

# connections

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**scis** SCHOOLS CATALOGUE  
INFORMATION SERVICE

## Leadership is not optional – it's a job requirement

William Shakespeare in *Twelfth Night* had Malvolio say 'Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em'. Change 'great' to 'leaders' and 'greatness' to 'leadership' and you have a message for all school librarians. I am well aware our profession has experienced drastic budget cuts and elimination around the world.

Bemoaning the injustice won't get you anywhere. It's time to accept the challenge and show politicians, administrators and parents that eliminating school librarians comes with a high price not only to students but to the entire educational community. Leadership is no longer an option for you. It's a job requirement.

Some of you are already leaders and are well recognised, but we need more. If we are to not only survive but thrive, all of us must be leaders. Tom Peters, an American writer on business management practices, said 'Leaders don't create followers, they create leaders'. So for those of you who are leaders, you have a big job to do.

To get librarians out of their comfort zone, it helps to understand why they stay there. And those of you who are not ready to move out, this applies to you.

As librarians we love telling stories. We delight in entrancing primary school students with tales new and old. We work hard connecting students to just the right book, knowing that is how we build lifelong readers. We believe in the power of story.

What we overlook is the power story has over our own lives. We tell ourselves stories about why we do or don't do certain things and, like the ones we bring to students, these have power. When our stories are positive, it helps us do great things, but most often we cling to our negative stories.

I am most concerned with the stories you have about being a leader. I have spoken with many librarians who recognise the value of being a leader but *know* they can't be one themselves. And they all have a story. Are any of these yours?



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### I don't have the time

I have a full schedule. I work in two (or more) schools. I barely have time to breathe on the job. I go home to more work. It's hard enough for me to complete all my responsibilities. When would I find time to be a leader?

### I can't talk in front of a large group

Teaching a class of students is not the same as speaking before my colleagues or parent groups. I am really an introvert. If I have to get up before a group, my palms sweat and my voice gets shaky. I don't sound like a leader, I sound nervous and scared.

And the most common one:

### Leaders are born, not made, and I wasn't born to be a leader

I can tell you countless stories of how I have never been a leader. I was last picked for teams. I was always the nerdy one. Whenever I did run for an office, I didn't get elected.

### A reality check

Even fairy tales have elements of truth. It's why we can relate to them, and each of those stories has an element of truth, but like those tales, there is quite a bit of fiction within them. Let's look more closely and see if it's *all* true.

### No time

Most of you are very busy, but the fact is in our world no one can *find time*. You have to make time. Which means look at what you are doing and determine priorities. Yes, you must get your lessons taught, but there is much you do within your school day that does not have as a high a priority. Getting every book into the catalogue as soon as possible. Checking everything in before the end of the day. You have others depending on your job. Yes, they are important, but making your presence known in the building, leading the way with tech integration, and sending visual quarterly reports to your administrator featuring what students are learning in the library are more important in ensuring that your program and you

are valued. Pick one and add it to your 'to-do' list.

### Public speaking

It's true that in countless surveys people put the fear of public speaking higher than death, but who said leaders must speak in front of large groups? That's only one aspect of leadership and not everyone needs to do it. Quiet leadership can be equally and sometimes more effective. Be the person who teachers can count on to show them how to use a new tech tool. Help your principal carry out a new administrative directive. When rubrics first erupted on the educational scene, I had a few teachers come to me quietly to ask for help. I had not made one for myself as yet, but they were confident I could help them — and I did. I also worked with the administration when the decision was made to move to block scheduling, getting material for teachers and giving them advice based on my research. That, too, is leadership.

### Born leaders

Sure, some people seem to be natural leaders from childhood, but to return to Shakespeare, '...some have greatness thrust upon them'. The bottom line is, the need to be a leader has been thrust upon you. You can do it. You have achieved so much in your life by this time, you are more than capable of going those extra steps and taking the risk of stepping out as a leader. Look for a mentor in the field, someone who you see as a leader, and ask for advice and help.

If you had met me in high school, college or even my first few jobs, you would have known I was no leader. I don't think anyone would say that of me today. What happened? I joined my state association and was on a committee. (Note, I didn't chair it.) I joined the American Library Association (ALA) and the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and went to conferences and programs. There I learned the 'language' of our profession, meaning I could speak with authority and conviction about topics

relating to school libraries and education.

I moved out of my comfort zone. I started saying 'yes' when my brain was screaming 'Are you crazy? You can't do that'. But I was smart. I got help. I didn't do it alone. We think we are alone because we usually are the only librarian in our building. But we belong to the most generously supportive profession in the world.

When I had a question, I could get an answer from around my state — and then the country. And at first I needed a telephone for that. Fortunately, we now have many more ways to connect.

I honestly think we have turned a corner on the depletion of librarians and libraries, but it will be a slow climb back and the direction will not always be forward. We must be there to support our colleagues who find leadership a scary thought and have told themselves many stories as to why they can't be leaders.

So please, be the help that your librarian colleagues need. Make it known you are there for advice and help. We belong to a very old profession that has been important to the progress of civilisation for thousands of years. We can all take it to the next level and ensure that we continue to make our invaluable contributions, for we truly transform our communities and our society. And we are seen as vital and indispensable to our students, faculty and the educational community.

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Author, editor, speaker

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# Librarians in the digital age: experts in e-health

Susan Marshall explains how the school librarian's role is central in developing students' e-health, and introduces a free website that supports online safety.

No one would argue against the perception that librarians have moved well beyond their traditional role.

The view of the librarian as the keeper of knowledge and the guide to unlocking the best of it has been totally overthrown — and the disruption metaphor is entirely apt. No longer do we even blink at the phrase 'digital revolution'. The revolution is over, but what persists is the need for experts — yes, most often librarians — to lead, teach and support their colleagues and their students to navigate the fabulous but precipitous world of the internet. With precipices can come falls, and one of the librarian's key roles is to ensure the e-health of students as they navigate their way through the digital world.

The librarian's role has never before been so complex and so central to the quality of learning outcomes for students. Internet search engines have opened up a world of options for seeking information and connecting with others. This exhilarating, instantaneous, results-driven phenomenon has resulted in both benefits and challenges for the digital novice, be that teacher or student.

Of central importance to librarians is teaching the skill of evaluating online websites. In a world of 'fake news', misleading information, and a plethora of online text and image-distorting tools, it can be a minefield for the gullible. Being able to interrogate online sources using critical evaluation, questioning, and problem-solving 'know-how' is essential for success in all learning areas, and a lifelong skill. A useful site for tips on teaching students how to make sure their information is accurate and reliable is Teacher Tap ([eduscapes.com/tap/topic32.htm](http://eduscapes.com/tap/topic32.htm)).

Another critical challenge revolves around the shared responsibility of ensuring students know how to keep safe online and to get the most out of their experiences on the internet, as seekers of knowledge and creators of content. In schools, it is



often the library where internet safety is first learned. Librarians understand well their role in explicitly teaching skills of safe internet use.

