



## New interlending service speeds delivery

**Researchers across the University now benefit from the launch of the new web-based service that enables postgraduate scholars and university staff to obtain books and documents more simply and quickly from libraries in Australia and overseas.**

La Trobe University Library is one of the first in Australia to launch the new interlending and document delivery system, the result of an Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee project that oversaw the development of the software for the new system during the past 10 years.

Researchers have responded to the new service with enthusiasm, as Rosemary Farrell at Albury-Wodonga reports:

"The Interlibrary loans delivery service has been a bonus to me as a research student in three ways: access to references, quality of references, and speed of delivery. As a recently enrolled PhD student researching an obscure topic, the introduction of the new ILDDS at my library revolutionised my otherwise negative data access experience. The speed of delivery has meant my work has not experienced crippling delays but rather informed progress, a plus for any research student. "

The service was introduced to researchers at events held in Albury-Wodonga and Bendigo, and the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Michael Osborne, launched it officially at Bundoora in April. He congratulated the library staff on its realisation: "The University Library has always been innovative in its approach and has been at the forefront of many new developments".

The service enables access to library catalogues worldwide, providing details of holdings of both La Trobe University Library and the other libraries searched, all via a single web page. The service allows clients to monitor the status of their requests. It generates email alerts to advise scholars that documents are available on the desktop, or that books have arrived from lending libraries. The system can be accessed by eligible staff and students at all campuses, as well as off campus and offshore.

The library has implemented the Fretwell-Downing Informatics VDX (Virtual Document eXchange) software as a member of a consortium of several Australian university libraries.

Jeanette Dazkiw, User Services Librarian, Bendigo

Left - Jeanette Dazkiw, Sharon Karasmanis, Earle Gow, Prof. Michael Osborne.  
Middle - Sharon Karasmanis.  
Right - Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Michael Osborne, launches the service.



## Multi database search now

**The library went live in May 2004 with a “soft” launch of AARLIN, the system developed by Australian academic and research libraries which offers a simultaneous search of databases, catalogues and other online resources.**

This launch provides an opportunity for researchers, primarily from the faculties of Health Sciences and Humanities and Social Sciences, to test the functionality and provide feedback on various aspects of the service.

The system also allows searchers to link to full-text journal articles and other resources to which the library has electronic access, and to create and keep their own personal research.

The La Trobe University Library team laid the groundwork for implementation by

describing and “cataloguing” almost 150 resources into the AARLIN service – databases, library catalogues, and subject gateways.

A range of training sessions has been given for reference librarians at Albury-Wodonga, Bendigo and Bundoora campuses, allowing them to conduct further training, and for researchers themselves, a number of whom participated in focus group interviews in the development stages.

Access was extended to the undergraduate students later in August on a trial basis, to test the impact on the server of a larger group of users. The range of resources is currently being extended into other discipline areas that will be relevant to all faculties.

Liz Burke, Reference and Information Services Librarian, Bundoora

## Canadian student enthused

Jen Waters from the University of British Columbia spent two weeks in April at the library, describing her placement as “action-packed, interesting and useful”, and if the opportunity ever arose to work at the Bendigo campus library she would “take it in a heartbeat, and move my life to Australia”.

Jen worked in a number of sections, and displayed initiative in evaluating and updating web pages, and recording a flash tutorial for the Interlending and Document Delivery Service using Camtasia desktop recording software.

Her enthusiasm for Bendigo stemmed from her passionate interest in children’s literature. Jen met up with David Beagley, Subject Librarian for Arts and Education and a children’s literature specialist, and used her visit to discover more about the Education Program at Bendigo and Australian children’s literature.

Liz Burke, Reference and Information Services Librarian, Bundoora



## Why do people visit the library in the evening?

**Bundoora campus librarians asked this question, in order to determine whether our opening hours meet the needs of clients.**

The library last surveyed clients on their satisfaction with opening hours during 2001. By 2004 it was considered desirable to again evaluate if the current opening hours are meeting the needs of clients - during an era of increasing use of electronic resources, and especially during the extended evening opening hours.

The survey was conducted between 9 pm and 10 pm from a Monday to Thursday in May, with each patron leaving the library invited to respond. A total of 431 survey forms were completed.

We can see that 82.5% (356) of those responding were students and 72.3% (312) were full-time students. Respondents indicated they visited at that time because:

- 1) it is quieter and they don’t have to queue 58.2% (251)**
- 2) they work during the day 24% (103)**
- 3) they are already on campus 12.7% (55)**

Those sampled primarily live close to the University, especially in University residential accommodation adjoining the campus (90), in colleges (51), Reservoir (36), Heidelberg (30), and Preston (27). Results of the survey will provide valuable data for planning the opening hours for 2005.

Liz Burke, Reference and Information Services Librarian, Bundoora

# Meeting the challenge of change

In keeping with the library's aim to support efficient and flexible work processes and to maintain and/or improve service to clients, it has embarked on a further phase of organisational change in the Borchardt Library at Bundoora. This latest initiative is in areas not generally seen by clients – where the collections of information resources are established and maintained. These changes build on the reorganisation successfully implemented in some of the “front line” areas last year.

