Reinventing the wheel at Rockhampton Hospital

In 1658, Richard Franck wrote in his Northern Memoirs, "art imitates nature and necessity is the mother of invention".

Necessity has been the catch-phrase of the staff at the Health Sciences Library, Rockhampton Hospital in Central Queensland since the hospital site redevelopment began in 2007.

The Health Sciences Library had a home on the ground floor of the old Nurses' Quarters and was part of the Rural Health Training Unit until it was disbanded and reinvented as the Education & Research Unit. All hospital staff accessed our 24/7 services and book collection quite easily – out the front door of the main hospital and down the path by the Blood Bank.

Following demolition of the our old building, space for the new library was initially allocated within the redeveloped main hospital building, but with clinical space at a premium, this was then resumed for part of the new Emergency Department.

In May 2008, the library was moved into a purpose-built demountable building where the aged flea trees used to provide shelter for the birds from the relentless summer heat. Along with the move, our language had to change. Nowadays we refer to our demountable accommodation as the Donga on Canning if staff want to know where we are located. We thought tagging it like a fancy local restaurant might encourage staff to visit!

Instead of looking at this move in a negative way, staff made a decision to look at promoting our services in a way to counteract the fact that there was a major, long-term building project with trucks, heavy machinery, and much dust and noise separating us physically from the main hospital and our biggest local client base. We had all the online access issues resolved but needed a way to take our collection to the busy clinical staff who had neither the time nor the inclination to go outside in the heat and seek out the library and our expansive book collection.

The three Librarians spent many a coffee break mulling over the alternatives and looking at affordable innovation to address this pressing issue. So, based on budgetary constraints we decided to reinvent the wheel – yes, four big blue wheels in fact – the book trolley!

Every week, one of our intrepid librarians fills the trolley with books and heads off across the building site to visit one of the hospital departments to peddle our wares. Not only has this been a huge success as far as putting the library on the campus map, but it has encouraged membership and use of our services by staff from nursing, medical, administrative, allied health, and support services. The idea of 'pimping a book trolley' is certainly not new, but in our case has actually worked and staff look forward to the visits from the librarian, even if it is only for a chat.

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Screencasting tutorials at The Prince Charles Hospital Library

One of the problems faced by hospital libraries is the accessibility of the library and library services to its clients. Many users work shifts when the library is unstaffed, others are located in remote regions. Providing efficient, well-designed user instruction to these groups is often a difficult task to carry out. In order to address this issue, The Prince Charles Hospital Library (a Queensland Health library) has launched a number of online instructional videos, also known as 'screencasts'.

To begin with, we tested the waters with a few freely available screencasting sites like ScreenToaster and Screenr.com. However, these posed various problems such as unwanted advertising, insufficient recording lengths, and limited capacity to edit the finished product. After some research and consultation with other larger libraries already engaged in screencasting we decided to proceed with the proprietary software, Camtasia Studio. This software has allowed us to create a video artefact which could be edited to include our library branding as well as providing complete control over what is displayed and how, for example, transitions, pan and focus, highlighting, etc. It also allows us to render the video in a variety of customisable formats to suit the requirements of the Queensland Health network as well as any external site requirements, such as YouTube.

All Queensland Health staff, not just those from The Prince Charles Hospital, can access the tutorials both on-site and remotely via the Queensland Health Libraries information portal, Clinicians Knowledge Network. For those outside of the Queensland Health network, the screencasts are also accessible via YouTube. You can check them out at **http://www.youtube.com/tpchlibrary**.

We have created five concise tutorials so far covering database and catalogue use and accessing ebooks – but this is just the beginning. Other tutorials, in various stages of completion, deal with topics like search strategy development and Boolean Operators as well as more detailed tutorials regarding specific databases.

In addition to reaching an added 'remote' audience, the online tutorials have had the additional benefit of reinforcing face-to-face information literacy sessions. They also provide an avenue of library instruction to those whose preference for learning is more auditory and visual. A further benefit of providing this form of information delivery is that staff who may be reluctant to contact the library with their information needs are now empowered to engage in some self-directed learning which may not have otherwise been available to them.

Screencasting tutorials allow a consistent message to be delivered over and over again to thousands of users, at a time and place of their choosing – no worries about schedule conflicts, no need for bookings.

From the initial positive response to our screencasting efforts, The Prince Charles Hospital Library will continue along the screencast path.

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