

i-access Online Vision Australia

Vision Australia's Information Library Service provides library services to people who are blind, have low vision or have a print disability. We are continually working to improve services to make information accessible to everyone. As well as the delivery of content via the traditional postal service, we are also developing new online services to deliver information.

Vision Australia's *i-access Online* service began in November 2007. It delivers books, magazines, newspapers and other publications to portable handheld devices via a personal computer connected to the internet. Currently the *i-access Online* service can be used by Vision Australia library clients on any PC that has the *i-access Downloader* software installed, which is available from the Vision Australia *i-access Online* website <http://i-access.visionaustralia.org/start.aspx>.

The web-based user interface is easily navigable using a screen reader like Jaws® or Windows Eyes®, and library clients are able to subscribe to publications for each day or only on specific days. For example, the Higher Education section in *The Australian* on a Wednesday might be of interest, rather than receiving an entire week of newspapers. In addition, clients can search up to two weeks of back issues of all of the newspapers available for downloading.

i-access Online allows clients to suspend their newspaper downloads, and choose to save their newspapers for up to nine days when not downloaded on the day they become available. Library clients are able to review what newspapers they are about to download and remove any which are no longer required. Once selections have been made, downloading daily subscriptions can be easily managed using the *i-access Downloader* without having to enter the website.

With the ability to transfer materials directly to a portable handheld device such as Book Port™, some of our general library collection is also available for download. Each month 20 different book titles are made available to *i-access* online subscribers, and we are working in partnership with publishers to expand this selection in order to improve access to information by the print disabled community in Australia.

If you would like to know more about Vision Australia's Information and Library service please visit our website at <http://www.visionaustralia.org> or call 1300 65 46 56.

Deborah Mould
Collection Services Manager
Vision Australia



University Awards QUT Library for supporting students with visual disabilities

Queensland University of Technology (QUT) recently presented Library staff in the Library Resource Services area with a QUT Equity Award for their considerable work in enhancing access to electronic course readings for students with visual disabilities.

This improvement was made possible through the University's Course Materials Database: an online system administered by the Library which allows users to view, print and download coursework readings selected by their lecturers.

Whilst overall usage of the Course Materials Database has successfully permeated into general teaching

practices, enhancements to the service since 2006 has allowed QUT Library to more effectively address the needs of students with visual disabilities to overcome the disadvantages they experience with print and digitised versions of these key texts.

The process begins with the Library staff consulting with the QUT Equity Office to determine what units will be undertaken by students with visual disabilities in the forthcoming semester. Academic staff involved in delivering these subjects was then approached to identify what key course readings will be prescribed throughout the semester, and their order of priority. Finally, PDF versions of these key documents are upgraded to ensure readability by the JAWS screen reader software.

The conversion of these documents to machine-readable formats enables students with a visual disability the same access as other students to online documents essential in completing their coursework.

Library staff have taken the initiative to deliver this valuable service on time and to a high quality for the benefit of students. It is very pleasing to have this ongoing commitment by Library staff recognised publicly by the University.

For more information, please go to <http://www.library.qut.edu.au/cmd/students.jsp#assistive>

Carolyn Young
Queensland University of Technology



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