## Understanding the interplay of students' online and offline worlds

As educators, we're aware that the students we teach have never known a world without the internet. Using technologies to learn, play, create, be entertained, or connect are simply viewed as parts of the whole for today's students. From research (<http://bit.ly/2orVEGI>), we know that young people check their phone on average 56 times each day, with most activity centred around social media. But competing for internet learning time is only one of the challenges facing educators.

Students require social and emotional competencies to operate in the digital world. It is when the developing brain engages with the immediacy of a digital platform that issues may arise that can have a negative impact on students' psychology. Supporting students to develop healthy behaviours online is a key responsibility of all educators. Schools with strong policies and implementation processes, and avenues for open dialogue with parents, can ensure a common understanding and approach to complex issues around responsible online behaviour. The National Safe Schools Framework (<http://bit.ly/safeschoolsframework>)

is a sound starting point for educators to find information and resources that support safe, respectful, and supportive learning communities that promote student wellbeing and safety.

## Safe internet use enables students to have positive online experiences

What are the key elements of safe internet use, then, that need to be taught? Students need to know how to act in their own best interests and develop behaviours to ensure they have safe and positive experiences online. Teaching students how to maintain their e-health is an important step in future-proofing them to get the most of their time online.

Equipping students with the skills to recognise dangers such as cyberbullying, strategies to manage their online time wisely, and practical help to develop resilience for the digital world are now priorities for educators. For a snapshot of how students' health can be impacted by the internet, the video 'What the internet is doing to our brains' (<http://bit.ly/2nz6TsT>) is a good starting point for developing a teaching approach.

The Student Wellbeing Hub (<http://bit.ly/swhub>) provides great classroom resources, lesson plans, and activities for primary and secondary students as well as a comprehensive professional learning module on online safety (<http://bit.ly/swhmodules>). For busy library staff, the accompanying podcast provides a snapshot of what you need to know about e-safety and e-health (<http://bit.ly/swhpodcast>), and how you can be supported in this important role.

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**Susan Marshall**  
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# What do our students really want?

Megan Stuart, teacher librarian at Canterbury College, surveyed her students to discover what drew them to their resource centre — and what it could do to draw them in more.

If there is one professional group familiar with the fear and excitement that disruptive technology can bring, it is library staff. Over the course of nearly four decades teaching in schools and libraries, I have witnessed incredible change and welcomed exciting progress in the way information is accessed, books are published and students are interactively taught. On occasion it has caused me to ponder unsettling questions such as: Will hard-copy resources eventually become irrelevant? Will students grasp the importance of the legitimacy of information in the digital age? Will my grandchildren or their children ever know (or care) what the Dewey decimal classification is? And amidst all the transformation, will knowledge or culture be lost?

Technology, media and our modern students are permanently forcing the school librarian to hone his or her expertise and crystallise the core values and purpose of their centre to meet the evolving

needs of its pupils. This year, inspired by the Lean Startup principles, I decided to take action. Instead of compiling lists of reasons that might stop students walking through the doors of the Canterbury College Resource Centre, I decided to decipher what it was exactly that kept students coming back. And my findings were not only surprising but greatly reassuring.

The Lean Startup theory was coined by Eric Ries, one of Harvard Business School's Entrepreneurs-in-residence, and has been drawn on by some of today's greatest enterprises (for example Instagram, Uber and Airbnb). Ries argues that some of our most successful institutions, businesses and movements are no longer drafting intricately detailed business plans and rolling them out according to predetermined forecasts. Instead, the best founders and managers are engaging in a continuous feedback loop with their clients to ensure the key objectives of the

enterprise are being delivered in the most engaging and adaptive way (Blank 2013).

Reading about Ries's theory instantly struck a chord. Some of our most inspired and innovative ideas at our Resource Centre have not necessarily come from external sources but from within the shared Canterbury College community. When the lines of communication between school staff, students and their parents are open, our services evolve and flourish.

Therefore, in an attempt to discover what drew our chief clients, our students, into the resource centre I drafted a simple seven-question survey for all students across years 2–6 to complete. The questions centred around the children's personal use of the library. We asked what time of day, for which tasks and with whom they came through our doors. We also asked which key areas they wanted improved and provided a list they could choose from to indicate their level of interest in some of our key functions.

Generally, we expect students to visit as part of their scheduled library classes to learn how to access information and

**'We nurtured and amplified the use of the library in ways that were already popular (instead of forcing new tactics to increase student engagement). Our student visitors were frequent, happy and calm.'**



Students make use of the library for recreational purposes.

borrow. In their spare time on school grounds, they are encouraged to undertake research for their projects using our electronic readers, databases, and hard-copy resources, as well as to borrow books for recreational reading. They are also encouraged to attend various clubs; experiment with coding, robotics, and Lego; play with board games and puzzles; use iPads and green screens to create movies and book trailers; and use our interactive screen (this can include Skype calls with authors and other schools).

In addition, the library hosts a number of annual cultural events including book week, book fair, 'dress up as your favourite character' day, barbecue for books, our student and parent book clubs, our Shrove Tuesday master chef bake off, and our Canterbury Drama Group performances.

After conducting the survey, I sat down to undertake an initial read-through of the answers and was immediately pleased to notice the first few responses indicated a keenness for recreational reading at the library. I was expecting the students to show their preference for our gadgets and screens or our big annual bake off, which is always a sugary hit. I read a few more responses and raised an eyebrow. Yet more answers about reading, about quiet time and about our collection of literature. By the time I collated all the survey results, I was positively brimming with excitement. Across all year levels there was an overwhelming recurrence of three main answers. Students were clear in telling us that they most liked to visit our library:

- to read hard-copy fiction
- during their lunch hour
- with their friends.

In fact, almost all Year 6 students (90 per cent) indicated their favourite activity within the library is to read fiction; 65 per cent enjoyed being with their friends in the library, while 77 per cent were lured in by the comfortable furniture. Around 60 per cent of all junior school students mentioned that the temperature of the library was a significant drawback (air conditioning and heaters depending on the season). And, rather pleasingly, the second most popular activity for Year 2 students to undertake in the library

#### Questions asked during the survey

- My year level is ...
- Why do you come to the library?
- What time of day you usually visit the library (excluding class visits)?
- The best parts of the library are ...
- What I would like to see improved in the library is ...
- What is your favourite annual library event? Why?
- If the library closed, what is the one thing you would miss the most?

Please indicate (by using a number from 1 to 4) how often you use the following (1 for never; 2 for I forget; 3 for sometimes; 4 for use them a lot):

- Fiction books
- Non-fiction books
- School databases
- Library catalogue
- Ebooks

(behind colouring in and creating craft) was volunteering to help!

We also learned that searching via our OPAC and databases had been overshadowed by browsing and asking staff, and that the older students wished to visit at times when the much younger students were not visiting. All year levels disclosed they preferred a reduced noise level within the library.

