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Widgets and widgetry for librarians: copy, paste and relax

Students can overlook websites that aren't filled with often-changing content

Do you think you're too busy to devote time and effort to attracting users to the great resources available on your library website? If you can simply copy and paste, think again! With no coding skills you can set up your websites to continually display fresh content.

This is no scam. The web is getting easier to use. Once upon a time, Google laid out a framework for displaying custom Google Maps (<http://maps.google.com>) on private webpages. Pioneering web workers had to register for a Google Maps API and hand code XML to make the map display as they wanted. Now, however, that struggle is long over, because they've made the process much easier. All you need to do is copy, paste and relax. In this article you'll learn how to embed Google Maps on your website, along with a few other widgets.

Geek talk

You don't need a spell from Hogwarts to make exciting multimedia appear on your website. It isn't magic – it's RSS and JavaScript. Thanks to the power of Web 2.0, we don't need to understand the intricacies of these two fabulous and geeky topics. The web has sorted all of it out and made it easy for us to use. All you need to know to use the tools listed below is that, after some (easy to do) customisation, you'll see a little bit of code to copy and paste into your website, blog post or blog's sidebar. Don't even worry that you'll be dealing with a bit of code. The copying and pasting you'll be doing is exactly the same as if you were working with a word processing document.

Dazzle 'em with video

A great place to start practicing copying and pasting code is with online video, not only because it produces such great results but because it is so simple. YouTube, blip.tv, Google Video and TeacherTube all provide snippets of code with which you can embed video on a website. The code is located in a different place on each site. TeacherTube provides code for a few types of websites.

If you can't find any videos (among the millions available) that you want to include on your website, you can post your own. You can put video directly online from a webcam using the Quick Capture feature. An excellent video series to emulate is *The One Minute Critic* from the public library in Vancouver, Washington. In the series, librarians do quick and to-the-point book reviews and book talks and check out <http://crashsolo.blip.tv>

Easy-does-it chatting

If you're communicating with faculty members and students via instant messages (IM), you need to use the meebo me widget: <http://www.meebome.com/>. This handy tool will display a chat box on your website to let visitors send IMs to your screen name. Don't be concerned about privacy issues because meebo me doesn't act as a chat room. Only the individuals on the other end of your conversations will receive your responses. Once you register for a (quick and free) meebo ID, you can customise the colour, size and title of your meebo me box. Meebo will give you a little piece of code to copy and paste where you want the box to appear. Paste it in, save the page, and you'll be

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Widgets and widgetry for librarians: copy, paste and relax (cont.)

chatting in no time. Recently, the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library (Topeka, Kansas) added a meebo me box to the 'no result' page in its OPAC. This gives searchers the opportunity to contact the library when they might need it most. Read more about this at David Lee King's post, 'Fun with our meebo widget and the Library Catalog': <http://tinyurl.com/yv3hd2>.

Show and tell

Are you collecting photos on Flickr? If you are, you can do more with the content that you're collecting. Flickr offers an easily customisable badge to display photo thumbnails on your website. While this is good for directing people to your profile on Flickr, it doesn't really let people see your photos. Flickrshow, <http://www.flickrshow.com/>, offers an easy way to display a slide show of your images directly on your own website.

The YouTube of presentations: SlideShare

Do the teachers in your school use PowerPoint® for their class lectures? If so, you could be archiving those lectures online for students to view again. Like all of these tools, you don't need to worry about writing any code or converting any file formats for the web. When you upload PDFs and PowerPoint® files to SlideShare (<http://www.slideshare.net>), they'll be displayed in a handy online viewer. By pasting a bit of code, you can display the presentations on your website. This could create a lot of night-time traffic on a library media centre (LMC) website when students need to make sure they've taken thorough notes.

Widget wonderland from Google

Google is onboard with providing widgets for many of its tools. Two particularly useful bits of code for an LMC website are available from Google Calendar (<http://www.google.com/calendar>) and Google Maps (<http://maps.google.com/>).

Displaying your LMC schedule for all students and faculty members to see is easy to do with Google Calendar. To find the code for embedding a Google Calendar, you'll have to navigate to the 'settings' page for your calendar, click on the name of the calendar you want to display (if you have more than one calendar), and then find the 'Embed This Calendar' section under 'Calendar Details.' Click on the available link to change the type of calendar you want to display (weekly,

monthly or agenda) and choose the colours for your calendar.

The easiest way to embed a Google Map into a webpage is to click on the 'Link to this page' link that appears above the upper-right corner of every Google map. Then copy the code found under 'Paste HTML to embed in website.' As with most of these widgets, you can customise the map there too. But wait, there's more. Using the 'Google Maps – My Maps' feature, you can annotate maps with pinpoints, lines and shapes. The possibilities for creating interactive maps related to your school's neighbourhood are unlimited. You might be considered a hero if you create a guide to the best surrounding restaurants and include it on your school's intranet.

Share tasty links with del.icio.us

Libraries often need to justify their existence, and one way to do this is by marketing the skills of librarians. Why not market the fact that, as a librarian, you're tuned in to cool and useful things on the web? Even better, you can do this by *using* a cool and useful tool on the web. Take a look at the linkroll option from del.icio.us. 'Linkrolls are a way for you to have your latest del.icio.us bookmarks displayed as part of your website,' claims the del.icio.us website, <http://del.icio.us/help/linkrolls>. You'll need to create a free del.icio.us account and login. Once you customise the linkroll and paste the code into your website, each time you post a link to del.icio.us, it will appear in your linkroll. Consider using this widget to display a link of the day or a list such as 'What I've seen today.'



The front page of del.icio.us

Using Blogger

You could do far worse than use the popular weblog site, Blogger (<http://www.blogger.com>) when trying to learn about website widgets. The entire layout section of Blogger is based on widgets that you can arrange

by dragging and dropping them around the screen. Blogger calls them 'Page Elements'. There are a variety of widgets available, including polls, lists, pictures, news headlines and more.



The front page of Blogger

A step further with Feed2JS

Feed2JS (<http://feed2js.org>) is an amazing tool that will display any RSS feed on your website. When the RSS feed is updated (eg *The New York Times* posts a new story or a new item is catalogued in your RSS-enabled OPAC), the new content appears on your website. Use this tool to get your LMC blog's feed displayed on the main page of your school's website.

Feed2JS isn't the only tool for displaying RSS on websites. You should read the article 'RSS To HTML – How To Convert RSS Feeds Into Published Web Pages – A Mini-Guide' (<http://tinyurl.com/yp5tau>) by Michael Pick for some different options, most of which are free.



The front page of Feed2JS

Where should I paste?

The type of content you'll be putting into your website determines where you'll want to put it. If the widget you're pasting in will display dynamic, changing content, it doesn't make sense to put it in a blog post. Why? The blog post will cycle off the front page and get lost in the archive. It won't matter that there is all sorts of wonderful,

automatically updating content there if no one looks at it on a regular basis. It makes more sense to put it in a permanent place, like on the sidebar of a blog or its own dedicated page. If the widget you're pasting will display just one piece of content, such as a timely video from TeacherTube, it might make the most sense to paste it into a blog post. People will see it when you intend them to see it. Then you can easily feature different content when the time comes by making another blog post.


