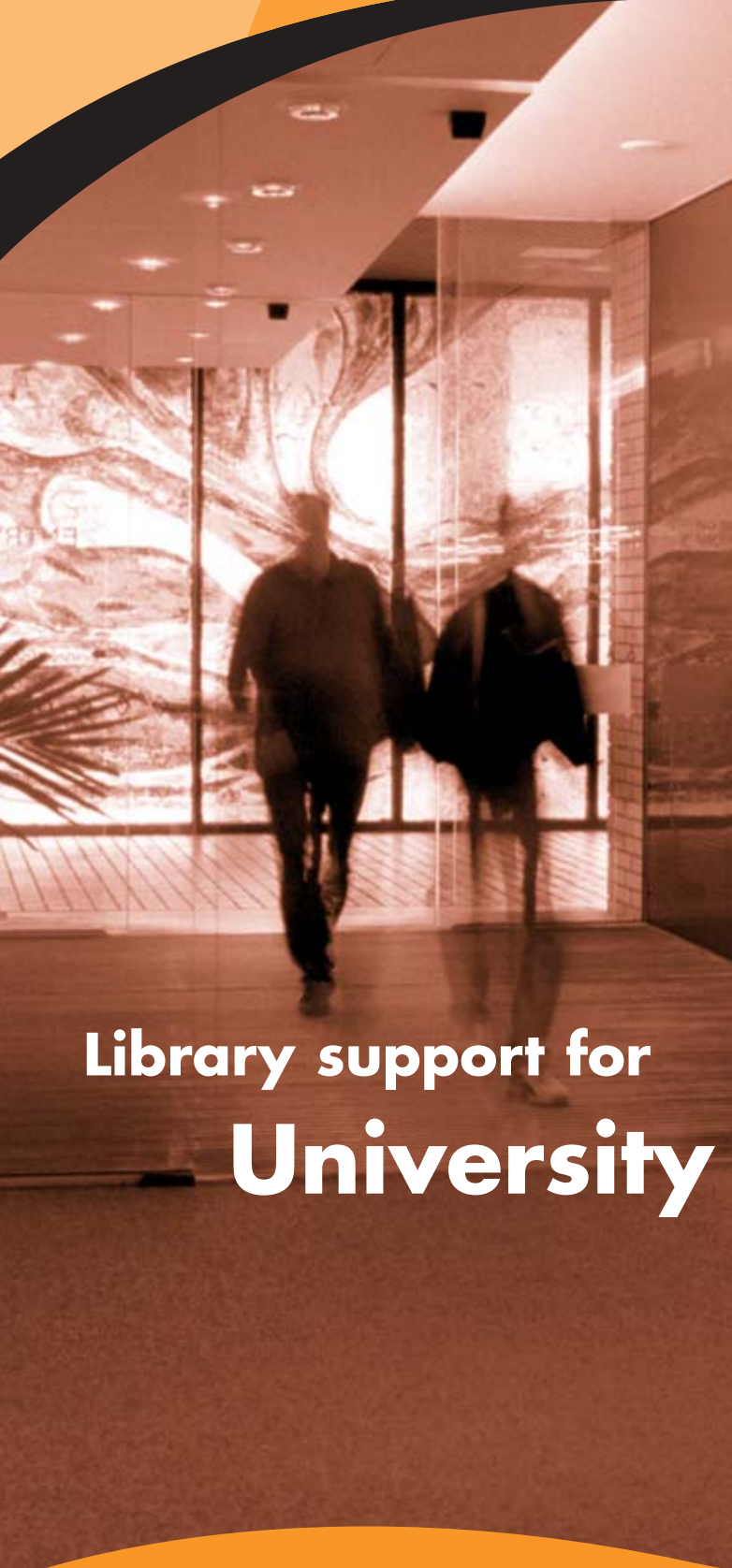




Library News

La Trobe University Library



Library support for University

A major objective of the University, which was a driver in the formulation of the University Strategic Plan, 2006-2010, is to be one of the top 10 ranked universities in Australia.

