clients. A new communications strategy has subsequently been implemented, with specific coaching and advice provided to staff on an ongoing basis.

The library has also appointed three cadets on a new three-year program. The cadets gain wide expertise across all elements of library activity and bring skills and knowledge of their recent education to augment library perspectives.

Regional initiatives

In keeping with Deakin's commitment to rural and regional engagement, in September 2008 the library investigated the feasibility of regional collaboration in the provision of training and development opportunities for library staff—and facilitate the development of a collaborative program across the major libraries in the region.

The pilot was developed, with a range of service providers used and activities included. CAVAL supported the pilot with a generous discount on the cost of their courses for inclusion in the program. The library will formally evaluate the pilot—and the collaborative processes to make it happen—at the end of July.

As these initiatives suggest, flexibility and choice are paramount in the library's vision to connect people, technology, and information. For more information, visit Deakin University Library online at **http://www.deakin.edu.au/library** or feel free to drop us a line on Facebook, Twitter, or at **libinfo@deakin.edu.au**

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Learning from the students at Swinburne

For many new students, the best way to make it difficult for them to actually find a book, is to give them the book's call number and send them on their way. If you were told that a book was on the shelves at "658.403 MAR", would you know what that actually means? Is the book on the sixth floor because the call number starts with a '6' or is it in the marketing section as the call number ends with 'MAR'? Or does the '403' mean that it is the four hundred and third book in the 658 section, so would logically be shelved after 658.49. All are very reasonable assumptions for a person who has never previously encountered the Dewey Decimal Classification (Dewey).

We can't assume that the student learned Dewey at school – many students went to a school where there was no library or if they did have access to a library, then that library used a completely different system for shelving. As one international student said to me recently, "In my school all of the marketing books were on one shelf and the books on accounting were on another".

Even if the student does have an understanding of Dewey, then we add further complications by not making it clear how we order the shelves. Have you ever been asked by a student to help them find a book at 658.403 because it appears that the numbers go from 658.402 to 658.404? Chances are the student is used to a shelving approach where you go from the bottom row of books on one book shelf to the top row of books on the next.

Another common roadblock we place in the student's way is deciding that, because something happens to be large, it gets shelved somewhere else. And if that is not confusing enough, we then don't call it something logical like a 'large book', but something really obscure like a 'quarto' or a 'folio'.

This is not suggesting that we abandon Dewey; at the other end of the spectrum we have PhD students who rely on a categorisation system that enables them to pinpoint the exact book in our collections that will be the pivotal piece in their research. But if we listen to the students' questions, we can develop strategies to make finding the right book easier.

At Swinburne we have recently put a lot of effort into doing just this. In preparation for second semester this, year we have completely integrated our folio collection into our general collection. I have already had a student ask me if we had just increased our collection because there were a lot of books in his subject area that he had never seen before.

We are also working on our signage, starting with clear signs showing where the collection continues; for example, if it continues on the floor above. Lastly we are working on signage that will not just tell someone which Dewey range of books are in a particular bay of shelves, but what are the key topics in that bay. The key point of all of this is that if first year students feel more comfortable and more able to use the library, then they are more likely to continue using the library throughout the rest of their course. The test of whether or not our strategies have worked will be seen over the second semester, but already the feedback has been very good.

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Partnerships at Swinburne

You all know about the services academic libraries provide to their most visible user groups: students and academics. However, the role academic libraries perform for the corporate side of their institutions is usually much less public. This is starting to change.

Swinburne Library is one of many Australian academic libraries managing an institutional repository – a digital collection of the university's research publications designed to maximise their potential to be discovered online. Institutional repositories can achieve many admirable goals for librarians – they preserve digital assets into the future, address the problem of skyrocketing journal prices, facilitate open access to scholarly research, and provide a single point of entry to an institution's entire body of research. For universities, though, the benefit of institutional repositories is more concrete. Information about a university's research achievements made available online helps to attract student enrolments and funding for more research.

Support for research is certainly not a new role for academic libraries. Traditionally we offer assistance in the early stages of the research process by providing access to scholarly content and helping construct comprehensive literature searches. While some libraries give advice to researchers about where to publish, the focus has always been on building the capability to produce quality research, rather than making the most of its end product.

