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The importance of school libraries in the Google Age

In Australia, access to the internet is almost ubiquitous. In 2014–15, 85% of the Australian population aged 15 years and over were internet users, with 99% of people aged 15–17 using the internet (ABS 2016). With such widespread access to information comes the commonly asked question: now that we have Google, do we still require libraries and librarians? This question is particularly being pressed in schools, where smartphones mean that both teachers and students carry a wealth of information in their pocket, and school budgets are increasingly stretched between a wide range of competing demands.

2009), many are quite new. Despite this, there are huge variances in terms of staffing, facilities, and resources. The most recent survey of staff in Australian schools by the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) found that between 2010 and 2013, the number of teacher librarians in primary schools dropped from 5,600 to 1,300; fortunately secondary teacher librarian positions remained fairly steady (ACER 2014). This leads to a situation where many libraries are empty and, as Nick Earls (2015) observes, in those cases 'classroom teachers are expected to take up the slack', training students to check out books, as if this is all that teacher librarians do.

The situation is dire, but the battle is not over yet. One of the key challenges for library staff is to convince the principal – who is often the decision-maker regarding allocation of staffing funds – that teacher librarians are so much more than the 'keeper of the books'. The role has changed, and it is constantly evolving to meet contemporary teaching and learning needs.

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Regular newspaper articles spread the gloomy news about the demise of the teacher librarian; articles such as 'Teacher librarians on borrowed time' in *The Age* (Preiss 2014) speak of funding pressures in Australian schools – but this is not just a local phenomenon. 'The calamity of the disappearing school libraries' (Kachel 2015), published in *The Conversation* last year, deplores the closure of school libraries and the perceived redundancy of the teacher librarian role across the United States of America.

Fortunately, in Australia almost all schools still have a library – and thanks to the Building the Education Revolution funding which prioritised school libraries in primary schools (Gillard

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» The importance of school libraries in the Google Age (cont.)

There are multiple reasons why schools must retain the teacher librarian role; and why, despite easy access to Google, this role is more important than ever. The reasons below will not be news for teacher librarians, but they may surprise others who are not aware of the capacity and potential of a qualified teacher librarian. Why not use this article as a catalyst for discussion with your school's administration team — and spread the word about why the world needs teacher librarians.

A qualified teacher librarian and a well-resourced library increases student achievement

Overwhelmingly in local, national, and international studies, a positive correlation is found between the presence of a qualified teacher librarian and student achievement.

Extensive research also finds that administration — most specifically principal — support for the teacher librarian role and the school library significantly enhances the positive impact the library has on student achievement (Haycock 1999; Oberg 1995; Oberg, Hay & Henri, 2000 cited in Hartzell 2002).

Scholastic's publication 'School Libraries Work!' (2016) includes reports from 25 states in the USA, as well as findings from the National Center for Literacy Education, and the School Library Journal's analysis. The research suggests that having a qualified school librarian, a well-developed library collection, and collaboration and co-teaching between the teacher librarian and teaching staff all elevate student learning.

In Australia, research demonstrates similar findings. Principle findings from the most recent Australian School Library Survey (Softlink 2015) suggest there is a positive correlation between annual school library budgets, the number of qualified teacher librarians employed,

and NAPLAN Reading Literacy results. This relationship has been consistent since the annual survey began in 2010.

Teacher librarians can provide access to curated information that specifically meets student and staff needs

Trying to find quality information on the internet has been described as trying to take a sip of water from a fire hydrant. Even choosing a novel to read can be an overwhelming experience when faced with the millions of titles available through providers such as Amazon.

A library offers access to high-quality information and resources that have been carefully curated to meet local needs. Teacher librarians have been specifically trained to help teachers and students find the information they need, and know how to model and teach these skills so that the top hit on Google ceases to be the most popular option. Teacher librarians can share tips and tricks for searching online, provide access to databases and indexes that can drill down into areas that a surface Google search cannot reach, and are familiar with the collection of resources that are currently available.

