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INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS IN LIBRARIES – THE WEB 2.0 WAY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the paper is to report on an E-Innovations project conducted in 2009 to help students studying to be library assistants to be better prepared for using Web 2.0. The project involved a small team of people with representatives from the State Library of Tasmania, the University of Tasmania's Morris Miller Library and graduates of the Certificate III. The library representatives helped to target appropriate Web 2.0 technologies and suitable workplace scenarios used in their workplaces. Graduates of the Certificate III provided a student perspective to the design process.

Learning strategies were developed based on the workplace scenarios and output as a teachers' toolkit in the form of a blog. Delivery was trialled with a small cohort of new students. Then, content, delivery, training and assessment were evaluated and modified based on stakeholder feedback. A further trial of the course was conducted and last modifications made.

All participants in the project agreed that the new course enabled students to be more confident in using Web 2.0 tools, better prepared for working in the library and information services industry and better prepared for transition to the Diploma qualification which involves many more Web 2.0 applications. Students involved in the two trials provided positive feedback.

The course is now ready for delivery in 2010 as part of the Certificate III in Library and Information Services and is available free of charge through the Internet for anyone wishing to use it.

1.1 PRIMARY FOCUS OF THE PROJECT

Students in the Library and Information Services stream are typically mature age women returning to study after a number of years and, whilst they have basic IT skills to use Internet search engines, copy, paste and otherwise download and manage information they have very limited knowledge of Web 2.0 tools especially the diverse range of information management, communication, and packaging tools available.

Currently, students aren't introduced to Web 2.0 tools until they are in the final stages of the Diploma in LIS, CUL50104, when they enrol in CULLB003B *Research and analyse information to meet customer needs* and CULLB602C *Use, evaluate and extend own information literacy skills*. In these units, which are delivered holistically, they work through the package called [Learn 23 things](#). This was introduced to meet the needs of industry as revealed by research and professional learning, as well as through feedback from business/industry partners at meetings, for example at Industry Reference Group and Enterprise Reference Group meetings, and through employer feedback.

On evaluation and review of the training and assessment strategy for CULLB003B *Research and analyse information to meet customer needs* and CULLB602C *Use, evaluate and extend own information literacy skills*, we decided that introducing students to Web 2.0 technologies for the first time at the Diploma level was too big a leap for most and their learning was superficial at best.

Students' evaluations of these units as delivered in 2008, supported our view.

By incorporating an introduction to some of the information management and packaging tools of Web 2.0 such as [wikis](#), [blogs](#), [delicious](#), [twitter](#) and [flickr](#), in the basic Certificate III (CULLB30104) unit *CULLB203B Develop and use information literacy skills*, it was proposed that students will be able to more confidently meet the requirements of the Diploma units.

Our project enabled us to apply up to date technology to training package units to reflect industry practice and changing technological trends. We sourced project funding from the Commonwealth Innovations program for funding for a project to include industry partners in developing the content for the unit, especially with regards to the Web 2.0 technologies we should include. In addition, the project aimed to trial the content with a small cohort of learners enrolled in the Certificate III in Library and Information Services at the Tasmanian Polytechnic.

1.2 BENEFITS TO THE CLIENTS AND LEARNERS

The learners were students enrolled in the Certificate III in Library and Information Services at the Tasmanian Polytechnic. The typical demographic of this learner group is female, mature age, and returning to study after a number of years away from school. These students are typically looking for part time employment now that their children have grown a little older and are more self-sufficient. Many of the learners have had limited paid employment opportunities prior to this return to study.

The challenge these students face is to become technologically proficient to meet the demands of the information industry in which they propose to work, within the very short time frame of two years full time study to attain the Diploma of Library/Information Services. Tasmanian Library/Information Services agencies use blogs and wikis in libraries in the following areas:

- As staff reference databases
- For public resource guides
- Managing team &/or project knowledge
- Marketing and communicating with clients
- Current awareness and professional development

Further afield in library and information agencies other Web 2.0 tools are also used for a variety of services and/or processes. For example, podcasts are used to deliver tutorials, Flickr is used to manage digital image collections, RSS feeds are used to provide access to new articles, new titles and news, mashups are created to provide enhanced information resources¹. The comment from information agencies is that it is vital for students to understand and be able to use these tools.²

We used information industry business clients from the State Library of Tasmania and the University of Tasmania Morris Miller Library to inform the project. They helped target appropriate Web 2.0 technologies and suitable workplace scenarios to use as case studies in the learning strategies. Once our information industry business clients identified appropriate workplace scenarios that incorporated Web 2.0 technologies, the Library and Museum Technology team developed learning strategies to reflect industry practice.