Widgets in practice

The widgets discussed in this article can be big timesavers. There is no cost to experiment with them all to see what works best for your website and your students. But because this

experimentation is so easy, you might be tempted to put all of them on your website at once. While there's a slim chance of this working, it most likely will turn your site into a visual disaster and render all of the widgets less effective. You'd be better off adding one or two at a time and dedicating an entire page to a widget displaying worthwhile information. Doing this will not overwhelm you or your students. Not only will your website be filled with fun and dynamic information, people will find it easier to use too.

Finding more widgets

Widgipedia (<http://www.widgipedia.com>) and Widgetbox (<http://www.widgetbox.com>) are two sites where you can find more widgets. Widgetbox even includes

widgets that let you paste in fun games on your websites. Be sure to find a countdown widget so you can display a countdown of days, minutes and hours until finals (or the last day of school)! 

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Softly, softly: the library's role in staff professional development

Teacher librarians need to be at the forefront of curriculum change within their schools

They must be leaders in this change. In their role as information specialists, they are well placed to facilitate the shift to a critical thinking, ICT and personal learning framework such as that required by the new Victorian Essential Learning Standards.

How do they do this? One avenue is the running of staff professional development sessions. The topics need to be varied and broad; the focus must always be on teaching and learning. Engaged teachers who are confident in their own learning will more easily develop a learning culture and be more prepared to let go of a content-focussed curriculum for one which is flexible and allows for student input. Through input comes engagement for both teachers and students, and for teacher librarians.

One major way that teacher librarians are able to assist their schools and make an impact within it is to provide professional development (PD) to teachers and other school staff. At Sacre Coeur College in Melbourne's Glen Iris, the library has always run sessions as part of the end-of year professional development program. 'Work when and where opportunities arise'

has been our motto and our PD has taken many forms.

Opportunities to provide PD can occur when there are changes in staff in curriculum-related areas, when there is a chance to work with teachers who are prepared to take risks and focus on skills rather than content, or when new curriculum directives are introduced by education authorities. The PD role has been undertaken not to the exclusion of our other activities, but in conjunction with them and is a product of the information environment in which we operate.

The importance of a PD role for teacher librarians is well documented, and appears for example in the *ALIA/ASLA standards of professional excellence for teacher Librarians* (2005); in *Learning for the future: developing information services in schools* (2001); and in other role statements published locally and internationally.

The Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS)

The new Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) has provided an excellent framework for our PD role. Our focus has been on ways in which the library can support the introduction of these curriculum initiatives, particularly as they encompass

many of the information literacy strategies and learning outcomes which the library has long promoted. VELS emphasises the use of content knowledge to foster deep understanding and intellectual quality. A VELS-driven pedagogy leads to greater emphasis on information literacy, information skills, thinking skills and students controlling their own learning. Teacher librarians as information specialists are well placed to facilitate the shift to the critical thinking, ICT and personal and interpersonal learning frameworks required by VELS.

Information and Communications Technology

ICT is one of the interdisciplinary domains of VELS and features strongly in the PD provided by library staff at Sacre Coeur. Over the past five years, as part of the end-of year professional development programme, we have run sessions on interactive whiteboards, electronic notetaking, combating plagiarism, the TLF Learning Objects and MyClass, shortcuts to the web, new websites and search engines (information literacy, thinking skills, rubrics), creative questions for extended brainstorming, Inspiration®, file management and the use of equipment.

Softly, softly: the library's role in staff professional development (cont.)

ICT training is readily accepted by teachers as part of the library's role. Our challenge is then how best to encourage and support the effective use of ICT, particularly new and emerging technologies. And while we have mastered many technologies, we are now grappling with blogs, wikis, ipods, mobile phones and interactive whiteboards.

It is critical that the use of ICT is integrated with the teaching of thinking skills. A glimpse at the VELs support materials for teaching and learning (2007) indicates the importance of this relationship. To assist with this integration, the SLAV guides, *Making a difference* and *Researching together*, have been made available to staff on their computer desktops and we have demonstrated their use. I have run VELs-specific PD, 'An introduction to VELs' and 'VELs and the Thinking Curriculum', with our Director of Studies.

The library's profile, particularly with regard to the thinking curriculum, was given a significant boost with the opportunity to follow up on the PD session, 'Assessment FOR/AS/OF Learning', held at our school in December 2006. Our guest speaker, Dr Gaell Hildebrand, referred to the work of Jamie McKenzie, a long-time advocate for the school library and its impact on student learning. This presented an opportunity to have input both into the curriculum and into skilling teachers in the use of ICT. In January 2007, I modelled ways in which staff could use a range of resources to develop assessment FOR and AS learning. The emphasis was on asking the right questions, the development of multi-domain tasks and rubrics.

In July 2007, in conjunction with our Director of Studies, I followed up with a focus on ways of teaching thinking, emphasising the VELs Thinking Processes, Habits of Mind and integrating ICT. In December I co-presented a session on the use of interactive whiteboards, focussing on useful resources.

While this whole school PD may not capture individual teachers at the time, we have planted seeds and advocated on our own behalf as experts in ICT and learning and teaching, so that when they do identify a need, they may use us to work with their classes. Feedback has been positive,

enquiries have increased and we have never been busier!

Faculty-based work

Time constraints with whole school PD mean that it is only ever possible to provide an overview and framework for teachers to take further. Ideally, these general ideas will be taken up at faculty level.

Several have been implemented.

- In Science, on researching together.
- In English, on hyperlinking in Word documents.
- In the Humanities, on Photostory, researching together and combating plagiarism.
- The Maths Department is undergoing data projector training.
- The LOTE Department is taking on The Le@rning Federation learning objects.

In the primary school, the focus on MyClass and The Le@rning Federation learning objects has been facilitated by the teacher librarian. These sessions are often followed up by work with a particularly enthusiastic teacher in their classes. Attendance at faculty meetings makes it easier to manage this process. Library staff regularly attend Primary, English and Humanities meetings and sometimes other faculty meetings too.

And beyond

As a result of school-based work, in May 2006 I was invited to address the Catholic Schools Curriculum Co-coordinators group on VELs and the school library. It was clear that many coordinators had not considered involving their teacher librarians in new curriculum planning, so I provided them with a pro forma for planning and a toolkit of websites that form the basis of our reference tools.

One-on-one


Rosemary Horton (2007) sees one-on-one PD as the most effective way of reaching teachers. They receive the PD they need when they need it. She sees this 'onsite professional development' as having advantages because:

- we are usually up to date with teaching and learning theories
- we have unique opportunities, being outside the confines of subject or year level
- we can see the overlapping interests of different learning areas
- we often have the time and the distance

to see common problems and areas of concern

- we are often the experts in use of technology and its application for education
- we can be catalysts for change or change agents, not where we are 'leading the charge', but as guides to teachers when they need help, specifically when it comes to using technology in education. (Horton, 2007).

Professional development of this sort can be quite challenging. Once you have established your credentials as an expert in a particular area, teachers will assume that you can do all sorts of things that you may not be able to do, but it provides an opportunity for you to skill up together, and often allows you to work with classes to facilitate student learning. It also keeps your own skills up to date.

Our focus on PD in ICT and thinking processes at Sacre Coeur is the result of a commitment to making an impact on learning and teaching whenever and wherever the opportunity arises. It stems from identifying where in the school we should best locate ourselves for maximum effect. This may not work for all teacher librarians, but for us it has been a very rewarding aspect of our work – and enhanced our profile. 

Kris Johnstone

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The Hub

A group of teacher librarians have banded together to raise awareness of school library issues

It was in July 2007, just before the federal election, that Leonie Paatsch and I and a few intrepid souls thought it might be a good idea to start a letter-writing campaign to put school libraries on the federal radar.

