



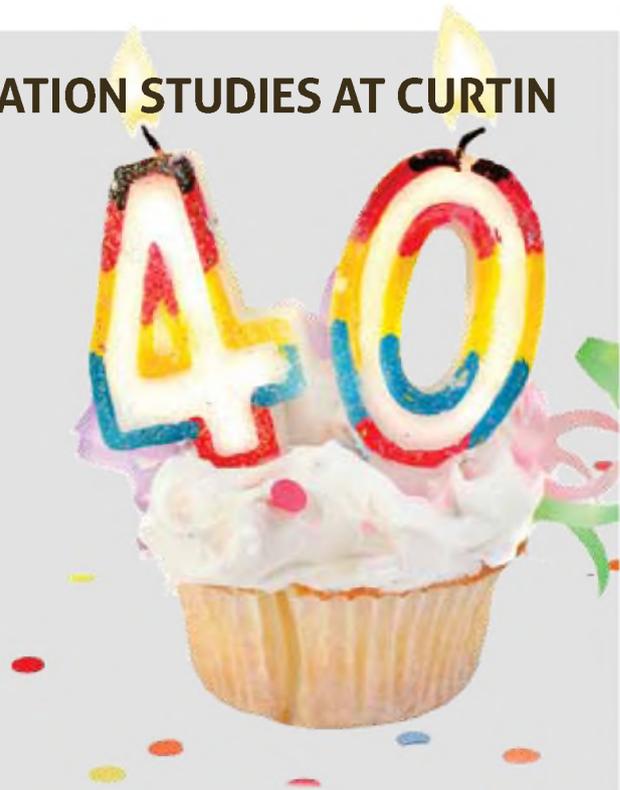
40 YEARS YOUNG FOR INFORMATION STUDIES AT CURTIN

The Information Studies program at Curtin is a story of the integration of professional practice, experience and melding the necessary theoretical and often historical frameworks of relevant literature and research into a series of courses that are current, relevant, lively and professionally recognised.

Forty years of existence may seem such a short time to some older library schools, but given the ups and downs of library education at university level in Australia, we at Curtin University wanted to acknowledge our history. The Information Studies program here has developed and evolved since its first graduates crossed the stage in 1971 and remains one of the largest graduate programs at Curtin. It covers the discipline areas of librarianship, records management and archives. It has evolved in times of calm and strife, including the advent of the internet, and the climate of library school closures that this brought with it.

So to start the celebrations for our 40th year, the Information Studies Alumni Committee organised a dinner, held at the end of June 2011. It seemed, from the noise and laughter level, that all enjoyed themselves. Guests present included a student from Singapore and many former members of staff including Nancy Lane, a former Head of the Department, and Janette Wright.

The decision in the early 1980s to offer all units and courses in the distance mode, as well as to continue to teach internally, meant that the undergraduate degree was the first degree course at the (then) Western Australian Institute of Technology to be available



completely through distance education. That all of this is now achieved both in the classroom and now in the online environment means the diversity of our students' backgrounds facilitates consideration of issues from a variety of perspectives.

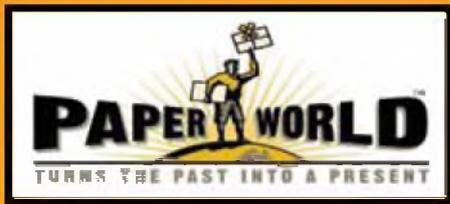
An online teaching environment helps students comprehend and critically reflect on the issues of the day through the use of discussion groups, virtual classrooms, chat rooms, iLectures and similar teaching technologies. Issues like the 'out of sight-out-of-mind student', student technophobia, broadband access and online discussion etiquette continue to be challenging to both staff and students, since Curtin's Information Studies students come from all parts of the globe. The next step in this online journey is the release this year of all of the Department's undergraduate and graduate coursework programs by Open University Australia (OUA).

The Curtin Information Studies team was recognised for the quality of its programs with an Australian federal government University Carrick Citation in 2007.

All coursework programs run by the Department are recognised by the relevant professional organisations, these being the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), Records and Information Professionals Association (RIMPA) and the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA). We are eternally grateful for the considerable support from members of the three professions across Australia and indeed all over the world, for our compulsory practicum placements.

This month the celebrations will continue with an alumni breakfast on 21 October 2011, followed by a seminar entitled *Educating Library Professionals for the 21st Century*, at which a panel of speakers will examine library and information profession education in the light of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council's report, *Re-conceptualising and Re-positioning Australian Library and Information Science for the 21st Century*.

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