Swinburne Research Bank (**http://researchbank.swinburne.edu.au**) is designed to promote and showcase the research of Swinburne academics. We have records for over 12000 publications including journal articles, conference papers, and books, and full text is freely available for over 2000 of these. Through our experience running Swinburne Research Bank, we've built up a comprehensive and reliable source of data about Swinburne research publications. While this information existed previously, it tended to be gathered only for a single purpose, such as individual reporting exercises or personal CV management. Our data is well maintained and quality controlled, and as we're discovering this can be of great use to a number of different areas in the university.

Strengthening partnerships

Swinburne Research

Our research office is an innovative and proactive area, and we have worked together to identify a range of areas where a reliable source of publications data can be of use to them. Rather than conducting a full data collection process each year, our research office can now rely on a data extract from Swinburne Research Bank to help meet publications reporting requirements. They can also call on the knowledge we've gained through dealing with publications to help classify areas of research interest for Swinburne academics.

Swinburne Marketing

Our marketing area needs an easy way to stay in touch with the activities and achievements of Swinburne researchers. Swinburne Research Bank provides them with a 'one-stop shop' to see what Swinburne academics are publishing. Our cross-disciplinary coverage helps them identify stories of interest that represent Swinburne's research successes and strengths.

Swinburne academics

Swinburne Research Bank has helped the library strengthen its relationship with individual academic staff. We're building our knowledge of how they choose to make their research findings available, as well as better understanding the cultural differences between disciplines and strengthening our dialogue with them.

Building partnerships with all our user groups helps make Swinburne Library services more responsive.

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Swinburne: engaging TAFE students within a university environment

Having worked in a TAFE library for over a decade, I didn't think it would be all that different working in the TAFE sector of the dual sector Swinburne University. It did, however, become clear that there are challenges associated with providing library services to students undertaking a range of study from pre-apprenticeships through to PhD research. These challenges the library staff at Swinburne work daily to meet, and do so with some flair.

Of the five libraries at Swinburne, two primarily serve TAFE students (with three mixed), and that allows the staff to experiment with a range of services aimed solely at this cohort. For example, at the Croydon campus, with a range of Child Care and Trade courses, the introduction of a Wii for use in the library has been a great way to reduce the 'academic' stigma often associated with the library. The introduction of lunchtime comedy screenings this year is also aimed at getting students to walk through the doors of the library. As students feel comfortable not only being in the library but also talking to library staff, it will no longer be a scary prospect to ask for help when it comes to working on assignments.

Engaging TAFE students with the library and encouraging them to seek help with research and assignments has become all the more crucial with the introduction of the Victorian Skills Reform Agenda. With the introduction of contestability and a change in funding agreements, keeping students engaged and achieving in their course is vital for the TAFE Division. The library will play a significant part in not only helping students achieve educational outcomes, but also feeling welcome and at ease on their campus. For some students the library has become their 'third place', that community space which is not home or work where they feel comfortable to socialise and connect online.

There is also an issue of matching electronic access to information with students' needs. Accessing the current Swinburne library homepage can be quite daunting for many of our TAFE students, with the extensive range of options available. More electronic information available to TAFE students because they are part of a university can be a double-edged sword: the difference between access to a limited number of targeted electronic databases compared with hundreds, which for the most part are of no relevance to these students.

But are TAFE students really that different to Higher Education students when it comes to library needs? A client survey done in 2008 asked students to highlight those areas of the library and its service that were important to them and to rate how the library was performing. For both TAFE and Higher Education undergraduate students 4 of the top 5 issues of importance were the same, issues of access to PCs, photocopying and printing, and interactions with the librarians. And when it came to areas for improvement, both TAFE and HE undergraduate students highlighted numbers of PCs, the need for suitable study facilities, noise levels in the library, and adequate photocopying and printing facilities. Maybe there isn't such a big difference providing library services for TAFE students within a dual sector environment.

As the range of TAFE courses continues to expand with the introduction of vocational degrees, librarians will also need to meet the information needs of an ever expanding cohort, a challenge we at Swinburne University already meet.

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Building literacy skills within the university library

Literacy skills are a fundamental component of many work tasks required in the typical jobs for which a university graduate might apply. But for some students being literate in English can become something of a challenge, particularly if literacy problems have not been dealt with adequately at the secondary or early tertiary levels. So how do some students get to university with limited literacy skills? And what role does a university librarian play in helping students with lower levels of literacy?