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## **ANTICIPATING INFORMATION NEEDS: MAXIMISING CONTENT DELIVERY FROM THE PREMIER'S LIBRARY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The library of the Queensland Department of the Premier and Cabinet is a special library that serves key Queensland Government departments. These departments are broad ranging in their functions and in their library requirements and play a central role in determining policy for the Queensland Government. The library therefore has to be on the cutting edge in providing current tailored information to its clients and has developed a range of proactive services to feed information directly to clients' desktops. Journals, blogs and other media are regularly scanned to create what is in effect a searchable collection of current material. New books in the collection, both hard copy and electronic, are also part of this process. This information is disseminated continually by means of blogs, with the options of Twitter feeds, RSS feeds or email delivery. Each month this same material is compiled into bulletins on specific topics and emailed directly to requesting clients in MS Word format.

A by-product of this regular alerting has been the development of a knowledge base of valuable selected and evaluated resources. Titles, abstracts and tags are searchable and the library blogs are often the first place to look to find material to answer research queries. The current awareness blogs are the initial source material for topical bulletins to support officers preparing for special government events such as policy summits.

An important factor in the success of these ventures has been the contribution of all library staff. No extra staff have been employed and no extra funding received to provide these value added services. Rather, promoting current awareness through the blogs, newsletters, media alerts, seasonal reading lists and special bulletins has become an essential part of everyone's work flow.

By anticipating clients' needs, the library has saved them valuable time and effort and has not only added value but demonstrated that value to their clients.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to outline how the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (Premier's) library has embraced selected features of the Web 2.0 world to improve service to library clients, and to encourage other government libraries to experiment with new ways to build on their strengths. Premier's library motto is 'simply excellent service' and it aims to 'provide what you need before you know you need it.'

The Library is a mid-sized government library with 8.5 staff, providing services to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Queensland Treasury, the Department of Infrastructure and Planning which includes the recently established Growth Management Agency, and the Public Service Commission. It covers a broad range of interests including government policy, economic development, finance, public administration, infrastructure, population and growth.

The library's clients require up-to-date authoritative material, often in a very short timeframe. Anticipating client needs has become an important part of the staff day-to-day workload. Library staff endeavour to keep aware of what's happening in parliament locally and overseas, watch and read the news and, importantly, talk as much as possible to library clients about their business information needs. Library research staff attend client team meetings not only to promote the library but also to listen and be aware of their program of works.

Being one step ahead is how the Premier's Library adds value to the information that is often freely available on the web. For many years library staff have been scanning the media for new local, national and international reports from governments and independent think tanks, and sending advice about these reports to individuals known to us. This was mainly the work of one reference librarian, and had the limitations of one person's knowledge and experience of the clients but in 2005 the library started to experiment with a blog to more widely disseminate this advice.

## 2. FORWARD INTO WEB 2.0

It was decided at the outset that blogging would only work if it didn't take too long as staff couldn't spare too much time away from their 'regular' work. Initially two research staff shared the blogging. The benefit of the *New Reports* blog was that a wide range of reports was delivered immediately to a large number of clients. That one blog proved so successful it was soon expanded to five separate blogs, covering different topics: *New Reports*; *Business and Industry*; *Society Law and Politics*; *Technology and Government Policies*. A sixth blog, *Economic Indicators* was added this year. The *Government Policies* blog is a selection of new policies and initiatives from the Federal Government, Territories and State Governments. The *New Reports* blog still contains freely available published reports with links to the full text and has an archive dating back to 2005 containing over 5000 posts. All library staff are now involved in the dissemination of material via the blogs.

## New Reports: a selected list

These are reports from a variety of sources, both government and non-government, which may be useful in considering government policy

Home

### An end to factory schools : an education manifesto 2010-2020

Source: Centre for Policy Studies (London)

"Too many state schools in Britain in 2010 have become factories. Results (at least on paper) have improved. But at what cost? Reluctant students are processed through a system which is closely controlled and monitored by the state. No area of public life is more important than education to prepare people to live meaningful, productive and valuable lives. Yet our schools turn out young people who are often incapable of living full and autonomous lives. At the same time, employers condemn students' lack of academic and personal skills while universities find that the end products of schools can be little more than well-drilled automatons who do not know how to think independently about their academic subjects."