Consistent with this objective, the library has commenced the development of strategies that will support strongly the stated core business of the University – Learning, Teaching and Research. To ensure that the approach taken will result in a systematic strengthening of the key elements in the library that underpin the core business of the University, the library has conducted an analysis of existing service performance using the nationally-adopted Rodski survey instrument for measuring client satisfaction, and also a range of benchmarking exercises against major Australian universities (including those comprising the Innovative Research Universities Australia, of which La Trobe is a member).

The results from these undertakings have been timely and revealing, and have provided helpful guidance in determining priorities. Both the client satisfaction survey and the benchmarking exercises have identified the need to strengthen the range and depth of scholarly information resources. This is essential, given the commitment of the University to recruit and retain world class researchers in areas of university strength and potential, and to develop and maintain a strong research culture among staff and students.

Over the past few years the library has implemented a 'process improvement program' as part of a continuous improvement strategy. A possible by-product of this, revealed in a recent review of library staffing levels, was a reduction of 13% in staff numbers between 1999 and 2004. During the same period the population of the University (staff and students) increased 20%.

core business

The next few years are likely to see heightened competition between universities, if recent developments are any indication. The University's Strategic Plan provides a framework which, when implemented, should enable it to meet such challenges. It should also result in the library becoming, once again, a centre of excellence in the University.

Professor Earle Gow
University Librarian



Christine Wanklyn, Jill Stokes, Beverley Forsyth, Heather Hulett and Sue Porter at the Carrick Citation awards.

Nursing team receives high accolade

A dedicated group of subject librarians from three campus libraries has been awarded the La Trobe Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning and was presented with the award by the Vice-Chancellor at a special ceremony on May 25 2006.

The University went on to support the team's submission for a Carrick Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning award of \$10,000, which was again successful. We congratulate Beverley Forsyth, Heather Hulett,

Sue Porter, Jill Stokes and Christine Wanklyn on their success.

The team submitted evidence that their Information Literacy for Nurses program contributed to new students' understanding of researching information resources, academic literature, and scholarly writing. It is now in its 4th year of delivery as an integral part of the first-year nursing course at Albury-Wodonga, Bendigo and Bundoora campuses, and has been expanded to Mildura and Shepparton.

Farewell to Liz Burke

Liz Burke joined La Trobe University Library as Reference and Information Services Librarian at the Bundoora Campus in September 2001. Liz participated in strategic planning and developments across the campuses and played a key role in a number of major changes in services at Bundoora, such as the establishment of the telephone enquiry service and the reconfiguration of service points. A significant development has been the introduction of LibXplore, the library's brand name for its implementation of AARLIN, the Australian Academic Research Library Information Network, and she has been the coordinator of this new service initiative.

Liz has made a significant contribution to the library over nearly 5 years. She resigned from the library in June 2006 to take up the appointment of Associate Librarian (Reader Services) at the University of Western Australia, and her colleagues wish her well in her new role and future career.

Barbara Paton, Deputy University Librarian



Recent enhancements

Feedback via email

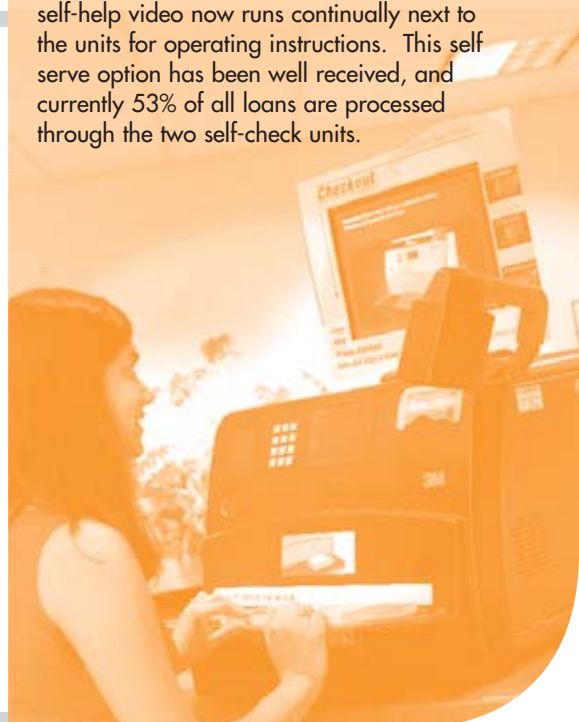
A further avenue for communication with clients was made possible with the launch of the library's new web site in July 2005. Clients can either make suggestions or ask for help from a librarian by filling in an online form on the Ask Us, Tell Us link. No matter what the hour, someone pouring over an essay can send a query, and receive an answer via email. Suggestions are invited and the input provides another way in which we can monitor and respond to the need for improvement. Responses are posted to a View Replies web page for all to read.