A call was put out on the OZTL NET listserv (http://listserv.csu.edu.au/mailman/listinfo/oztl_net) to seek like-minded activists, and Leonie and I had some fun discussing what our action group's website might be called. Teacherlibrarians.org? SaveSchoolLibraries.net? Whattheheckisateacherlibrarian.com? Hmmm, that one may be a bit long ...

Margaret Spillman (Qld) joined, along with Dona Hartwich (Vic), Cathy Corbitt (WA), Maggie R and Sharon McGuinness (NSW). Others joined and left throughout the next year, and even more joined and stayed: Peter Macinnis, Barbara Combes (WA), Barbara Braxton (formerly ACT, now NSW), Miriam Meehan (Vic), Sarah Mayor Cox (Vic), Kerry Neary (Qld), Jane McKenzie (NSW) and David Strempel (SA). So we now have 15 in our think tank. For we are a think tank, not a public listserv. Everyone is expected to contribute, brainstorm, comment and help edit. We are still looking for people from Tasmania and NT and anyone else who feels they would like to be part of this action group.

We are lucky to have attracted some experienced, articulate members so far. Most of us have been long-time members of IASL, ALIA, ASLA and our local teacher librarian associations and given significant time and energy to the profession (often with awards for doing so). We still do so. We wish to work as a think tank for our professional associations – in collaboration, not in opposition.

Further brainstorming came up with the name 'The Hub' and Leonie and her IT husband, Vince, suggested the Wordpress site and design. Leonie posted the first blog entry on 8 September 2007 and has posted close to 100 blog entries now, with only a few 'guest' bloggers.

I led the charge to do background pages. We worked hard to gather and verify information for principals, parents, teachers and teacher librarians so the hard questions

could be asked regarding school library staffing, funding and scheduling. Anyone who was motivated to write a letter or an article or speak up in the media was encouraged and supported, and their efforts are posted up on the website as examples for others.



A posting on The Hub

We have had members publish articles for principals, speak up on ABC Radio's *Perspectives*, write newspaper features, deliver personal reading material and a cuppa to Julia Gillard, make submissions, provide university education lecturers with notes to hand out to pre-service teachers on the role of the teacher librarians, and make contact with the APA, CBCA and ASA. We also contributed to the newsletter of the National Parents Association, quoting the Lonsdale Report on the decline of school libraries.

Perhaps these are only little acorns, but as a group we are learning how to talk to politicians and get into the media. Our skills will develop. We will write more letters ... a flood. We will get our rascally mascot HubCat out of quarantine and into the limelight. We are a *creative* group, a think tank intended to model positive action and encourage the building of a coalition of publishers, booksellers, professional associations, writers, parents, unions, academics and teachers to demand quality school libraries and teacher librarians in every Australian school.

We do not see ourselves as a lobby group as such or even as having a strategic campaign. Instead, we try to raise awareness of the issues as we see them with examples to inspire others to act and information on what our colleagues (especially in Canada

and the US) are doing. Here are some of the reasons our members have joined.

Sharon McGuinness, a NSW public school teacher librarian, is 'passionate about our role and concerned that, within both schools and the community, there is a lack of understanding regarding what a teacher librarians actually does and how school libraries make a difference. I joined The Hub to give me an opportunity to work with other "like minds" on advocacy issues.'

Peter Macinnis, a NSW author and media presenter, states, 'I write for children and adults but I was and remain a lifelong teacher who was also an administrator. I care about literacy at the level of the single child, not as an ill-defined herd characteristic. As a teacher and as a strategic planner, I know that teacher librarians are essential to making children literate.'

NSW-based Barbara Braxton, an author and retired teacher librarian formerly of the ACT, believes that 'a top-shelf teacher librarian is the glue that binds the staff, students and curriculum together ... Like Peter, I want to ensure that my grandchildren will have access to the best of the best so they can learn and love life as much as their grandmother. I believe that too few politicians, principals and parents know and value the role of the teacher librarian, so I joined The Hub to make my loud voice even louder.'

Margaret Spillman has been teacher librarian at Mackay West State School for 11 years. She is 'a fervent believer in the power of advocacy. The contribution of teacher librarians and libraries to learning is underappreciated. Powerful advocacy can redress that imbalance. I love the passion of the other group members, their ability to think outside the box and the intellectual rigour they display in promoting all issues associated with teacher librarianship. Membership has made me more aware and more proactive.'

Jane McKenzie, a newly appointed teacher librarian and acting principal in country NSW, felt 'quite frustrated about a lack of understanding of the role of the teacher librarian in our school and local community, and a lack of professional support after finishing my retraining. Asking myself what I could do, I wrote an email to vent

The Hub (cont.)

my frustrations to Oztl.net. After coming into contact with Georgia, I realised that being involved with The Hub would help me learn how to better advocate for all teacher librarians, giving me the professional support and teacher librarian dialogue that “normal” teachers don’t fully understand or really engage in. It is a way to actively do something about the plight of the teacher librarians rather than leaving it to others.’

Kerry Neary, a Queenslander, says, ‘I am retired, having spent half my teaching career as a teacher librarian. I became a teacher librarian all those years ago because I instinctively believed that it was a way of making a difference to student learning across the curriculum. I was excited about the validated research coming from America in the 1990s which was showing this, but found that the decision-makers were neither aware of it nor being made aware of it. After my retirement, I began hearing about ill-informed decisions being made regarding teacher librarians and school libraries, so I decided to promote awareness of this important research, in Queensland anyway. It surprised me to be invited to join The Hub (out of the blue). I gladly did so because of its national and unaffiliated presence but I continue with my Queensland focus.’

David Strempe, an Adelaide-based secondary teacher librarian and teacher of English, Drama and Science, enjoys being


a member of The Hub. ‘I gain a plethora of ideas and have instant access to a group of wise and experienced teacher librarians to bounce ideas off. As the world of the teacher librarian is vibrant and dynamic, I find that it’s important to have a professional group to maintain a balanced and informed perspective.’

Dona J. Hartwich, a curriculum resource and ICT coordinator in Victoria, has ‘three adult children, all whom are avid readers. I have fond memories of them helping me stocktake in the library. They would be busily working and then totally silent. I knew then that they had found a good book and had stopped their work in order to read ... I joined The Hub because I believe that the library is the hub of a school. But with cutbacks in education, libraries and teacher librarians are in danger of being lost. I see The Hub as a way for interested parties to voice their opinions against this trend.’

She quotes Stephen Krashen. ‘Better school libraries are related to higher achievement in reading. Children who attend schools with school libraries with better collections and superior staffing do better on tests of reading.’ (‘What do we know about libraries and reading achievement?’, *Book Report*, 2002)

As you see, we are a diverse group with diverse motivations. We seek to use our blog as a forum for comments and dialogue.

