

FEI: ENERGISE, ENTHUSE & INSPIRE

Elizabeth Alvey (left), Amanda Winters (right) are moving on from the old rules.



**No Food
or Drink**

**EATING,
TALKING OR SMOKING
IS NOT PERMITTED
IN THE LIBRARY**

YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF RULES, LADY!

If you ask Fryer Library's Elizabeth Alvey or Amanda Main, neither of them ever had a desire to be a stereotypical, "rule-enforcing librarian. But, they argue, it's not the stereotype getting in the way now, it's the rules themselves.

How do we continue as good stewards of the unique material in our special and archival collections, while also fulfilling our core goal of becoming more approachable and accessible? In a world where library design increasingly reflects a preference for 24/7 availability, interactive spaces, and the option to eat lunch, a preservation-safe reading room is a positively archaic anomaly. In a culture of study where remote access and copies are prized, eternal copyright seems needlessly restrictive.

Fortunately several current trends are enhancing the accessibility agenda for special collections. While there still is

no single search tool that does it all, re-imagined interfaces are slowly catching on. WorldCat Identities and ArchiveGrid are putting library catalogue data to new use, with interactive and (dare we say it?) fun results. And the National Library's Trove continues to direct clients from all over the world to Fryer's door.

Closer to home, information literacy is essential to enabling students to feel confident and comfortable when using special collections. Increasingly, we find embedded classes are invaluable for building students' critical thinking skills and challenging assumptions about the comprehensiveness of online information—a theme which is supported by current special collections literature.

Of course making things findable and integrating our holdings with courses is bound to increase demand for access, and that's a good thing, right? Absolutely! But...



from across Queensland to make copies of copyrighted material to assist them in their studies.

Fostering collaboration and promoting interaction with clients has been one of the most valuable aspects of being online for the galleries, libraries, archives and museums sector. Fryer has participated in sector activities, such as #collectionfishing, and has recently launched a blog which aims to be authored as much by the library's users as its librarians. So far, contributions have promoted personal experiences and original research which have resulted from accessing our special collections. Similarly, building on a tradition of co-authoring online exhibitions with researchers, we see collaborating on digital humanities projects, open data, and online interaction with our community as being essential to how our collections will be accessed in the future.

There's no silver bullet to completely eliminate the spectre of the shushing, bun-wearing librarian. But as new graduates, our goal is to leave clients with a better impression, one interaction at a time.

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Elizabeth Alvey and Amanda Main are currently librarians in the Fryer Library at The University of Queensland. They graduated from QUT's LIS program in 2009 and 2010 respectively. They share a strong interest in special collections and equipping students to effectively access both physical and digital collections.

It's long been apparent to librarians that making photocopies or taking photographs is becoming an essential component of research practice. No one can deny the increasing preference of, and demand for, digital access to a widening range of material. "I can't believe what great stuff you have here, you really should put this online" is a familiar refrain in the Fryer reading room.

General understanding about barriers to online access seems to be nearly non-existent, and there are no easy explanations. However, the Australian Law Reform's discussion paper into copyright and the digital economy, released in June, offers us a fantastic opportunity to raise public awareness, particularly to address issues such as mass digitisation, unpublished material, and orphan works.

Until copyright reform eventuates we are left to find 'workarounds', often to our clients' chagrin. We are learning the value of promoting understanding of the current copyright situation, particularly for unpublished material, and we strive to make our copying permission processes as transparent as possible.

We also work closely with our donors when possible, to ensure access. For example, many of our architectural plan donors have generously extended permission for university students

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