Simplifying logins

As the library's resources and services move increasingly online, the authentication systems for accessing these systems and those of the University become progressively more complex. To simplify the process, the library adopted a login for authentication purposes which is consistent with the University username and password used for logging in to email, StudentOnline, etc. Students and staff will now access restricted materials and library online services using their University username and password.

Self help loans

Self checkout machines were introduced at Bundoora campus library in 2005, giving the client a choice when borrowing a book – do I do it myself, or ask for help at the desk? They have been very effective in reducing queues at busy periods, and freeing up staff to expand services in other areas. The production of a self-help video now runs continually next to the units for operating instructions. This self serve option has been well received, and currently 53% of all loans are processed through the two self-check units.



Library leads in managing research collections

The library is at the forefront of an online initiative to store and distribute the research output of La Trobe University on a worldwide basis.

In recent years institutional repositories have been developed as a means of managing collections of information in digital formats and facilitating their reliable citation, accessibility and preservation. By their inclusion in repositories, materials previously only available in print can be made more widely accessible. Studies have shown that articles published in open access repositories are cited more extensively than those in the same discipline published in subscription-only journals. Repositories also make possible the management of digital resources not amenable to presentation in print, including audio, video, and research data sets.

Following discussions between the library and the Research and Graduate Studies Office (RGSO), the library is initiating the

implementation of an institutional repository for La Trobe University using the ARROW repository software developed by the ARROW project at Monash University. This is based on the Fedora repository software developed at Cornell University and the University of Virginia with funding from the Mellon Foundation. The software is already in use at Monash, Swinburne University of Technology and the University of New South Wales.

The RGSO is particularly interested as ARROW has developed an interface to the Research Master software used in the RGSO. Taken together they provide an information management tool suited to managing the University's gathering and submission of research outputs for the Research Quality Framework.

Geoff Payne

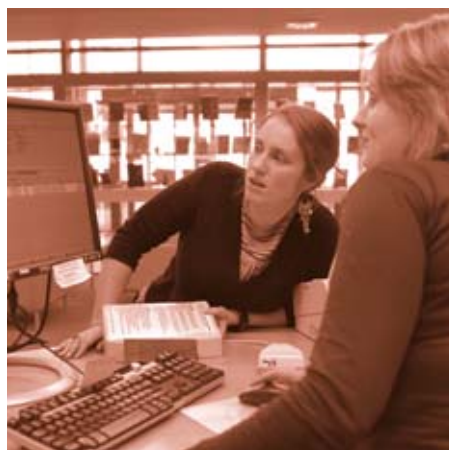
Director, Library Corporate and Financial Services

The changing face of reference services

The current library environment is characterised by shrinking numbers of library staff and a shifting student population, with significant numbers of mature age, part-time, international, and postgraduate students. It was timely for Liz Burke, Reference and Information Services Librarian at Bundoora, to explore what comprises reference services in this context and to analyse how their delivery and model in Australian academic libraries has changed in recent decades. She distributed a survey to the 40 academic libraries in Australia, and 35 valid responses were received, giving a response rate of 87.5%.

The suite of services was distinguished as:

- some form of enquiry service point
- a method for receiving and responding to queries from clients who may not be physically in the library
- an information literacy program
- subject specialist services
- liaison services
- collection development activities.