So, after synthesising the answers with Jenny George, our dean, we discovered many of the advantageous changes that were indicated by our student users could be implemented almost immediately and without significant expense. We invested in more comfortable furniture and apportioned more of our budget towards increasing our large and clearly popular works of fiction collection. We trialled splitting times for year groups to use the library and rolled out a campaign to raise database awareness and installed new touch screen OPACs. And of course we proudly put our helpful Year 2 students to work returning picture books to their correct shelves.

We nurtured and amplified the use of the library in ways that were already popular (instead of forcing new tactics to increase student engagement). Our student visitors were frequent, happy and calm. And as larger numbers continued to roll in and settle into our extended range of com-

fortable furniture every lunchtime, I was thrilled.

Our modern and technologically savvy students told us directly that their preferences actually align with the historical purpose of libraries. Even during the late Roman Republic, 'Cicero records building some new reading rooms (exhedria) in a little colonnade' where reading and intellectual discussion took place (Affleck 2012).

Today at Canterbury College, some 2,000 years later, our students indicated a similar ideal. They want a place sheltered from the scorching Queensland sun or the bitter winter winds of the school playground where they can sit comfortably and enjoy the narrative of a good work of fiction, quietly, among their peers.

If the school library can create a place where a culture that reveres literature and time with peers can blossom, then I will steadfastly encourage it. It is well accepted that culture (or 'funds of knowledge') and education are not only linked but extremely complementary. We all know the threat of social media and mobile devices are burdening our interactions and relationships. It turns out our students are happy socialising with nothing but a few books between them. We are looking forward to noting whether the increased popularity and familiarity with the library will have a positive impact on individual research and learning outcomes. And we will certainly be keeping our client feedback loop open in the future.

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**Megan Stuart**

Teacher librarian  
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Megan Stuart is the Junior School Teacher Librarian at Canterbury College. She has previously worked as a primary teacher, a senior humanities teacher, and a teacher librarian at various schools and universities in the UK and Australia.

# Ebooks: to subscribe, or not to subscribe?

Teacher librarian Martin Gray weighs the arguments for and against ebooks.

I have an iPad, and it has books on it. I read them on the train from time to time. Our school library has some paid ebooks where I think they are worth it, and lots of free ebooks. But when I am asked why I have not subscribed to an ebook platform for my school, I have several reasons why I am not keen to do so ... yet.

I think ebooks are wonderful, and a lot of people like them, but they have not reached tipping point for being the best option in our school library. Personally, I think the benefits of early adoption do not outweigh the disadvantages.

## Platform wars

If I want to watch *House of Cards*, it's only on Netflix. I want to watch *Ash vs Evil Dead*, but that's only on Stan. In short, I can't get everything I want from the one place; and ebooks are the same. Not all publishers are on the one platform. Some platforms only really have fiction. For example, if I want fiction I may have to use one platform, but need to use another for non-fiction. Subscribing to one service may be cost-effective, but to two or three?

What's more, if I want to change platform, I lose everything I have from the original. Not like paper, where if I get sick of Supplier X, I can keep the books after I move to Supplier Y. And even if I could keep the file, the file type may not be compatible with another device or service.

## Recall

Several studies have found that a student's ability to recall information read from a screen is lower than that from information read from paper. This may have something to do with the way paper is more tactile, which triggers better memory (Mangen 2013), but it still means books can be more effective for students to study from.

## Comprehension

Several studies have found that for most people, there is deeper comprehension and understanding from print. This trend is across all age groups. Schuger



& Schugar (2014) suggest this may be due to distractions available on digital devices, and Tanner (2014) suggests it may be due to dry eye from looking at a screen. Personally, I think the association of computers with entertainment further discourages focus. Either way, most students understand more clearly using print books.

## Equity: learning styles

Quality teaching demands that we differentiate to meet student needs. A large number of students work best with printed material, therefore, to be fair, we need to provide them with books. It is also essential that students who wish to go to university still use books, as most universities still have books in their collection or for textbooks. This varies from faculty to faculty; some subjects are better suited to ebooks than others (Wexelbaum 2011).

## Equity: costs

For a digital collection to work, a school needs to assume that students have a suitable device and ready access to the internet. This is not always the case, especially in a school with a high proportion of students from a low socioeconomic background. ABS data (2016) show that 14 per cent of all households do not have

the internet. For many students the only device they have is a phone —maybe acceptable for a fiction book or Wikipedia, but not for in-depth research, for which a larger screen with epaper is best (Tanner 2014). Even if there is a suitable device, we can't assume that the student is the only person using it. During the days of the digital revolution and free laptops, we could presume that students were able to download at school and then access their own device at home, but not anymore.

## Myth: everything is online

The belief that everything is available online is somewhat true, and somewhat not. To start with, there are some things that you cannot get online, or at least not easily, especially in local studies or new release. Myth busted there.

The other side of this is that *everything* is available online. However, it may or may not be fact-checked, it may or may not be biased. The website you need may be surrounded by similar websites set up by hate groups, amateur academic hacks, or spam. Everything in a library has to be checked by a professional publisher and then selected by a trained librarian. Even if you do find good information on the net, it may be behind a paywall.



### The kids don't want it

Well, some do, but a lot don't. Anecdotal evidence from a lot of school librarians I have spoken to has been that, given the option of ebook or print, kids choose paper. Even my town library says their ebook stats are underwhelming. I did a survey of 10 per cent of my school students and the results were, at best, inconclusive.

### Books are expected

Whenever I have visiting performers or lecturers come into our book-filled school library, they tell me how relieved they are to see a real library. Libraries have an effect on people. This in itself does not rule out digital books, though it is still a reason to keep paper books.

### But . . .

Despite all this, I am not anti-ebook. The lack of storage space for physical books and the ability to have ebooks on a multipurpose device mean I am often reading on my phone happily in a physician's office. There are several reasons why sooner rather than later I *will* pay for ebooks.

### Equity

Just as most students prefer paper, and will even print out an article from online, some students prefer or do better with

digital. Fair allocation of resources and differentiation mean we need something for them. I personally expect that in the future students may become better at retaining information learnt online.

Sometimes ebooks are better. It could be that a student needs to make text bigger due to sight issues; it could be easier for essay writing, copying and pasting any quotes. It could just be more interesting: we have arrived at an age where the better and more expensive online textbooks have built-in quizzes with instant feedback, which is far more engaging.

### Cost and space

Eventually I think the cost and choice of ebooks will improve, and with better value and ease of use, they will be more practical. Especially in terms of using less space and taking less time for library staff to process.

### It's expected

A good library is expected to have ebooks. They are now mainstream, making up 20 per cent of all book sales in the USA. But as ebooks become better value, and ereaders better mimic, or in some cases add to, the experience of paper, this will only increase. And with more people buying ebooks and owning devices, more will also borrow.

