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Managing international education: the cybrary's perspective

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Paper Title: Managing International Education: the Cybrary's Perspective

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Abstract

The diverse community at the University of Queensland includes 6000 international students from 124 countries. The University of Queensland Cybrary delivers client focused innovative information products, services and programs of the highest quality, that are integrated with and central to the University's teaching, learning and research activities. In this increasingly cross-cultural environment, this paper presents the role the Cybrary plays in international activities within the University and overseas.

The Cybrary constitutes the largest teaching, learning and research collection in Queensland and is one of the largest in Australia. The Library uses the term Cybrary to describe the integrated access to printed and electronic resources and the combination of physical and virtual space. The success of this strategy was recognised in 1998 when the Library was awarded joint first place in the institutional category of the prestigious Australian Awards for University teaching. For international students, the Cybrary provides an interface to the extensive collections of print, electronic and networked databases.

Providing client focused quality services is the Cybrary's driving force. Specialist Cybrary services for international students include information skills training, the AskIT computing help and training, access to special language software enabling different scripts to be read, word-processing in many languages, a large video collection with many languages other than English, an International website, multilingual staff and International student liaison officers. International newspapers are available in print and electronic form. The high levels of personal assistance and the extent of Cybrary resources consistently receive very positive feedback from international students.

The Cybrary runs a unique six-week program for international library professionals called 'Creating a Cybrary: The Library of the Future'. To date, participants from countries such as Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Fiji, and Sri Lanka have enrolled in the program to acquire skills for providing innovative library services.

BACKGROUND

The University of Queensland

The University of Queensland is a leader among Australian universities and is recognised internationally as a premier research institution. It is the largest and the oldest university in Queensland. It has over 30,000 students and 5, 000 staff. The main University campus is at St Lucia in the western suburbs of Brisbane. Other campuses include: Gatton, located 100 kilometres from Brisbane; Ipswich, which is a new campus located 40 kilometres from Brisbane; a medical school; a dental school as well as farms and research centres throughout Queensland.

The University's teaching, learning and research activities have attracted numerous awards. In 1998 the University of Queensland was declared the University of the Year by the *Good Universities Guide to Australian Universities*. It received the maximum five-star rating for positive graduate outcomes, prestige, student demand, research performance, gender balance and staff qualifications. The University is consistently in the top three in Australia in the amounts of researching funding it receives and consistently performs well in teaching and learning awards nationally. The University of Queensland is a member of the Universitas 21 consortium, a network of seventeen research-intensive universities across nine countries. It is also part of the Group of Eight, a consortium of Australia's leading Universities.

The University of Queensland Cybrary

The University of Queensland Library badges itself as a Cybrary to illustrate that the libraries of today are not just mere physical spaces for study or storage spaces for books. The library of today provides access to information via the Internet as well as through electronic full text journals and electronic books. Information access is now provided through the physical library as well as that of cyber space (Internet), and with that the brand of the *Cybrary* was created.

The University of Queensland Cybrary has one of the largest collections amongst academic libraries in Australia and by far the largest in Queensland. The collection comprises: over 2 million volumes; 12,340 print journals and over 22,600 electronic journals; 752 networked databases; 299, 600 electronic books and 27, 387 videos. Over 20 service points deliver services up to 84 hours per week over 13 branch libraries located at the St Lucia, Gatton and Ipswich campuses and in the major teaching hospitals. Service delivery through branch libraries is supported by centralised processing and administrative services for the whole system. Personnel are recruited centrally and library materials are ordered and processed centrally. Policies are developed by the Library as a whole, with participation and input of as many staff as possible.

In 1998, the UQ Library was awarded joint first place in the institutional category of the prestigious Australian Awards for University Teaching for its development and implementation of the Cybrary concept. In 2000, the Library won the same award for its *Ask*IT Computing Help and Training Service. UQ Library is the only Library in the country to have won this Teaching Award. The University Librarian, Mrs Janine Schmidt was designated Library Manager of the Year for 1999 by her colleagues in the Australian Library and Information Association.