What's more, with increasing numbers of resources available digitally, library catalogues are becoming far richer than simply lists of books that are currently sitting on shelves. A well-developed library catalogue provides access to collections of books, DVDs, CDs, and other physical resources, as well as ebooks and audiobooks, links to websites, reviews of apps for installation on mobile devices, and more. This movement toward seeing the library catalogue as a social space (Tarulli 2012) is being adopted across many libraries — but in schools, it is driven by qualified teacher librarians.

Teacher librarians take pride in developing library catalogues without 'dead ends' that take users directly to high quality resources. The top ten 'hits' on a well-developed catalogue are probably much closer to what a teacher or student is looking for than the top ten 'hits' from a simple Google search.

A teacher librarian works to develop a reading culture and to raise the levels of information literacy across the school

Teacher librarians know and love literature. They promote texts in a variety of formats, including novels, ebooks, audiobooks, graphic novels, picture books, and magazines. Teacher librarians' knowledge of literacy development, current releases, and popular culture ensures they have the ability to suggest the right book to entice the reluctant reader, and to share joy with the compulsive bookworms when new titles by favourite authors are released.

The teacher librarian has a unique role in the school. Having qualifications in both teaching and librarianship, they are familiar with pedagogy and curriculum, and also have expertise in resource management, information literacy, and literature (ASLA 2014). Not being tied to a particular year level or subject area means that they interact with everyone, allowing them to develop a 'big picture' of the school in a way that few others can.

In the age of 'infowhelm', having an information expert on staff, who can not only identify the right tool or piece of research but can also teach staff and students the skills and strategies required to access it, is essential. Teacher librarians are experts in content curation, and they can create digital lists of resources that are carefully evaluated, selected, and distributed in easily accessible ways.



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SCIS
Education Services Australia Ltd
ABN 18 007 342 421
scisinfo@esa.edu.au
www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/
connections

PO Box 177 Carlton South
Victoria 3053 Australia
Level 5 440 Collins Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Australia

Tel +61 3 9207 9600
Free call 1800 337 405
(Outside Melb metro)
Fax (Aust only) 1300 780 545
Fax +61 3 9910 9800



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School libraries provide a social space to meet, collaborate, research, learn, share, and relax

The school library can be seen as one of the only spaces in a school which is truly free — the space that is not ‘home’ or a ‘classroom’, and which can be without academic, sporting, or family expectations. While some may insist that the stereotypical ‘silent’ library should still exist, many school libraries provide a space to meet, talk, eat, study, relax, make, and play. Along with great examples of modern libraries such as the State Library of Queensland’s The Edge, school libraries can also be welcoming, flexible learning environments. School libraries have long been a place of refuge from the playground for many students, and now, with changing technologies and concepts such as makerspaces becoming commonplace, libraries are even more exciting to explore than ever before.

As Roly Keating, Chief Executive of the British Library, states: ‘[Libraries] stand for a certain freedom, and privacy of thought and search and expression. They stand for private study in a social space; they are safe . . . places of sanctuary. . . And they are trusted’ (cited in Furness 2015).

The challenge for school libraries now is how to effectively combine the physical and the virtual — to find the right balance so that the library is not seen as a dusty remnant of the past, but as a living incubator of ideas, learning, and innovation. Without a teacher librarian available to direct this growth, this challenge often goes unmet, and the library, which represents a significant investment of school funds, does not meet its potential.

A well-resourced school library and a qualified, passionate teacher librarian can transform a school. A qualified contemporary teacher librarian can:

- plan and teach collaboratively across all year levels and subjects
- encourage an active reading culture
- develop an inquiry-based learning culture
- provide advice and information on cutting-edge technologies and pedagogies
- manage and develop relevant and responsive collections of physical and digital resources
- and provide professional learning for teachers, admin, and other school community members in areas such as information management, social media management, and resource development.

The connected teacher librarian is an indispensable part of every school in this information age.

How can a school exist without one?

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Kay Oddone is an educator with experience across a range of settings, having worked at school, system and tertiary levels. She has commenced doctoral studies

in the areas of social media and connected learning and has presented at a number of national and international conferences. Her interests include contemporary libraries and resourcing, digital technology in learning, content curation, social media and copyright, makerspaces, Creative Commons, and open source initiatives.

