digital content such as a website, video, podcast, quiz, pdf, or almost anything! They can hold much more information than a regular barcode and have been used in a wide variety of contexts like music, museums, games, marketing, libraries, and education. In all contexts, they connect users in a physical space to contextualised digital content.

Trend watching: what the experts say

QR Codes are a new technology recognised as a part of two emerging trends discussed in the recent ANZ Horizon Report (2009) on emerging technologies in education.

1. Mobile content and augmented reality

Emerging within the next two to three years, this trend includes the development of educational gaming programs using augmented reality layers and making use of geolocation technology. QR codes are included in this category because of their ability to deliver mobile content when a connection between the physical and digital worlds is required.

2. Smart Objects

Emerging within the next four to five years, Smart Objects are technology that connects the physical and digital worlds and includes QR codes, RFID, smart cards, and microchips. QR codes are included in this category because they combine “the ability to collect and transmit information with the means to immediately use that information” (Horizon, p.22, 2009).

The physical and digital spaces of UTS Library

At UTS Library, we are trialling QR codes in a number of ways.

We are placing them on objects in the physical library such as self-check machines and scanners where assistance may be required. This allows clients to take a photo of the QR code and immediately watch a short demonstration of the service they are trying to use. Traditionally, instructional and promotional materials have been text-based, however with the addition of QR codes these resources are now enhanced with more dynamic content.

QR codes can be used on promotional bookmarks and brochures to connect clients to online content in context. For example, at UTS Library we are using QR codes to enhance our library ‘Z card’ which is a fold-out brochure introducing new clients to library services and resources. The QR code links to a short video explaining how to get started and make the most of library services and resources.

QR codes can also be used online to link to specific mobile content. For example, UTS Library is launching a mobile website in January 2010 which runs on a range of mobile platforms including iPhone/iTouch, Android, Windows Mobile, and Opera mini. A simple way of promoting the mobile site to clients is to place a QR code on the library home page. The QR code links clients to the new mobile site and they can immediately move around the library searching and browsing at the shelf rather than at the PC terminal. Similarly, databases are starting to provide mobile platforms and QR codes could be used in the OPAC to link clients directly to mobile databases rather than having to type in a long URL. While these ideas are simple, they provide library clients with easy access to mobile content and services.

Moving forward

At UTS Library, we are raising client awareness of QR codes so that clients can use this new technology more effectively. We will monitor this pilot project by tracking usage statistics of the content we link to and engaging in discussion with clients through our social networking sites. We see the addition of QR codes to our promotional and instructional material as a way to enhance traditional services rather than replacing them altogether.


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CSU’s Second Life

Academic staff at the School of Information Studies (SIS) at Charles Sturt University had a busy 2009 with significant curriculum renewal and the development of new undergraduate and postgraduate library and information management courses. As part of the development, a project team worked on the design of a purpose built CSU-SIS Learning Centre in Second Life.

For over a decade SIS lecturers have used Learning Communities MOO, commonly known as LC, MOO. In 2008, we decided it was time to provide staff and students with a more immersive synchronous 3D learning environment, and the 3D virtual world of Second Life (owned by Linden Lab) was identified as the logical place for our school to take up residence. This 3D virtual world provides users with a greater sense of space and presence than text- and graphic-based MOO environments, because they log into Second Life (SL) as avatars – this is known as ‘being in world’.

In April 2009, the project team successfully applied for a Major Educational Equipment Funds Grant from CSU’s Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic). These funds were provided to cover the cost of designing and building the Learning Centre. The project team employed the consultancy services of Joanna Kay (inScape Consulting), and received supplementary funding to support the research component of the project – this included funding from CSU’s Centre for Research in Complex Systems (CRCs) and the School’s Research Development Committee Research Priority Area (RPA) funding.

Upon discussions with jokay about our short- to medium-term needs and because CSU has not bought an island in SL to develop a campus presence, we decided to rent part of the north-east corner of one of jokay’s islands, jokaydia III, with plans to continue this lease for the next two years. The diagram below shows the location of the CSU-SIS Learning Centre on jokaydia III (in the top right hand corner) in relation to other privately developed and public facilities in the world of jokaydia.

One aspect of the design of the CSU-SIS Learning Centre was the use of branding, using both our school and university colours and logos where appropriate. A visitor to the Learning Centre will know they are ‘at CSU’ when they enter this space.

Part of the design involves a number of multi-purpose spaces which use ‘rezzers’. These are sets of pre-packaged learning space designs comprised of different combinations of specific environmental settings, table/seating objects, and educational/learning objects, which can be assembled and ‘packed up’ with the click of a button. Some of the key spaces, features, and custom-built rezzers of the Learning Centre design include:

- The CSU-SIS Landing Area where people teleport to enter the Learning Centre – to visit us, go to our SLURL: [http://slurl.com/secondlife/jokaydia%20III/207/194/](http://slurl.com/secondlife/jokaydia%20III/207/194/).
- The main courtyard area, with a welcome sign where visitors can click on a ‘Join Us’ button to become a member of the CSU-SIS group; an announcement board which receives a feed from a Google calendar listing upcoming events; a wall of recommended landmarks; a Contacts wall listing SIS Hosts and their ‘in world’ availability;
- Main Meeting Hall with comfortable seating areas for social engagement, an ‘Avatar corner’ containing a number of educational boxes and instructional material to support people’s customisation of their avatar, and two learning space rezzers.
- SIS Head Quarters (SIS HQ) with a large open space for functions, a boardroom rezzers, a bookshelf of educational tools for SIS staff, and a smaller meeting room.
- Three ‘skyboxes’ which are rooms located in the air space above the centre. Skybox 1 and 2 are classroom spaces, with the third skybox a dedicated research centre for academics and research teams to meet ‘in world’ and for our distance education PhD students to meet with their supervisory teams. The remainder of the CSU-SIS Learning Centre can be accessed at any time by the general public; these skyboxes provide privacy while conducting classes or meetings, because we only give out the landmarks to staff, students, and other collaborators. Skybox 1 and 2 also have garden rezzers for more private, casual social spaces.

Throughout the Learning Centre visitors will encounter promotional material about SIS courses based on our hard copy promotional material to ensure consistency in information provided. These promotional objects include ‘virtual’ course fliers, and interactive computer screens with direct links to our school and university website. We have promotional material and links to Master, Graduate Certificate, and Bachelor programs and information for prospective PhD students. So, this is not just a learning space and a social space for our staff and students; it has added another dimension to our school’s marketing strategy.

If you are interested in Second Life, visit [http://secondlife.com](http://secondlife.com).

In 2010 we look forward to residing in Second Life as we explore new ways to support teaching, research, and professional development activities. If you decide to drop by look out for one of our staff members: Lyn Hay (aka LenaLotus Latte), Joy McGregor (aka Hyacinth Genna), Jake Wallis (aka Bart Benusconi), or Bob Pynn (aka Coolhand Brentley).
New directions in online client support: a participative model

Victoria University Library offers client support in traditional ways: we aimed to investigate new ways of managing patron enquiries in the context of web 2.0 technologies that use participative or collaborative models.

We conducted a literature search and survey of Australian university libraries to determine how libraries in Australia and overseas were providing online client support. The survey revealed that most used online reference help tools to push information out to the user community, as opposed to being used for collaboration/discussion. Chat, SMS and instant messaging are being used, but in much smaller numbers. Griffith University was the only university using online forums – one for library help, the other for IT help. Deakin was the only university using Facebook for submission of reference questions.

An investigation into client support in industry revealed businesses are establishing online communities to cultivate relationships with their customers. Organisations recognise the value of an online community to provide an interactive online environment for discussion of products and related topics. Clients exchange questions, offer ideas and suggestions, and share tips and tricks. Online communities also enable businesses to share information with their customers and provide a mechanism for customers to exchange information and experiences among themselves. Benefits for the organisation include marketing new services as well as obtaining valuable feedback on products.

Educators have recognised the value of students collaborating and supporting each other online. The use of online discussion in university education is now commonplace. At Victoria University, teaching staff have encouraged peer to peer collaboration through the use of discussion boards on Blackboard and customised online forums.

VU Library plans to establish an online forum on the library web page, initially for a 12-month trial period. The primary aim of the forum is to enable clients to seek advice and provide advice to each other on library related topics. The forum will be offered in conjunction with the library’s existing support services. While staff may moderate the forum, there will be no obligation for moderators to respond to every discussion – integral to building a participative community. Staff may only need to participate where an initial query goes unanswered. The forum will be asynchronous, as opposed to real-time chat.

As outlined above, online discussion forums are commonplace in a variety of sectors and increasingly in education. It is likely that the majority of Victoria University students would be familiar with the protocols of communicating in an online discussion forum. The experience in the business and education sectors is that users of online forums provide valuable support to each other. In addition an online forum would provide an additional means of communication between library clients and the library, and can be implemented with relatively small cost to the organisation.