### In conclusion

The minute ebooks pass the best-option tipping point, I will jump on board. I constantly wait to see if there are more locally relevant non-fiction texts rather than just American or British choices. I watch the fiction platforms for ways to have the same book borrowed by more than one person at a time without paying a premium. I know how much some platforms charge and how that would fit in our budget. If our school library budget was magically increased by 25 per cent, I would be making calls tomorrow.

Until then, I have links to Project Gutenberg in my library, and I have a partnership with my town library to have all our students join and use their ebooks, audiobooks and databases. Free books are definitely worth it. For now, ebooks are a question, not of *if*, but of *when*.

### References

For a full list of references, please visit the online version of this article.



**Martin Gray**

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*Martin Gray is a Google-certified teacher with 20 years of experience in education worldwide. Martin is a Premier's Reading Challenge reviewer, a Teach for NSW ambassador, and the teacher librarian at Singleton High School in Hunter Valley, NSW.*

## Introducing the next chapter of SCIS

A new SCIS website is coming, featuring:

- richer search and simpler download of SCIS records
- streamlined cataloguing requests
- online account management and payment.

Due for release late 2017. To find out more, please read 'SCIS is more' on page 14.



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# Navigating the information landscape through collaboration

Elizabeth Hutchinson, Head of Schools' Library Service in Guernsey, writes that information literacy is at the centre of student learning, making the role of library staff as important as ever.

School libraries and school library professionals have a huge role to play in supporting teaching and learning within a school. I often hear visiting authors comment on being able to identify a good school by how well the library is used. School librarian Caroline Roche penned the phrase 'heart of the school', which is used to describe schools whose library is at the centre of learning. But just having a school library does not make students suddenly want to start reading or researching. School libraries need to be looked after and maintained to ensure that good quality resources are available, and the school librarian has to be involved in curriculum discussions and included as part of the teaching and learning team to make an impact. However, even if this is happening, unless teachers fully support and are encouraged to use their school library, their students will struggle to become independent learners.

In a perfect world, all teachers would know how to access their school library and understand why using the library is beneficial to them and their students. Many teachers are resistant: they don't have the time, they need current information, the books are too old, and there is nothing in the library for them. This is a very blinkered view. I understand that within some subjects, the information changes more quickly than the books can be written — but this is why the school library offers more than just books. Unless we can enlighten and encourage teachers to use these other resources, we are never going to win the battle of our 'Google everything' society.

In order for school librarians to remain relevant it is important for us to keep supporting the next new idea in schools.



School librarians have always adapted in accordance with changing demands, so the recent idea of innovation and digital literacy in schools is no different. George Couros recently wrote that innovation in schools is a 'process not a product'; as a librarian, I love this statement because it is the process that we are all about, and it starts with finding and accessing information. To be truly innovative, Couros suggests that we need to consider 'how we think and what we create, not what we use'. For our students to think deeply, they need to be able to find the

information in the first place, evaluate it, decide what to use, and then think about how they can share it. This, in the librarian's world, is called information literacy.

## Information literacy starts in the school library

I regularly hear frustrated teachers talking about the quality of research they receive from their students. One way teachers tackle this is by researching educational websites and then sharing them with their students. Not only is this time consuming, but in a world where we need to create independent learners, it is important that teachers are encouraged to stop spoon-feeding their students —

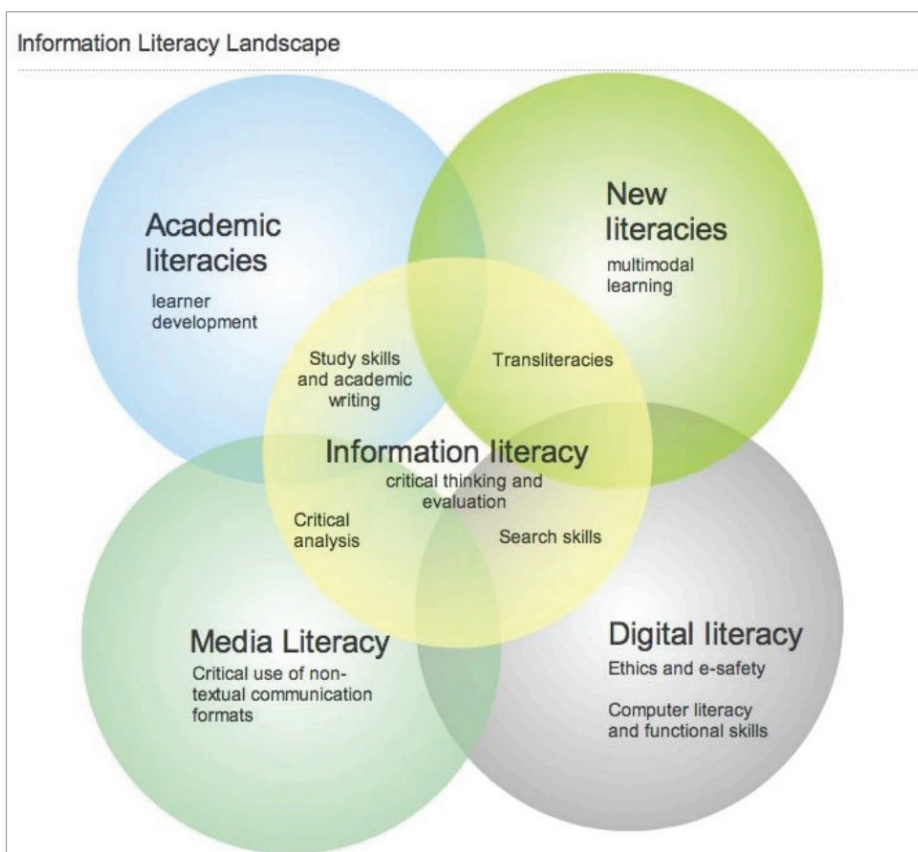
not by leaving them to type the question into Google, but with something far better. The school library can lead students directly to good quality resources, both physical and online, but it is often forgotten and goes unused. Yet the library is by far the best place to start creating independent learners within a school.

As more schools embed digital literacy and want innovative teaching within their curriculum, trained school library staff become even more important. The school library not only enables students to learn how to search a database and find quality resources via the online catalogue, but it also provides access to other online resources. These, like all academic resources, require real skills to navigate. You can't type the question into any academic database, you have to think of keywords and understand research techniques. The school librarian can teach students the best way to find and access information from these sources, and can ensure that these skills are embedded throughout the curriculum. If teachers and school librarians work together to ensure students use these resources, the students' skill set and quality of work will vastly improve.

As the conversation about digital literacy and independent learning changes, we have the perfect opportunity for school librarians to turn the tide and demonstrate to teachers why our students should use the school library. Knowing how to find and use school library resources should certainly be considered a 'digital skill' — one that needs to be taught to our students.