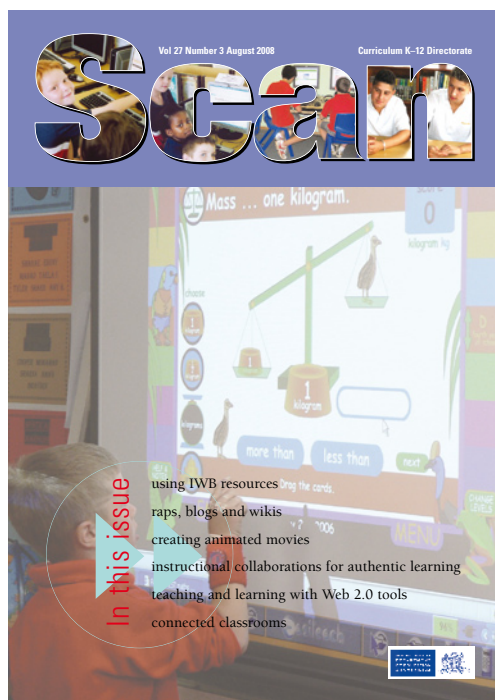
We are keen to have feedback. We are especially interested in posting examples of using the media and letter writing to encourage greater recognition by educators, parents, principals and politicians of the transformational role teacher librarians can play in student learning and literacy. We hope to give others the ideas, the information and the models to take action to build quality school library services in Australia.

So go to The Hub at <http://hubinfo.wordpress.com/> and join the ‘campaign’. 

Georgia Phillips
Co-founder, The Hub



Cathy Corbitt, Sharon McGuinness, HubCat, Barbara Braxton, Georgia Phillips, Dona Hartwich (plus a young friend:-) We are a virtual community, but one day we were able to meet in Canberra.



Scan is a refereed, quarterly journal that focuses on the interaction between information and effective student learning. Of interest to all educators, **Scan** is an essential support for teacher librarians and school libraries.

Each issue of Scan contains a range of articles covering:

- quality teaching for teacher librarians
- integrating ICT in teaching and learning
- collaborative support for the curriculum
- practical ideas for library management
- recent Australian and overseas research, highlighting important implications for teachers
- 80 internet site reviews and approximately 200 other resource reviews, invaluable to schools.

Contact us: editor.scan@det.nsw.edu.au.

For further information and subscription forms:

<http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/schoollibraries/scan>

Website reviews

Australia's Prime Ministers – A National Archives of Australia Project

<http://primeministers.naa.gov.au/>
Comprehensive biographical information about each of Australia's Prime Ministers is available here for students. Allied information includes a Flash timeline, searchable fast facts, a glossary, key personnel associated with each PM and an intriguing researcher's portal.
SCIS No: 1122964

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/GEO/>
Authoritative information on almost 240 countries is available from Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Entries for most countries include recent data regarding history, people, government, the economy, travel advice and foreign relations.
SCIS No: 1397577

Exploratree

<http://www.exploratree.org.uk/>
Exploratree features innovative and interactive templates that incorporate thinking skills for a variety of applications. The applications include ideas development, problem solving, analysis, topic comparisons, PMI (Plus Minus Interesting) and reverse planning.
SCIS No: 1397581

Immune Attack

<http://fas.org/immuneattack/>
Senior secondary science students can undertake a series of interactive video games that will enhance their understanding of the workings of the human immune and circulation systems. Teachers are catered for with lesson plans and extension work.
SCIS No: 1397585

MathMovesU.com: Explore, Have Fun and Pick Up Cool Math Skills!

<http://www.mathmovesu.com/>
A captivating maths website for students in Years 5-8, MathMovesU incorporates a variety of maths themes. Students can take the opportunity to delve further into topics through embedded links to other websites.
SCIS No: 1397589

NASA Earth Observatory

<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/>
Hosted by NASA, this website focuses on changes to the Earth's climate and environment. Utilising the scientific resources of NASA, students can access satellite imagery, computer data, in-the-field research and recent scientific publications. Most materials are copyright free and can be re-published.
SCIS No: 1139366

NZHistory.net.nz

<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/>
This informative and authoritative site enables users to search a wealth of material relating to New Zealand's history. With an appealing layout and a variety of pertinent sections, the site will encourage students to browse.
SCIS No: 1099610

Beehive – Latest News from the Beehive

<http://www.beehive.govt.nz/>
This site is the revamped official website of the NZ Government. Content includes news, images, speeches, press releases, archives and links to related sites. The site features a comprehensive search engine.
SCIS No: 1099112

ReadWriteThink: Student Materials: Comic Creator

http://www.readwritethink.org/student_mat/student_material.asp?id=21
Part of a larger site emanating from the International Reading Association and the (US) National Council of Teachers of English, this website enables students to create their own comic strips, emphasising background, characters and dialogue. Features include the Comic Strip Planning Sheet.
SCIS No: 1272819

Scholastic Canada: Captain Underpants

<http://www.scholastic.ca/captainunderpants/comic.htm>
Fans of the series Captain Underpants by author/illustrator Dav Pilkey will be motivated to create their own Captain Underpants comic strip episode using the various scenarios available on this interactive website.
SCIS No: 1397615

South Australia

<http://www.southaustralia.com/>
Although some general information regarding South Australia is available, this award-winning site is particularly pertinent for secondary students studying tourism or web page design. Appealing features include an innovative drag n' drop Travel Planner and video footage.
SCIS No: 1397676

Stop Climate Change. Greenpeace International

<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/campaigns/climate-change>
Greenpeace is challenging people around the globe to take part in an energy revolution by stopping reliance on nuclear and fossil fuels and embracing renewable energy. Details of the blueprint for this energy revolution are provided.
SCIS No: 1035097

Visual Dictionary Online

<http://visual.merriam-webster.com/index.php>
This innovative dictionary website uses text, graphics and animation to connect words with images. With over 20,000 entries, students and teachers will be fascinated by the visual information displayed.
SCIS No: 1376752

Your Shot – National Geographic magazine

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/your-shot/your-shot>
Visual arts teachers and students can access a range of evocative and intriguing photographs which are changed daily. Viewers are encouraged to submit a favourite photo for possible publication or to vote on the daily selection.
SCIS No: 1397693

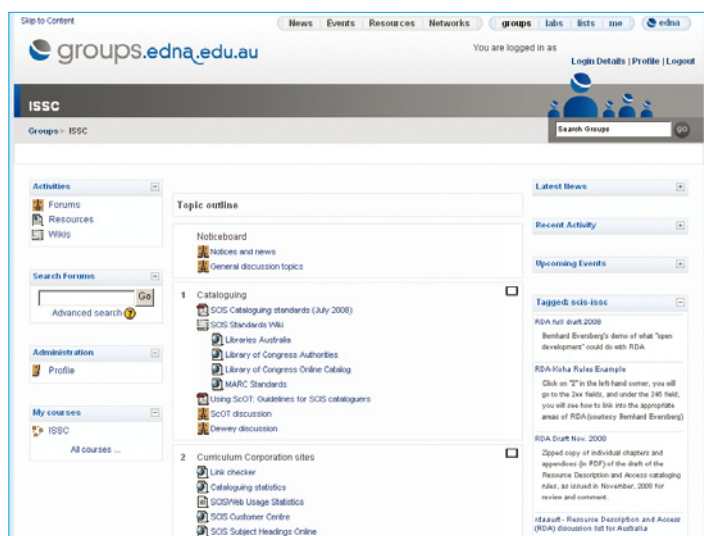
Reviewed by Nigel Paull
Teacher Librarian
South Grafton Primary School
npaull@telstra.com

The internet sites abstracted in *Website reviews* are often of a professional nature and should be initially viewed by teachers and library staff to determine suitability for students. The links, content and address of these sites may not be permanent.

SCIS is more ...