So you think you can Google?

That’s the tagline we’ve been using to lure students into our library training sessions. As new librarians who have spent the last 18 months as Graduate Librarians at the University of Adelaide, we wanted to address the view among library users that Google is best. We have developed and facilitated library training aimed at undergraduate students: those who dare spend a little under an hour learning more about Google – strengths, limitations, plus some handy tips and tricks.

We chose to highlight the good resources they can find using Google, as well as those they will never locate – the PowerPoint slide that gets the best reaction is an image of a huge iceberg with ‘7-30%’ looming above, demonstrating how little Google finds. We start by showing our students some Google operators which help them go beyond the typical-assignment-question-into-Google approach. We then move onto the advanced Google screen and guide them through using these options. We also highlight that, despite the fact that it is handy, they need to be careful when using Google Scholar and explain the reasons why. We work hard to persuade students that there are better sources out there, beyond the holy Google grail (we also manage to give the library and our databases a big plug!). However, we know that no matter what we tell them, students still generally prefer Google, so our aim is to help them be smarter searchers.

Google training has proved the most popular of all the sessions we began to run in the second half of 2009. Attendees have been undergrads, postgrads, PhD students, academic staff, and library staff. We also offer sessions in RSS and library databases (which consistently don’t get the same numbers as Google!). We have also had interest from other libraries that are keen to know what we are telling our students about Google. As well as being useful for students, we both love presenting these sessions. Our managers and colleagues have been very supportive and are keen for us to keep training students to search intelligently.

The way we market our library sessions is heavily influenced by web 2.0. Traditionally, training in our library has been promoted through posters, flyers, and word-of-mouth. These new sessions are publicised on our library blog and are also pushed to fans of our library Facebook page, reaching nearly 1400 people. We have had several comments from our Facebook fans indicating that they ‘like’ our sessions.

We think it is important for libraries to create sessions that address developments in technology. We know that our students are Googling in ways we’d prefer them not to, but it’s a great way for us as librarians to go where our students are going. Teaching Google has also allowed us to reach students who don’t seem to be regular library users. We will continue offering our Google session in 2010 and as new librarians we are excited that Google and other technology is changing the face of library instruction.

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InCite 21
Technology heralds new age of learning

Throughout Australia, training providers, business, and industry are using e-learning as a flexible and cost effective solution for training and retraining, with research showing that 39% of all vocational education and training activity now involves e-learning*.

As we enter the digital age, it is imperative that libraries keep pace with these changes in technologies and learning styles. Below we’ve profiled three examples of how Australian organisations are exploiting technologies to better connect with traditionally marginalised groups, including at-risk youth and Indigenous communities.

Online gaming engages young learners

Major tyre manufacturer and retailer Bridgestone Australia delivered automotive and tyre fitting training to learners in the juvenile justice system. To help keep the young learners engaged throughout the ‘boring’ theoretical aspects of the training, Bridgestone used interactive online activities that incorporated a range of digital media, including games and video. Learners were able to self-review their knowledge and formal assessments were created in the Moodle learning management system to track assessment results.

Mobile technologies train on-the-job

In preparation for the arrival of two giant endangered pandas on loan from China, Adelaide Zoo used mobile phones and Bluetooth technology to deliver ‘just-in-time’ situated learning for employees and volunteers. Hardware access points located in key areas around the zoo were linked to a central server. Staff and volunteers then downloaded software onto their mobile phones and, when they were in the vicinity of an access point, accessed instant information about the animals.

3D animated avatars break down cultural barriers

Traditional Credit Union (TCU) used a 3D animated avatar to present financial compliance information in a way that better engaged and increased understanding among TCU’s Indigenous employees. The MARVIN avatar animation system can deliver education and communication campaigns tailored for any culture in the world. By incorporating the images, stories, and ‘lingo’ of the Indigenous culture and engaging employees on a more human level, MARVIN improved the uptake of information and increased learner participation, recognition, and acceptance. Materials, once created, were easily and quickly reviewed and updated as training needs changed over time.

Library staff can visit http://flexiblelearning.net.au to learn more, including access to free services and resources.


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EBooks in Canberra: Blackadder, Rumpole, and romance

The ACT Public Library has offered an eBook collection to the Canberra community for several years. Exploring the reading and listening habits of its users shows some interesting patterns.

The downloadable eBook collection, provided by OverDrive, currently includes 3 702 titles, of which 1604 are eAudio. These books can be downloaded to a member’s personal computer or portable devices like smart phones and MP3 players.

The service has proven very popular with a core group of customers and curious explorers, and has seen a 60% increase in the number of unique patrons using it since the format was first offered. From early on, the library also received requests for access from people in other Australian states and as far afield as Europe and South America, all eager to experience the service.

With a range of formats, the eBook collection has had a total of almost 40 000 checkouts since early 2007, and is currently averaging almost 1500 checkouts per month. Over half of the most borrowed titles are eAudio books.

The most popular titles in the library’s collection are a racy romance called Show me, followed by Blackadder, Life laundry: How to de-junk your life, Michael Connelly’s Echo Park, and Rumpole and the Primrose Park. Also popular are Mao’s last dancer and Tolkien’s The fellowship of the ring. Some of these correlate with interest in their print format, while others are simply old favourites.

The popularity of eAudio is also demonstrated in the number of reserves placed – over 90% of the total 11 166 to date. The range of titles requested is diverse, with the two most requested titles in December 2009 poles apart in content: The art of war by Sun Tzu and Anne of Green Gables by L. M. Montgomery.

In an effort to promote the downloadable option, the library has also made an effort to tap into those members browsing the physical shelves for audio books. Signs have been strategically placed to highlight alternatives.

It is probable that growth in use of portable media players, and downloadable music and books being available for purchase online, is contributing to the popularity of this format. If this is truly the case, we expect the interest in this collection to continue to grow.

So if you are searching for something different for your customers to read, or listen to, why not explore the eBook option?

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Usability testing: a client-centred approach to innovation

Whether you call it ‘Library 2.0’ or a response to the shifting technological landscape, a wind of change is ushering us into an exciting new realm of spatial and technological development. Usability testing, a technique used to test the ease with which our clients can use our website, has become a major factor in shaping the development of this important virtual resource. Web Developer Kat Clancy and Web Cataloguing Librarian Michelle Watson will outline Deakin’s client-centred approach to innovation at the VALA 2010 Conference in February. Until then, here’s a taster of how usability testing has influenced the development of the Deakin University Library website, its search and discovery tools and, ultimately, how it has improved support for flexible education at Deakin.

Not just a catalogue

Deakin University Library’s website, www.deakin.edu.au/library, was initially redeveloped in 2006. Since then, the website has been progressively enhanced and adjusted to meet the needs of staff and students, with the help of usability testing and direct feedback. Once seen as the public interface to online library services and resources, the library website has become an interactive portal of information, with many features available via computer or mobile phone, including Quick Search (Encore), a web 2.0 version of our traditional Classic Catalogue; Mobile catalogue (AirPAC): a low bandwidth catalogue specially designed for mobile devices; and online course materials, including e-readings, delivered via the university’s Learning Repository (Equella).

Our range of online resources, including subject databases and increasing collections of e-books, enables students to seamlessly continue their research and study at any time of the day, as well as during the university close-down periods, simply by pointing their browser to the library website.

Usability testing drives innovation

Since 2006, specialist library staff have conducted usability tests across all campuses on an annual basis, focusing on the methods, pathways, and tools that our varying stakeholder groups use when navigating the library website. Here are two examples where new features have been incorporated into the website as a direct result of usability testing.

Introduction of Quick Search

Quick Search was introduced to the website after usability testing concluded in 2008. The decision to introduce a simple, ‘keyword only’ search option was based on the results of the usability study, which revealed that undergraduate students in particular struggled with aspects of the traditional ‘classic catalogue’, including incorrect use of the author and subject indexes, and typically found the range of options and choices overwhelming. It was thought that Quick Search would meet the needs of this user group, while the classic catalogue would continue to be favoured by academic staff and postgraduates. Would two search options be confusing? This would be explored in the next round of usability tests.

Increasing the range of search options

Usability tests supported the introduction of an ‘articles from journals and newspapers’ search facility on the library homepage, which includes a number of features. This includes a select list of popular databases, which can be accessed via a dropdown box. This list of databases is one of the most well used features of the website. All databases can be accessed directly from a link on the library homepage, and a link to Easy Article Search for federated searching was introduced to assist in the discovery of journal articles, particularly for undergraduate students.