Students were involved in the process at the initial stage, with two graduates of the Certificate III providing a student perspective to the design process. The project also entailed testing the learning and assessment strategy that was developed with a small cohort of learners. The trial group of learners was encouraged to provide feedback (Appendices 1, 2, 3) and to evaluate the unit. Various evaluation strategies were also trialled at each of the sessions for the first trial. Modifications to the

¹ 2007 Library 2.0 and beyond : innovative technologies and tomorrow's user Libraries Unlimited, Westport, Conn.

² 2009 Information online conference, ALIA Sydney

content, including learning and assessment strategies, were made based on feedback from the first trial, and a second trial was conducted. Students in the second trial were also encouraged to provide feedback (Appendix 4) The new unit content was implemented with the full Certificate 111 student intake in 2010.

The multiple stakeholders were managed as a cohesive group using team building skills to enable them to function effectively as a work team. All members of the project were encouraged to reflect on their learning and to contribute to the discussions. A range of facilitation styles was modelled to ensure that all members of the group received the support and direction they required. Feedback was encouraged and modifications to the process were made based on that feedback.

1.3 EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARTNERS AND LEARNERS

The learners who trialled the learning and assessment strategies for the unit, developed as an outcome of the proposal, were students who had already enrolled in the Certificate III in Library and Information Services in 2009.

The industry partners who were involved in targeting appropriate Web 2.0 technologies for incorporation into the learning and assessment strategies for the unit, Develop and use information literacy skills (CULLB203B) and in assisted in the development of suitable work place scenarios, have a very strong relationship with the Library and Museum Technology section of the RTO. They participate in Industry Reference Group and Enterprise Reference Group meetings, ALIA accreditation meetings, work placements, as guest speakers and in providing workplaces for industry visits. We have a strong and long-term partnership with our industry especially as represented by the State Library of Tasmania and the University of Tasmania. The State Library of Tasmania is the largest employer group in Tasmania as it manages all Tasmanian public libraries and all Tasmanian public school libraries.

We have worked with industry partners in the past with Learnscope and Re-framing the Future projects and each project has successfully met the needs of all partners.

2.1 E-LEARNING STRATEGY AND PROJECT OUTCOMES

The table below shows, by AQF level, the prerequisite units that provide underpinning knowledge and skills for successful completion of the information literacy stream of qualifications. CULLB203B is the first and most basic unit. By introducing appropriate Web 2.0 tools at this level, students will build confidence in using new technology. This is a recognised pedagogical technique based on the theory of cognitive load. Each of the units in the information literacy stream will incorporate the use of Web 2.0 tools with increasing sophistication. This project aimed to provide for a flexible, supportive and connected integration of current technology into the course.

Certificate III Core unit	CULLB203B Develop and use information literacy skills
Certificate IV Core unit	CULLB401B Assist customers to access information
Diploma Core unit	CULLB003B Research and analyse information to meet customer needs
Advanced Diploma Core unit	CULLB602C Use, evaluate and extend own information literacy skills

The project incorporated learning design that ensured learning is embedded in both realistic and relevant contexts, with learning resources developed from authentic and practical scenarios as provided by our business partners. The learning tasks were developed to engage the student and to encourage collaboration, participation and reflection. By introducing Web 2.0 technologies at the

Certificate III level, effective scaffolding was established so that by the Diploma level units, the student has the confidence to be an independent learner.

3 CONCLUSION

The project embedded e-learning at the Tasmanian Polytechnic as the Library and Museum Technology Team investigated and evaluated appropriate Web 2.0 technologies for inclusion in the Certificate III unit. Staff were required to explore various Web 2.0 technologies to ascertain suitability for inclusion. The various Web 2.0 technologies were also evaluated in terms of information literacy skill requirements to ensure that learning and assessment strategies for Certificate III were developed at the appropriate level.

The project has the potential to provide new training markets for the RTO because information literacy skills development using Web 2.0 technologies is considered an essential skill for professional development for librarians and information industry employees. It is also an essential skill for students studying at both undergraduate and post graduate level at university, so another partnership market may be forged between academic library staff and the Polytechnic.

The project will improve workforce performance for the Library Technician graduates because it will ensure that they have a better, deeper understanding of Web 2.0 technologies in the information industry context, and can apply these directly in their work roles.

The Information Industry has undergone rapid and radical development and the time is right for the development of new resources to reflect the contemporary information environment and support the new content and methods of delivery.

Web 2.0 technologies were the content of our proposed training, but they also became the delivery medium/learning resources. The delivery plan and strategies was be shared with industry partners and other Library and Information Services teachers. The blog that became the delivery medium is freely available to all at the following URL: <http://informationliteracy.blogsome.com>

Team comments and student comments can be found on the blog