Students are not necessarily going to use the school library without teacher encouragement. Collaboration between the teacher and the school librarian is known to have an impact on student attainment, and part of this is about ensuring they use the right resources. Many do work together, but what





The information landscape places information literacy at the centre of various literacies.

happens if a teacher is not aware of how beneficial the school library is? Our students need to understand how it works, and the conduit to this is the teaching staff.

Schools are expected to use technology in their classrooms to demonstrate innovative teaching. Imagine a class where the teacher was collaborating with the librarian, and students were using the online catalogue to find books and websites for research: this would be classed an innovative lesson. The school library provides the opportunity to find good quality information, but teachers need to guide students there – and for this to happen, teachers need to know and understand themselves why quality library resources are important.

### Identifying resource quality through referencing

Some teachers believe that Google is the quickest way to find information, and therefore do not discourage students from researching in this way, which is where our problems lie. When teachers understand the importance of referencing and are aware that libraries provide educational resources, at the right level for

students in the school, they can encourage students to use them. I am not saying that students should never use Google, but we need to have a way of evaluating where they are getting their information. This can be done through referencing. Teachers should educate students about plagiarism and copyright, and expect students to reference their research. The reality is that if teachers do not check where the information is coming from, the students are never going to see the need to provide quality work.

### How can library staff help?

Students need to be aware of the consequences of poor research, and this is where we can support and provide training. School librarians have just been handed the perfect opportunity to work alongside teachers using our skills to link with their curriculum needs. We are trained to teach digital literacy skills and use innovative ideas, and we now have the opportunity to share these skills. Our problem is that, just like the lack of understanding by some teachers of what information literacy is and how the school library supports this area, we now have the same

problem with digital literacy. Conversations with head teachers become really important.

The wonderful diagram of the information literacy landscape (see left), which demonstrates how all literacies fit together, can definitely help start the conversation about what information literacy is and how it should be at the heart of learning.

School librarians need to be aware of current research, the importance of their professionalism, and the power of their own advocacy. It is essential to talk to senior leaders, discussing with them the importance of embedding information literacy into the curriculum and providing evidence that librarians can make a difference. Attending teacher meetings and curriculum-planning sessions, keeping the conversation going about the resources in the library, and talking about how you can support teachers and students in the classroom are all necessary. It is important to provide training and to demonstrate best practice whenever you can because it can have a huge impact. Through talking and sharing, we will not only ensure students get skills for the future, but also guarantee our teachers understand how we can support them in their journey with digital literacy and innovation.

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**Elizabeth Hutchinson**

Head of Schools' Library Service  
Guernsey

*Elizabeth Hutchinson is a chartered librarian with special interests in school libraries. This includes raising the profile of school libraries and qualified librarians through advocacy, promoting the importance of information literacy within the curriculum, and working alongside teachers using technology to support independent learning for students. She was runner-up in LILAC 2016 Information Literacy Award, and is also an international speaker. Follow Elizabeth Hutchinson on Twitter (@elizabethhutch) & her blog ([elizabethhutch.blogspot.com](http://elizabethhutch.blogspot.com)).*

# Library catalogues and the World Wide Web: it takes two to tango

Nicole Richardson explores the way library catalogues engage with elements of the World Wide Web to create a rich, interactive search experience.

Library catalogues have traditionally been the access point between the library user and the collection. Broadly speaking, the general function of the library catalogue is to allow the user to successfully find, identify, select and obtain resources (Tillett 2004). While these are still the main functions of the library catalogue, suggesting that these are its *only* functions is to suggest that libraries are used only to store information.

Through enhanced content, the online catalogue can now reflect the physical library environment, shifting into a more open, collaborative and social space reminiscent of features of Web 2.0: it can become a community hub (Gisolfi 2015; Tarulli 2012). Although the notion of enhanced catalogue content is not new, studies have questioned whether content-enriched data is used to its full potential by library users, despite being an important part of ensuring library catalogues remain relevant (Tosaka & Weng 2011, p 425).

And yet the value of libraries in the digital age is still challenged; libraries are often referred to in *comparison* to the wider internet. This article examines ways in which library catalogues can coexist, not compete, with the World Wide Web. Using the SCIS catalogue as an example, it discusses ways libraries can incorporate elements of the World Wide Web within their catalogues.

## One-stop catalogue

Before using the library catalogue, people often seek information from Google or websites such as Amazon or Goodreads to assist with their selection (Tarulli 2012). Enhanced catalogue content can limit the need for users to visit Google before accessing the library catalogue, thus increasing the ability of the library catalogue to aid in the selection of a resource. Bibliographic metadata assists with resource selection — it is important, for instance, to know if a book is

800 pages long or what subject headings have been assigned to a particular resource — but the expectations of today's library users go beyond this.

Let's look at the SCIS catalogue as an example. Say you're interested in purchasing a book for your library collection, perhaps at a student's recommendation. You can head straight to the SCIS catalogue, bypassing Google as your source of information, and you'll find a range of information to aid in your selection: summaries, author notes, awards and published reviews provided by Syndetics, as well as user reviews, user tags, other editions and similar books provided by LibraryThing. In addition to using the SCIS catalogue as a place to download catalogue records, it's also an ideal selection aid that can eliminate another step in your selection process, and point you in the direction of resources that other school libraries are using.

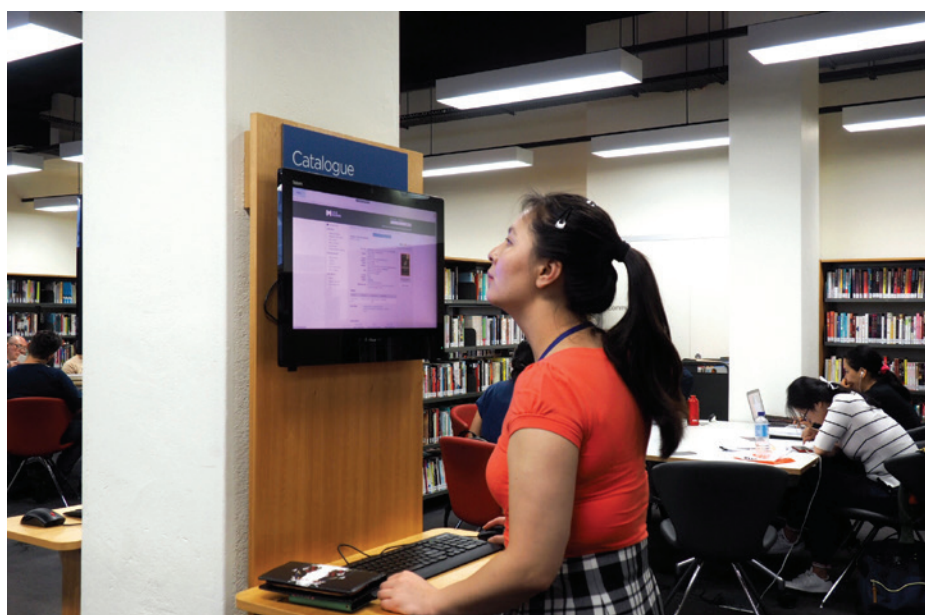
While these services can be supplied by external platforms, library management systems (LMSs) can include features such as user-generated reviews, user tagging and reading lists, making the catalogue a rich, single location.