International Services

Illustrations here are drawn from the University of Queensland Cybrary's involvement in a range of international education initiatives in a number of countries in South East Asia. These activities include:

- Support for University of Queensland students living abroad
- Support for international students studying at the University of Queensland
- Support for students enrolled in bilateral UQ twinning programs.

- Collaborative library development activities with university libraries
- Professional development programmes for professional librarians from the higher education sectors of developing countries
- Feedback from international students.

1.   Support for Remote International Students

All remote international students enrolled at UQ are provided with Cybrary services. Access is provided to all services available via the Cybrary's website, free of charge. Authentication is required to access the library's services, which uses the student's Library ID Number and a PIN that the student assigns.

Services include:

- Catalogue use
- Access to online databases
- E-journals subscribed to by the library
- E-books
- Access to electronic course readings
- FindIts/UseIts providing course guides to information on specific topics and specific resources, including how to cite materials and evaluate the Internet

UQ Cybrary web Site for International Students

- Virtual Reference Collection, providing a gateway to hundreds of freely available Internet resources ranging from legislation to quotations
- *Ask*IT and *Aska*Cybrarian services, which provide IT help, much of it on the web, and individual reference assistance
- Internet and portal/gateway services
- Supply of books and journal articles from the Library's collection (Service to Remote Students)
- Supply of books and documents not held in the Library's collection through Document Delivery Service (for postgraduate students)
- Learningfast – an online help service designed to assist users with applications such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint and many others
- Specialised webpages.

Additional services are offered to remote students to compensate for the distance from a physical UQ Cybrary. Remote undergraduate students are entitled to 10 free photocopied articles from the UQ collection and for those students without access to the Internet; a Liaison Librarian will conduct a literature search on their behalf. Extra Cybrary services are similar for postgraduate students plus an additional 10 free articles from the UQ collection. Each branch library assigns a liaison librarian who will assist remote students with their enquiries and information needs. http://www.library.uq.edu.au/skills/remotestudents.html

There are specialised services available for specific training programs in institutional twinning arrangements e.g. Universiti Brunei Darussalam, where the University of Queensland's Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Biomedical Science degrees are offered.

2.   Support for International Students at UQ

International students studying at the University of Queensland have access to the full range of Library services and facilities. In addition, a customised orientation program is offered, which includes library tours and a Discovering the Cybrary seminar. Students studying on AusAid scholarships are required to attend the Introductory Academic Programme (IAP) which incorporates four hours of information skills training. Some international students choose to enrol in the Academic Preparation Programme (AAP) which also incorporates a library information skills session, the Cybrary liases with Student Support Services to integrate this class. Higher level English language students enrolled at the Institute of Continuing and TESOL Education (ICTE) are given Library training seminars and tours. Librarians work with Learning Advisers at the University's Student Support Services to help students become independent and confident learners able to achieve their academic goals and to further student information gathering and communication skills and to prepare students, in many cases, for further study here in Australia.

Foundation Year Students receive borrowing rights and access to all facilities while they are in any of the branches of the University of Queensland Cybrary. They also receive training in the use of our services and a tour of the facilities. This is made possible through a small fee from International Education Services (IES) Limited.

There are international students from 124 countries studying at the University of Queensland. The Cybrary provides them the same services it provides to local students. In addition, specialist services are also available:

- Nominated International Student Liaison Officers in the library, to assist international students and students from non English speaking backgrounds
- Some library staff speak more than one language and can be of assistance http://www.library.uq.edu.au/about/languages.html
- Specialised software on library computers, to enable the web browser to read many other language scripts
- 39 electronic International newspapers, 26 print International newspapers and 14 print Australian newspapers, to keep up to date with what is happening at home and a tailored website newspaper page http://www.library.uq.edu.au/database/newspapers.html,
- Each branch library has a number of designated email terminals to help students keep in touch with their family and friends
- Extensive opening hours and 24 hour a day access to the Cybrary's resources via the Internet
- A specialised webpage providing information for international students http://www.library.uq.edu.au/services/international.html
- There is a direct email contact with the Cybrary for International students. (international@cybrary.uq.edu.au)

