



# Library News

La Trobe University Library

## Launch of the library's new web site

The library launched a newly redeveloped web site at the start of Semester 2, creating a One Library structure and simplifying the navigation across all campuses.

The library carried out a review in 2004, looking at the services currently being offered via the web and giving consideration to new services in the future. The Library Web Team interviewed a sample of staff and students at four campuses, and analysed web log usage and statistics to find out what it is that clients have difficulty finding, and what information is not provided. They then set out to redesign. The pages were improved in response to feedback, and comments are still welcome.

### These are the main changes:

#### The catalogue

Find books and other resources in the collections; the most sought after feature, placed centrally for easy access

#### Campus libraries, databases & catalogue

The header & footer appear on all pages, with links to the library rather than the University; find out about the library at all its campuses; databases and the catalogue can always be found here

#### Search

The new and improved search facility for finding pages on the library site

#### Core services and information

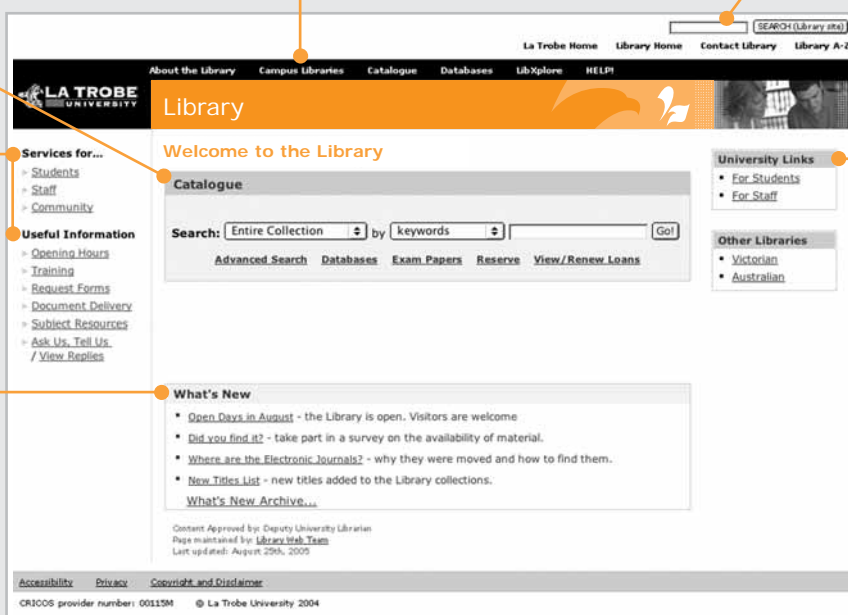
Library services are presented by the main client groups; link to information proven to be most popular

#### Information about the University

The library is the centre for information; select these links to find your way to the key University sites.

#### What's New

A prominent position to ensure clients learn of new resources, library services and events



# Emerging trends in library space

Helen King (Associate Librarian) examined this issue during a recent trip to England. She visited seven new or refurbished library buildings which were winners of SCONUL (Society of College, National & University Libraries) library design awards. This award is made on the basis of functional design rather than purely architectural merit, and covers qualities such as functionality, adaptability, accessibility, choice of learning spaces, interactivity of design, environmental suitability, safety and security, and efficiency.

## The common themes:

- Open plan design - enabling flexibility to change layouts as the electronic environment becomes more pervasive and student study and learning preferences evolve
- Consistency in design and layout on each floor - providing navigational assistance for library clients as they move through the relatively complex library physical environment
- 24 hour opening - recognising that today's students demand access to the library and its facilities on a 24 x 7 basis
- Self service and self help options - offering library clients a choice, but ensuring that staffed service points are still provided
- Computers, computers, computers - recognising the continuing demand for institution-provided computers and facilities for personal laptop use, and providing a mix of wireless and wired access points
- The evolution of learning and social space, characterised by
  - the shrinking demand for silent study space,
  - the growing requirement for a range of types of group study and group work space
  - the inclusion of substantial areas for training facilities to provide instruction in information and computer literacy
  - the provision of dedicated space for specific client groups such as postgraduate students
  - the inclusion of social space such as internet cafés within the library walls.

## The common challenges:

- The increase in noise within the library walls and attempts to solve this
- The continuing pressure to provide space for ever-growing print collections and the use of compactus shelving
- Anticipating and responding to the needs of today's Net Generation students and the impact on physical space
- The high cost of building and refurbishment projects.



London School of Economics Library


Hatfield Campus Learning Resources Centre, University of Hertfordshire



London School of Economics Library



Frederick Lanchester Building, Coventry University



# Law students learn online

If first year law students at La Trobe are research savvy, they can give credit to developing their skills online. In first semester this year, legal research instruction was integrated into the first year law subject using the University's courseware platform WebCT. The Subject Librarian for Law at Bundoora, Dennis Warren, worked with the unit coordinators to embed a series of quizzes into the subject "Legal Institutions and Methods". He reports that the response has been favourable: "From the students' perspective, online learning can be good fun. From the library's point of view, it is a way to provide a meaningful experience for large numbers of students and ensure a level of mastery of basic skills".

With more than 250 students enrolled in the first year of the law degree, it was a challenge to give traditional "hands on" training in the library. By going online, students learn the skills they need, as required throughout the semester. They completed four online quizzes, and these quizzes contributed to the assessment for the subject. As Dennis says, "WebCT takes care of the marking issue when large numbers of students are involved. And while there are severe limitations on the type of assessment that can take place using WebCT, it is possible, with a little imagination, to create multiple choice questions which demonstrate that they have learned useful skills".