## User-generated content

Welcoming the collaborative nature of Web 2.0 into the catalogue can help to create conversation between library users. User tags, reviews and reading lists are popular features available within some LMSs, allowing users to benefit from and contribute to shared data.

Although user tags are not quality controlled, they can add depth to records by providing information that cannot be supplied by authorised subject headings. For example, in the SCIS record (1688987) for Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, user-generated tags such as 'classics' and 'stream of consciousness' provide a sense of the book's tone, which is useful information for browsers. Giving catalogue users the ability to add tags to resources can benefit catalogue users; however, 'without the ability to search and sort by authorities, enabling users to search or choose by categories such as series, names and topics, a social catalogue with its faceted navigation feature would be lacklustre at best' (Tarulli 2012).

Another option provided by some library systems is the ability to create reading lists within LMSs. According to an earlier



study by OCLC (2010), user-generated lists have proven to be popular despite the interaction not being embedded in the metadata. Whether they are created by the library staff or by the users themselves, this function allows for the possibility of 'bibliographic playlists' of curated resources that can support particular personal, educational or research needs (Chambers 2013). This can be done by library staff as an online library display for upcoming events such as Book Week, or by users themselves to curate their own reading lists.

The benefit of the interactive catalogue space is not only for its users; the data trail left by user tagging, reviews and indeed the use of the catalogue itself, illustrates how users interact with resources — which means that libraries can 'more effectively rank, relate and recommend' (Chambers 2013, p 184). It provides more meaningful information that can be used to further improve library collections and services.

Rather than relying on only the information the resource provides, user-generated content adds further depth to catalogue records. It also means that catalogue users benefit from 'all of the accumulated knowledge' of a school (Bento & Silva 2013, p 3). With this in mind, we are excited about the forthcoming 'next-gen' SCIS website that will allow members of the SCIS community to contribute to and benefit from user-generated content.

## Websites and digital content

Another way to enhance the content within library management systems is to welcome websites and apps into the catalogue itself. But why do this when Google provides abundant access to the same resources?

For schools with limited budgets, including catalogue records for free digital content is a cost-effective way to enlarge and enrich their collection.

How many of your students choose the first website returned in a Google search? The quest for information should not be limited to websites that generate the

most traffic through increased search engine optimisation (Bothmann & Clink 2015, p 162). As Kay Oddone (2016) notes, the website [martinlutherking.org](http://martinlutherking.org) appears in the top Google search results for 'Martin Luther King'; however, this website, hosted by white supremacist organisation Stormfront, seeks to discredit King. Catalogues, in contrast, provide access to resources that have been

**'Although there remains a perception of competition between libraries and the wider internet as sources of information, the two are not mutually exclusive: when it comes to serving the needs of information consumers, it takes two to tango.'**

'assessed, evaluated and validated by experts' (Bothmann & Clink 2015, p 162), giving libraries a higher degree of trust than unmoderated search engines.

Say a student is interested in finding Anzac resources, and searches for content using 'Anzac' as a keyword search. Google returns close to 15 million results. A

search on the SCIS catalogue returns a manageable 1,100 results — resources that have been hand-picked by SCIS cataloguers for their suitability to the education community, and described using SCIS subject headings. If you further refine your search by selecting 'add filter: Electronic resources', and sorting by the most recent publication date, you will find a number of up-to-date, credible and educational resources — many of which are available online for free.

The benefits of websites and apps in library catalogues go beyond supplementing budget-stretched collections and increasing information literacy; they complement existing collections. They allow for a different kind of information to be made available, constructing a search environment that has not been 'vetted only by commercial publishing establishments' (Bothmann & Clink 2015, p 178). This, Bothmann and Clink argue, provides a 'richer universe of recorded knowledge'. As an example, look at the interactive experience provided by resources such as *My Grandmother's Lingo* (SCIS no 1784795), a free SBS-produced website seeking to raise awareness of and preserve Indigenous Australian languages. Including rich content like this within your library catalogue will lead students to unique learning experiences that may not have been accessible through

traditional library catalogues (Bothmann & Clink 2015, p 161).

By making frequent use of SCIS's digital collections ([www.bit.ly/scisspecialorders](http://www.bit.ly/scisspecialorders)), you can download bulk catalogue records for digital content to include in your own library catalogue. For more information on how to download Special Order Files, please revisit 'What's so special about Special Order Files?' in *Connections* 97.

## What next?

Laurel Tarulli (2012) suggests library staff research what is available: check out what other library catalogues offer, what vendors are offering — and what yours already offers. Read articles to find the success stories, but also access community-based sites such as blogs and forums to see any issues that have been encountered by people in similar situations, and any information that can provide advice. Lastly, Tarulli suggests talking to other professionals. There is a wealth of professional networking options available for school library staff, such as social media and school library listservs.

Library catalogues, like physical library spaces, can be adapted to become a one-stop community hub. Enhanced catalogue content supplied by third-party providers or your library users can help to enrich the catalogue search and browse experience. Although there remains a perception of competition between libraries and the wider internet as sources of information, the two are not mutually exclusive: when it comes to serving the needs of information consumers, it takes two to tango.

## Image credits

Photo by Nicole Richardson.

## References

For a full list of references, please visit the online version of this article.



**Nicole Richardson**  
Communications & Projects  
Coordinator, SCIS  
Education Services Australia



# School library spotlight

SCIS speaks to Cathy Costello from Campbelltown Performing Arts High School about what's happening in its library, including library programs and promotions.

## What is your job title, and what does your role entail?

As a NSW Department of Education employee my job title is that of teacher librarian. I particularly appreciate that it emphasises our teaching role by putting it first. As an educator, I view my role, first and foremost, as that of a teacher. My position at Campbelltown Performing Arts High School allows me the indulgences of my two loves: I teach a junior HSIE (Human Society and its Environment) class while simultaneously fulfilling my role as teacher librarian.

I have worked in high school libraries, on and off, for more than 20 years. The teacher librarian role has been ever-changing and evolving in response to the information landscape and the information needs of the school community. Teacher librarians have recognised the need to provide students with information literacy and critical thinking skills to cope with the deluge of available information online. As information specialists, this places teacher librarians in the front line as instructional leaders of 21st-century pedagogies in schools.

## What is the most rewarding aspect of working in a school library?

The answer is simple: the students. We embark on a teaching career because we love children and young people. We work hard for them, to teach them, to guide them. We try to instil in them a love of learning and a love of reading. Our reward, in return, is watching them grow into confident young adults. We are renewed by their energy, enthusiasm, and sense of humour.