Cybrary staff undergo training in cross-cultural communication skills as part of their initial induction program. This is organised as part of the Staff Development Program and in conjunction with the University's Teaching and Educational Development Institute (TEDI).
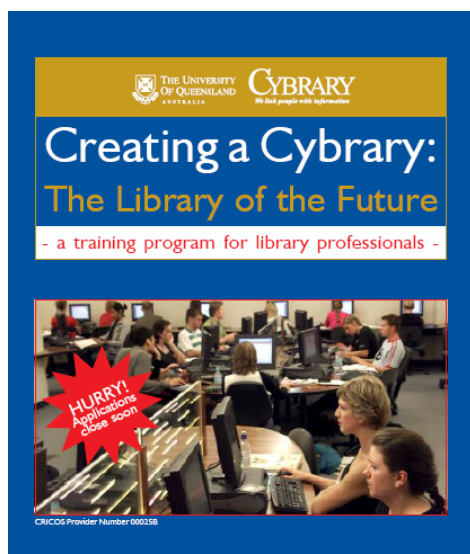

3.   Services to International Librarians

The Cybrary has provided training in information management to librarians and library technicians from Thailand and Indonesia, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia and Sri Lanka. In addition, academic visitors and librarians from Australia and many overseas countries are regularly received. Structured and targeted programmes are provided. The Library consistently has achieved high results in these exercises and imparted information to others involved.

Librarians from a number of these developing countries, spent periods of time ranging from one week to three months at the University of Queensland Cybrary. They can undertake any or all of the six modules of the *Creating a Cybrary: the Library of the Future* Program. The modules are:

- Effective Collection Management;
- From Workstation to Cybrary : using technology in libraries
- Meeting the needs of library users
- Managing the modern library
- In some cases participants also select to do practical work experience in appropriate branch libraries. Internship programs and work experience opportunities are also offered in a varying duration.

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Other services include visits and tours with talks and inspections targeting areas like web design and the provision of virtual reference service. This enables the information professional to acquire skills and knowledge in specialist disciplinary areas like medical librarianship or specific library applications like web design or information skills training can be acquired.
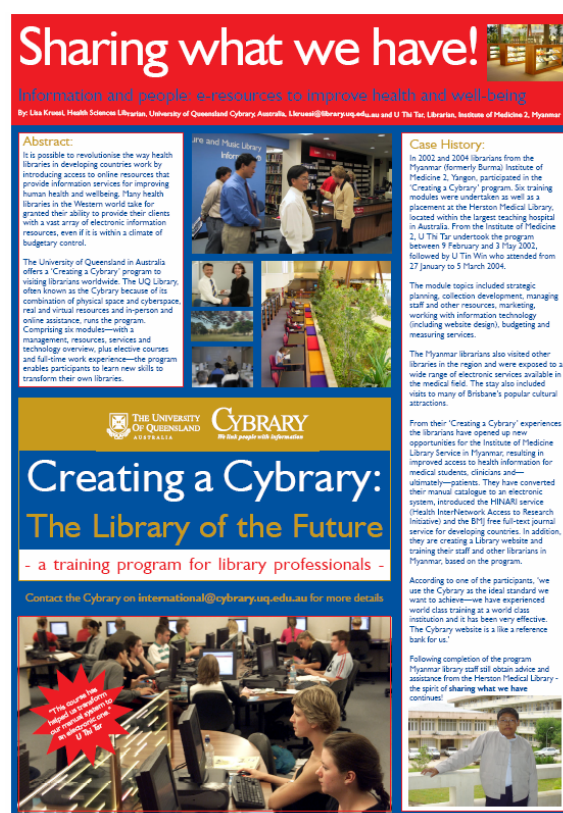