The results show that Australian academic libraries appear to be implementing services using the new technologies – but cautiously. The emphasis has certainly moved away from a focus on the traditional reference desk and is more on information literacy programs. The results clearly demonstrated that reference librarians play a key role in assisting students and researchers to successfully navigate the information landscape, but as that landscape is considerably more complex, the challenge in planning for the long term may require them to abandon some of their traditional services to free up their time and energy to engage with new opportunities and initiatives.

Queuing

- what can we find out?

The demand for computer workstations in the library continues to be an important area for review and improvement. The seating survey conducted in 2004 confirmed the continuing high use of computer workstations in the Bundoora Campus Library and highlighted the queues of students waiting to use workstations.

Lea Beranek, Resource Delivery Services Librarian at Bundoora coordinated a survey in September 2005 to investigate the effect of the addition of 24 workstations on Level 1 on the overall workstation usage, and to assess the time clients spend waiting for access. The comparison with data from the 2004 survey showed that the actual number of clients at workstations and in queues had dropped only marginally and that the addition of the extra workstations had little overall impact in meeting the demand.

Some of the major findings were:

- The average queuing time in peak periods was 11 minutes, with a range of 2 – 16 minutes.
- Clients don't like waiting; they "aborted" when the queue was too long or too slow.
- All workstations were overstayed, except those which are standing-use only and do not permit printing.
- Group-usage of workstations poses additional problems in data collection and queue analysis.
- The printing service is fast and efficient.

The methodology used to analyse the survey data predicts that if 24 more computer workstations were made available and distributed across the various workstation locations in the library, the longest time spent in a queue during the busiest periods could be reduced, based on current demand. The complete report can be viewed at: <http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/about/surveys/workstation-usage2006.pdf>. Since the survey, an additional 4 workstations have been added on Level 1 as part of the current refurbishment.

How effective are our teaching programs?



Heather Hulett taking an information literacy training session.

The major focus of our teaching programs is to facilitate students' acquisition of information literacy skills, and it is always of interest to gauge the effectiveness of these programs. Linda Sheridan, Campus Librarian at Albury-Wodonga undertook a research project which set out to determine whether the acquisition of the skills is measurable and, if so, can this measure be used to evaluate the effectiveness of our teaching programs?

Linda chose the Albury-Wodonga's University Bridging Program students for her survey, basing it on an information literacy skills program she had previously developed in collaboration with the Academic Skills Unit Manager, Bernadette Bennett.

The data from the tests indicated that the training resulted in improved outcomes in a range of areas, particularly in relation to the knowledge of how resources are organised in a library. It also indicated that the changes made to the training program between 2003 and 2004 in response to feedback resulted in improved outcomes for the overall student group. She concluded that it was useful to use pre- and post-testing as one of a range of evaluation tools, but with limitations. It may be a useful evaluation tool to use with a longer term information literacy program, but too time intensive for individual or intermittent training.

Visitors from Singapore and Malaysia



Barbara Paton, second from left, with visitors from Nanyang Technological University Library.

Eva Fisch, right, with Madam Nooraini Ismail from the International Islamic University Malaysia.



Keeping abreast of web usability

A continuing interest in the way people navigate around a web page led the Library Web Team to invite Shefik Bey to the library in April to speak to a group of web-developers, academics and public relations staff of the University. Shefik is a graduate of La Trobe, and the co-director of UsabilityOne, a Melbourne-based company which helps organisations understand and measure the performance of their web interfaces, in addition to providing a comprehensive range of usability services and consultancy.

Shefik outlined the company's method of observing people navigate through web pages and ran through some of the essential components of quality design. He explored with his audience the effectiveness of some commonly used sites, both commercial and government, in communicating with clients. A number of web pages were identified which cause frustration, allowing discussion of the elements of both good and bad navigation. The audience was left with a clear message about the importance of repeatedly measuring the success of changes in improving a web site, and adjusting accordingly. Participants expressed their genuine appreciation of Shefik's generosity in sharing his knowledge and expertise with them.

Beverley Forsyth
Information Services Librarian, Bendigo

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