SCIS – a collaboration with education departments, libraries and information service providers

Representatives from Curriculum Corporation, edna, the education departments of Queensland, Western Australia and New South Wales, and the National Library of New Zealand make up the SCIS Information Services Standards Committee (ISSC). ISSC continually revises the SCIS Standards for Cataloguing and Data Entry and SCIS Subject Headings. Discussion papers are exchanged via an edna group which provides a range of tools to facilitate communication and collaboration.



The ISSC uses an edna group for communicating

New headings and proposed changes to the cataloguing standards are submitted for comments and discussion to ensure that school libraries stand to benefit. In assessing these proposals, members of the ISSC draw on their experience in providing cataloguing and support services to school libraries and their links to curriculum experts within their organisations.

Teleconferences are conducted on a regular basis to formally adopt new or modified headings, to finalise cataloguing standards and to discuss enhancements to the SCIS service and information management trends.

New and revised subject headings

A summary list of new and revised SCIS subject headings is provided in each issue of *Connections*. For the detailed lists of new and revised subject headings, see the SCIS website at <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/productinfo/supplists.htm>.

In the summary lists, headings are marked with:

- * Existing allowed headings which have been updated with changes to references or notes
- N New headings
- A Headings which were previously USE references but are now headings in their own right
- U Previously allowed headings which have become USE references
- D Deleted headings

- * Circumcision
- A Female genital mutilation
- * Human rights
- * Mountains
- * Social life and customs
- U Southern Alps (NZ)
- N Southern Alps/Ka Tiritiri o te Moana (NZ)

Google Books link in SCIS OPAC

An upgrade to the Voyager system (which supports the SCIS database) provides a link to Google Books built into the SCIS OPAC bibliographic record display. The Google Books link(s) (if any) will appear at the bottom of the display. There are three possible links.

- Entire book is viewable.
- A portion of the book is viewable.
- 'About This Book' information is available.

These links will enrich search results with lists of relevant books, journal articles, web page citations and links to related works and full texts when available.

The Google Books links are not part of the records and will not be included in record downloads.



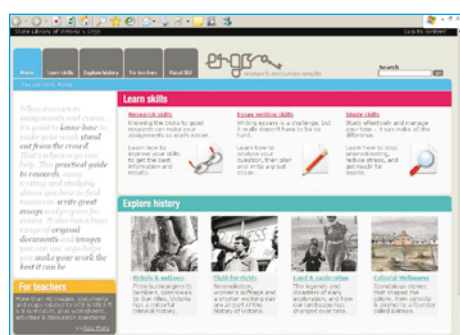
A SCIS OPAC search result displaying GoogleBooks links

ergo: an online framework for critical literacy in secondary education

A new State Library website aims to encourage the development of research skills

For over 150 years, the State Library of Victoria has been the State's premier public research institution, facilitating public access to information. Playing that role in the modern world has meant translating a growing amount of printed material to the web, and offering guidance in how to navigate it.

School students are one of the groups served by the library. Today's young people are exposed to more information than any previous generation. The sheer quantity of information students are now expected to process and manipulate makes critical thinking and information literacy skills more important than ever. To this end, the library has recently developed the *ergo* website, a learning and teaching tool for secondary teachers and students that supports the development of information literacy and critical thinking skills in the classroom. *ergo* provides not only online resources but also a conceptual framework for the development of the skills students need to evaluate information.



Home page for *ergo*

The key areas of the site are titled 'Learn skills', 'Explore history', 'For teachers' and 'About SLV'. The skills component of the website is explored in the 'Learn skills' area, which covers research techniques, essay writing and study skills. Digitised resources appear in the 'Explore history' section. These two areas are linked through innovative dropdown 'annotations' that provide commentary and worked examples, show the relationship between sources and

outline the skills required to analyse them. The 'For teachers' section offers a range of resources, activities and worksheets for use in the classroom or as assessment tasks. There are four Resource Kits each for VELS levels 5 and 6 and VCE. 'About SLV' introduces readers to the library's wider resources.

Preparatory research

This integrated approach was born out of initial market research conducted by Gundabluuey Research and the *ergo* project team in February 2008. The research involved structured discussions with our target audience of teachers and secondary students to ascertain their expectations of the library. Sessions were conducted at the library and involved group discussion and one-on-one questioning. Groups consisted of 12–15 participants and included teachers and students from a range of areas, schools and disciplines. During these sessions, we recorded many observations which helped shape and focus the goals, content and functionality of the site. The feedback, some of which surprised us, may be summarised as follows.

1 Keep it simple

There's nothing more pathetic than an older person trying to use street culture and language. Kids can sniff it out like that.

Student

Teachers and students had a clear message. Give us the information and give it to us straight. Despite the common belief that games and quizzes are the key to engaging teenagers, the site most commonly used by students in our group was Wikipedia – a simple information site with a text-based interface. Sites like Wikipedia and Google were useful because they gave students what they needed, quickly and easily.

As a result, *ergo* was designed to maximise ease of use and relevance to a student audience. Features include simple navigation and site structure; efficient use of text, including dot points; point-of-need support through dropdown worked examples; and rollover glossary entries.

2 What is research, anyway?

There was this teacher, and she like taught how to research like five million times in one year and then I had her the next year and she tried to teach it again. I know it already!

Student

Comments like these are unlikely to surprise teachers, librarians or parents, but clearly illustrate the fact that students don't necessarily understand what research is, let alone how to research effectively. Some students stated they struggled to extend their research beyond the internet whereas others believed that Google was all they needed.

As a result, *ergo*'s 'Learn skills' section explicitly shows the stages of learning associated with the development of fundamental information literacy skills. Features which developed from this premise include:

- step-by-step guides to research and essay-writing articles designed to be a starting point with essential basic information
- worked examples throughout 'Learn skills'
- guides which can be used in sequence (eg 'The writing process') or to explore a discrete skill (eg 'Writing a bibliography')
- a six-step research process recommended by the School Library Association of Victoria and educators internationally.

3 It's hard to find the 'right' answer

I get the impression from a lot of students that they're not used to, and sometimes don't even enjoy the prospect of, having to think – they just want to cut and paste. But I think the problem is more about kids not having confidence in their own ideas – they just say what they think you want to hear.

Teacher

While the belief that some students just want to cut and paste is quite common, these students' behaviour is arguably the result of insecurity and the misconception that there is a 'right answer'.

This idea in part drove the decision to combine skills and resources in the one website, helping students to develop transferable skills and build confidence and intellectual rigour. As a result, *ergo*:

- is designed to raise questions and

ergo: an online framework for critical literacy in secondary education (cont.)

provide a foundation for discussion, not simple answers

- provides contextual information to support students developing their own opinions
- groups primary sources in 'Explore history' in order to illustrate relationships between texts, ideas, people and events.

4 If it's written down, it must be true

I think students have a tendency to assume, depending on their age, that because it's published somewhere, even on the Net, then it must be factual.

Teacher

Statements like this reinforced the view that *ergo* needed to focus on skills associated with evaluating sources and identifying bias. The idea that students need to evaluate everything they see and read, whether online or in a text from a hundred years ago, underpins all areas of the *ergo* website.

This can be seen in:

- a critical literacy framework built around simple questions students can ask when they're reading and reinforced throughout the site in worked examples, student resources and education kits in the 'For teachers' section
- over 500 digitised sources selected to illustrate contentious issues from Victoria's past, including Mark 'Chopper' Read's self-portrait, John Batman's treaty and early cartoons of Indigenous Victorians
- contemporary and historic resources drawn together to illustrate relationships between the past and the present
- explicit documentation of the thinking processes behind research and critical thinking, helping students to repeat, transfer and elaborate on these skills.