Usability testing in 2009

The 2009 web usability study was intended to be broader than the study conducted the previous year. Instead of focusing on individual search interfaces, participants were asked to complete a series of everyday information gathering tasks using the library website to find out how well the various search gateways ‘hung together’ on the library home page: what pathways did clients choose when starting from the library home page? Were multiple pathways flexible or confusing? Could clients find the resources and information they needed? Were we successful in addressing the usability issues that had been identified in earlier testing? The 2009 testing also included a section to determine how well clients could find basic information on the library home page, like opening hours and the number of items they could borrow.

2009 tests were recorded using Camtasia Studio for Mac. This is the first time that this client-centred technique has been employed at the library, providing an additional insight into how clients access library resources and information.

The library website is at the frontline of a shifting technological landscape. As such, it remains a work in progress: usability testing and direct feedback from clients enables us to be innovative, relevant, and receptive to new technologies and the varying needs of our clients. Together with the introduction of new generation learning spaces, the library website remains a critical resource that supports our staff and students’ teaching, research, and learning endeavours.

For more information about usability testing at Deakin University Library, watch out for Kat Clancy and Michelle Watson’s presentation at the VALA 2010 Conference.

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I listen, I learn, iPods

Ernest Hemingway once wrote, “I like to listen. I have learned a great deal from listening carefully. Most people never listen.” Though it is unlikely Hemingway had cause to listen to biomedical lectures or derived great learning from hearing interviews with authors from the New England Journal of Medicine, nevertheless his wry observation remains true for the clinician: listening can result in great learning.

As compared with reading, listening has benefits of particular relevance to the busy clinician. The wide availability and low cost of good quality digital recording devices and the popularity of podcasting have led to an abundance of informational and educational audio material being made available via the internet. Undoubtedly, some of this is of dubious quality, however medical colleges, educational institutions, community organisations, and research institutes are increasingly publishing high quality material in this format.

The fact remains that appropriately useful podcasts are not necessarily easy for clinicians to access. Not everyone has an MP3 player and listening at a desktop PC is not ideal. Podcast feeds often include unnecessary or peripheral materials, while searching for files to download takes time and it can be frustratingly difficult to isolate what is needed. The Toowoomba Hospital Library has embarked on a novel approach to capture and disseminate targeted audio material for clinicians in an attempt to eliminate these barriers.

The library began with the purchase of ten Apple iPod 1GB shuffles. Each iPod was assigned to one of the clinical subject areas included in the rotations undertaken by the resident medical officers at the hospital: Anaesthetics; Emergency Medicine; Internal Medicine; Mental Health; Obstetrics and Gynaecology; Oncology and Palliative Care; Orthopaedics; Paediatrics; Renal and Cardiac; and Surgery. The iPods were then loaded with relevant audio files found by library staff. Most of the files were found through searching freely available websites, though some were purchased through the dedicated CME vendor Audio Digest. The files include lectures and debates from conferences and meetings of professional societies; journal issue summaries and interviews with article authors; interviews with prominent physicians about their research interests; continuing medical education podcasts; and radio broadcasts. All information selected is aimed at the practising clinician and much of it is equally valuable and accessible for nursing and allied health staff.

The iPods are available to registered library clients for a two week period. Users are asked to fill in a brief online survey and the feedback received has been overwhelmingly positive. Staff have appreciated the immediacy and flexibility of the iPods, as well as the opportunity to obtain information relevant to their practice that they otherwise may have missed. The subject specific nature of the iPods has ensured staff have not had to negotiate unnecessary content.

An Access database has also been constructed and populated with metadata for each of the MP3 files included. This not only helps library staff keep track of what has been downloaded, but allows the generation of descriptive lists so clients can select their own playlist. The MP3 files making up this playlist can then be transferred to a client’s own player or burned to CDs which the client can keep. As well, stemming from this initial service, library staff have subsequently been asked to source further audio information on areas of particular interest to clients (eg mentoring and preceptorship), or to provide a list of relevant websites clients can explore themselves.

The project is still in its infancy, and further refinement will come through liaison between the library and the clinical community. Nevertheless, initial reception of the iPods has justified the library’s belief that audio material, shrewdly selected and disseminated, can be an important component of clinician learning and development. If you are engaged in similar efforts or would simply like to learn more about this project, the authors are happy to share any insights they have.

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Taking it to the streets – emergingtechnologies@Murdoch

In 2007 Murdoch University Library’s Emerging Technologies Specialist, Kathryn Greenhill, introduced library staff to the 23 Things, a selection of web 2.0 tools. Staff explored these tools and considered the impact they were having on libraries and library services by completing a new Thing each week and then reflecting on it in their blogs.

In 2009 Kathryn worked with the university’s teaching and learning staff to offer a similar program for the wider university community as part of the Academic Work Matters workshops (http://www.tlc.murdoch.edu.au/asd/docs/workmatters.html). This program, titled ‘Web 2.0: Easier, faster, friendlier’, covered 14 Things and was offered over 6 weeks from mid June to late July.

Participants could enrol in one or more of the weekly one-and-a-half hour sessions, or attend the two intensive half-day sessions. The response to the program was overwhelming, with sessions booked out within days. About 60 participants enrolled, some for just one or two sessions and some for more. At the end of the program 17 people had attended every workshop in the series. Participants at the half-day sessions were asked both before and after these workshops how they currently felt about each Thing. The responses showed that familiarity and confidence with the Things increased. Participants indicated that they would be now more likely to use research tools like Zotero and LibX. Self-reported competence and confidence increased in all areas, even those like web-based email where staff had presumed that participants would be already competent.

Written feedback was extremely positive about the usefulness of the course content, enjoyment of the classes and competence of the staff presenters. Several participants felt that the course should be offered again.

Feedback from participating library staff showed that the program raised the profile of the library as a place to learn about technology, improved team teaching skills and technology teaching skills for library staff involved, improved skills at creating online content for library staff involved, and encouraged people who are not regular library users to use our services.

The program also created an online resource about new technologies for the university community.

Where to from here?

The program showed us that participants from all age groups can benefit from immersion in new technologies, regardless of whether they continued using the new technologies. The program broadened horizons and allowed staff and students to approach traditional problems in new ways.

Plans are afoot to reintroduce the program in 2010 with the possibility of two streams: one focused on postgraduate students and the other on staff, and tailoring the program in each demographic.

By its very nature emerging technology is fluid, and even during the program web tools can change (just ask us about creating multiple Gmail accounts from the same IP address).

For more information see http://www.slideshare.net/katejf/what-we-learnt-2116281

Thanks to Kathryn Greenhill and Kate Freedman (in absentia).

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It’s not enough to be good, they also have to like you: why libraries need to think about usability

In the two years between 2006 and 2008, Swinburne Library users’ ratings of the library catalogue dropped noticeably, despite no changes having been made to the catalogue. The only possible reason for this drop is our users’ increasing expectation that we provide modern, user-friendly, and attractive user interfaces – which our 25 year-old catalogue, replaced in early 2010, definitely was not.

This expectation is reflected more widely; information seekers are no longer content to use information systems that require the help of a librarian, and the fractured nature of library resources has been a source of confusion and frustration. Trends toward the use of Google have been heralded by some commentators as heralding an age of stupidity; the reality is that the majority of information seekers are ‘satisficers’—they are happy with the easiest way to find answer to their information need, even if it isn’t the best one. Despite the fact that libraries are now only rarely the first port of call for information seekers, libraries are still well-respected as sites of authoritative, trustworthy information.

So how can we reconcile information seekers’ frustrations with library systems and their respect for library information resources? One commonly-used approach is library training, which can ameliorate some of the problems with library interfaces, but reaches only those who attend the training. Another approach is help text provided either within a system or as supplementary material, but this only reaches the maximum 3-4% of users who actually read it.

Here at Swinburne, we have taken an additional, alternative approach to helping users with our information resources: usability. I am a full time usability analyst at Swinburne, and it is my role to ensure, insofar as it is possible to do so, that the software and services we offer our users are usable. Usability implies a number of factors: consistency with users’ other experiences (for example, search services providing good relevance ranking, like Google does); consistency with the context of the software or service (in our case fitting in with the Swinburne website); speaking the users’ language (i.e. avoiding jargon); and user autonomy (i.e. avoiding the need for help text or librarian assistance as much as possible).

It is my role to assess how the software and services we offer fit in with these factors, both through user testing, and by supporting decision-making using the literature and my training and academic background in usability. In the past three years at Swinburne I have surveyed our users about terminology; been involved in customising Swinburne Research Bank (http://researchbank.swinburne.edu.au) to reflect usability concerns; and, most recently, assisted at every stage of the selection and implementation of our new ILMS to ensure the outcome is the most usable system possible.

It’s no longer enough to have the best information, or the system that allows the most search flexibility: library systems must be usable if they are to meet our users’ expectations and convince users that library information resources are a viable option. At Swinburne we are committed to usability, and we believe this commitment will serve us well as we make decisions about new technologies and services into the future.

