Blogs, wikis, RSS Feeds, Facebook, Del.icio.us, Flickr.

These are just a few of the new Web 2.0 technologies the whole of Swinburne Library staff experienced by completing the 23 Things staff development program.

Beginning in mid September 2007, the 23 Things program encouraged staff to explore and become familiar with emerging and popular web technologies. The program took a guided step by step approach, and was rolled out over a 13 week period. Each of the 23 tasks introduced a new Web 2.0 technology, giving staff some background and was accompanied by a podcast. Staff completed the tasks in any order they chose, commenting about each task on their own personal blog. Maintaining this personal blog was an essential part of the process for staff.

Thomas Rutter, Library Web Coordinator, set up Swinburne's 23 Things instructional website and a progress reporting system on the private staff wiki, allowing staff to see links to each others' blogs and yellow stars representing other staff's progress through the program. Staff were given the option to remain anonymous to their colleagues, which many of them did.

The 23 Things concept, applied to libraries, comes from The Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. We also received lot of help and encouragement from the Yarra Plenty Library who were the first Australian library to conduct such a program. In collaboration with Deakin University Library, Swinburne Library was one of the first academic libraries in Victoria to take on this program.

Planning and launch

The 23 Things program was co-ordinated by a team of 5 staff from various campuses and departments within the Library. The team selected and prepared help material and podcasts for the tasks

A road show was held, visiting each campus library to introduce the program and encourage staff to get started. The road show also served an instructional purpose with the 23 Things team giving not only an overview but practical demonstrations on how to create a blog, showing Flickr, Del.icio.us while having a bit of fun introducing image generators.

Once the program was launched we then chose 'buddies' to help out at each campus. These buddies were not just chosen for their technical skills but for their instruction style and friendly approachable personalities. Help was also available by email or by leaving comments on the 23 Things blog.

The carrot

Staff progressed through the program at their own pace with incentives given for completing tasks; including a double movie pass after completing the first 13 items. A major prize draw for a new laptop was held in March 2008 for all those who completed the program.

Each week we send out an email to all staff to introduce the latest tasks and encourage participants to keep up with the program. Derek Whitehead, University Librarian, also encourages staff to keep exploring web technologies in each of his staff newsletters.

The stick

Swinburne Library added an objective for all staff to undertake the 23 Things program into the formal Performance, Planning and Review system.

Success

We can measure the success of the program in a statistical sense. 80% of the 89 staff who have started the program, including full-time, part-time and casual staff, have completed. We also received feedback from the staff's individual blogs on their experiences of 23 Things as a whole. Staff mostly saw the program as a learning journey, where they were encouraged to learn and play…

> "Since doing the 23 things, I found I enjoyed doing it and had no trouble in performing the tasks. I found such tasks as making a blog, RSS feeds, Google maps - docs - book search, Google home page and Del.icio.us bookmarks very useful and would use them on a regular basis. Other ones like Facebook, Myspace, UTube videos, Second life etc I find not for me and would probable take far too much of my time as I have other interests. All in all I found it was a positive experience."

Quote from participant – Allan's Blog

The 23 Things program is not intended to end, even though we have drawn the major prize, and all new staff together with those who haven't finished the program will be encouraged to complete all of the tasks. At Swinburne we plan to roll out additional new web technologies over the next year. The fact that the staff are now more technically savvy as a result of doing the 23 Things means that when we introduce new technologies they will find the whole process less daunting, more manageable and enjoyable.

We have learned so much from the experience. Having the 23 Things buddies at each campus has been beneficial for all involved, fostering cross-campus communication through blogs and other social networking sites. Staff have also been adapting these tools to show teaching staff how they can be incorporated into the learning experience for the students.

Read about the Swinburne 23 Things program at **http://23things-swinburne.blogspot.com/**

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Professional development in May

May Day… May Day…
ALIA and CAVAL, in collaboration with Blue Shield, present 'Disaster planning for cultural collections'
More information and registration details at **http://www.caval.edu.au/course-description.html?CID=168**

Re-think. Reinvent. Rejuvenate:
A workshop with Kevin Hennah. For dates, locations and to register visit **http://www.kevinhennah.com.au/**

Retaining and sharing knowledge from an ageing workforce
A master class presentation by Key Forums. Presentation dates, locations and registrations at **http://www.keyforums.com.au/events.aspx**
For more on ALIA PD and our training partners visi **http://www.alia.org.au/education/pd/pd.services/**