## What do you see as the most important part of the library's role in the school community?

As I indicated earlier, our most important role today is developing students' information literacy skills. We find that many students are not sophisticated users of information and cannot distinguish advertising from information sources. Information literacy involves research skills and techniques to accurately locate

relevant information. The next step is to critically evaluate the information source to determine if it is credible and reliable. In the evolving information landscape, it is important students can identify 'fake news' in a so-called post-truth world (Andersdotter 2017).

Another important part of our role is teaching students to be safe and responsible users of information and digital media. This includes digital citizenship and respecting intellectual property. A significant aspect is instructing students on how to avoid plagiarism by teaching them how to paraphrase information and reference information sources using online citation tools.

## How do you engage with your students in a digital environment?

The library has a range of digital hardware including desktop PCs, laptops, tablets, smartboard and connected classroom technology. The tool that I use most to engage with my students, however, is my website, Virtual Library ([www.virtuallibrary.info](http://www.virtuallibrary.info)), which I use in the classroom for instruction when collaboratively teaching. Students are shown how they can later revise the content of the lesson at any time by navigating back to the website. The website provides information about what is happening in the school library and how students can access our resources. It also provides information and resources on information literacy and digital citizenship, and a wide range of electronic curriculum-based materials. Students can also use the website's contact form for help locating resources, to suggest a purchase, or to provide feedback.

## Are there any current issues or challenges facing your library? How are you working to overcome them?

When I inherited the library in 2015, it had not had the stability of a trained teacher

librarian for some years. We needed to significantly update some of the library collection as well as continue the

process of transforming the library into a modern learning space to further engage our students.

My head teacher helped me to determine how I could best support teachers in the classroom using collaborative practices. These were discussed with faculty heads and promoted via profes-

sional conversations and emails. Staff continue to be responsive to these collaborations. To address the collection deficit, I invested in an ebook subscription; purchased carefully selected, recently published young adult fiction books; included links to e-resources on my Virtual Library website; and uploaded credible websites to our library catalogue using SCIS Special Order Files.

## How do you promote reading and literacy in your school? Are there any challenges in doing so?

Our most successful strategies, thus far, for promoting literacy in our school have been the purchasing and promotion of graphic novels and our recent 'blind date with a book' promotion. Graphic novels have proved by far our most popular items since their introduction in late 2015 and this is reflected in our circulation data. 'Blind date with a book', for those unfamiliar with it, is a mystery book wrapped in plain paper and tagged with clues. It exceeded all expectations, with the books flying off the shelves; we had real difficulty keeping up with demand. Again, the success of this promotion is reflected in our loans statistics: loans more than quadrupled compared to the same period in the previous year. And, working with English faculty teachers, we have had some success in introducing 'speed dating with a book' into the wide reading program for years 7–10.



The 'blind date with a book' display was one of the library's most popular promotions.

Another strategy that we introduced to promote reading and literacy is the genreification of our print fiction collection. Instead of books being shelved according to author, we rearranged and labelled our fiction books according to genre. Evidence-based research has shown that this strategy increases loan statistics because it helps students to choose a book from a genre of their choice. I plan to create displays and promotions that highlight one genre each month to promote this strategy, and I will be closely monitoring library metadata to evaluate its success.

We also promote the Premier's Reading Challenge and strongly encourage students in years 7–9 to participate. And we undertake various other promotions and displays throughout the year to promote reading and literacy.

### How do you promote an interest in STEAM areas in your school? Are there any challenges in doing so?

We are in the process of planning a makerspace for our school library in 2017. I am currently investigating a range of digital tools, such as robotics, electrical circuits and coding apps, to promote authentic learning for our students. I approach this endeavour with little more than a will to learn, which models innovative discovery for our students. I will be working closely with the STEAM teaching staff, and undertaking ongoing professional development to learn to code and gain experience using these future learning tools. From conversations with

students, I have already managed to generate a lot of interest in STEAM, and have full confidence that this will be a huge hit with students at the school.

### How do you encourage students to make use of the library?

This is all about a welcoming and inviting environment. Having an aesthetically appealing arrangement of both comfortable and functional furniture is a great start. Having wonderful eye-catching book displays and all the best resources is another lure. Having the latest technology is also great. If I am really honest, however, most of the students who come to the library are not there to look at my wonderful book displays or for any of the other reasons listed. They are there because they feel comfortable. It is a place to be on their own or to be with friends. Most students simply want a comfortable indoor area away from the elements where they can sit and use their devices. This is perfectly OK. The success is actually getting students into the library. Once they are there, we can begin to build a rapport with them so that we can ultimately point them in the direction of our services and resources. They may not be interested in them that day, or even that year, but these students will come to us for help at some stage in their school life and that, in itself, is a win.

### What is your favourite thing about SCIS?

I could not manage my library management system (LMS) without SCIS.

SCIS allows us to automatically upload metadata for each resource into our Oliver LMS, the most useful access point being SCIS Subject Headings and ScOT authority files. The role of these access points cannot be underestimated as they are one of the main ways that our library users are able to locate relevant resources.

I also love SCIS's Special Order Files. These files provide quick and ready access to batches of records for digital resources such as recently SCIS-catalogued websites and e-resources and websites recommended in SCAN magazine and Scootle. I love the fact that our library users can have full confidence that all the websites in our library catalogue are credible and reliable sources.

I also love the reviews and the tag browser in SCIS OPAC. When genreifying our fiction collection, I made good use of SCIS reviews, tags and subject headings to determine which genre to allocate each book to. Likewise, when recently creating cryptic tags for our 'blind date with a book' promotion, I used SCIS subject headings, reviews and tags.

### What would you like to see SCIS do more of?

I would encourage the continuation of cataloguing credible and reliable websites aligned to Australian Curriculum content. Please keep them coming as we cannot get enough of them. I have also recently discovered that SCIS offers webinar training courses; please also keep them coming, as I am sure there is still more to learn about how to best utilise our SCIS subscriptions.

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#### Image credits

Photo supplied by Campbelltown Performing Arts High School.



**Cathy Costello**  
Teacher librarian  
Campbelltown Performing  
Arts High School

# SCIS is more

On Valentine's day I was at a conference, and found myself in a spa with a metrologist (Google it) and an engineer (I was inadvertently intruding on their Valentine's afternoon). In the course of pleasant banter they asked me what it meant to be a librarian in the age of Google. My answer — that the need for resource curation, information and digital literacy, and knowledge management was greater than ever — came as no surprise to them. They instantly comprehended that this age represents not a diminished role for information professionals but a fascinating and challenging evolution. Part of that challenge is to provide advocacy and leadership in settings, such as schools, where librarianship is only one cog in the larger machine.

So, this issue of *Connections* is particularly pertinent, and I thank Nicole Richardson for curating a fascinating and timely collection of articles. Hilda Weisburg discusses the need for leadership in the school library professions — even if it doesn't feel comfortable or come naturally. Martin Gray discusses the pros and cons of moving forward with an ebook collection. Elizabeth Hutchinson reminds us of the library's importance for

digital and information literacy, and of the need for active two-way engagement with teaching staff to reinforce this. Our own Nicole Richardson explores possible interfaces between the library and the World Wide Web. And Megan Stuart reminds us that we need to come back to our user's basic needs: a quiet and comforting space to spend time with friends and discover great stories.