[Full report.](#)

This entry was posted on Tuesday, June 15th, 2010 at 11:38 AM and is filed under Children youth and family, Education and training. You can follow any responses to this entry through the RSS 2.0 feed. Both comments and pings are currently closed.

SEARCH THIS BLOG

Search

CATEGORIES

Select Category

ARCHIVES

Select Month

EMAIL SUBSCRIPTION

Subscribe to New Reports: a selected list by Email

RSS FEED LINK

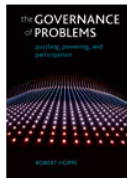
Subscribe in a reader

### New Reports blog

It was realised that the use of the blog medium could be expanded to promote new books and journal articles, in all formats, received in the library. The *Business and Industry*, *Society Law and Politics and Technology* blogs are fully searchable listings of new content within these subject areas. The library had to be mindful of copyright and licensing issues. If the access to items was restricted to departmental clients, the IP authentication process ensured we did not breach copyright. If it was not permissible to link to an item in full text, a form email link was included for a request to the library. Library clients found this easier to use than requesting through the library management system, and it is now the clients preferred method of requesting books.

### The Governance of problems : puzzling, powering and participation (book)

Thursday, June 17, 2010



**Author: Robert Hoppe**

"Policy analysis usually gives more attention to problem solving than problem finding and there is a real threat of mismatch between problem perceptions by citizens and problem definition by their elected and appointed policy makers. Contemporary democracies need to develop a better governance of problems, as all too often, policy is a sophisticated answer to the wrong problem."

Call number: **320.6 GOV 2010**

**Like to borrow a copy from your library? Click here!**

Comments Off | Government, Policy development, Public administration | Permalink  
Posted by Library

### Requesting a book via the library blogs

Another evolution of the library blogs was the advent of tagging. The library staff selected a group of key terms so that the tagging would be controlled across all the blogs. This seemed counter to the principles of Web2.0 user-driven tagging. However it has enabled the library to move on to the next development.

Staff were concerned that some library clients were not comfortable with the idea of using blogs. It was also time consuming to read the amount of information being made available each day and clients began asking to receive only items with specific subject tags. As a result of these requests a different format for delivery was trialed: a monthly summary of items based on the subject tags in the blogs – the *Monthly Topic Update (MTU)* .



## Monthly Topic Update – Business and Industry

As the subject tags were controlled across all the blogs, RSS feeds were set up for each separate subject tag. Each month staff copy the contents from the RSS reader (the library uses Google's reader) and formats them into an MS Word document. Clients request individual topics online and their topic updates are emailed at the beginning of each month. MS Word was chosen for the updates as it is a familiar format for the techno-reluctant. As every item has an active link, this may morph into an online only production in the future. *MTU's* were so popular that what began as a trial to a small number of selected library clients quickly developed via word of mouth into a full blown service.

### 3. FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

The latest addition to the library blogs was added in early 2010 to meet a need for constant and immediate access to current economic indicators. This blog is unimaginatively but descriptively titled *Economic Indicators* and links to the latest economic data as it is released.

The library blogs have always been accessible via email and RSS feeds. Twitter feeds have recently been added, as the library is mindful of the number of people who want quick information on their small portable devices and smart phones.

- 
**smartdelivery** Australian hospital statistics 2008-09: Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare "Australian hospital s...  
<http://bit.ly/9zXB1M>  
 6:05 PM Jun 18th via twitterfeed

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**smartdelivery** Toward national workplace safety and workers' compensation systems: a chronology. Updated 16 June 2010: Source: A... <http://bit.ly/blz6zu>  
 6:05 PM Jun 18th via twitterfeed

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**smartdelivery** Vocational Education and Training Workforce Issues paper: Source: Australia. Productivity Commission "This issues... <http://bit.ly/aYPYzP>  
 6:05 PM Jun 18th via twitterfeed











Twitter feed

A recent development was making the Premier’s Library blogs available across all Queensland Government agencies instead of restricting them specifically to the library’s clients. This involved no extra work on the part of the library staff, and, as Premiers works across a full range of government policies, they are useful for officers in other departments.