5 Primary sources are compelling

I love quotes – because they're profound, really important and like mean something. They bring you closer to what you're actually researching.

Student

Students and teachers alike respond to primary sources and their capacity to bring the past to life. As a result of recent digitising projects, *ergo* showcases hundreds of primary sources from collections traditionally closed to students, including manuscripts, original artwork and rare photographs. Over 200 primary source quotes also appear on the site. Through the


exploration of primary sources, *ergo* also grows awareness of the role of libraries and their increasing presence online.

ergo and other library resources

The *ergo* site also alerts students who wish to pursue their topic in more detail to the library's wider resources. These resources may be of particular help in later research undertaken during higher education, employment or the pursuit of personal interests. *ergo* links to resources beyond books and journals to items such as newspaper articles, historical pamphlets, political and cultural ephemera, old postal directories and news cuttings about lesser-known public figures. *ergo* also links to the library's inquiry service, which provides access to subject experts. The reference librarians can assist inquirers to clarify their research goals and guide them to online and offline resources that they may not otherwise discover.

ergo combines core information and critical literacy skills with contextualised groups of resources showcasing the State Library

of Victoria's unique collections. In this way, *ergo* not only provides educators with an invaluable learning and teaching tool but also engages students and teachers with the broader library community by providing them with a tailored gateway to the ever-growing range of online resources and alternative pathways to traditional print resources.

Ultimately, *ergo* demonstrates the library's ongoing commitment to providing access and a world of information to a new generation of users. 

Linda Angeloni

Content Producer – ergo, State Library of Victoria

This article was originally published in *Curriculum Leadership Journal*, vol 6, issue 35, Nov 2008, <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/leader/home,61.html>

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SLANZA National Conference 2009

Rangi Ruru Girls' School, Christchurch, 28-30 September

**How does your library turn heads in your school?**

You are cordially invited to join us to explore "head turning" possibilities and opportunities for school libraries. Our programme will be full, interesting and stimulating, with associated social activities and mystery events you will remember forever!

- transforming libraries
- switching on learning
- making a difference
- being seen and heard
- changing perspective

THREE OF OUR "HEAD TURNING" KEYNOTE SPEAKERS WILL BE:

Nathan Mikaere-Wallis: University of Canterbury lecturer & Brainwave Trust presenter.

Suzette Boyd: Head of Library & Information Services at Scotch College in Melbourne.

Denise L'Estrange-Corbet: Maybe best known for her career as a fashion designer, Denise also works with the "Books in Homes" project for lower socio-economic schools and is a great advocate for the importance of reading.

We are now inviting submissions for presentations and workshops. We invite library teams and others, who are already turning heads, to respond. Share your expertise and experience with like-minded colleagues.

Visit www.slanza.org.nz and follow the  icon for more information.

Registration & Call for Presentations are **OPEN** now



School libraries: making a difference

Research confirms the vital role of school libraries

Within schools across Australia there is a learning space of considerable investment. This is the school library, sometimes modishly titled 'resource centre', 'information centre', 'learning centre' and so on, but nevertheless, the library.

In economic terms, the replacement value of a modest collection of 5,000 books starts at \$100,000; include all the other teaching-learning resources that are variously housed in the library and this can conservatively be doubled. However, this article will focus on the educational investment, which should be, at the very least, equally valued.

US research for over a decade continues to show that the school library plays a critical role in facilitating and enhancing student learning. Of the major factors shown to contribute to improved student outcomes, three are addressed here (if only in part due to lack of space).

- Having a full range of print, audiovisual and electronic resources that provide equal learning opportunities to all students.
- Engaging students meaningfully with information that matters to them both in the classroom and in the real world.
- Being staffed by qualified professionals trained both to collaborate with teachers on quality learning programs and to shape the collection to the curriculum.

For a comprehensive overview of the manifold ways school libraries contribute to improved student achievement, including language literacy development, refer to the 2008 version of *School Libraries Work!*

Print resources

In many schools today, the educational value of print resources in the library collection (chiefly books) is underestimated by decision makers. There are some who even see books, which form the foundation of most school collections, as an outdated information and communication technology; but 'the jury is still out on that', as they say. This view overlooks the teaching-learning significance of books. Knowledge is a construct; it does not exist without intervention. A model commonly used to represent the construction of knowledge is the *Data-Information-Knowledge* model. Books – that is, 'information' books – reflect the construction of knowledge in a way that the

internet does not. The information guides of a book, particularly the discrete facts in the index, represent the data; these are organised under captions and sub-headings into information contexts; finally, main headings and chapters show one way we know that that information set can be logically processed and compared with similar information.

Searching the internet involves the use of key words, which are in fact the organisers of information in the model above. Key words (which do not represent discrete facts but rather imply some prior knowledge of the context of the information being sought) are used to follow a trail of links in internet searching with the objective of arriving at the right place ultimately. Students with a better sense of knowledge construction will achieve more successful internet searches because they have a better sense of what headings are relevant; their searches are less 'hit'-and-miss.

Sometimes we overlook the fact that students are novice learners in searching for information; and that it takes a long time to become 'expert' in the skills and strategies involved. There is the temptation to think that the information found is the important 'outcome'. It isn't. In a return to the 'Process vs. Product' debate, how they get to it is more important. Books are fundamental to teaching students the processes of knowledge construction and should be educationally valued in every school library collection.

Information literacy

The knowledge construction model above underpins the notion of information literacy (IL). This, like all literacies, is difficult to define because it is a concept, a notion of a set of competencies which facilitate deliberate but informed choices and actions. Again, an internet search on the term is very revealing of its meaning and widespread application. In 1989 (that's nearly 20 years ago), the American Library Association provided this definition:

'To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.'

Isn't this what we are constantly asking students to do in their learning? Across

all their 'key learning areas'? To build a foundation for their 'lifelong learning'? Why has the significance of this literacy not reached the educational policy makers? Why have school administrators not recognised the foundational importance of this literacy and explicitly included it in their school's learning programs? Is it because they haven't been told to?

Information literacy programs

What has the school library got to do with this? The library has always been the information hub of the school. It makes sense, therefore, for IL programs to be focused on the library. As with all quality school programs and cross-curriculum strategies, though, IL programs are a whole-school responsibility. Cooperative curriculum program planning is one of the major aspects of the role of the teacher librarian (TL). If your TL has the recognised qualifications – and they should – then they are trained for this. But it is their specialist knowledge of learning resources, in particular their school's resources, which demands that TLs be included in curriculum planning. Holders of other planning positions in the school (in some systems, referred to as Head of Curriculum) may not have this expertise. It is therefore critical to involve the TL in the implementation of a school's IL program.

The research-based evidence

This criticality is not just about fulfilling the stated role of the TL; it is also about improving student learning outcomes. US empirical studies, as mentioned above, have shown that quality school library programs facilitated by qualified TLs with adequate support staff and with the philosophical, fiscal and practical support of school leaders, improve student learning outcomes. These studies began with the work of Keith Curry Lance in Colorado, reported in 1993, and his studies have now been replicated and validated across 19 US states, involving over 25 million students! The results have been so compelling that bipartisan support was given to the *Strengthening Kids' Interest in Learning and Libraries* or SKILLS Act in the US House of Representatives and US Senate legislation in June 2007.