Dana McKay
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Thanks to Kathryn Greenhill and Kate Freedman (in absentia).
**Adopting e-learning technologies at Monash University Library**

Monash University Library has eight libraries spread across a number of campuses in Victoria. There are also two overseas campus libraries in Malaysia and South Africa and altogether the student population is approaching 60,000. The library is responsible for increasing the level of information literacy, as well as engaging students in improving their learning skills. Furthermore, there is a multitude of student cohorts and individual study units that impact upon the library’s commitments in learning and teaching. These factors present challenges, such as minimal class contact time, customised learning content for individual units, optional attendance, high volume of face-to-face sessions and reduced opportunities for students who cannot attend the sessions.

This article describes how library staff are empowered to use technology as a partial solution to provide increased and more flexible access to information literacy and learning skills programs and content.

**Providing flexible learning content**

Instead of relying on external vendors and/or specialist multimedia developers, which would be too costly and time-consuming, Monash University Library is taking steps to empower its staff to develop e-learning content. However, high-end technological tools, costly development time, high maintenance, low levels of exposure to e-learning pedagogy, and other logistical constraints make it difficult for staff to provide effective e-learning products. For these reasons, the library provides e-learning pedagogical guidance, templates, software training, and procedures to support staff.

In this pragmatic approach, the unique attributes of each learning situation are assessed and a solution recommended. The solution may range from highly interactive collaborative modules incorporating web 2.0 technologies to step-by-step drill and practice style software simulations, which library staff may develop themselves, or may create in collaboration with other library or academic staff.

Two of the technologies to create and deliver e-learning content currently being trialled are LibGuides and Adobe Captivate 4.

**LibGuides and Captivate**

LibGuides offers librarians and learning skills advisers the ability to create subject pages (websites) and tailor them to suit the learning skills and information research needs of their student cohorts. These sites have the potential to be more than the current standard subject guides. Staff can incorporate various multimedia formats and web 2.0 tools such as comments and voting. There is an intention to blend information literacy and learning skills content, and the flexibility afforded by LibGuides enables the use of common or generic elements in multiple places, as well as tailored content specific to a faculty or subject. Another of the attractions of LibGuides is the ability to use tabs across the top of the page, enabling easy-to-follow page navigation.

The library has initiated a trial phase and implemented a LibGuides checklist and template to assist staff to effectively manage the creation and quality assurance processes.

Adobe Captivate 4 is a rapid development tool, reducing reliance on highly skilled multimedia developers and programmers that are usually required for creating e-learning content. Captivate enables the creation of interactive simulations, as well as other e-learning activities and is continuously evolving to include more functionality, but does not yet have the flexibility of high-end tools such as Adobe Flash. Nonetheless, it puts the power in the hands of staff and also works well with other tools such as Flash and graphics applications. In addition, staff can place published Captivate learning content wherever they need it: in LibGuides, in learning management systems, or even as a link in a face-to-face class. This content can then be accessed later by off-campus students and students who could not attend the classes, as well as for ongoing practice.

The library has embarked on creating a number of templates to help staff create their own learning content, to provide consistency in look and feel and functionality, and to move closer to providing active learning situations for students. These templates include software simulation type activities that are interactive and require student input, as well as more conventional self-review quiz type activities.

**Early Conclusions**

While still early in the process, staff report that there are many steps to follow to arrive at a good e-learning outcome. Coming to grips with new software in a time-intensive workplace is challenging, but the templates and procedures help to get them on their way. A number of high quality learning interactions are starting to emerge and some should be ready for student uptake in the first semester of 2010.

**Steven Yates**

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Return to contents
In 2007 Swinburne University Library was looking for a computer booking system to both improve access to its computers and equity of usage. At that time, if a student was lucky enough to find a free computer in the library, then there was no limit as to how long they could use it for. Everyone else was forced to stand in queues and wait an indeterminate amount of time until a computer was free. In a library that was getting busier each year, and where the queues for computers were getting longer and longer, it was evident that something needed to be done. After evaluating a few products, it was decided to trial a British computer booking program called MyPC, tested first on a few student computers at the Hawthorn campus, then rolled out across the Hawthorn and Prahran libraries in 2008. By the end of the first year however, it was evident that the program had achieved only partial success.

The program had been successful in limiting the amount of time that students could stay on a computer, but it had not worked as a means of enabling students to plan and book computers in advance. Even though the demand for computers had increased yet again, by the end of the year there had only been 3000 advanced bookings – well under expectation.

In early 2009 an opportunity was identified to use the MyPC program to also manage the student room bookings. The unforeseen benefit of this was the dramatic way this expansion helped to better manage the ever-increasing demand on the library’s computers. In the last year the number of computer bookings has increased by more than 700%. By encouraging students to use the program for booking the meeting rooms, they have become more familiar with the program and consequently are now more comfortable in using it to also book and plan their use of the computer resources.

In stark contrast with the experience of using the program solely for computer bookings, this expansion proved to be an immediate success with over 1100 room bookings in the first month and, by May this figure had jumped to 2500 room bookings. Prior to the expansion, the Service Desk areas had been managing the room bookings by using large A3 booking sheets which were being continually passed back and forth from one staff member to another as rooms were both booked and then checked to determine which rooms the students had booked when they came to collect the keys; a system which inevitably led to numerous errors and the lengthening of queues.

In the first year the rooms have been booked through the system over 15 000 times which has resulted in a significant reduction in staff workload. The booking half is handled by the student themselves with no staff intervention. The collection of keys still requires staff intervention, but importantly can now be managed by multiple staff at the same time. If there are four staff working on the Service Desk, all four can now be checking bookings and handing out keys whereas previously this was restricted to whoever had the booking sheet. The other major impact has been the reduction in booking errors and consequently there are now virtually no disputes over incorrect bookings.

The major success however was not in the improvement of room bookings, but in the way that it has dramatically improved access to the library’s computers. This past year the computers at the Hawthorn library alone have been used almost 100 000 times more than they were the previous year. In the period of May to Dec 2008, there were 233 919 uses of the Hawthorn library computers; in the same period in 2009 there were 333 503.

Even if the students don’t actually book the computers in advance, the flow on effect is that they are now using the booking program to determine when would be a good time for them to come to the library. If a student at lunchtime can see that all of the computers are booked until 3:00pm, then they won’t need to come in and out of the library all afternoon to check if there is a computer free, or be forced to stand in a queue for half an hour. They instead simply delay their visit until 3:00pm.

The result: 40 000 bookings of rooms and computers, 100 000 extra uses of the computers (or a 43% increase on 2008), no significant increase in door count (roughly 10%) and a reduction in queues everywhere.

Richard Neville, Mitchell Librarian, State Library

Jean Arnot
MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP 2010

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The annual Jean Arnot Memorial Fellowship honours Jean Fleming Arnot (1903–1995) MBE, FLAA, who had a distinguished career of 47 years in librarianship and was a pioneer of equal pay and women’s rights.

The fellowship is funded by a generous donation from the National Council of Women in New South Wales Incorporated, and the Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women’s Associations Incorporated.

The fellowship is awarded to a female librarian or student of librarianship for an outstanding paper of no more than 5000 words on any aspect of librarianship. An award of $1000 will be presented to the winner at the annual Jean Arnot Memorial Luncheon to be held at Parliament House, Sydney, on Friday 21 May 2010. Entries for the fellowship close on 19 April 2010 and should be submitted to: Richard Neville, Mitchell Librarian, State Library of NSW, Macquarie Street Sydney NSW 2000

Further information: Ph: (02) 9273 1478 Email: rneville@sl.nsw.gov.au

For conditions of entry and application forms: www.sl.nsw.gov.au/about/awards/arnot.html
Digital photo frames – on the spot promotion

Digital Photo Frames are an increasingly popular way of sharing and displaying photos, but Coffs Harbour City Library has recently taken the idea one step further, using the compact professional image display as a promotional tool within the library.

While flyers, newsletters, noticeboard displays, and now e-news all provide valuable opportunities, we live in a very visual world, where our message can be easily overshadowed and lost.

Thanks to NSW Public Libraries Learning 2.0 program, it was with increased awareness that we approached the promotion of our children’s Summer Reading Club for 2009/2010, looking for a visual display to catch the attention of not only the children, but also their parents.

We had chosen the Wild West as our interpretation of the Read on the wild side! theme, and staff member Amanda Williams created a PowerPoint presentation, complete with animated cowboys and cowgirls to explain the details of our program. We had envisaged running this via a laptop and data projector in the children’s area of the library, but when time came to present the display, the safety issue of cords, computers, and unattended equipment came to light, and viability was questioned.

We were very pleased to come up with a solution, borrowed from Bayside Library Service in Melbourne, and the feedback from the community has shown the idea to be one that we will continue to use for other events.