Another new initiative has been the ability to quickly produce special bulletins based on current topical issues. For instance, when the preparation for the Queensland 2010 Growth Summit was in progress, the Premier’s Library provided a select list sourced from its blogs, by simply searching on relevant tags and cutting-and-pasting items (books, articles, reports) into a *Growth Summit Special Bulletin*. This demonstrated one of the unexpected benefits of the library blogs. While they were initiated as a current awareness tool, they’ve also become the first place searched in response to research requests. As all the reports, articles and books have already been selected with a high level of authority and relevance, they can be quickly scanned without the necessity of searching a range of databases and constructing long searches.

occupations. Other states would later introduce their own workers’ compensation schemes. Australian colonies also enacted British-style statutes on employer liability and factory and mine safety.[2] Victoria enacted the first occupational health and safety (OHS) statute, the Supervision of Workrooms and Factories Statute 1873.”

[Full Report](#)

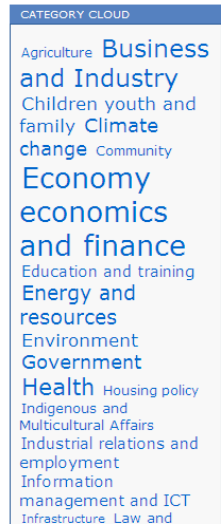
 Comments Off | 
  Business and Industry, 
  Economy, 
  economics and finance, 
  Government, 
  Industrial relations and employment, 
  Law and justice, 
  Policy development | 
  Permalink  
 Posted by Library

**Australian hospital statistics 2008-09**

Friday, June 18, 2010  
 Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

“Australian hospital statistics 2008-09 presents a detailed overview of Australia’s 1,317 public and private hospitals. In 2008-09, there were 8.1 million separations from Australia’s hospitals including: 4.5 million same-day acute separations; 3.3 million overnight acute separations; almost 300,000 non-acute separations. There were 7.2 million presentations to public hospital emergency departments, with 70% of patients seen within the recommended times for their triage categories.”

[Full Report](#)



Category Word cloud on the right-hand side

All the library blogs were recently transferred from the original platform to Wordpress. The change was due to search problems with the original platform. All content was able to be imported smoothly, and the change enabled the use of Twitter feeds and category word clouds, giving a graphic depiction of the relative content strengths, and another access point to the different blogs.

## Winter Reading List

<p><b>Borrowing a new title</b></p> <p>To borrow a new book click on the blue highlighted title. An email will be sent to the library with your request.</p> <p>For help call x44110 or <a href="mailto:library@premiers.qld.gov.au">library@premiers.qld.gov.au</a></p>	<p><b>Tribes : we need you to lead us</b></p> <p><b>Author: Seth Godin</b> "Argues that today everyone has an opportunity to start a movement - to bring together a tribe of like-minded people and do amazing things. And yet too many people ignore the opportunity to lead because they are 'sheepwalking' their way through their lives and work, too afraid to question whether their compliance is doing them - or their company - any good." - cover.</p>	<p><b>Leadership</b></p> <p><b>Fish! culture : essential conversations that transform your organization [DVD / Training Kit]</b></p> <p><b>Authors: John Christensen, Mind Resources &amp; Charthouse Learning</b></p> <p>Seattle's world-famous Pike Place Fish Market is an otherwise ordinary fish market that's extraordinarily successful. The work is hard and the hours are long - yet these employees make a personal choice to bring passion, playfulness, commitment and a positive attitude to work everyday. This kit contains all you need to facilitate a successful workshop on organizational change.</p>
<p><b>Career development</b></p> <p><b>The Element : how finding your passion changes everything</b></p> <p><b>Author: Ken Robinson</b> Draws on the stories of a wide range of people, from ex-Beatle Paul McCartney to renowned physicist Richard Feynman and many others, including business leaders and athletes, showing how all of them came to recognize their unique talents and were able to make a successful living doing what they love.</p>	<p><b>What color is your parachute? 2010 : a practical manual for job-hunters and career-changers</b></p> <p><b>Author: Richard N. Bolles</b> Covers: The five best ways to hunt for a job, How to deal with handicaps, Creating a resume, How to prepare for an interview, Salary negotiation, How to choose a new career, and How to find a job if you're a baby boomer.</p>	<p><b>FIERCE LEADERSHIP</b></p> <p><b>Fierce leadership : a bold alternative to the worst "best" business practices of today</b></p> <p><b>Author: Susan Scott</b> "The goal of this book is to help you spot the crazy practices that are holding you back, the practices that leave you cursing and covered in cat hair, and replace them with practices that will significantly improve both your performance and the pleasure in everything you do and the results you generate." - page 12.</p>
<p><b>Women, work, and the art of savoir faire : business sense &amp; sensibility</b></p> <p><b>Author: Mireille Guiliano</b> "Talks about style, communication skills, risk taking, leadership, etiquette, mentoring, personal relationships and much more, all from a perspective of three decades in business. This book is about helping women (and a few men) feel good about themselves, being challenged and engaged in our working lives,</p>	<p><b>Stress management for success in the workplace</b></p> <p><b>Author: Robert M. Fried</b> Designed to provide tools that employees can use to handle their workplace stress in a constructive manner.</p> <p>Suggestions include: massage, self-hypnosis, meditation, neurolinguistic programming, exercise and diaphragmatic breathing.</p>	<p><b>INHUMAN RESOURCES</b></p> <p><b>Inhuman resources : a guide to the psychos, misfits and criminally incompetent in every office</b></p> <p><b>Author: Michael Stanford</b></p>

