



clients. A new communications strategy has subsequently been implemented, with specific coaching and advice provided to staff on an ongoing basis.

The library has also appointed three cadets on a new three-year program. The cadets gain wide expertise across all elements of library activity and bring skills and knowledge of their recent education to augment library perspectives.

Regional initiatives

In keeping with Deakin's commitment to rural and regional engagement, in September 2008 the library investigated the feasibility of regional collaboration in the provision of training and development opportunities for library staff—and facilitate the development of a collaborative program across the major libraries in the region.

The pilot was developed, with a range of service providers used and activities included. CAVAL supported the pilot with a generous discount on the cost of their courses for inclusion in the program. The library will formally evaluate the pilot—and the collaborative processes to make it happen—at the end of July.

As these initiatives suggest, flexibility and choice are paramount in the library's vision to connect people, technology, and information. For more information, visit Deakin University Library online at <http://www.deakin.edu.au/library> or feel free to drop us a line on Facebook, Twitter, or at libinfo@deakin.edu.au

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Learning from the students at Swinburne

For many new students, the best way to make it difficult for them to actually find a book, is to give them the book's call number and send them on their way. If you were told that a book was on the shelves at "658.403 MAR", would you know what that actually means? Is the book on the sixth floor because the call number starts with a '6' or is it in the marketing section as the call number ends with 'MAR'? Or does the '403' mean that it is the four hundred and third book in the 658 section, so would logically be shelved after 658.49. All are very reasonable assumptions for a person who has never previously encountered the Dewey Decimal Classification (Dewey).

We can't assume that the student learned Dewey at school – many students went to a school where there was no library or if they did have access to a library, then that library used a completely different system for shelving. As one international student said to me recently, "In my school all of the marketing books were on one shelf and the books on accounting were on another".

Even if the student does have an understanding of Dewey, then we add further complications by not making it clear how we order the shelves. Have you ever been asked by a student to help them find a book at 658.403 because it appears that the numbers go from 658.402 to 658.404? Chances are the student is used to a shelving approach where you go from the bottom row of books on one book shelf to the top row of books on the next.

Another common roadblock we place in the student's way is deciding that, because something happens to be large, it gets shelved somewhere else. And if that is not confusing enough, we then don't call it something logical like a 'large book', but something really obscure like a 'quarto' or a 'folio'.

This is not suggesting that we abandon Dewey; at the other end of the spectrum we have PhD students who rely on a categorisation system that enables them to pinpoint the exact book in our collections that will be the pivotal piece in their research. But if we listen to the students' questions, we can develop strategies to make finding the right book easier.

At Swinburne we have recently put a lot of effort into doing just this. In preparation for second semester this, year we have completely integrated our folio collection into our general collection. I have already had a student ask me if we had just increased our collection because there were a lot of books in his subject area that he had never seen before.

We are also working on our signage, starting with clear signs showing where the collection continues; for example, if it continues on the floor above. Lastly we are working on signage that will not just tell someone which Dewey range of books are in a particular bay of shelves, but what are the key topics in that bay. The key point of all of this is that if first year students feel more comfortable and more able to use the library, then they are more likely to continue using the library throughout the rest of their course. The test of whether or not our strategies have worked will be seen over the second semester, but already the feedback has been very good.

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Partnerships at Swinburne

You all know about the services academic libraries provide to their most visible user groups: students and academics. However, the role academic libraries perform for the corporate side of their institutions is usually much less public. This is starting to change.

Swinburne Library is one of many Australian academic libraries managing an institutional repository – a digital collection of the university's research publications designed to maximise their potential to be discovered online. Institutional repositories can achieve many admirable goals for librarians – they preserve digital assets into the future, address the problem of skyrocketing journal prices, facilitate open access to scholarly research, and provide a single point of entry to an institution's entire body of research. For universities, though, the benefit of institutional repositories is more concrete. Information about a university's research achievements made available online helps to attract student enrolments and funding for more research.

Support for research is certainly not a new role for academic libraries. Traditionally we offer assistance in the early stages of the research process by providing access to scholarly content and helping construct comprehensive literature searches. While some libraries give advice to researchers about where to publish, the focus has always been on building the capability to produce quality research, rather than making the most of its end product.

Swinburne Research Bank (<http://researchbank.swinburne.edu.au>) is designed to promote and showcase the research of Swinburne academics. We have records for over 12000 publications including journal articles, conference papers, and books, and full text is freely available for over 2000 of these. Through our experience running Swinburne Research Bank, we've built up a comprehensive and reliable source of data about Swinburne research publications. While this information existed previously, it tended to be gathered only for a single purpose, such as individual reporting exercises or personal CV management. Our data is well maintained and quality controlled, and as we're discovering this can be of great use to a number of different areas in the university.