The PowerPoint screens have been saved as individual JPG files and are run as a continuous display on a Digital Photo Frame. The effect is the same as if it was the PowerPoint presentation! Once we could see the positive impact of this very eye catching idea, we also saved the PowerPoint images onto a disc to be played in the DVD drive of the wall-mounted television in the children’s section. While children are browsing or reading the information is rolling on the screen. We have seen this work on many levels, providing opportunities for conversations between staff, children, and parents.

This simple method of file transfer to JPG format and display on the photo frame proved a winner for our purposes. It was an easy way to create and present up-to-date visual messages to promote our library services. A Digital Photo Frame, positioned where people are attended to at the Circulation Desk has provided us with an instant promotional display, which is both space saving and effective.

Judy Atkinson
Library Programs Officer
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Community praise for 21st century libraries

Public libraries in Australia are always seeking to broaden their services to support their communities. I write as an innovator of one of these new technologies: yourtutor by Tutoring Australasia. In just five years, more than 300 Australian public libraries have adopted yourtutor with the aim to engage with their communities even further – connecting with the next generation of library users, as well as supporting parents, carers, and teachers at the same time.

The only electronic service of its kind in Australia, yourtutor connects students to real people who are experts in school curricula. Getting ‘stuck’ with homework is no longer an impossible hurdle for students and their parents, thanks to the public libraries in Australia – and now in New Zealand – who, in 2009 alone, provided more than 21 000 hours of free primary, secondary, and tertiary tutoring to local families.

Importantly, while 21st century libraries adopt new and changing technologies – the goal of providing equitable access to learning resources remains constant.

“...is the best homework help service I've ever used! Thank you very much.”

Northern Territory Library

“...it helps when mum and dad and teachers are not around to help with English essays! Thanks to the library!”

Year 11 student, City of Canning Libraries, WA

“...the wild side...”

Year 8, Central Coast, NSW

"I love this service. I can get help online, and it’s free. Awesome.”

Year 10 student, Geelong Regional Library Corporation, VIC

"Thank you to the librarians for this help with my schoolwork. I enjoy learning with an online tutor it's like having a personal tutor with you, even after dinner. And we even have a whiteboard. I love that idea." 

Year 11 student, City of Canning Libraries, WA

"...Engaging and fun, very helpful. Thanks!" 

Year 9 student, Bayside Library Service, Melbourne

"...it has really helped..." 

Year 10 student, City of Canning Libraries, WA

"...The best homework help service I’ve used. Love it..." 

Year 10 student, City of Canning Libraries, WA

"...the wild side..." 

Year 8 student, Bayside Library Service, Melbourne

"...helped me through a tough time..." 

Year 10 student, City of Canning Libraries, WA

"...very helpful..." 

Year 10 student, City of Canning Libraries, WA

"...the only service I know of that does it well..." 

Year 10 student, City of Canning Libraries, WA

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Under the dome

Stephen King
Hodder General, 2009
ISBN: 9780340992579
RRP: $34.99

King’s latest novel generates the usual quota of bloodthirsty deaths and characters with sickening personal habits, yet the mayhem produces some thought-provoking themes, not anticipated by this first time King reader. There is an element of Lord of the Flies as the dome isolates a dysfunctional community from civilising forces. Corrupted government exploits the paranoia of its citizens to seize absolute power while ignoring the inevitable catastrophe confronting them.

Against these forces of greed are ranged a small, motley crew, lead by Barbie, a blow-in Iraqi war veteran. Barbie’s concern is surviving the dome; the town powers are concerned with continuing habits of illicit drug manufacture and blackmail. As the physical quality of life deteriorates, so does society. When the doped-out overseer of the manufacturing operation decides to a more terrifying force.

Everyone has tales of Christmas times past, however the reminiscences of Augusten Burroughs will most likely surpass all, real or imaginary. In this collection of stories, an embarrassing childhood gives way to cunning teenage manipulation and adult alcoholic stupor, before concluding with the power that loved ones can have over our behaviour. Also the need to follow recipes when making gingerbread houses, as opposed to the gingerbread slum dwellings our narrator ultimately created.

It is proof that it doesn’t matter if you cannot tell Santa from Jesus, Christmas is still there and, whether you observe it or not, it can truly account for some memorable experiences – and some embarrassingly funny ones too.

Deborah Mould
debmould@yahoo.com

You better not cry

Augusten Burroughs
Hachette, 2009
ISBN: 9780733621437
RRP: $31.95

Everyone has tales of Christmas times past, however the reminiscences of Augusten Burroughs will most likely surpass all, real or imaginary. In this collection of stories, an embarrassing childhood gives way to cunning teenage manipulation and adult alcoholic stupor, before concluding with the power that loved ones can have over our behaviour. Also the need to follow recipes when making gingerbread houses, as opposed to the gingerbread slum dwellings our narrator ultimately created.

This is definitely not your traditional feel good Christmas round-up of stories. For me, the power of the writing and the range of emotions I felt, from trying not to laugh out loud while reading on the train to wondering why a child psychologist wasn’t called in, made this more memorable than ‘nice’ books on the subject ever have been.

It is proof that it doesn’t matter if you cannot tell Santa from Jesus, Christmas is still there and, whether you observe it or not, it can truly account for some memorable experiences – and some embarrassingly funny ones too.

Deborah Mould
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Stripping bare the body: politics violence war

Mark Danner
Black Inc., 2009
ISBN: 9781863954327
RRP: $39.95

Mark Danner’s extraordinary account of the last 20 years of American policy and power reveal a flawed and frightening world of ignorance, violence, and torture. This is a big book at 563 pages plus notes and index, daunting in size and topic. The revelations are both distressing and disturbing as they clarify what has really occurred ‘behind the scenes’ of international conflicts. Danner reveals death and torture in Haiti, Bosnia, Iraq, and Afghanistan as increasingly acceptable to post Cold War governments.

Despite the grimness of the subject, the writing is always interesting and lucid. It is quite confusing at times trying to keep the various protagonists, policies, battles, and coups, but this does not distract from the overall theme that through times of conflict and great upheaval the true nature of a society is revealed and for all its power and might, the ideals and morality of the United States of America and the western world have been and are still being challenged and found wanting. Power creates its own reality.

This is a book for those who are fascinated by international politics and the dynamics of history in the making.

Kathy Leong
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The slightly skewed life of Toby Chrysler

Paul Collins
Celapene Press, 2009
ISBN: 9780975074244
RRP: $14.95

Toby Chrysler’s life is “slightly skewed”. Not only has his mother disappeared, but his father seems at a loss to be able to explain what has happened to her, whether to protect Toby from the truth because of his existing issues (Toby has some type of condition that makes his ability to relate to other people difficult) or to support the story’s premise. This then starts Toby on his quest to find her.

The main character’s best friend’s quirky trait is misquoting well known proverbs and quotes, which become more common and convoluted throughout the book. This could become confusing for younger readers but the author has provided a glossary of the correct terms at the end of the book.

From the point of view of the target audience of eight to twelve year olds the story could be seen as fast moving and captivating. It has many twists and turns that will keep the audience interested to the end.

Donna Reid
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Meltdown

Ben Elton
Transworld Publishers, 2009
ISBN: 9780593061930
RRP: $32.95

Ben Elton books serve two purposes: they make you laugh, and they break down complicated issues into stories with interesting characters. They might not be completely accurate (his first novel, Stark, predicted complete environmental breakdown by the mid-1990s) but you’ll walk away with a better idea of how things work.

Meltdown focuses on the Global Financial Crisis in England, by telling the story of Jimmy, the son of a banker and an unemployed father of two. Through flashbacks, the novel shows the rise and fall of Jimmy’s career – how he fluked his way to the top and the events that led to him being thrown down to the wolves below.

I’d recommend Meltdown for anyone who, like me, was aware of the GFC, but had little idea as to its genesis or the meaning of most of the buzzwords. The terms are explained so smoothly that it’s not until after that you realise how much you’ve learned.

Meltdown is not Elton’s best work, but it doesn’t disappoint. Whether it’ll still be as enjoyable in 10 years time, I’m not sure, but at the moment it’s educational, a good read, and delivers lots of laughs.

Peter C Hayward
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Going rogue: an American life

Sarah Palin
HarperCollins, 2009
ISBN: 9780061939891
RRP: $39.99

Like most books by living politicians, Going Rogue is an exercise in shameless self-promotion. On page after page, Palin tells the reader just how awesome she is. Only her occasional veering into self-pity interrupts Palin’s self-congratulation, but this veering grows more frequent as the book continues and Palin attempts to blame everyone else for her problems and failings. It’s all the fault of her political enemies, whether those are to be

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found in the “liberal media elite” or the mysterious higher ups in the Republican Party who apparently have the power to make presidential and vice-presidential candidates dance like puppets.