Creating a Cybrary Brochure

4.   Consultancy

The University Librarian and senior library staff are regularly invited to undertake consultancy activities in other university and research libraries within Australia and overseas. These have included major reviews of libraries and library service delivery in Oman, Vietnam and Malaysia. Specialist expertise is available in the following areas:

- Benchmarking, costing (including activity based costing) and total quality management.
- Library building and facilities design, including signage
- Train the trainer programmes
- Information skills programmes, including interactivity
- Website design
- Collection development and management.
- Information technology applications in libraries.
- Effective use of integrated library management systems, particularly Innopac
- Gateway and portal development
- Strategic planning
- Leadership and management
- Hospital and medical librarianship, including evidence based medicine.
- Information services to business and industry
- Flexible delivery of information
- Marketing of library services, including publications.

Kruesi, L., Poster presentation at a Medical Conference

5.   International Conference/Seminar Presentations

A selection of some of the international presentations by senior library staff at International conferences includes the following:

The Cybrary was represented at the First Shanghai International Library Forum, held in July, by Liz Jordan, coordinator of International and Special Projects. Liz presented a paper titled *The Cybrary and the Consortium: Mutual Benefits*, which focussed on the services of the Cybrary and interactions between the participant members of Queensland University Libraries of Cooperation.

Anne Horn, Executive Manager, attended the Learning Resource Catalogue Workshop in Birmingham UK from the 24th September to 26th September 2002. The workshop reviewed the Pilot Phase of implementation and discussed technical issues, future development of the LRC software and the need for an LRC business plan. It was agreed there was an opportunity for more research on the underlying premise that learning objects will be re-used by teaching staff in the same organisation or by collaborative partners in other organisations.

Chris Taylor attended the 68th IFLA General Conference and Council: Libraries for Life: Democracy, Diversity, Delivery at Glasgow in Aug 2002. He presented a paper, *Report on the successful AustLit: Australian Literature Gateway implementation of the FRBR and INDECS event models, and implications for other FRBR implementations*, which was written by Marie-Louise Ayres (The AustLit Gateway, National Library of Australia, Australia), Kerry Kilner (University of Queensland, Australia), Kent Fitch (Project Computing Pty, Ltd) and Annette Scarvell (University of New South Wales, Australia).

EDU-COM 2002 Conference was titled, *Higher Education without Borders: Sustainable Development in Higher Education* held in Khon Kaen, Thailand, November 2002. University Librarian Janine Schmidt attended the conference, and gave a paper on "*The Cybrary: an entrepreneurial approach to collaborative partnerships for information support for borderless e-education*". A presentation was also made to library staff at the University of Khon Kaen on managing a multi campus library in 2002.

In March 2003, Grace Saw, Executive Manager, and Liz Jordan attended the Australian Education International (AEI) Industry Seminar. AEI is part of the office of the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) which exists to support and facilitate the efforts of Australian Education institutions providing programs offshore. At the seminar, an address by Michael Gallagher, CEO of AEI, outlined the "new AEI", which is coming into being now as a result of a review of the organisation conducted last year. His presentation was followed by a double stream of presentations by AEI Counsellors who are based in the Australian Embassies in countries all over the world.

In June 2003, Janine Schmidt attended the combined annual conference of the American Library Association (ALA) and the Canadian Library Association (CLA). Over 17,500 delegates frequented the conference in Toronto and Janine presented a paper that was well received by those that attended the titled *Funding Down Under: entrepreneurial approaches to generating income at the University of Queensland Cybrary.*

In October 2003, Grace Saw presented a paper on *Sustaining User-Centred Website Development in an Online Environment: Approaches taken by AVEL Sustainability Knowledge Network* at the DigiLib Conference at Helsinki which outlined how user centred surveys are applied for getting customer feedback regarding the design of our websites and portals.