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Celebrating Children's Book Week with the CBCA

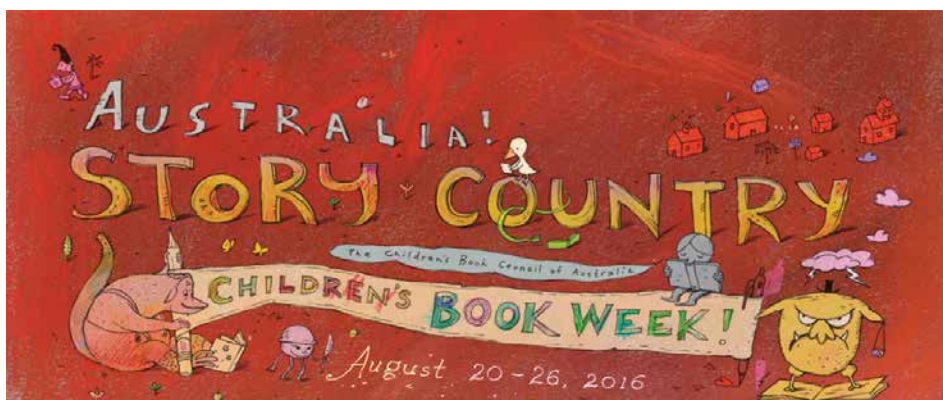
Australia's rich history of storytelling is an important part of our culture. It helps us to make sense of who we are and how we live, and the theme for Children's Book Week 2016 captures this history beautifully. *Australia! Story Country* opens up a world of opportunity to engage young readers by helping them share their own stories, and enjoy the stories captured in the wonderful range of Notable and Short List Books by Australian creators.

The first Australian Children's Book Week was held in November 1945, with the theme *United Through Books*, and there has been a different theme every year since then. Teachers can access the full list of themes from the Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) website www.cbca.org.au, and use them to create critical and creative thinking ideas for older students.

CBCA Official Book Week resources

Now celebrating 70 years of supporting and promoting the best of Australian children's literature, the CBCA has teamed up with award-winning author and illustrator Shaun Tan to create delightful Book Week materials. The artwork in the *Australia! Story Country* poster acknowledges the themes from many iconic Australian picture books over the past decades, and children will love trying to spot the references to their favourite stories. It is the perfect companion to the Book Week bunting, bookmarks, stickers, and other merchandise that can be used to produce fun displays in classrooms and libraries.

The CBCA has also created the Official Book Week Handbook with exclusive information and a comprehensive notes section to help teachers celebrate the full range of stories referenced in the poster.



Children of all ages — and some adults — will love the black and white outline version of the poster, which is perfect for colouring in, adding to library displays, or class activities.

There are also suggestions for activities that work well with Australian Curriculum general capabilities such as Information and Communication Technology, Personal and Social Capabilities, Ethical Understanding, and Intercultural Understanding.

Book Week in schools

With the help of the handbook, library and teaching staff can select a range of options from the 2016 Notables or Short List books for students of all reading levels to enjoy. Many libraries create a special display of Book of the Year Award Short List books suited to different age groups for students to browse and borrow. Students love to be involved with shortlisted books: some partake in challenges to read as many as they can, and others vote for their favourites to see how they compare with the judges' decisions.

CBCA Book of the Year Awards 2016

The presentation of the 70th CBCA Book of the Year Awards in Sydney on 19 August officially opens Children's

Book Week, which runs from 20–26 August 2016. The CBCA's National Patron, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd), will present the awards, which have become the most respected and influential in Australia.

The awards have had a profound influence on the careers of countless Australian authors and illustrators, and on the literacy levels of Australian children. Award categories are: Older Readers, Younger Readers, Early Childhood, Picture Book of the Year, and the Eve Pownall Award for Information Books.

Library and teaching staff can find information about the CBCA Children's Book Week merchandise via the CBCA website at www.cbca.org.au or through their local branch of the CBCA. Some information on the website is restricted to members only. Membership benefits include access to discounts on merchandise, high resolution images, branch-specific activities, and more, and it is a great way to support the vital work of the CBCA.

Image credits:

Artwork by Shaun Tan. © copyright 2016 The Children's Book Council of Australia.