To make matters worse, Palin’s prose style is repetitive. Going Rogue is dominated by clichés and expressions of Alaskan patriotism, and although Palin constantly mentions “the issues” and the need for practical politics, her book is conspicuously lacking in anything but the most general details of policy.

As an attempt to set the record straight, the book is interesting – especially considering how many of its claims have already been disproven – but as a reading experience, it is neither enjoyable nor particularly educational. Only the historical interest of it would justify the purchase of this book.

The littlest pirate and the hammerheads

Sherryl Clark, illustrated by Tom Jellett

Penguin Group Australia, 2010
ISBN: 9780143503774
RRP: $16.95

Twitterature

Alexander Aciman and Emmett Rensin

Penguin, 2009
ISBN:9780141047713
RRP: $16.95

Twitterature is the brainchild of two 19-year-old students at the University of Chicago, who have condensed over sixty classics into a series of 140 character tweets.

The authors interpret poetry and prose with equal fervour. The collection ranges from Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales to Dostoevsky’s Crime and Punishment and Coleridge’s Rime of the Ancient Mariner. Shakespeare receives special attention in the collection, with the inclusion of Romeo and Juliet, The Tempest, King Lear, Macbeth, and Hamlet. Purists will undoubtedly recoil in horror at the tweet, “2borm2be”.

In addition to plot, the authors condense some of the great literary characters into one tweet or part thereof. A tweet from F Scott Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby, for example, describes the title character in the first four words, “Gatsby is so emo”.

Twitterature will divide audiences. Some will consider it an inspired, contextually relevant reinterpretation of the great works, while others will consider it a sacrilegious affront to the classical canon. Regardless of which category you fall into, I highly recommend reading it, if for no other purpose than to develop your understanding of the art of tweeting.

The Levels

Sean Cregan

Headline, 2009
ISBN: 9780755357857
RRP: $32.99

The Levels is the kind of book that would make a perfect movie: jam-packed with violence, death, disease, and corporate conspiracy. Throw in an ex-cop, ex-CIA agent, teenage assassin, serial killer, and some mysterious lurking figures, and there you have it. But this book is so much better than your average blockbuster.

It is set in the levels, a failed housing development project, abandoned by the authorities and left to the homeless, destitute, addicts, and criminals. The only law in the levels is Shadow and his Furies, who use the Book to deal out justice to the people. Into this walks Nate Turner, ex-CIA agent thought to have been murdered outside his home. He meets Ghost, one of Shadow’s Furies and with ex-cop Kate Friedman, they expose Sirius Bio-life’s cover-up of medical experimentation on the residents of the levels.

Told from both Nate’s and Kate’s perspective, The Levels moves along at an increasingly frenzied pace, which fits perfectly with the events in the story. There are many deaths, all of which are violent and can make reading a little uncomfortable at times. However, the plot is a cracker and the writing excellent, which more than makes up for sometimes gratuitous violence.

Darkfall

Isobelle Carmody

Penguin, 2009
ISBN: 9780140278484
RRP: $24.95

Darkfall, the first novel of the Legendsong trilogy, promises a captivating, if demanding, read. Stamped with Carmody’s dark and enthralling brand of fantasy, this is the best kind of teenage fiction. Avoiding the hackneyed clichés and absolutes common in fantasy novels, Darkfall offers believable heroines in a landscape of moral ambiguity.

Even before they are swept separately into the foreign world of Keltor, twin sisters Glynn and Ember feel adrift. Ember is dying, Glynn, while attentive to her sister’s needs, lacks purpose. All changes on Keltor. This is a realm of otherworldly powers, where stones reveal the future, men walk on wind, and human virtue seems less common than mystical talent. Somehow, Glynn and Ember find themselves caught up in the web of prophecies woven by the soulweavers of the mysterious island, Darkfall.

Darkfall is a testament to Carmody’s depthless imagination. As Glynn and Ember are thrown to opposite ends of Keltor, a veritable world of geographical novelty and political intrigue emerges. Just as absorbing is Carmody’s perspicuous exploration of human vice and virtue. Ultimately, it is Glynn’s gritty courage and Ember’s latent fighting spirit that set them apart in a world lapsing into chaos and despair.

From page 30
CUBE DISPLAY SYSTEM

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Rules of Meeting

1. Motions for discussion at the AGM are to be forwarded in writing to the ALIA Executive Director, ALIA, PO Box 6335, Kingston ACT 2604 by Friday 5 March 2010. Motions should be signed by the movers either individually or on behalf of a division/group of the Association. All such motions received will be published in the AGM agenda notice in the March & April issue of inCite and on ALIAnet.
2. All motions to be put to the AGM must appear in this published agenda.
3. The only items that may be raised under general business are those of an informal nature, or those that are within the scope of the business already laid down. Motions of a substantial nature relating to items not covered in the notice of the meeting will not be allowed.
4. If any item of urgency arises which is not within the business of the meeting, the Chairperson has the power to accept it without notice or rule that notice must be given.
5. All motions additional to those on the printed agenda and in accordance with rule 4, and amendments, shall be in writing, signed by the movers (forms will be provided) and delivered to the Chair.
6. When addressing the Chair, the person desiring recognition will properly identify themselves, giving his or her name and affiliations. Only ALIA members may speak.
7. Debate shall be limited to three minutes for each speaker; no speaker may have the floor twice on the same question until all who wish to speak have spoken.
8. Proxies. To be valid, proxies must be in the form set out in the Constitution item 8.2 and be in the hands of the ALIA Executive Director, ALIA, PO Box 6335, Kingston ACT 2604, email address: enquiry@alia.org.au, by 6:00pm AEST on 17 May 2010. Proxy forms must not specify how the holder of the proxy is to vote on specific areas. A proxy must also be a member. A form is available from ALIA National Office or on ALIAnet at http://www.alia.org.au/governance/
9. By general consent, if there be no objection, or by a two-thirds vote, any rule governing the debate may be suspended.
10. The Chair's rulings on procedural matters may not be debated. The reference for rules and their interpretation by the Parliamentarian will be Joske's The law and procedure at meetings in Australia, 10th ed, 2007. A Parliamentarian will be appointed to advise the Chair on procedures and to assist in determining the results of a poll of members present if necessary.

All members are invited to attend. RSVP Jenna Walter, ALIA National Office, ph 02 6215 8222; jenna.walter@alia.org.au
Educating our future profession: towards cohesive and sustainable library and information science education in Australia

The project aims to establish a consolidated and holistic picture of the Australian library and information science profession and identify how its future education and training can be mediated in a cohesive and sustainable manner.

The project is being lead by Associate Professor Helen Partridge from Queensland University of Technology, and will be undertaken in conjunction with a project team that includes 11 institutions representing the broad spectrum and diversity of university and vocational library and information science education in Australia. Participating institutions include Queensland University of Technology (Project Leader), Charles Sturt University, Curtin University of Technology, Edith Cowan University, Monash University, RMIT University, University of Canberra, University of South Australia, University of Tasmania, University of Technology Sydney and Victoria University.

The project commenced in November 2009 and will be undertaken over a period of approximately 12 months. The project is framed around three areas of consideration which represent key stakeholder groups in library and information science education. These areas of consideration are students, employers, and higher education.

The primary objective of the project is to develop a Framework for the Education of the Information Professions in Australia. This framework will provide guidance on how best to reposition and reshape Australian library and information science education to ensure it remains dynamic, sustainable and responsive to the evolving information age and produces graduates with the necessary attributes for professional practice in the rapidly changing 21st century. The project also seeks to provide a medium through which LIS professionals and educators can identify opportunities for collaboration and communication, and to foster increased engagement between LIS educators and other parts of the industry in the education of the next generation of professionals.

A website has also been established to provide information about the project and to facilitate the sharing, discussion and dissemination of LIS education issues in Australia. Visit www.liseducation.org.au and subscribe to the project's RSS feed for regular information including news, events, progress reports, and project findings. Questions, comments, or requests for further information about the project can also be directed to Associate Professor Helen Partridge at h.partridge@qut.edu.au.

Helen Partridge (Project Leader) & Christine Yates (Project Manager) h.partridge@qut.edu.au cl.yates@qut.edu.au

ALIA would like to acknowledge and thank Ian McCallum for his dedication, enthusiasm, and commitment in his position as Editor of the Australian Library Journal from 2007 to 2009. We wish him the very best in his future endeavours.

Call for Expressions of Interest

Members, Editorial Board: The Australian Library Journal

ALIA is seeking expressions of interest for up to seven members of the Australian Library Journal Editorial Board from suitably qualified and experienced persons.

The Journal is published quarterly and covers a wide range of professional interests in the sector. Published by the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), the Journal is now in its 55th year. It is the flagship publication of the Association and the Editorial Board will be expected to be familiar with its evolution and with ALIA's objectives, programs, range of interests, and place in the LIS sector.