SCIS is also showing initiative in this ever-changing digital era. When SCIS was founded (as ASCIS) in 1984, I was busy running around the playground with my gang the Super Sneaky Team and, no, I was not a librarian at the time (you can read more about it on our blog: <http://scis.edublogs.org/2015/04/24/to-my-school-library-with-love/>). Now, I feel very privileged to be involved in a complete revision of SCIS's online services. Over coming months we'll be releasing more detailed news about these innovations but, to whet your interest, we're looking forward to a new system that will:

- provide more timely and effective help and support
- enable easier, streamlined invoicing
- offer better security

- provide a more engaging interface and user-friendly environment
- make bibliographic and authority data available through multiple avenues including contemporary APIs, and express and expose data in multiple formats, including as linked data
- incorporate new, rich data to enable you to better support teaching and curriculum, including the capacity for our community of users to contribute to that richness
- fit better with subscriber's workflows, including use of our cataloguing services and easier integration of our digital content into your collection.

For further announcements, please make sure your email address is up to date in your SCIS profile: <http://scis.curriculum.edu.au/myprofile.php>.

I look forward to being able to provide more details in subsequent editions of *Connections*, so watch this space!



**Ben Chadwick**  
Manager, SCIS  
Education Services Australia

# Supporting Australian book creators

Many of you will by now be familiar with the Educational Lending Right (ELR), a cultural program funded by the Australian Government. ELR provides annual payments to eligible members of the writing and publishing industry. The Department of Communications and the Arts invites eligible publishers and book creators — including authors, editors, illustrators, translators, and compilers — to register for payment under the Lending Right schemes.

SCIS manages the ELR school library survey, which compiles an estimate of book holdings in Australian school libraries. This is then used as the basis for payment.

The word 'survey' here may be misleading. There are no questions to answer or forms to fill in; rather, it is an automated book count that, after a few clicks within your library management system, pulls the relevant information from your library. No lending information is collected.

We previously prioritised schools that had not yet participated, but, given the longevity of the ELR program, this became difficult with time. We now know that schools that previously participated are more likely to continue to respond favourably, well aware of the ease of participation. Thank you to all school staff who have supported the ELR survey.

Book creator registrations for ELR 2017 are now closed, and we are in the early stages of preparing to invite 750 schools to participate in Term 4.

If your school is selected to participate in this year's ELR survey, please consider accepting. The survey processes have become increasingly simpler, with most schools able to activate the automated survey in two minutes — an easy and efficient way to support Australia's publishing and writing communities.



**Nicole Richardson**  
Communications & Projects  
Coordinator, SCIS  
Education Services Australia



# Website & app reviews



**Nigel Paull**  
Teacher librarian  
North Coast, NSW

## Apple Education — special education

<http://www.apple.com/au/education/special-education/>

Apple has produced a comprehensive guide to using iPads, iPhones, iPods, and Macs for teachers to enhance the learning opportunities for special education students. The features of both hardware and software are explored, along with a collection of appropriate apps.

SCIS no. 1799578

## Forest learning

<http://forestlearning.edu.au/>

Educators seeking resources about Australian forests, wood products, biodiversity, recreational spaces and sustainable forestry programs will find material on this website developed in collaboration with ACARA. The content links to a number of key learning areas and stage levels.

SCIS no. 1799587

## Here: explore the university in 360 degrees

<http://tour.sydney.edu.au/>

This multiple award-winning site/mobile app, developed for the University of Sydney, offers new or aspiring Year 12 students a virtual tour of the university. IT teachers could also use this site to deconstruct a stunning resource.

SCIS no. 1799651

## I am making a difference

[www.environment.nsw.gov.au/sustainableschools/cross-curriculum.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/sustainableschools/cross-curriculum.htm)

Linked to both the NSW Syllabus and the Australian Curriculum, this material addresses the NSW DET's Sustainability Cross-Curriculum Priority, using project-based methodology. Topics include national parks, rainforests, biodiversity, climate change and Aboriginal heritage.

SCIS no. 1799686

## Kiwi kids news

<http://kiwikidsnews.co.nz/>

Developed for NZ students, teachers and parents, this website offers readers the latest NZ news, world news and current events in an age-appropriate and 'educational, safe and entertaining website'. Content includes video links, music, and sport.

SCIS no. 1799669

## NASA's eyes

<http://eyes.nasa.gov/>

As the title implies, this website allows users to view NASA's space resources and spacecraft feeds to experience events on Earth, aspects of the solar system and the universe. Links are available to apps for mobile devices, PCs and Macs — but remember to use the appropriate country-specific app store.

SCIS no. 1799903

## Performing arts

[https://performingarts.withgoogle.com/en\\_us](https://performingarts.withgoogle.com/en_us)

Google has produced a stimulating resource to encourage the exploration of some of the world's greatest cultural institutions in the fields of music, opera, theatre, dance and performance art. Content includes interactive video performances, pictures and text.

SCIS no. 1799906

## PhET: interactive simulations

<http://phet.colorado.edu/>

Produced by the University of Colorado, this website creates interactive simulations for physics, biology, chemistry, earth science, and maths. The simulations are all in HTML5, allowing all devices to access them. Searchable by grade level (infants to university) and topic.

SCIS no. 1260215

## Schools and teachers

[www.sl.nsw.gov.au/learning/schools-and-teachers](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/learning/schools-and-teachers)

From Australian migration in the 1800s to Henry Lawson, the State Library of NSW has a wealth of educational material available in this collection. There are a variety of formats, and the resources are searchable by stage and subject.

SCIS no. 1762268

## Sketchbook express

<https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/sketchbook-express-for-ipad/id410871280?mt=8>

This free introductory-level art app allows students to create layered sketches (these can be imported from Photo Library, too) and doodles with a variety of fonts, colours, and brushes. Work can be stored for completion at a later time.

SCIS no. 1799913

## Smartraveller

<http://smartraveller.gov.au/>

Teachers can use Smartraveller to supplement resources about countries. Current, authoritative information relates to travel, wildlife, unrest, natural disasters, climate and terrorism. The subsection Schoolies/Leavers could be highlighted to Year 12 students.

SCIS no. 1162009

## Tickle

<https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/tickle-program-drones-robots/id1063639403?mt=8>

Designed for iOS devices, this free app teaches students the fundamentals of coding using the programming language Scratch. Initially students animate Tickle's characters by building blocks of code. They can then progress to programming smart toys, robots, and drones.

SCIS no. 1774659

The internet sites selected for review are often of a professional nature and should be viewed by teachers and library staff to determine suitability for students. The content and URLs of these sites are subject to change.



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