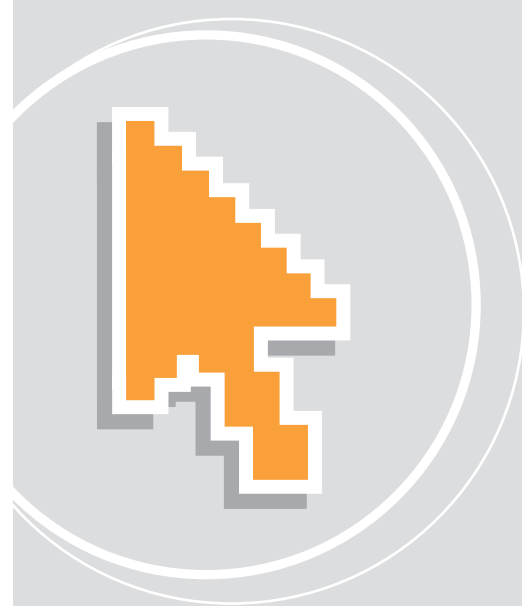
There are 3 main components:

- A restructured position of Collections Librarian will provide coordination and leadership in the development and management of collections (both physical and online) across subject areas and formats. Eva Fisch, previously Subject Librarian for Social Sciences and Humanities, has been recruited to the position.
- A single Resource Acquisitions section replaces the existing Serials and Acquisitions sections and deals with the ordering and receipt of serials, books and audiovisual materials. This section is led by Alison Bates, the previous Acquisitions Librarian.
- A separate Metadata Services section continues and broadens the work of the previous Cataloguing section. The role of this team is to support the discovery of, access to, and management of information resources in all formats. Staff contribute not only to the traditional library catalogue but also to new access systems such as AARLIN, the recently developed multi database searching tool. Dorota Pudlowski joined the library in February and leads the Metadata Services team.

Jan Maslen, Associate Librarian, Information Resources, and Ian Smith, Senior Librarian, Personnel



Left to right - Eva Fisch, Dorota Pudlowski and Alison Bates



## Librarian lurks online

**How can we help undergraduate students in large classes, bringing the focus onto their subject and yet ensuring that we are efficient with our time?**

Val Forbes, a subject librarian in the Bundoora Humanities and Social Sciences team, has taken a new approach to the challenge, with positive outcomes. She has been lurking in the online discussion lists (WebCT) in her subject areas to troubleshoot library-related questions before they escalate into problems.

She has encountered the usual reading list problems - requests for suggested reference titles and websites to answer general questions, queries about finding past exam papers – basically, the type of inquiries received at the Information Desk. Val also found herself well placed to help with problems with computer technology, either directly or by referring the query to the library's IT staff.

But when essay writing time comes around, students' questions start to focus on the information resources for that particular subject. When one student poses a question in WebCT, both the question and the response can be read by all students enrolled in the subject.

The benefits of this are clearly apparent. Students have indicated that they are very happy to have their own librarian on standby, the teaching staff are pleased to have the questions dealt with, and the librarian enjoys being a valued part of the class community.

Val shared her findings with academics at the University's Online Day in November 2003 and with fellow librarians at the CAVAL Reference Interest Group forum in May 2004.



## Hearing awareness award

Val Forbes of Bundoora campus library began working with the deaf community in the University in 1997, providing research skills to hearing and deaf students enrolled in Deaf Studies. She has been a Subject Librarian at La Trobe since 1990, and is the contact librarian for deaf students needing help in the library. In recognition of her contribution in this area, the Deafness Foundation presented her with the Hearing Awareness Week 2004 Committee Award for outstanding service to people with hearing loss.

Although Auslan skills were not a requirement for Val's new role, she became intrigued by the beauty of sign language and she learnt Auslan, with support from the library. She has gradually added to her communication skills and without an interpreter has taught classes of deaf students how to use library resources. Recently she worked with the library's Display Committee, advising on resources for a display of materials relevant to the deaf community and highlighting Hearing Awareness Week. For the wider deaf community, Val has established an email distribution list to notify people of new books, websites, newspaper articles and other items of interest.

## Responding to distressed students

Responding to difficult and distressed students is a critical aspect of the library's focus on service, and the library has been pleased to have the staff of the University Counselling Service facilitate two workshops on this topic. Library staff from across the campuses and service areas attended and the workshops have been so successful that the Staff Development Committee is negotiating to offer the session regularly in the future.



## Thanks for the feedback!

Jenny Corbin, subject librarian at Bundoora, thanked an academic for receipt of some journals. His gratifying response was: "It is a very small gesture in comparison to the service you and your colleagues provide to the rest of the University and the commitment and professionalism with which you do so."

And Val Forbes received this feedback from a client: "Thanks for your time on Friday, it was very helpful. I put in a few requests to the ILDDS and the articles came in a couple of hours ago via email. I think the library offers a great service! Thanks again."

Eva Fisch was the recipient of congratulatory messages from academics in the areas in which she liaised, when her transfer and appointment to the new Collections Librarian position at Bundoora was announced. She was described as "spectacularly wonderful", "perennially cheerful" and "amazingly efficient". Development of collections was frequently cited as one of her great strengths, and it will no doubt be valuable in her new role.



## Visitor from Papua New Guinea

The library was delighted to host a visit from Bruce Ningakun, Chief Librarian at the University of Vudal, Papua New Guinea, in May. The visit was arranged by Peter Sale, Associate Professor in Agricultural Science, in association with a program funded by the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, Crawford Fund. The main part of the program had final year agriculture students from La Trobe and the University of Vudal participating in joint case studies in their respective countries. Sue Grandfield, Subject Librarian for Science and Technology at Bundoora, provided information skills classes as part of the students' schedule.

A two-week program was developed by Barbara Paton, Deputy University Librarian, in response to Bruce's expressed areas of interest. Bruce worked closely with library staff, discussing the application of new technologies, staff management and library cooperation. He visited several libraries and took back many recommendations for development of his own University library. He wrote glowingly of his visit, and was delighted by the Bundoora campus. What impressed him was the diversity of the community, incorporating a wide range of ethnic groups and people with special needs, and the library itself.

"This is the biggest library I have had the opportunity to visit and it was a great experience to go from section to section and see the great sense of professionalism and commitment shown by the staff. Their willingness and kindness in making available their time to show and explain to me how they do their jobs was a very inspiring experience".

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