CBCA Short List Books 2016

Book of the Year: Early childhood

- Piranhas Don't Eat Bananas*, Aaron Blabey, illust: Aaron Blabey (Scholastic Press)
My Dog Bigsy, Alison Lester (Penguin Random House)
Perfect, Danny Parker, illust: Freya Blackwood (Little Hare)
Ollie and the Wind, Ronojoy Ghosh (Penguin Random House)
Mr Huff, Anna Walker (Penguin Random House)
The Cow Tripped Over the Moon, Tony Wilson, illust: Laura Wood (Scholastic Press)

Book of the Year: Older readers

- The Flywheel*, Erin Gough (Hardie Grant Egmont)
The Pause, John Larkin (Penguin Random House)

- Freedom Ride*, Sue Lawson, (Black Dog Books)
A Single Stone, Meg McKinlay (Walker Books)
Inbetween Days, Vikki Wakefield (Text Publishing)
Cloudwish, Fiona Wood (Macmillan)

Book of the Year: Younger readers

- The Cleo Stories: A Friend and a Pet*, Libby Gleeson, illust: Freya Blackwood (Allen & Unwin)
Soon, Morris Gleitzman, Viking Books (Penguin Group)
Run, Pip, Run, J. C. Jones (Allen & Unwin)
Sister Heart, Sally Morgan (Fremantle Press)
Molly and Pim and the Millions of Stars, Martine Murray (Text Publishing)
Shadows of the Master, Emily Rodda (Omnibus Books)

The Eve Pownall Award for Information Books

- Phasmid: Saving the Lord Howe Island Stick Insect*, Rohan Cleave, illust: Coral Tulloch, (CSIRO)
The White Mouse: The Story of Nancy Wake, Peter Gouldthorpe (Omnibus Books)

- The Amazing True Story of How Babies are Made*, Fiona Katauskas (ABC Books, HarperCollins)
Lennie The Legend: Solo to Sydney by Pony, Stephanie Owen Reeder (NLA Publishing)
Ancestry: Stories of Multicultural Anzacs, Robyn Siers & Carlie Walker (Dept of Veterans' Affairs)
We are the Rebels: the Women and Men who Made Eureka, Clare Wright (Text Publishing)

The Picture Book of the Year

- Ride, Ricardo, Ride!*, Shane Devries, text: Phil Cummings (Omnibus Books)
My Dead Bunny, James Foley, text: Sigi Cohen (Walker Books)
Flight, Armin Greder, text: Nadia Wheatley, (Windy Hollow Books)
One Step at a Time, Sally Heinrich, text: Jane Jolly (Midnight Sun Publishing)
Suri's Wall, Matt Ottley, text: Lucy Estela (Penguin Random House)
And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda, Bruce Whatley, text: Eric Bogle (Allen & Unwin)



Helen Stower
Programme Leader
iCentre, Mt Alvernia College



Margaret Donaghue
iCentre Cybrarian
iCentre, Mt Alvernia College

Using social media to support school library services

Mt Alvernia iCentre was an early adopter of social media for school library services, and is now five years into the journey which began experimentally and involved a steep learning curve. Currently, we are in the process of drafting social media guidelines and strategies. If we were to embark on using social media today, these guidelines would be our first step. This article shares our story about learning to use social media platforms as one avenue of moving our library services into the digital age.

Learning about new information landscapes

We began investigating the use of social media in the spirit of leading pedagogical change. We wanted to embrace new technologies and the significant shifts in the global information landscape, both of

which saw the rise of mobile technology, social media, and cloud computing (O'Connell 2014). Our goals for using social media began with the desire to understand these new information landscapes. In order to reach such an understanding, it was essential that we positioned ourselves as learners. We realised we had to participate in social media to understand how it worked, and how it might benefit students and teachers (Valenza 2014).

At that time, our vision was to connect our learners with the skills, tools, and information they needed to live and work in the digital age. Enabled by our principal, we adopted Facebook as our first social media channel, which we used to communicate and promote library services. After engaging in our

own professional learning, Twitter was adopted and we began to coach teachers and students to use social media to build their own personal learning networks (PLNs). We went on to experiment with other platforms including curation tools such as Scoopit, Flipboard, Pearltrees, Pinterest, and Goodreads, with the last two becoming permanent choices. Our Instagram account was added in 2015 as we became aware that students had migrated to this platform, and that we needed to be there as well.

