

UTS Library, a learning space like no other

In *The Library with Mr Hank*, a video he and some others made about the library, a student puts in a nutshell what UTS library is trying to do as we seek to provide innovative and pervasive support for learning and research at UTS.

Running an open competition to make videos about the library is one example. Another recent instance was the launch of a new, single-box catalogue this year. Using the Endeca software, the new catalogue offers the uncluttered interface our clients expect from search engines plus a number of web 2.0 features. The catalogue finds books, journals, and other materials usually found in a catalogue, but also scholarly articles and books published by UTSePress and the university's research output collated in the UTSiResearch repository, both elements of UTSeScholarship.

Use of web and other new technologies extends to YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter as well as extensive blogging for staff communication and shared innovation. On behalf of its partner university libraries in the Australian Technology Network (Curtin, UniSA, RMIT University, QUT and Auckland UT), UTS Library developed the Collaborative Online Workspace, or COW, which is a platform for collaboration among the staff of those six widely separated libraries.

UTS Library is trying to create digital learning spaces that mirror and intersect with our physical learning spaces. The latter have been substantially upgraded over the last few years to create a rich, dispersed learning commons that extends well beyond the walls of the university's libraries. Silent study spaces and a Scholars' Centre provide spaces for contemplation while open social study spaces and group and presentation rooms support interaction. Other spaces enable communal study as well as discovery and consultation, the traditional library activities.

UTS Library's strategic priorities are facilitating discovery and access to scholarly information, developing capabilities, promoting learning, and enabling scholarship. Our 'Library of the Future' which will open on Broadway, one of the gateways to the Sydney CBD, in 2015 will not only be a great building but it will represent new thinking about academic libraries, a combined online and physical learning space 'like no other'.

Alex Byrne
University Librarian
alex.byrne@uts.edu.au

You can see the video here http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QYP_hZmcRgg

Looking forward, looking back – Whitehouse Institute of Design Melbourne Campus Library

Rewind to mid-2007: Charles Sturt University Bachelor of Arts (Library and Information Science)

Completing my last exam was one of my happiest moments, but at the same time it left me with a slightly hollow feeling. I don't have to study any more! I don't have to study any more...

Fast-forward to 2009: Whitehouse Institute of Design, Australia

A lot has happened over the past eighteen months. My first job out of university and I am solely responsible for a higher

education library. To add to the circulation desk duties, enquiries, research for staff, shelving, shelf checking, book repairs, collection development, weeding, acquisitions, end-processing, committee meetings, and technical support for the students, my last year has also involved the creation and implementation of a library in the brand new Whitehouse Institute of Design Melbourne Campus plus ongoing responsibility for its smooth operation.

Melbourne Campus was a twinkle in the Whitehouse eye well before I joined the team, so a number of years of foundation work and consultation had already been completed. I arrived just in time for action. My two main objectives have been to staff the new library and fill it with resources.

First things first: a library needs resources. A foundation collection was sent to Melbourne from the Sydney library including all the duplicate books and a large supply of magazines. Online bookstores were also scoured for design books and a large order was placed to be sent directly to Melbourne.

This was where the first issue was encountered: there were no plans for me to go to Melbourne Campus and a large delivery of books was arriving with no one to accession or catalogue them. Thankfully the receptionist in Melbourne is a hard working, reliable, and fantastic person. All the boxes of books were dutifully opened and a form was filled out for each book stating details such as title, author, and ISBN. About five reams of these forms have been across my desk for remote cataloguing now. Barcodes were organised and spine labels were printed working in a left-to-right, top-to-bottom direction on the page to make sure the receptionist could easily choose the correct barcode and spine label for each book. These were posted to Melbourne where, once again, the receptionist end processed the books, never even realising that what she was doing had a name.

Any donations received by the Melbourne Campus have also been catalogued in this manner. While the system is not ideal, and there have been a few little mix-ups along the way, it has actually worked surprisingly well. However, I would never suggest this as a viable system unless the person on the other end had a little bit of 'librarian' about them.

For a long time a combination of administrative staff and one teacher in Melbourne were my eyes and ears...and hands and feet. Students were able to use the resources in the library itself under supervision of staff, but due to a lack of qualified library staff and library circulation software the students were unable to take the resources home.

Now for the second issue: the library needed a librarian. This was solved earlier this year when Whitehouse employed a part-time, qualified library technician.

This was interesting for me, having only ever been on the other side of the interview process. I not only wrote the advertisement and received the applications, I organised a short list of applicants and was on the panel of interviewers. In due course we appointed a library technician for the Melbourne Campus and I flew to Melbourne for a short, intensive training session with him.

I've been involved in training staff before, both within libraries and in customer service roles. However, this training was a totally new experience. While I had put together some information for our new library technician, I had never seen the Melbourne Campus Library before, so he was one up on me. Also, the role for the new library technician in the new campus was somewhat organic as all the procedures that I ran in Sydney had to be checked over by Melbourne staff to ensure that they would be compatible with practices already in place.

After a slightly rocky 4am start to catch the plane, the training went really well and I now have a colleague to support, have discussions with, teach, and learn from. While our two days of