

IF THE LIBRARY GOES DIGITAL WILL UNIVERSITY STAFF COME TO THE PARTY?

Implementation of a digital preferred strategy for collections is transforming the Library experience at the University of South Australia. Students and scholars can access a rapidly growing range of information resources anytime, anywhere. The Library is becoming ubiquitous, infiltrating offices, homes and favourite coffee shops. The physical resources of the Library are dwarfed by what is available online and for digital download. Analogue video content has been replaced by digitally streamed versions. Access to information through the Library has improved greatly both in terms of volume and discoverability. Staff and students have the ability to search the full content of huge collections of digital books and journals subscribed to by the Library. Attractive and inviting furniture is replacing rows of print resources. Critical to the success of the digital strategy is ensuring that the University community, make a confident transition to a primarily digital collection.

The digital world is already more than a broader range of titles and subjects. Interactive textbooks with embedded activities, scenarios and the facility for direct data manipulation are already available in many of the scientific disciplines and the range and level of these is expanding quickly. Interactive story-books with playable characters and links to embedded audio and video are already in use within primary schools. Students already get much information from the Internet, Twitter feeds and the like and educators recognise that those students who multitask within their social network don't necessarily engage with textbooks that are finite and linear. Students and academics alike are looking online to find those documents, blogs and wikis that get them beyond the standardised textbook format. As a result, the trend to replace the traditional linear fixed content textbook with more dynamic and engaging digital versions is gaining momentum and is complemented by lessons assembled from the wealth of free courseware, educational games, videos and projects on the Web.

The implications for pedagogic practice extend beyond a simple expansion in the amount of information available and the possibilities of substituting print textbooks with digital equivalents or alternatives. Developments in digital searching already permit searching across, as well as within texts. The potential of access to huge digital collections for teaching and learning is immense. No longer limited in the range of resources that students can be directed to, academics are able to utilise vast digital collections of published works, images and presentations while students are free to pursue their interests well beyond the confines of the largest research library. Digital editions facilitate integration of learning resources with direct links to the full content of

recommended readings replacing the static reading list. The explosion in digital information content presents new opportunities for interdisciplinary research and the introduction of new programs that stretch beyond the confines of books and journals in print format.

With this rapid change in library collections late in 2011, a survey was conducted to gauge Library staff understanding and awareness of terminology and usage of eresources and ereaders and mobile devices. The survey outcomes were used to design a program of an experiential learning activity to engage library staff with eresources and related devices.

A similar survey was carried out in late 2012 with academic staff to gauge their knowledge about eresources and devices in general, and more particularly their knowledge of what was available in their discipline and what digital resources were they directing students to engage with.

As a result, the Library is tackling the conundrum of so many resources, and so little awareness or confidence amongst academics to venture beyond their comfort zone. Analyses of high demand print material, are being used to show the disadvantages students face when academics rely heavily on print based material rather than embracing the ubiquitous eresources.

This paper describes this sometimes difficult process of transition for all university staff to find comfort convenience and capability in the digital world which is now part of all scholarly endeavours.

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