Learning how to engage in social media

As this was new territory for everyone, conversations with college leadership about purpose, security, branding, and the ownership of intellectual property

» Using social media to support school library services (cont.)

were necessary (Stower 2012, p. 14). However, the potential for educational learning in these networks was quickly realised and it was not long before the college and other areas of the school also had Facebook pages and Twitter accounts. Consequently, when we worked with web designers to build an iCentre website that revisioned our digital space, the team insisted that our Facebook and Twitter feeds be included on the home page.

Along the journey, we have discovered many things. We quickly learned that

enabling, not blocking, was the key to success in using these platforms. Additionally, an essential aspect of the teacher librarian role emerged: digital citizenship needed to be modelled so that our learners were able to connect and participate safely, legally, and ethically in these new and emerging online environments.

Although parents were initially concerned, we used our social media accounts to model best practice digital literacy and digital citizenship skills. The focus changed as we realised that social media was not effective for learning and teaching if the platforms were only used as push technologies without engaging users in the process. Rather, we learned that the learning potential of such platforms lies in using these tools as conduits for knowledge building, literacy, and communication.

Learning how social media supports school library services

In the early days, our lack of knowledge, experience, and understanding of how to use social media for school library services meant taking the first steps was daunting. Yet, as we persevered, we began to discover that many of our traditional functions could be accomplished, and even enhanced, by using social media. Through Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, we are able to broadcast library content and draw attention to the collection material.

These channels also allow immediate feedback, responses, and interactions with our community. Examples of these interactions include students writing to us on Twitter to ask for book recommendations, colleagues contacting us to share professional experiences, and parents sharing Facebook posts about online safety. Twitter has also become a great platform to alert teaching staff about news, events, and resources particular to their faculties.

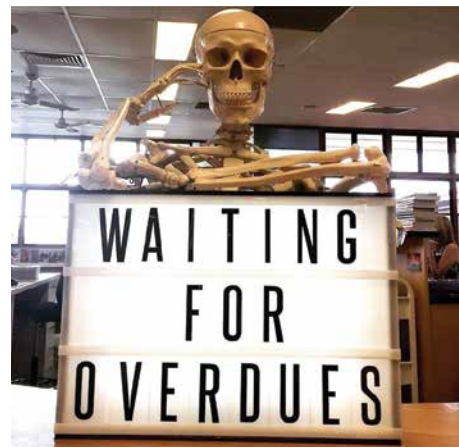
Another role of school libraries is to curate information for students.

Traditionally, a teacher librarian may have set aside a trolley of books on a research topic or created a pathfinder for students. We have discovered that Pinterest is an excellent curation tool that enables us to point students to resources from our collection, as well as to external collections and web sources relevant to topics they are researching. We also use Pinterest as a virtual display board to promote reading and fiction. Some examples of this include our boards

titled 'Books for mighty girls', 'Series to follow', and 'Dystopian literature'.

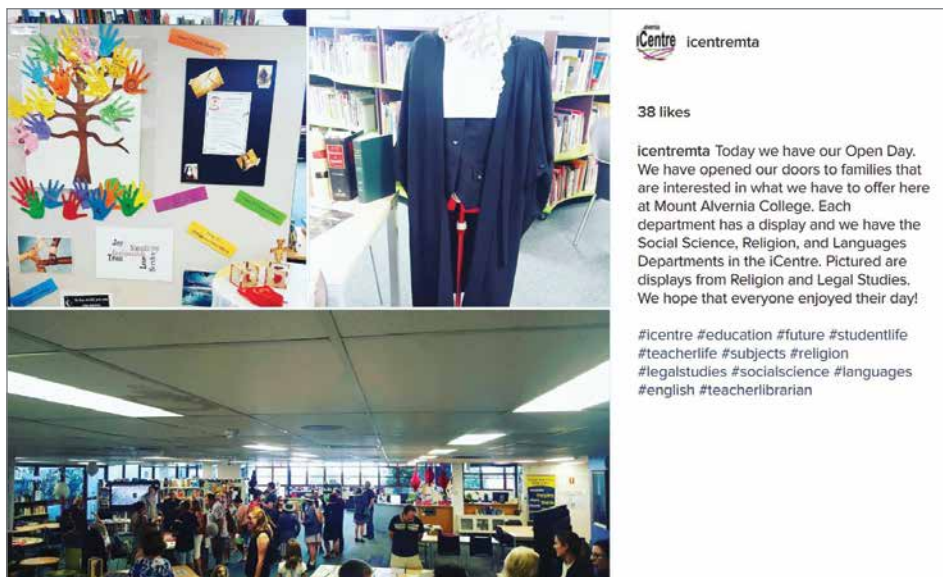
Another gem we have uncovered is that one of the affordances of social media

