

## Technological literacy: Innovation and practicality

As technology becomes an ever increasing part of our lives, technological literacy must become an increasing component of our learning. Integration of technology into our learning institutions must reflect its social and vocational uses; avoiding innovating purely for innovation's sake. Cuff-linked to the challenges of integration is a resistance to change amongst educational practitioners. A perception that substantial up-skilling is required and that new technologies and techniques means discarding what they know can often be the reason for their hesitation. The recent emergence of Web 2.0 offers key opportunities to respond to these complications and to take practical steps toward integrating technological literacy.

At present, approaches to integrating technology have been largely deterministic in nature; viewing ICT as a resource while largely ignoring its influence on the context of our lives and our learning institutions. Early approaches saw ICT as advanced, improved pens; and they assumed that dropping technology on mass into schools, universities and public libraries, would automatically improve outcomes. Technological literacy emerged in the form of computer classes where the emphasis was on structure rather than function.

There is a lot of chatter online and in literature about how Web 2.0 may finally deliver on the internet's early promises of democratising information access and production. Perhaps more salient to us are the underpinning structures that provoke these types of suggestions. In simple terms, Web 2.0 is based on context rather than hardware; responding to users and processes, rather than infrastructure and products.

Technological literacy with Web 1.0 tends to focus on learning the application. Web 2.0 attempts to reduce the intellectual load of running the application so that literacy can focus on the communication and its context. Web 2.0 integrates willingly because it responds to context. Several benefits are immediately apparent. Integration mimics social and vocational use and innovation is contextual, instead of being at political or industrial whim. There is also less technical up-skilling required, and how it fits in to existing models is more easily apparent to resistant practitioners.

So where do these new technologies fit with existing schemas? Aside from medium, traditional book review brochures share a lot in common with blogs, as do new releases notices and advertisements for author visits; and all of these can be RSS fed to a single dynamic library news page. Maps and directions can be preset on Google Maps for reading or print out. Subject finders and the frozen books trolley in a school library are a lot like an online subject gateway, except one of them is more accessible. Lecture notes and updates can be posted on a subject blog instead of forming mountains of paper waste outside your office. Essay drafts can be posted to a forum for peer review any time, rather than just tutorial time. Forums and chats are ideal environments for information sharing, and as archives become knowledge silos. Group projects can be

planned and constructed using a wiki, which is really just butcher's paper on the internet.

These techniques are simple, yet innovative. Above all they are practical examples of how technology can be integrated with existing learning systems rather than imposed. With adequately resourced support, the resistance to new 2.0 technology is greatly reduced because users feel that it is serving rather than restricting, making them more willing to approach it.

Once its mysterious numerical name is overlooked, Web 2.0 offers the perfect opportunity for technology finally to be integrated in to everyday learning and for technological literacy to acquire deeper contextual meanings than 'how do I turn on this beige box?'

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## Book review

### *Skills for Work Book 4 – Rights and Responsibilities*

Publisher – Phoenix Education  
www.phoenixeduc.com  
ISBN - 9781876580635

This is the fourth in a series of books aimed at teens and young adults who have low literacy skills. The focus of the series is on supporting teachers who work with these students by providing age appropriate, Australian resources which are interesting, appealing and relevant to a modern workplace environment.

This book is geared towards young people who are moving into a workplace for the first time, and who need to understand the basics of getting along at work. It looks at areas related to rights and responsibilities of both workers and employers, covering topics such as:

- Getting started at work – understanding the basics such as forms, work arrangements, responsibilities and rights of workers and employers
- Staying safe – occupational health and safety and related issues
- Workplace relationships – getting along with others, working as part of a team, managing problems at work
- Planning for the future – helping young people plan their career and gather the skills they need to manage in the longer term at work.

The book is written in an 'easy to read' format, with clear, simple text, appealing stories and case studies. It is aimed at young people who are attending secondary school, or are learners at TAFE or other educational settings. It could also be used effectively with young adults, particularly those with limited workplace knowledge and experience. It uses Australian laws and examples where relevant in relation to modern workplaces. The book can be photocopied, making it appealing and easy to use for teachers in a range of settings.



**Anna-Maria Sviatko**  
ALIA's new Groups  
Liaison Officer

## Anna-Maria Sviatko

### What attracted you to the role of Groups Liaison Officer?

Working with a great group of people at National Office and for a great group of people around the country.

### What are 3 things you'd like us to know about you?

Can I make them up or do they have to be real? :-)

### What gives you a sense of purpose and accomplishment?

Finishing something...anything!

### If you could have your ideal role in the world, what would it be?

Shopping guide on a cruise ship. Actually, I could also be the Librarian if it were a Cunard ship. Failing that travelling the world putting together a guide to op shops and such would be pretty cool.

### Which kinds of libraries have you worked in?

I started off as a school library monitor and ended up at the local public library where I had to deal with the usual: a photocopier that liked to send out smoke signals whenever I was on the desk, the woman with tourettes who used to

freak out other patrons, the woman who brought scones in on Thursdays in return for us hiding the new Mills and Boons under the counter so she had first dibs, and the occasional accidental dumping of a catalogue card drawer upside down on the floor. I then ran the gamut of special libraries with stints at the DSIR (CSIRO's equivalent in New Zealand) and The Red Cross followed by five years running a newspaper library before packing my bags for Australia.

After temping in various special libraries (including a contract at State Forests' photo library where they took me bushwalking to see 'real' Australian bush after I kept handing out photos of rainforest when asked for 'a nice photo of some bush') I fell into library recruiting and have spent the past 9 years working to support the library community rather than working *in* the library community.

### What are you currently reading?

A never diminishing list of blogs on my blogroll and a never diminishing pile of magazines in my magazine pile.

There's also a never ending pile of books which I've picked up at various op shops and Lifeline bookfairs which I am currently reading in themes. April's theme is *Art* so I'm half way through a book on New Zealand modernist wood engraver E. Mervyn Taylor and have just started *Vision of Art*, a book about the art of RCCL's cruise ships.

### What do you feel are your greatest achievements and successes?

Can you wait 'til I'm on my deathbed and ask that again?



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