## Quarterly reading list

The library supplements regular monthly newsletters with quarterly reading lists. They do not necessarily include all the latest books but rather interesting books lurking on the library shelves. It has been a surprisingly effective way of finding new readers for relevant but older books. As with the blogs, clicking on the title in the reading list generates a form email for a request to borrow the book. The fact that the library uses the same format for all of these marketing ventures means that the brand is recognised and other services promoted.

The library is currently experimenting with subscription database access via mobile devices particularly smart phones such as Blackberries and iPhones.

## 4. MANAGING THE PROCESS

Of the 8.5 library staff there is only one part-time person who does no blogging. Staff have rostered blogging days and the sources to be monitored are divided up so that each day something new is blogged, whether it is a tv programme found by the manager, a report found by a reference librarian, a new book promoted by the collection development librarian or a new economic indicator posted by the serials librarian.

While all staff are involved, there were initially different levels of confidence. As with all things some people were game to give anything a go, and others needed written instructions. However, the Premier's Library team members are very flexible and it is rewarding for them to see a professional-looking result and to know that the blogs are widely read and respected. The level of willingness to participate has been very high.

## 5. MEASURING SUCCESS

Initially the monthly summaries of the five blogs – the *Monthly Topic Updates (MTUs)* – were not widely promoted, as their production was still in experimental mode. However, with marketing conducted principally via word of mouth, the number of emailed updates in recent months has exceeded 700 individual subject specific updates.

These statistics are in addition to the clients accessing the blogs via daily email alerts and RSS feeds. Feedburner, a web feed management tool, provides the statistics of clients accessing the blogs and these numbers increase substantially whenever any of the blogs are mentioned in the monthly library newsletters. Increased access to articles within subscription databases is also shown in the access statistics provided by individual vendors and is a measure of the success of the blogs.

Client feedback is also a strong measure of the success of the current service delivery mechanisms. MTU's were monitored via Outlook read receipts over a number of months to ensure that the emails received were being read. Any that were consistently shown as "deleted without being read" were followed up with an email on "Reviewing your current awareness from the library" and an offer to remove the client from the distribution list for that topic update. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with clients requesting **not** to be deleted. Client comments included the following:

*Sometimes I have to transfer them to a READING folder for later, when time does not permit me to go through them.*

*Our unit uses the library research services to assist in developing policy advice and projects to support the industry in Queensland. Further, our unit maintains a watching brief ... and draws on assistance from Department Premier and Cabinet's Library to ensure comprehensive information is sourced for this purpose.*

*Excellent and valuable service, please do not delete me.*

As part of the assessment before implementing the *Economic Indicators* blog, trial access was given to selected clients the library thought would have a need for this information. Feedback was very pleasing,

*This is one of the better sources of economic info for our needs.*

*We would certainly benefit from having access to this service.*

*This is a really good blog!*

This blog is now linked directly from the Queensland Treasury intranet.



Treasury Intranet link promotion

Clients who have moved to other government departments have expressed a desire to continue reading the Premier's Library blogs, even if they are unable to directly access the restricted items.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The Premier's Library has developed various methods of service delivery which reach out via many different channels. A feature of the success has been the cooperation and willingness of all the library team to be involved and to be innovative. Clients who still shy away from the word 'blog' now value the immediacy of the authoritative information provided. A more catchy name for the blogs remains elusive, however, the Premier's Library continues to concentrate on providing 'simply excellent service', giving library clients 'what they need before they know they need it'.

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