‘Social media guidelines are particularly necessary in the school setting where the age of students, institutional values, and parental concerns necessitate consideration.’



Screenshot of iCentre Mt Alvernia's Instagram account.

is the almost instant data that users can collect as feedback to inform future practice. When we share our programs, events, and tutorials on Facebook, we quickly learn if a particular post is important for parents by the number of views, likes, and shares it receives. This then means we can be more targeted and relevant with future posts. Similarly, a tweet that resonates with colleagues will receive high numbers of retweets. We use Instagram to connect to our student body by celebrating their achievements, broadcasting their book interests and reviews, and notifying them of upcoming activities. It is heartening that our most popular posts on this platform are those that feature student work and opinion.



Screenshot of the iCentre Mt Alvernia's Instagram account, showcasing displays in the library on Open Day.



Finally, at the recent Edutech Conference in Brisbane, both Kate Torney, CEO of the State Library of Victoria, and Dr Ross J. Todd, Associate Professor in Library and Information Sciences at Rutgers University, stressed to delegates of the Future Libraries stream that if libraries are to thrive, then they must share their story. Social media platforms have been a powerful way for the Mt Alvernia iCentre to share its story.

The need for social media guidelines

For school libraries contemplating going down the path of using social media, there are some important considerations that need to be kept in mind. Social media guidelines are particularly necessary in the school setting where the age of students, institutional values, and parental concerns necessitate consideration.

At the Mt Alvernia iCentre, our journey has taken us in a back-to-front process; we leapt into these environments without establishing such procedures to underpin our practice. This was largely because social media was an emerging technology, and organisations were just starting to realise the potential for connecting with clients and communities. Since that time, there have been multiple examples of businesses and professionals making extraordinary mistakes on these digital platforms and discovering that actions that are not legal, ethical, or safe in online environments have real-world consequences. Simultaneously, as our use of social media platforms expanded we also experienced changes to our team in the iCentre. Consequently, we have realised that guidelines must be developed in order to both protect and showcase the college's reputation, the iCentre's brand, and the individual staff who are given the responsibility of using social media as part of their service delivery.

We are currently in the editing stage of creating our social media guidelines, having completed research and an initial draft. Feedback from this process

‘The learning potential of [social media] platforms lies in using these tools as conduits for knowledge building, literacy, and communication.’

will inform any changes to be made to our guidelines. In the research and drafting process, we have discovered that it is essential that our social media guidelines are in line with wider college values. It is also important that the iCentre vision and mission statements underpin the behaviours advised throughout the guidelines. Furthermore, the guidelines must be a practical document that can inform iCentre staff about appropriate actions for social media use.

At this stage, our guidelines are to:

- Know our legal responsibilities
- Understand how to stay safe
- Always act ethically
- Balance social media and work productively
- Observe professional standards.

These guidelines are structured under the following headings:

- Rationale
- Definition
- Purpose of social media use
- Audience
- Principles.

Where to next?

Following the editing process, the guidelines will be presented to stakeholders such as the college principal and leadership team, the iCentre team, and teaching and learning staff.

These guidelines will be posted in shared environments for all to access as required. Our next step will be to research and draft social media

strategies that assist the team to achieve deliberate outcomes from their posts and interactions in social media.

The story of the Mt Alvernia iCentre's journey into using social media for school library services is not complete. In fact, we hope it never will be, as the essence of our journey centres around continuous transformation. This is very much a story of trial and error, and we don't claim that we have found a model that will work for every school library – what we do hope is that we can share our ideas, and that something we have done or experienced will help others on their journey.