In Australia, Lyn Hay of Charles Sturt University has based a study on the Ohio Research Study by Ross Todd (an Australian) and Carol Kuhlthau. The first reports from

School libraries: making a difference (cont.)

the Australian-based research are beginning to come through, and the results are revealing the same connections. Clearly, the outcomes are not related to parochial characteristics of unique settings such as 'curriculum priorities, pedagogical methods, technology infrastructures and/or school library' standards; but more generally to the quality of the school library programs.

How has all of this evidence slipped past educational decision-makers in Australia?

In fact, the evidence is that Australia generally is falling into habits of 'worst practice' in relation to these research findings. In 2003, Michelle Lonsdale set out to uncover trends in attitudes towards school library staffing in her research for ASLA/ALIA under the auspices of the ACER. In section 4.2 of her report, *Impact of school libraries on student achievement: a review of the research*, she concluded that 'anecdotal evidence, and information gained from several State-based surveys ... indicate:

- a general shortage of teacher librarians (and other specialist teachers)
- the practice of schools using librarians rather than teacher librarians, or having staff with no library or teaching qualifications at all
- that teacher librarians (are) being used in classrooms as subject teachers to fill gaps in staffing
- an ageing profession, with retirees not being replaced by sufficient numbers of graduates
- added responsibilities for teacher librarians in terms of technology

maintenance and student use of technology.'

'In addition, devolution of financial management to schools means that funding for school libraries relies on the resource allocation priorities established by the school community, which might or might not place a high priority on the need for a well-staffed library system.'

'For the sake of educational outcomes for our students, these trends must be reversed.'

Where is the vision? Where is the leadership?

There is no doubt that governments have a responsibility to support the development of school libraries, as does the US SKILLS Act. The Federal Government should provide adequate funding to all schools for library development. The various state systems should, on the one hand, provide professional development for school administrators to keep them up to date with this kind of research; on the other, they should be using more flexible staffing formulae which would allow schools to utilise TLs more effectively in their role. It is up to school administrators to lobby for these changes. The Federal Government, through its 'Education Revolution', must underwrite this. But first, all levels of educational policy making (government or otherwise) must articulate their vision of quality library programs within schools so that all stakeholders know where they stand on supporting library programs in schools.

Next time you, as a school administrator, might be thinking of no longer funding book purchases for the library, cutting the library budget further, deploying your TL to other roles in the school, not including a TL in your staffing formula, replacing your TL with an unqualified 'library manager' or moving your library into cyberspace, remember that 14 years of replicated and validated research shows that school libraries DO make a difference to student achievement. Such decisions are 'worst practice'. Our students need 'best practice' actions to improve schools' returns from this authentic investment in children's learning. **O**

Kerry Neary, Cert. T., B.Sc., Grad. Dip. TL, B.Ed.

Kerry is a retired teacher librarian with 35 years' teaching experience, 19 in Queensland Government secondary schools.

This article was published in its original form in *The Queensland Principal: the Journal of the Association of State School Principals Inc.*, vol 3, no 3, September 2007. Some minor changes have been made here to accommodate a wider audience.

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The article with bibliography appears in the online version of *Connections* 69 at <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/connections/latest.htm>

Connections

Connections is a quarterly newsletter produced by the Schools Catalogue Information Service (SCIS), a business unit of Curriculum Corporation. SCIS is committed to publishing informative and useful material for the benefit of library staff in schools. Our focus is helping library professionals keep up to date with the latest in information services and information technology relevant to school libraries.

Connections is distributed by Curriculum Corporation to all schools in Australia.

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Connections contributions

SCIS welcomes submissions of articles to be considered for publication in *Connections*.

Articles may range in length from 500 to 2,000 words. Work outside these specifications will be considered.

Contributions and correspondence are welcome and should be forwarded to scisinfo@curriculum.edu.au. Please include your contact details.

Advertising in Connections

Advertisements, supplied in electronic form, should be forwarded to SCIS. Contact SCIS for specifications and advertising rates.

Connections online

All articles and regular features are available electronically at <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/connections/latest.htm>

Educational Lending Right

A primary school's support of the survey

When Leopold Primary School library was invited to complete the Educational Lending Right (ELR) survey last year, I initially thought there wouldn't be enough time in my busy day. However, once I realised the ease with which it could be completed, I was absolutely delighted to participate. As most who work in libraries these days know, time is very short but this procedure was extremely simple and time-conservative.

I was very happy to participate because I appreciate how important it is that library collections be checked for Australian content. Our creators need to be paid for their hard work and creativity because Australian literature in our schools reflects our culture and our way of life. Australian books are readily identifiable by our children: Mem Fox's *Possum magic*, Andy Griffiths' *Just* series and John Marsden's *Tomorrow* series are all examples of local books that are devoured by children at our school.

At Leopold Primary School, we have had several authors and illustrators visit; amongst them, Terry Denton, Nan Bodsworth and Isobel Carmody. Most recently, Andy Griffiths held an entire gymnasium full of children in the palm of his hand with his wonderful lyrics and anecdotes. His books are always some of the most borrowed in the library: their

simplicity and humour are truly loved. We have also had a local artist/illustrator named Lisa Hunter visit. Lisa held some wonderful workshops with the children and gave them some insight into the life of an illustrator. Her artwork still hangs in the library and inspires our budding young artists.


After reading the article written by Craig Smith in *Connections* 65, I better understand the position many of our creators now find themselves in because of the ELR and Public Lending Right (PLR) and how much they appreciate these schemes. Under the Australian Government's lending rights schemes, Australian creators and publishers are paid for books that are held in public and educational lending libraries.

Australian creators need to be encouraged and fostered as well as financially supported – the ELR and PLR systems help with this while our creators are working to enrich the culture developing at our schools and in our communities.

Each year, I endeavour to ensure that our students and staff have a good look at some of the new Australian literature by purchasing the relevant Children's Book Council shortlisted books. They are displayed in the library and each class that enters is encouraged to peruse and discuss the books which are appropriate to their age group. This often leads to the children wanting to

look at other books by the same author or other books of similar topics and like genres. It can have a snowball effect, giving me an idea (for later purchasing) of the books and authors that work particularly well. Many of our teachers also find that the activities that are available for these books work really well with their literacy programs.

Once the ELR survey results are complete, a list of the 'Top 100 books' is published. I find this is an interesting list and a handy reference tool because I check it to see which books on it are in our library, and if there is something that we don't have, I try to peruse a copy to see if it would be a worthwhile addition to our catalogue. There are usually very few on this list that are not in our collection so it works as a terrific indicator and enables me to keep up with what the other libraries are also deeming to be worthwhile additions to their collections.

Leopold Primary School has been very happy to support the growth of Australian writing and publishing, and participating in the ELR school survey is the very easiest and most efficient way to do this. Who knows what future authors and illustrators we might be nurturing and fostering by completing this simple task? 

Chris Kilfoyle
Teacher Librarian
Leopold Primary School, Victoria



Leopold Primary School students support ELR!

What's new at The Le@rning Federation

It's time to browse through the catalogues of The Le@rning Federation to find out what latest content is available for your schools.

Early years

New to the English and literacy strand for the Early years project is the *My day* series for Year 2 students. The series provides students with opportunities to focus on word discrimination to differentiate texts, and includes audio to support reading and comprehension.



