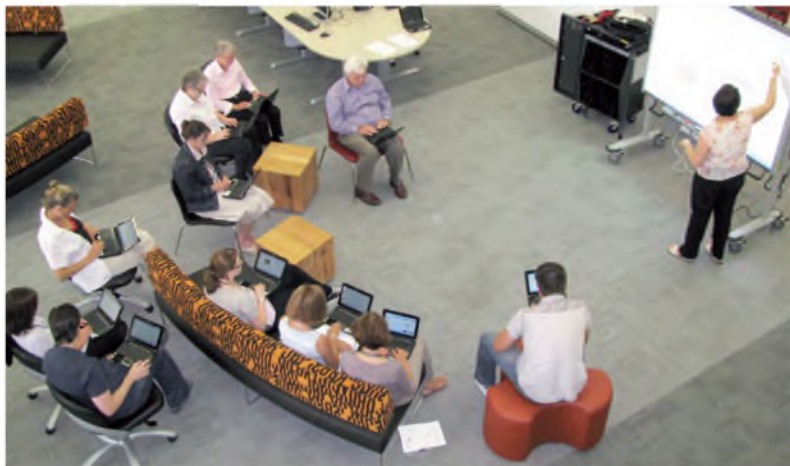


Learning for life at the State Library of Western Australia

The State Library of Western Australia has a small training room used for delivering digital information literacy programs, but with only eight workstations it has serious limitations. School visits require careful management of larger class sizes to ensure that all students get the most from their State Library experience. Other library orientation tours have the clients clustering around a group of 3-4 computers and being given a 'show and tell' – not at all conducive to effective learning.

It was evident that we needed a fresh and innovative way of presenting our SEaK (Search Engage and Know) learning programs to ensure all students were able to actively participate in developing their skills and understanding of the State Library. "Wouldn't it be great if we had an interactive whiteboard and a set of laptops that we could set up anywhere in the library and create a classroom?" said the Education Officer to the CEO and State Librarian, and the idea of the mobile classroom was born!

The mobile, interactive electronic whiteboard is mounted on a mobile stand which also houses the data projector. With its laptop connected to the internet we have our e-resources easily accessible with no wires or cables trailing across the floor. Fifteen netbooks (smaller than laptops but more robust



and with a longer battery life) provide the opportunity for hands on learning anywhere in the library. They operate using the library's wireless network to access our catalogue and resources – but again no wires!

The interactive whiteboard is also used in the Discovery Lounge to provide e-resource information sessions to small groups. Set up adjacent to a bank of computers, staff are able to deliver highly interactive training sessions in an informal setting. We have noticed that these sessions often attract curious onlookers, happy to observe the session from a distance but probably learning about the library in the process.

Taking about eight months from idea to reality, the mobile classroom has proved a hit with clients and staff. Amazed and amused by the interactivity of the touch screen, staff are keen to learn how to make the most of the features and functions available to deliver awareness sessions for selected web-based resources – to both colleagues and clients.

The netbooks are also fun to learn with. While adults take a short time to get used to the smaller screen and navigation features of the devices, we anticipate that school children will thoroughly enjoy using them when visiting the library for one of our education programs.

We are still learning as we go and have lots of ideas but in particular we are looking forward to using the classroom when creating digital stories with children and adults.

The State Library's Strategic Directions state: "The challenge is to be a 21st century institution that helps people learn, enjoy and play in their own time, in their place or in our place, so that our communities thrive, flourish and support creative and economic opportunities." We believe we are on track to achieve this!

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