Spain, South, and Central America were recruited. This also included Galego.

The State Library of NSW Multicultural Consultant invited the participation of State Library staff whose first languages included Hindi, Slovak, Serbian, Italian, Arabic, Vietnamese, and French.

Volunteers and Friends of the State Library and members of the community contributed with their language skills in Dutch, German, Kannada, Korean, Portuguese, Swedish, Swahili, Somali, Macedonian, Dinka, Bosnian, and Tatar.

The Consultant also recruited assistance from the NSW Public Libraries network with Cantonese, Mandarin, Tamil, Polish, Galego, Filipino, Turkish, and Serbian.

2. Developments in website and content management technology

The development of this website is supported by the State Library of Victoria's Vicnet, which has developed and maintained significant expertise in the areas of multilingual web development and has led the technical aspect and the foundation of the project.

Website technology has developed from providing pages of static html to using sophisticated content structures. Many high traffic, content-rich sites are now structured around an internal database and a series of design templates, with the interaction between the two elements controlled by a series of program scripts. This is the structure underlying MyLanguage as it simplifies management and update processes, allowing many of these to be undertaken by library staff as part of their regular duties.

The role of special technical staff can be refocused on higher level technical and content development issues, while the content management technology takes care of the day-to-day management. Other developments in collaborative global content creation such as Wikipedia and the Open Directory Project allow for new opportunities in content resource discovery.

MyLanguage uses harvesting protocols and methods to expand access to online information resources. The use of scripts to harvest external data to populate an internally-held database is a central feature of MyLanguage.

MyLanguage portal structure

The contents of this internal database can be searched and displayed in response to user enquiries. This process is very similar to the way in which search engines use scripts to populate and index an internal database. This method allows the re-use of externally provided information, including government information, and ensures the information is accessed appropriately by language and topic.

More conventional sites offering multicultural content often have intensive editorial and content selection requirements and processes, with a consequently large staff overhead to cover in their budgets. The MyLanguage portal enables current library staff with specific language or other multicultural expertise to be involved in updating, researching, and adding information resources to the site with little requirement for technical knowledge and so are able to do this as part of their regular duties.

The usage

Since Sept 2007 the usage statistics of MyLanguage show that the website has received more than a million visits.

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A better way to read

In a country with a population of such diverse ethnic backgrounds, supplying materials in community languages will always present a challenge to Australian libraries. Whether a phrase book for an international holiday, a language course for an extended stay overseas, or the latest blockbuster in a preferred tongue, libraries have recognised the need for materials in diverse languages within their collections.

Language difficulties present one of the toughest barriers to obtaining information, and factors such as aging, vision impairment, chronic arthritis, or Parkinson's disease place added pressures on homebound services and language collections. Audio materials in languages other than English are more expensive and difficult to obtain than print. Reliance on others to read newspapers or books can result in a loss of independence and recreational enjoyment.

In 2000 an open source software development gave print disability organisations and libraries around the world the ability to exchange titles through a standardised audio format. DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) provides a digital quality audio file that allows the reader to skip forward or back and remembers the page they last read. DAISY books are self-described as the better way to read and the standard is diverse enough to be adopted in 55 countries internationally.

Vision Australia is working to build partnerships with DAISY libraries overseas in order to develop a high-quality collection of audio materials for print-disabled, community-language readers. Currently we have a direct supply of German and Finnish books provided by Medibus and Celia libraries respectively, with plans to create local collections of Hindi, Japanese, Dutch, and Spanish materials. With an increasing number of audio libraries around the world embracing the DAISY standard, further expansion is just around the corner.

Do you know anyone who is unable to hold, manipulate, or see a regular print book? If so, the Vision Australia Information Library Service can provide increased access to a whole world of print information. For further information, please contact our friendly Reader Services team on 1300 654 656.

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UTS student wins ALIA conference scholarship

Natalya Godbold, a liaison librarian with the University of Western Sydney and PhD student at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS), received a $1500 scholarship for the best paper by an early career researcher or practitioner at the recent Research Applications in Information and Library Studies (RAILS) conference, held at UTS on 23 January 2009. The scholarship was sponsored by the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) and the recipient chosen by the ALIA Research Committee. Natalya was presented with the award by ALIA President, Derek Whitehead.

Natalya's paper, based on her recently completed UTS Masters project, *User-centred design vs. "good" database design principles: a case study, creating knowledge repositories for indigenous Australians*, describes the challenges involved in creating metadata for a database to store the traditional knowledge of Aboriginal clans involved in Traditional Knowledge Revival Pathways (TKRP).