When asked if they thought this had been a valuable part of the subject, 46% strongly agreed and 36% agreed that it had been. Positive comments include:

"I found the library exercises very useful in gaining knowledge about legal research, particularly in regard to the online journals. The timing of the exercises was great, with each exercise complementing the essay I was working on at the time."

"I found the skills tests invaluable. I believe they will provide a good basis for future essay and exam preparation; the skills test should become a regular feature of LIM and be worth more than 5%."

Dennis observes that while online learning is certainly not a substitute for library-based instruction, it may be seen as a useful adjunct in some subjects where there are large enrolments. The basic research skills gained can be further developed in later years by scheduling sessions in the library.

## Support for nursing in hospitals

In 2002 the School of Nursing submitted a course proposal to have five undergraduate Clinical Schools operating in 2005 for the third-year students undertaking the Bachelor of Nursing. Two general Clinical Schools were established at the Alfred and Austin Hospitals, and three specialist Clinical Schools were located at the Bundoora Extended Care Centre, The Royal Women's Hospital, and the Royal District Nursing Service. The new curriculum requires the students to spend most of the week at one of the hospitals, studying acute care and other units, tying the theory in with the practical in a more direct way.

About half the third-year nursing students were located at the Alfred Hospital in first and second semester 2005, with the remaining half located at the Austin Hospital in second semester only, when the redevelopment of the hospital is complete. Refurbishment of the existing library space however, is likely to continue until the end of the year.

The changed curriculum required a new model of library service delivery. To support the 300 undergraduate nursing students located in the two hospitals, La Trobe University Library has added materials to the hospital library collections. The students are also entitled to receive document delivery from the Bundoora campus library. A collaborative effort between La Trobe University Library, the School of Nursing, and the hospital libraries resulted in the students having access to all the resources and services from Bundoora they were accustomed to receiving in the first two years of their course, in addition to the usual undergraduate services provided by the hospital libraries.

Detailed planning ensured the transition of library services to the Alfred ran very smoothly. Sue Porter, the Subject Librarian for Nursing, and Adam Clark, Manager of the Ian Potter Library at the Alfred, explained procedures for borrowing books at the Ian Potter Library; they trained the students in using the online document delivery service and accessing the full range of electronic resources. Day to day issues were addressed quickly, and a review was held in May which confirmed that the implementation had progressed well. A survey planned for students at the Alfred will help inform staff at the Austin Hospital Library in second semester, and it is desirable that services to both clinical schools are as similar as possible.

Sue Porter  
Subject Librarian, Health Sciences, Bundoora



Nellie Green

## From the Indigenous viewpoint

A lively and informative presentation gave library staff a greater understanding of the academic experience of Indigenous students. The Library Staff Development Committee, Melbourne welcomed Nellie Green, Coordinator of the Ngarn-gi Bagora Indigenous Centre to the library in April this year to speak about her role and that of the Centre on the Bundoora campus.

Nellie is a Badimia woman of the Yamatji people of the central wheat belt area of Western Australia. She provided a picture of her youth and family life in Perth and as a student at Curtin and Murdoch universities. While at Curtin she worked in the Centre for Aboriginal Studies, and was appreciative of the support and the familiar cultural environment the centre provided. This experience gave her a strong insight and sensitivity to the needs of current Indigenous students.

It is clear that a university education is not something Indigenous students expect to achieve, and as a result of specific social factors, gaining an academic qualification is quite significant and often achieved despite great adversity.

There are approximately 80 Indigenous students enrolled at La Trobe, thirty percent of whom are studying Health Sciences. When on campus, they are welcome to access the resources in the centre. Nellie provides students with a positive and culturally supportive environment, offering

counselling and assistance with their study or personal concerns. Nellie also plays the key role in the Centre's participation in the national Indigenous calendar such as the National Day of Healing, NAIDOC Indigenous Week and the annual Hyllus Maris Memorial Lecture.

Among the issues addressed by Nellie was the reluctance of many of the Indigenous students to use the library as a place of study. They perceived it to be an overwhelming and chaotic space, and were hesitant about asking for assistance. As an outcome there is a strong impetus for library staff to have further discussion with Nellie and with the Indigenous students. The aim will be to increase the inclusiveness of the library space, and to encourage new Indigenous students to gain confidence in using information resources both within the library and online.

Interest and enthusiasm for Nellie's presentation was evident in the spirited discussion, and it is anticipated this is the first of many steps to ensure meaningful on-going communication between the library and the Ngarn-gi Bagora Indigenous Centre.

The Staff Development Committee, Melbourne wishes to convey its appreciation to Nellie for her presentation.

Lorraine Chapman  
Chair, Staff Development Committee,  
Melbourne

## Rare documents available to all

The Internet opens up wonderful opportunities to display historical documents to interested readers worldwide, and thanks to a joint project of four Australian universities, a growing collection of nineteenth century Indian documents have been digitised and made available on the web.

Dr Peter Friedlander, Asian Studies, and Professor Robin Jeffrey, Politics, are part of the Digital Colonial Documents Project (India), and along with researchers from Curtin, New England and Sydney universities, they have identified documents of interest to researchers which are almost impossible to sight in paper format. The documents are sourced from research libraries; they are then scanned, and are available on the web site as searchable text as well as images of the original pages.

Peter Thompson, Information Systems and Resources Librarian at Bendigo Campus Library is now working on the digitisation of "Picturesque India", an 1890 guide to India from the library's Sandhurst Collection.

The library hosted a forum in June at which Dr Friedlander and Professor Jeffrey spoke of the research project, which is funded by the Australian Research Council and supported by the Library.

Further details:  
<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/asianstudies/>



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