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Screenshot of iCentre Mt Alvernia's Facebook page



Tehani Wessely
 Head of Information Services
 Marist College Canberra

Tehani Wessely is currently the Head of Information Services at Marist College Canberra, following roles as a teacher and librarian across Australia over the past 15 years. She has a passion for reading and is an avid user of technology, both in the classroom and for recreational purposes. In her 'spare time', she operates a boutique publishing house, FableCroft Publishing. Find her on Twitter: @editormum75.

Student perspectives of ebook and audiobook usage

Various studies suggest that ebook usage is suffering in comparison to its print counterpart. Franklin's (2016) research indicates that readers overwhelmingly prefer print books to ebooks, while others argue that readers' information retention and comprehension while using ebooks are not as strong as with print books (Flood 2015; Salter n.d.; Walter 2014).

Data in other studies imply that the rise of ebook sales have begun to falter (Baddeley 2015; Kowlowski 2015; Alter 2015; Trachtenberg 2015). Yet, despite this, the accessibility and availability of ebooks continues to be a strong point in their favour.

In the Marist College Canberra's Senior Library, we have several methods for our school community to access and read audiobooks and ebooks. For the past three years, we have subscribed to a popular ebook and audiobook delivery system. Essentially, it's a library within our library: one that can be accessed on any device, from anywhere with an internet connection, which makes it a fantastic resource for readers.

Additionally, we have a set of around 30 Kobo devices. Several of these are dedicated to a 'staff' account, for which we purchase content more likely to be consumed by adult readers. The majority are synced to a 'student' account, which has more than 140 titles suitable for young adults. We also have three Kindle devices, which are primarily used as a repository for certain audiobooks, and include material sourced from the Gutenberg Project (out-of-copyright,

free ebooks), in our library management system for easy access.

The ongoing use of each of these systems is highly variable. During some periods, students are eager to borrow ereaders and read prolifically and indiscriminately. For our heavy borrowers, they are an ideal option for holiday loans. Usage of ebooks and audiobooks increases significantly when the library staff markets the technologies in classes, but drops off sharply when this active promotion ceases. Kindle use is minimal, and usually only occurs at the request of a staff member, for individual student cases. However, anecdotally we know that many students use ebook apps with their own (or family) accounts on their personal devices. We also see many students reading manga on their devices, a trend that supplements the physical copies of manga series held in the library collection.

The costs involved in maintaining ebook and audiobook access vary. Our lending platform is somewhat expensive, with a cost of \$4,000 per annum, which includes \$1,000 of content credit. Restrictions on content can be significant, with various publishers having limitations on the number of loans, the length of time the title will be available, and even requiring that a certain number of unique titles be purchased in bulk before access to their collection is given. In addition, once an institution discontinues its subscription, it loses all access to material it had leased.

During Term 3 in 2015, I invited the teachers and students of all years 7 to 9 English classes to take part in a research activity with two goals: firstly, to investigate the current awareness and usage of ebook and audiobook technology in the school; secondly, to discover whether this could be increased both in the short term and with lasting effect through direct and targeted marketing. During Term 4, I requested opportunities to work with students for around 10 to 15 minutes at a time. In all, the research involved 13 classes with around 28 students in each.

Prior knowledge

Students in Year 7 who had come up from the Marist College Junior School had all been exposed to our ebook and audiobook lending platform in Year 6, through a targeted process with the junior school teacher librarian. Many of the students had also been advised about the platform and devices via their literature enrichment lessons in years 7 and 8.

Conducting the survey

The initial survey invited students to consider their regular reading habits, their knowledge of ebook reading devices, and their personal experiences with our e-lending platform.

We conducted this survey, which was created and administered online through a Google Form and Google Sheets capture, at the start of each group's lesson with us, prior to any discussion about the topic.

I was disappointed but unsurprised by the finding that more than 85% of respondents either didn't know about our e-lending platform or had not used it. The likely inference is that the 10% of students

'We are still in the early stages of ebook adoption, particularly in Australia, and I can't help but think it is a field that will continue to experience game-changing advances in technology and acceptance over time.'



who said they had used the technology were Year 7 students who had been exposed to it in the junior school.