My day: Li: level 3
TLF ID L8294

English and literacy

You can use the new *Wonderful words: creative stories* series to help students better understand the use of adjectives and adverbs in simple sentences. Students use the new words they have learnt and the skills they have developed to create their own imaginative sentences. Students experiment by substituting different descriptive words in each sentence and noting the impact of their word choice on the accompanying animation. The highly visual nature of these learning objects enriches meaning for the students and enhances reader engagement.



Wonderful words, creative stories: pets
TLF ID L8740

Finance, business and enterprise

New to the Finance, business and enterprise strand is the *Plan for the party: superannuation* series. Targeted for Years

9-10, these learning objects are licensed from the Australian Securities and Investments Commission and provide students with the opportunity to investigate various topics associated with superannuation. To make it even more engaging, the series includes a quiz contest to test the students' understanding of superannuation.

Languages other than English

Learning objects in this strand support the teaching and learning of languages by incorporating a range of rich multimedia to support immersive intercultural language learning experiences which are not easily generated in the classroom.

Number trains (Indonesian) allows students to use their knowledge of Indonesian numbers one to 400 to arrange train carriages according to numbers on their sides. The randomised number generation in the learning object also encourages repeated use.

The other languages TLF learning objects include Chinese, French, German, Greek, Italian and Japanese.

Mathematics and numeracy

Designed for Years 3-6, the *What's the problem* series gives students the opportunity to solve one and two-step mathematical problems presented in worded form. The structure of the learning object aims to develop a routine for solving problems.

New to the mathematics and numeracy strand is the *The metrix* series, where students can practise conversions between metric units of measurement, giving particular attention to place-value relationships using whole numbers and decimal fractions. Students interpret terminology for length, area measurement, volume and capacity to solve problems.

Senior secondary teachers can use the *Trig radians* series to help their students explore sine, cosine and tangent values in different quadrants.

Science

The learning objects for science are based on current research findings in science education and pedagogy. The objects foster skills such as scientific inquiry, data interpretation, analysis and synthesis, which are transferable to daily life and offline learning opportunities.

The *Radioactive decay* series from Energy and change designed for Years 10-12 helps students make predictions and analyse graphs resulting from the decay of an array of radioactive atoms in order to determine half-life. They apply their understanding of the method of radiocarbon dating to establish the age of organic remains. It also includes a word-completion exercise to confirm student understanding.

A remarkable range of digitised items licensed from leading Australian and New Zealand cultural and scientific institutions has been released this year. With each item, TLF supplies an educational value statement comprising a description and contextual information that enriches the value of the asset.



'Leave us alone' by Mel Stringer TLF ID R9530.
Reproduced courtesy of Express Media and Mel Stringer

Express Media is one of TLF's new partner institutions. TLF has licensed 30 items of work from their publication, *Voiceworks*, a quarterly magazine showcasing poems, short stories, articles and artworks from Australian writers and artists under the age of 25.

Access TLF's digital curriculum content

Information on how you can access TLF's range of digital curriculum content is available on the TLF website, <http://www.thelearningfederation.edu.au>

For any TLF-specific enquiries, email info@thelearningfederation.edu.au

Rohini Mehta
Communications Officer
The Le@rning Federation

Resources

Reading Enriches Learning (website)

SCIS No: 1196595

New collection—Sustainability

Visit www.curriculum.edu.au/rel

Reading Enriches Learning provides online student-centred activities based on engaging texts. The books have been selected to cater for a range of interests and abilities of students in years 2–8.

This new collection focuses on the theme of Education for Sustainability. Twelve Australian picture storybooks, fiction and non fiction titles have been carefully selected to suit the theme, and the varying interests and abilities of students in middle primary (years 2–4) and the middle years of schooling (years 5–8). The activities address the core literacy areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening, as well as other areas like drama. A bank of downloadable templates and proformas extend the scope of the activities and emphasises the use of ICTs in the classroom.

Popular texts include: Years 2–4

The Antarctica Book: Living in the freezer

32pp

Author: Dr Mark Norman

RRP: \$16.99, Pack of 4 \$63.00

SCIS No: 1327054

ISBN: 9781921167867

The Antarctica Book: Living in the Freezer examines life in Antarctica. Who lives there and how do they survive? You will be amazed at how these clever creatures survive in the coldest place on earth.

Big Rain Coming

32 pp

Authors: Katrina Germein and Bronwyn Bancroft

RRP: \$16.95, Pack of 4 \$63.00

SCIS No: 1078042

ISBN: 9780143500452

A lyrical story about waiting for the rain to come to an isolated Aboriginal community. Tension in the community builds as the rain clouds thicken and grow dark. Everybody waits. When will the rain come?

Mang the Wild Orangutan

32 pp

Authors: Joan and John van Loon

RRP: \$28.95, Pack of 4 \$110.00

SCIS No: 1315053

ISBN: 9780734410023

Orangutans are our closest relatives, highly intelligent and very gentle. In this poignant story, Mang, the old orangutan who lives in the zoo, remembers his happy days in the lush rainforests of Borneo.

The World That We Want

32 pp

Author: Kim Toft

RRP: \$17.95, Pack of 4 \$68.00

SCIS No: 1221670

ISBN: 9780702234828

A stunning interactive, environmental picture book illustrating the unique ecosystems of North Queensland. Each illustration has been exquisitely created by hand-painting silk and contains 10 representative creatures.

Years 5–8

Hope Bay

267 pp

Author: Nicole Pluss

RRP: \$17.95, Pack of 4 \$68.00

SCIS No: 1209027

ISBN: 9780143301523

Every evening Possum waits with Olga in the calm water of Hope Bay for the dolphins to surge from the deep. They only ever come for the old woman and no one knows why, though Possum is sure it is magic. But there is more to Olga than just magic... there are secrets.

I Saw Nothing: The extinction of the thylacine

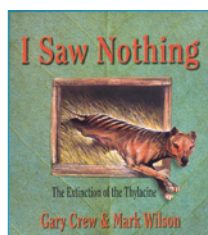
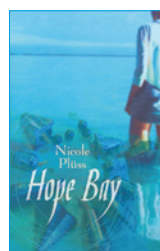
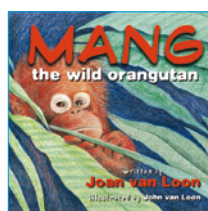
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Rosie never liked Elias Churchill, and she liked him even less when he trapped the last tiger-wolf ever to be seen. Thylacine was the proper name for a tiger-wolf, according to Alison Reid, the lady at Hobart Zoo. She said that this one may be the last in existence.

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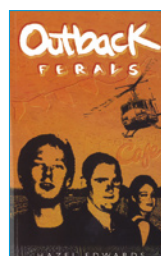
Author: Hazel Edwards

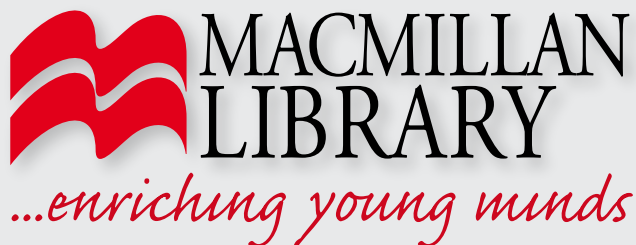
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SCIS No: 1285983

ISBN: 9780734409355

Environmental activist Kyle has just arrived in Darwin for a temporary job checking gardens for diseased vines. Seems easy enough, but Kyle's job also involves working undercover – befriending a chopper pilot who may be bringing illegal bugs into the country. Is this pandemic threat real, or is it just media hype?





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