

Spydus meets Vision Australia's software challenges

The innovative nature of Vision Australia's Library service, coupled with a move to new premises, posed a unique set of software development problems.

The challenges to software functionality and data reliability come on three interconnected and interdependent fronts.

First, the library system interfaces with warehouse carousel devices for efficient storage and retrieval of the talking book collection of more than 40 000 items. Secondly the library has introduced automatic profile-matching to enable the automatic selection of items for loan to the majority of its 9000 borrowers. Thirdly, provision of the library catalogue over the internet, allows the library's vision-impaired borrowers to use screen readers which utilise voice output software to browse and search the library catalogue of Braille, large print and talking books online.

'Our existing library management system — Spydus, from Sanderson Australia has had to be customised to deliver innovations such as these,' said Susan Liepa, Vision Australia's manager of library systems.

The new browsing library, which allows vision-impaired people to enjoy the functions that sighted people take for granted in a public library system, was opened in April this year by the Victorian Minister for Local Government, Mr Bob Cameron. Two months after the library was opened, about 70 borrowers were using the internet to search its online catalogue and order books.

Borrowers are able to look up information about their loans, reservations and overdues, through a secure interface controlled by a PIN number. This will be en-

hanced by the next Spydus upgrade which will include an option to renew loans over the internet.

Ms Liepa says that because the bulk of Vision Australia's collection comprises audio devices, from both a technical and a logistics point of view, it places unusual demands on the library's computer system. The software that controls, manages and circulates materials has to be flexible enough to handle each title as a number of physical items. Even the shortest book usually comprises a minimum of eight cassettes, packed four to a mailer box, and the system may have to deal with up to nineteen mailers for every copy of a title.

She cites the library's new automated profile-matching function as another example of innovative technology. This system notes all the titles each borrower has read, and using an individual borrower's profile, allocates new titles and then places the selection into the collection and mailout process. The profile-matching system has been incorporated into Sanderson's standard Spydus Home-bound module, which is available to all public libraries.

The most recent customisation helped to transform the South Yarra library's manual shelf storage system for talking book distribution into a fully automated and integrated warehousing and library cataloguing system.

She sees future development with Sanderson aligning Vision Australia's computer system even more closely with the way in which libraries normally operate.

The library is located at 454 Glenferrie Road, Kooyong. Website at: <http://www.visionaustralia.org.au>. Follow the links via 'read' to the library catalogue. ■



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catering purposes to: Jo-anne Fuller, local presence co-ordinator, ph 02 9906 6000, fx 02 9906 5987, jojo1@ozemail.com.au

• **20/10 NSW Library Technicians. Book repair workshop.** Bankstown Public Library, The Mall, Bankstown, commencing at 9am. Cost: no charge for library technician group members; \$10 ALIA members/students; \$20 non-members. Contact: Kevin Dudeney, ph 02 9636 5007, kdudeney@hotmail.net.au

• **22/10 Clare Burton Memorial lecture series.** University of Technology, Sydney, evening. Contact: Richard Gilzean, ph 02 9514 2923, richard.gilzean@uts.edu.au

• **26/10 NSW Children and Youth Services.** *On the shelf and online: collection management in the children's library.* Burwood Council Chambers, Conder Street, 9-4:30pm. For more information contact: Mylee Joseph, ph 02 9777 7900, mylee.joseph@willoughby.nsw.gov.au

• **20/11 ALIA NSW. Council meeting,** all welcome. Coles Room, Level 11, State Library of NSW, Macquarie Street, Sydney, 6pm. *RSVP for catering purposes to:* Jo-anne Fuller, local presence co-ordinator, ph 02 9906 6000, fx 02 9906 5987, jojo1@ozemail.com.au

• **18/12 ALIA NSW. Council meeting,** all welcome. Coles Room, Level 11, State Library of NSW, Macquarie Street, Sydney, 6pm. *RSVP for catering purposes to:* Jo-anne Fuller, local presence co-ordinator, ph 02 9906 6000, fx 02 9906 5987, jojo1@ozemail.com.au

QLD

• **11/10 Clare Burton Memorial lecture series.** Queensland University of Technology, Owen J Wordsworth Rooms, Level 12, S Block, Gardens Point Campus, 2 George Street, Brisbane, 5:30-7:30pm. Contact: Glenys Drew, ph 07 3864 4082, g.drew@qut.edu.au

• **mid-October (around 15th) Pathways to CPD.** *Critical & creative thinking.* How & why it is important to stay at the cutting edge — Suzette Boyd, Scotch College. Inchholm Hotel. Contact: Sue Rigney, sue_rigney@justice.qld.gov.au

• **16/10 ALIA's election strategy, hosted by Quorum.** Jennefer Nicholson, ALIA executive director, will present ALIA's Election Strategy. State Library of Queensland, 5pm for 5:30-7pm. \$5.50 to cover refreshments. *RSVP to:* Vicki McDonald, ph 07 3840 7874, vicki.mcdonald@slq.qld.gov.au

• **18/10 Children and Youth Services Qld. AGM.** De-brief on Profusion Conference, strategic planning, elec-

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