Electronic publishing venture at Monash

Monash University has launched a new electronic publishing service, Monash University ePress, with a view to streamlining and promoting its academic publishing to both Australian and international audiences.

University librarian Ms Cathrine Harboe-Ree said the library had created ePress in response to interest from the university's academic community. The aim of ePress is to use technology in innovative ways to showcase Monash's research activities.

'We will do this while retaining a commitment to quality through traditional peer reviewing. Our involvement in this area brings us into contact with other publishers interested in presenting Australian content to international audiences and we are collaborating with them to find cost-effective ways to publish scholarly content,' Ms Harboe-Ree said.

ePress plans to focus mainly on publishing electronic journals in under-served and emerging disciplines.

The first four titles published by ePress are:

- *Melbourne 2030* — a book analysing the Bracks government's radical planning scheme to accommodate an additional one million people in Melbourne by 2030. Produced by Monash's Centre for Population and Urban Research led by director Dr Bob Birrell, with co-authors Dr Ernest Healy, Ms Virginia Rapson and Professor Kevin O'Connor (University of Melbourne). Available online and in print;

- *Applied GIS* (geographic information systems) — a new online journal containing data-intensive maps with zoom-in functionality. Edited by Associate Professor Jim Peterson, director of Monash's Centre for Geographical Information Systems and Associate Professor Ray Wyatt (University of Melbourne);

- *The Bible and Critical Theory* — a new online journal edited by Dr Roland Boer, Logan Fellow at Monash's Centre for Studies in Religion and Theology;

- *History Australia* — official journal of the Australian Historical Association. Edited by Professor Marian Quartly, Monash's School of Historical Studies.

For information on Monash University ePress, visit http://www.epress.monash.edu. ∎

Plagiarism detection consortium meets to share insights

Australasian universities concerned with plagiarism detection gathered for the second conference of the CAVAL Plagiarism Detection Consortium at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre on Monday 31 January 2005, just prior to the ALIA *Information Online 2005* conference.

Last year's conference set out to share practical experiences in the implementation, management and forward planning of the successful use of plagiarism prevention operations in Australasian academic institutions.

This year's theme was 'Integrating electronic plagiarism into academic curricula'. With considerably more experience in the Australasian academic community, the conference focused on the impact of the detection systems on academic programs. A number of universities have dealt with a significant range of issues embedding the service into their policy and operational aspects, and came to the conference ready to share these insights and examples of 'best practice' with other consortia members.

Steve O'Connor (CEO of CAVAL Collaborative Solutions) discussed the growing use of software tools to detect and prevent plagiarism and to review the development of this Consortium in 2004. Already fourteen Australasian universities have joined the Consortium.

Other papers presented were 'Issues and concerns in the implementation of Turnitin software at Deakin University' by Wendy Sutherland-Smith from Deakin University and 'Turnitin — a university-wide implementation' by Charmian Eckersley from the University of Newcastle. Both of these papers are available on the CAVAL website (http://www.caval.edu.au). These informative and detailed papers provided research results as well as examples of university-wide programs designed to inform and improve Australasian practice.

Attendees took the opportunity to informally discuss what has been achieved and what is planned for their institution. Also discussed were helpful hints for using plagiarism software as well as Turnitin developments for 2005.

Further information about the Consortium, plagiarism detection software and services may be obtained from CAVAL Collaborative Solutions, by e-mailing plagiarism@caval.edu.au or by telephoning Steve O'Connor on 03 9459 2722. ∎

Students to see tangible benefits of increased HECS fees at RMIT

Of the additional $4 million expected to be raised through increased HECS fees at RMIT University, it is anticipated that around one-third will be directed to the library. Students will see improvements to the six library sites in line with feedback derived from university and library surveys. The big issues in 2004 were resources (books), access to PCs and group study facilities.

Improved access to PCs

An additional twenty PCs will be installed at the Bundoora Library, and twenty new semi-enclosed study spaces are planned at the Swanston Library to enable better conditions for group work, with larger screens for up to three people to work together on the one PC. Improvements to group study rooms across the sites will include wall-mounted plasma LCD screens. An improved PC booking system will enable more equitable access to available PCs. Twelve Macintosh computers will be installed at Swanston Library.

Student lounges in the library

Relaxed student study lounges are planned for the Swanston Library (the largest and highest-use site). These will be places where students can gather, talk, eat, drink and use laptops (with powerpoints available). There will be general improvements to group study facilities at the Swanston and Bundoora sites with appropriate tables and seating, and architectural and acoustic features to control sound and maximise privacy.

More books

The book collection is always something students want to see improved and $150 000 ($50 000 per portfolio) will be directed towards targeted areas. In addition, a project to improve and update reading lists will be established through better consultation with academic staff.

Following the announcement of increased HECS fees last year, the library put forward a proposal for a number of projects to directly respond to student feedback, which reflects changing study patterns. There is clearly now a need for more informal group work and discussion space within library sites combined with ready access to PC facilities and online information sources.

Craig Anderson, director of RMIT University Library, stated that students can expect a more user-friendly library, with 'a more welcoming, informal atmosphere. We're responding to student demand to create better student spaces'. ∎