During June 2004, Grace Saw presented at the 25th IATUL international conference at Krakow, Poland, on *Reading Rodski – user surveys revisited*. The opportunity was to share the findings of this survey which has been conducted over the last five years at the Cybrary which could be benchmarked against the 37 Australian university libraries was invaluable for our international colleagues.

6.   International Representation

Universitas 21

The University of Queensland Cybrary is an active member of Universitas 21 Libraries Group. Universitas 21 is an international network of leading research-intensive universities. It has 17 member universities in 10 countries. The aim of the Libraries group is to assist its members to position themselves internationally, to improve services, to establish partnerships and to benefit the educational and research endeavours of the parent universities by sharing intellectual capital. The Cybrary participates in these activities and is also a member of the Australasian Libraries regional sub-group.

IFLA (International Federation of Library Association)

The University Librarian is a member of the IFLA (The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) Standing Committee, *Library Buildings and Equipment.* The committee aims to collect and disseminate knowledge on buildings and to establish better contacts between librarians and architects.

IATUL (International Association of Techological University Libraries)

The UQ Cybrary is a member of IATUL which provides a forum for the exchange of ideas relevant to librarianship in technological universities throughout the world. It also provides library directors and senior managers an opportunity to develop a collaborative approach to solving common problems. UQ librarians attend to give presentations annually at the IATUL conference.

7.   Collaborative Projects

Universitas 21

The Learning Resources Catalogue (LRC) is an example of one of the collaborative Universitas 21 projects that the Cybrary was actively involved in 2002. It is a catalogue of learning objects – defined by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) as *'any entity digital or non digital which can be used, reused or referenced during technology supported learning'*. Its purpose is to facilitate the identification and sharing of learning objects, promoting the efficient use of existing resources. During 2002 a pilot was conducted, with participating institutions beginning to establish content.

The Library also participated in a "24x7 Discussion List". The aims of the list were to enable participants to exchange information on reference techniques, and technological development related to reference work across the globe.

8.   Visits to UQL

Request for short visits grew and a program of possibilities was prepared. The process of making standard offerings, ranging from presentations on management by the University Librarian to overviews of information technology by the Manager of the Library Technology Service, appeared to work well. Visitors also receive a copy of the video, Introducing the University of Queensland Cybrary, as well as an information kit including samples of the various information brochures and resource discovery aids produced by the Library.

The Library also responds to many requests for visits made directly to it, via the University of Queensland's International Education Directorate or via the Faculties.

9.   Feedback and surveys

As part of its ongoing commitment to the provision of excellent service, the Cybrary conducts biennial Rodski client surveys, has regular input from its electronic suggestions and organises targeted focus group interviews.

The outcome of the most recent Rodski survey is that international students find that there are adequate computer facilities and electronic equipment, and that they are treated fairly and without discrimination by library staff. This last factor tops the list of performance factors identified by international students, which is a gratifying outcome for the Cybrary. International students also share three factors with local students in their identifying of the top three important factors. These relate to ease of use of the website, the clarity and usefulness of information on the website, and adequacy of the collection.

In general, the results of the Rodski survey for international students are highly similar to those of local students/staff and they would like to have more:

1) Computer workstations
2) Computer facilities and electronic equipment
3) Photocopying and printing facilities.

International students, however have two unique factors which are top of their list, they would like to see longer opening hours and to have more study spaces in the library. This is perhaps an indication of international students' reliance on the Library as a study location.

Conclusion

The Cybrary seeks to continuously improve and extend its services to domestic as well as International students at the University of Queensland. In so doing we organise feedback through questionnaires as well as focus group interviews. We are constantly looking at new and better ways to offer our service delivery to help improve the quality of scholarly engagements for International students during their time at the University of Queensland.

The Cybrary also plans to extend its training assistance to professional librarians from developing countries to help equip them with the necessary skills to create an information seeking environment in their own countries that supports and enhances the research, teaching and learning of their institutions.

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