Editorial Board members will maintain ALIA membership, and will be involved in the overall policy and development of the journal, including determining the broad character of particular journal issues, assisting in the peer review process, and contributing ideas, themes and possible authors. Communication is via email and meetings are via teleconference. Membership of the Editorial Board is on an honorary basis.

Interested people should email their expression of interest to Sue Hutley, ALIA Executive Director, sue.hutley@alia.org.au. For further information, contact Sue Hutley, ph 02 6215 8215.

Closing date for expressions of interest is March 19 2010.

Call for Expressions of Interest

Editor: The Australian Library Journal

The Editorial Board of The Australian Library Journal is seeking expressions of interest in the position of Editor from suitably qualified and experienced persons.

The Journal is published quarterly and covers a wide range of professional interests in the sector. Published by the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), the Journal is now in its 55th year. It is the flagship publication of the Association and the Editor will be expected to be familiar with its evolution and with ALIA's objectives, programs, range of interests, and place in the LIS sector.

Experience in the professional field, in serial publications, and as an editor are important. Applicants should briefly address the selection criteria (indicating editorial experience) and supply the contact details for two referees. A maximum of 400 words outlining their thoughts on possible editorial directions for ALJ and its relationship to ALIA's other publications would also be acceptable as part of the application.

Further information on the duties and responsibilities of the editor and the roles of the Editorial Board and the Association, and copies of the selection criteria, is available from Sue Hutley, Executive Director, ALIA, PO Box 6335, Kingston, ACT 2603, ph 02 6215 8215, sue.hutley@alia.org.au.

Closing date for expressions of interest is March 19 2010.
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American Psychological Association
ACT gets new ‘smart’ library

The Canberra community received an early Christmas present on 17 December 2009 – a new library.

In May 2009, the ACT Government allocated funding in the budget to create a new library in Canberra’s inner south: $890 000 in capital construction funding for the 2009–2010 financial year, and $3.29 million in operational funding over four years. A commitment was made to open the library before Christmas the same year. This deadline was met, with the library completed in six months, a period of time which must be close to a record.

Kingston Library, the ACT Public Library’s ninth branch, is located in a shopfront in a popular local shopping precinct. Nearby cafes, restaurants, and shops all contribute to passing traffic and encourage linked trips to the library.

Designed by BVN Architecture, and constructed by Capezio & Co, the library features:

- RFID, including self check out and a smart chute for returns,
- Wireless internet access,
- Public internet PCs,
- An XBOX 360,
- Playaway digital audio books, and
- Two large LCD screens with rotating library information.

The inclusion of RFID ensures Kingston Library is in keeping with the technology installed at other ACT Public Library branches in 2009. Kingston is, however, the first of the libraries to install a smart chute. The smart chute provides increased security by recognising the RFID tag on library items, and unlocking the chute for those items to be returned.

LCD screens are being used instead of traditional noticeboards which have a tendency to become untidy. The attention-grabbing screens require minimal space and promote library services and programs, as well as community information. Mounting one of the screens in the front window of the library also enables the community to access this information when the library is closed.

Discussions are also underway in the hope of adding a bicycle rack and a dog hitching post, for those people who want to ride to the library or call in while walking their dog.

During the first week of operation, a lot of people commented that they were visiting the library for the first time in many years, and there were a number of people who returned on successive days to continue borrowing. On the first Saturday of business, a community day celebration was held with story time, face painting, giveaways, and a roving musician all contributing to the atmosphere of excitement:

It’s like a bookshop you can take home.

I’m impressed with how many books they fitted in, the space is quite deceptive.

Love the location. It’s just so convenient.

Although small in stature, Kingston Library is expected to reach many people. A steady flow of visitors have already been exploring the brand new books, DVDs, magazines and other material, with 2 798 items borrowed and 123 new members registered in the first five days.

With recycled timber floors and exposed brick walls, Kingston Library has been described as having a New York loft feel. Programs including story time, school holiday activities, and a book discussion group are planned, and are expected to add to the contemporary vibe.

We love our funky new smart library and would love you to visit and check it out for yourself.

Sarah Steed
Programs Manager, ACT Library and Information Service
sarah.steed@act.gov.au

How can your organisation do more with less in challenging times, becoming leaner but not meaner?

This question was explored on October 21 2009 at the ALIA Information Science (SA) event, Leaner Not Meaner: Strategies for Improving Services in Difficult Times, held at the University of South Australia City West Library Function Room. Fifteen people listened to speakers from the consulting, corporate, and university fields.

Bob Cother from Cother Consulting introduced the key concepts of lean management and explained how organisations can maximise value creation and eliminate waste, using real world examples from his own experiences as a consultant.

Simon Woodley of ALS Library Services outlined the benefits of outsourcing technical functions for public libraries, such as freeing library staff to concentrate on quality interactions with patrons. Simon’s presentation included valuable tips to help libraries maintain good relationships with suppliers.

Finally, Christine Cother from University of South Australia explained how lean principles could be used to enhance service standards in libraries despite budgetary constraints. Drawing on over 15 years’ experience as a professional librarian, Christine offered engaging examples of how she had used lean approaches to manage organisational change.

Further information about the Leaner Not Meaner presentations can be found at: http://www.alia.org.au/groups/infoscsa/LEANER NOT MEANER.pdf
Libraries with a difference

With the current focus on renewal, refurbishment, and replacement of school libraries in Western Australia, I recently coordinated a day bus trip for teacher librarians, librarians, library technicians, and library officers to view three outstanding refurbished libraries in the Perth metropolitan area.

The day was called: Improve Floor Space & Flexibility in the Library.

Participants boarded a bus and took a tour of the very latest school libraries to:

- Meet the Changers
- Gain an insight into setting goals for library change
- See what, where and how it was all done by the “Changers”
- View the libraries in action

The first stop was to meet Sandra Naude, Head of Library at St Hilda’s Anglican Girls School Library in Mosman Park. Sandra was only too happy for us to visit so she could share the innovative improvements created without the added cost of building a completely new library. Displays on feature walls used school memorabilia photographs enlarged to wallpaper size. Changes in room spaces used glass paneling. Colour was used with great effect to create specific spaces and the existing library had been shelving refurbished. Window spaces and the external garden also reflected some of the interior colours: amazing, creative, inspiring, and of great interest to everyone.

Then we moved on to John Curtin College of the Arts in Fremantle. We were greeted by Iain Aitkinson, Head of Library. John’s library is on two levels and, like most government schools, funding is challenging. Iain wanted to create a café type atmosphere in keeping with the local Fremantle flavour. With the help of all the library staff, the shelving configuration was changed, simple, strategically-placed display shelves purchased or sourced then painted, and banners with inspirational wording highlighting the current display added.

Iain has chosen colours that reflect the local café scene for the interior walls, and purchased new soft chairs to create reading nooks. The downstairs computer section has been reorganised so students can sit at tables next to floor to ceiling windows while working on computers. Great!

Again, everyone was in awe of what had been achieved with very little money to spend, and using the interesting, or perhaps challenging, floor levels with the maximum effect.

Off we went, back on to the bus and stopped off for lunch at the Fremantle Arts Centre.

The day was cold and windy so we ate inside; the food was delicious. Talking, laughing, networking, suddenly it was time to visit the last library for the trip: Fremantle CBC Library. This library was featured in October 2009’s *inCite*: “Back from the future or how to create a 21st century library”. Trevanna Cooper, Teacher Librarian and Christian Thompson, Library Officer, worked together and, well, this library is stunning in its use of space, colour, and light. Everyone was inspired with this library.

Again wallpaper has been used as a feature and coloured carpet tiles, rubber floor coverings, and feature lighting help define the specific areas of the library.

Now, let us see where these creative floor space and flexibility plan success stories lead these visitors in their school libraries in renewal, refurbishment, or replacement in 2010 and on.

Rochelle McDonald
Director, West Coast Library Training
info@westcoastlibrarytraining.com.au
ALIA welcomes members who joined the Association in October 2009 and congratulates our members who have upgraded their qualifications.

**Member to Associate Member**
- Sophie McDonald, NSW
- Kevin Marsh, WA
- Christine Ouslinis, QLD
- Anne Clifford, WA
- Ping Hoon Koh, VIC
- Andrea Phillips, VIC

**Member to Technician**
- Deborah Smith, QLD
- Vasuki Shanmuganathan, NSW
- Kate Bugden, QLD

**New Associate Member**
- Jeannine McCartney-Johnson, WA
- Michelle Carter, QLD
- Linda Gilmore, TAS
- Mark Dudgeon, NSW
- Catherine Conway, WA
- Kellie Ayre, QLD
- Fiona Clark, VIC
- Patrick Lord, QLD
- Violeta Milenkovic, VIC

**New Institutional Member**
- Emerald Group Publishing Limited, VIC
- Commission for Children and Young People, NSW
- National Institute of Dramatic Art, NSW
- South Burnett Libraries, QLD

**New Member**
- Angela Blazevic, VIC

**New Technician**
- Jia Tina Du, QLD
- Felicity Renner, TAS
- Mary Kumvaj, NSW
- Lincoln Kay, WA
- Penelope Morse, NSW
- Jessica Watson, VIC
- Elizabeth Barnard-Brown, SA
- Isti Von Huben, NSW
- Sharon Peterer, SA
- Wendy Stephens, NSW
- Johanna Henwood, NSW
- Luke Waldon, NSW
- Vijaya Spain-Taylor, ACT
- Geraldine MacLean, QLD
- Meaghan McKee, VIC
- Sashi Reddy, VIC

**Readmitting Associate Member**
- Wendy Frerichs, VIC
- Samantha Searle, VIC
- Elisabeth Wheeler, QLD
- Jennifer Wilson, NSW
- Rhonda Cotsell, ACT
- Cynthia Love, VIC

**Readmitting Technician**
- Russell Reinhardt, QLD

**Readmitting Member**
- Catherine Crawford, QLD

**Events**

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**NSW**
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**NT**
Check the events listing online at [http://www.alia.org.au/events/nt.htm](http://www.alia.org.au/events/nt.htm) for events.

**QLD**
15–19 Mar: The Somerset Celebration of Literature International Conference and Writer’s Festival. For more information, contact Somerset College Events Office, events@somerset.qld.edu.au

**VIC**
16 Feb Vic: LT Committee meeting First Committee meeting of 2010. University of Melbourne, 6 pm. RSVPs essential. Contact Kerrie Kelly, ph 03 86647155, kkelly@slv.vic.gov.au.


**TAS**
Check the events listing online at [http://www.alia.org.au/events/tas.htm](http://www.alia.org.au/events/tas.htm) for events.

**VIC**

PD opportunities
For a listing of this month’s PD opportunities, visit the online event listing: [http://www.alia.org.au/events/](http://www.alia.org.au/events/)
Energise>>Enthuse>>Inspire!

i heart science library

At the beginning of 2008, I was an Arts (Communication Studies) graduate picking up casual summer work at my family’s business and wondering how I’d survive in the competitive Perth media scene. Fast-forward one and a half years and I’m now an LIS graduate working in an academic library. A last-minute enrolment in the 2008 graduate information studies course, many of my friends commented on the ‘new direction’ I’d taken with my studies and career. Through my experiences in a brand new academic science library, it’s becoming apparent to me that my Communication Studies background and skills in e-learning and web-based technologies are increasingly useful and relevant in libraries...

The new Science Library at the University of Western Australia (UWA) opened its doors to students on 20th July 2009. With an innovative outlook and design that emphasises access, collaboration, and connections, it’s a great environment for a new librarian to work and learn in. And the library’s users tend to agree. In the opening week, ‘awesome’ seemed to be the standard response from students. By the 3rd of August, the students took their praise online with the creation of a Facebook fan group, “I heart science library”, aimed at “everyone who thinks the science library is the coolest thing since Pokemon cards”. By the 19th of September the group already had 281 members and numbers are steadily growing.

Three weeks later, one enthusiastic library user composed and wrote “the library song” a four-minute ode to the “Scibrary” (as it is affectionately known by students). The song and its accompanying video describe the new library facilities in great detail, with the catchy chorus:

“It’s the new science library…
it’s the place to be!
it’s the new science library…
it sets your inner nerd free!
it’s the new science library…
it’s what libraries are meant to be…”

The song made its debut on Facebook and was added to YouTube on 6 September 2009. Less than two weeks later it had already been viewed 1942 times.

As a new librarian, it’s been an exciting experience to watch the library begin to take on its own identity and culture through the students’ use of social networking sites. With the second stage of the Science Library (complete with café, access grid, and multimedia facilities) scheduled for completion in December 2009, I’m sure first semester 2010 will present further opportunities for exploration of how the library can use new and emerging technologies to support student learning and research. We’re ready, the students are ready, and the foundations have been set for the new Science Library to employ new and emerging technologies to become a collaborative teaching and learning community.

And that’s really “what libraries are meant to be”…

Energise>> Enthuse>> Inspire!

...gives a voice to the new generation of library and information professionals. If you have any suggestions or topics for this column, please contact the column co-ordinator Naomi Doessel, naomidoessel@gmail.com

To see the Science Library “theme song” go to: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBkGc3v7K9Q
Microsoft can find the millions to fund such a sweetener for many many months

Quite a few though displayed a disturbing lack of awareness of how best to use the technology. Several displayed the PDF bloat that I’ve mentioned before, and one from a major government department had apparently been photocopied crookedly. It’s not a good look, and neither was the use of Word 7 by many organisations, necessitating a few more hoops to jump through before you could read their documents.

Something like this

There have been other attempts to do image search on the web - based on similarity to a particular picture - so it’s hard to guess how successful Tineye (http://tineye.com) will be, but in doing a few searches one thing struck me. It’s a handy little way to check if anyone has appropriated your images, because they’ll show up more and more in the search results as the Tineye database grows.

Libraries – now it’s personal

While the relationship has moved on from its first burst of excitement, I’m happy enough with LibraryThing (http://www.librarything.com). It meets my needs for an online personal catalogue and provides a set of interesting forums for discussing all sorts of issues. They also publish a nice little newsletter every month (The State of the Thing) to keep you informed of what’s new. So why would you change? It’s a good question, and one that I don’t have an answer for – even after looking at an Australian offering called Booktagger (http://www.booktagger.com). This one isn’t bad (although the user interface is a little clumsy) but to succeed they need to be better than the competition, not just as good.

Communities – online and other

Many people don’t know who Tim O’Reilly is, but they’ll probably recognise the computer books with the animals on the covers - that’s Tim’s private zoo. We really owe a lot to him, and he deserves all the thanks we can muster. I was thinking about this while reading one of his company’s latest offerings (there’s a free download at http://tinyurl.com/lr692e). It’s Jono Bacon’s The Art of Community: Building the New Age of Participation. Whether you’re into online communities or merely organising a political party, there’s a lot of very useful advice there.

I can hear the harrumphs coming in from everywhere

The Danish Government is reported to be allowing Internet access to high school students during exams (see http://tinyurl.com/ybmnwyn). To someone who remembers using a slide rule – and living through the controversies about whether electronic calculators should be allowed in examination rooms – this is a bit of a shock, but then it depends just what you’re trying to test. If it’s only to see whether you can regurgitate facts, that’s one thing. But if we’re moving to a more information-literate society it makes a lot of sense.

All the news that’s fit to suppress

As interesting as the buzz is that News Corporation is arranging a deal with Microsoft to transfer all its content from Google to Bing, it’s even more entertaining to see all the pundits trying to work out if it’s a wise or crazy move. There is of course the benefit that it’s bound to increase Bing’s market share – if only by a small amount – and Microsoft can find the millions to fund such a sweetener for many many months, but then it’s (to my eye at least) quite anti-competitive and we can expect a lot of activity in that area before the dust settles.

Well, what basket should we put all our eggs into?

Hanging his hat on reports that Wikipedia editors are bailing out in large numbers, Mike Elgan is looking a bit further into the future at http://tinyurl.com/v235yym to ask about the implications of many web 2.0 sites foundering. It’s a valid concern: although I’ve recently been called a pessimist in a blog (Cassandra would have been more flattering, and skeptic more accurate) I do think that we need to keep a realistic eye on the foundations of our 2.0 dreams. Some of the general notions though for safeguarding the future are risible: a government take-over of Second Life for one. Others are more sensible, such as a proposal for government-sponsored URL-shortening service or a video-hosting site. Both ideas have a lot of merit.

She blinded me with Library Science

Among the great time-consumers on the net are the publications known as web comics. The medium allows a great deal of experimentation with drawing techniques, and like all web publishing the barriers to entry are low. I haven’t looked around too much, so there may be some really bad ones, but if you have a bit of free time over the summer try xkcd (http://xkcd.com) or if a story line is more to your taste go to Questionable Content (http://questionablecontent.net/) – part of which is set in a university library – yay!

Don’t forget to visit my blog


Kerry Webb
kwebb@alianet.org.au

Webb’s web

Assertive Submissions

I took the time to read through the submissions that the Government 2.0 Taskforce has received (see http://gov2.net.au/submissions/) because I really wanted to see what people are saying. The good news first: there are many fine ones (including ALIA’s of course). These provide a minimal amount of background about the organisation involved, address the issues that the Taskforce has asked about and don’t grind too many axes. There are also a few that aren’t worth reading, possibly penned by executives whose performance agreements require that they respond to a certain number of enquiries each year, with no regard to relevance and quality. And then there are the submissions from private individuals, which fall into both categories - even the one where much of the text had to be suppressed because of its inappropriate nature.
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