Once students had completed the survey, we spent time with the class to demonstrate use of the platform, to answer questions about it, and to support the students in investigating it themselves. We created displays within the library during the term to remind readers about the available technology, and also sent two emails to the participating classes advising them when new ebooks and audiobooks were added to the catalogue.

Findings

We saw most of the 13 classes at least once more in the term, during which time we administered a second survey. The results of this showed that around 15% of the students identified as having used our ebook and audiobook platform: a small increase but somewhat disheartening given the opportunities to investigate it in class time. Only 3.5% of respondents said they would use the platform during the school holidays. Interestingly, the follow-up survey sent to all participants in the first week of Term 1 2016 showed that in fact eight per cent of respondents had used it. However, as the survey was only sent by email and the response was less than a quarter of the original sample size, it could be inferred that the respondents were students with a greater interest in reading in general, and in ebook technology specifically.

Comparing the responses to the e-lending statistics for the holiday period suggests that around three per cent of the student population used the platform during the holidays, supporting the previous inference. The number of items borrowed from the platform was similar to the number of physical items borrowed in the week leading up to the holidays, but many students are not aware they can borrow physical books during the break, which influences borrowing.

Statistics from our e-lending platform also show that during the research and promotion period, student ebook and audiobook borrowing increased from previous months, although only around nine per cent of the student population was utilising the system, with about 475

loans. In the same period, approximately 1,800 physical resources were circulated.

What I learned

It was interesting to investigate other research on reading and comprehension that compared print to screen outcomes, and particularly about the perception of these technologies among specific groups. However, most of this research was in relation to non-fiction texts; there doesn't seem to have been much formal, long-term research carried out on the enjoyment and comprehension of fiction, comparing print books to ebooks. I would be particularly interested in a longitudinal study of readers that looks at the changing discernment of their enjoyment over time when they are required to substitute ebooks for print. Anecdotally, it would seem that the current perception is based more on the idealisation of print books than on fact, particularly among people who identify as 'readers' — that is, those who read prolifically (at least one book per week). This may be an area for further study in the future.

I discovered that a higher percentage of users than I had anticipated were using the ebook and audiobook technologies, with more titles borrowed both prior to and during the research and promotion period. With that said, this percentage and number is still significantly smaller than that of the print book users. I also found a strong negative perception among the students towards reading ebooks generally, with a far lower proportion being aware of our e-lending platform than I would have expected. The final response regarding use of the platform during the holiday period was particularly disappointing.

Despite the low usage statistics in our school, there are still many opportunities provided by ebook and audiobook delivery systems. Access is a particular advantage, and as more students begin to feel comfortable with reading fiction on screen, accessibility — in more than one sense of the word — is very important. I also believe that every major change in terms of ubiquity of technology, including the introduction of the print book itself, has been a challenge; but every major change has to start somewhere.



We are still in the early stages of ebook adoption, particularly in Australia, and I can't help but think it is a field that will continue to experience game-changing advances in technology and acceptance over time.

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Jill Wilson
Content Manager
Education Services Australia

Libraries, languages and free resources

How does your library support the languages taught in your school? How are their culture/s represented in your collection? Find out more about the Language Learning Space — a free online resource with ample materials for learning Chinese, Japanese, and Indonesian, as well as some generic materials suitable for all languages teachers and library staff.

What is the Language Learning Space?

The remit for the Language Learning Space (LLS) was as follows: build a digital environment for Australian students and teachers. Target the age groups that disengage from language learning. Provide free resources that can be used in class or by individuals. Push the envelope a little in terms of pedagogy. Help build support for second language acquisition across the school.

Over the past three years, hundreds of LLS resources have been created to support teachers and students of Chinese, Japanese, and Indonesian languages. You can view the trailer on the LLS home page (www.lls.edu.au), register to discover the content — or read on.

Graphic novel elements

Thirty challenges (learning pathways) are available for each language, with each challenge 'bookended' by a graphic

novel adventure. *Robot Suspect* (pictured below) is an example from the Japanese section of the LLS, which teaches students about idioms used in Japan.

Students undertaking this challenge go through some 'training' — a set of appropriate online resources — before reading and interacting with the short graphic novel story. They can collect snippets of cultural information, referred to as 'treasures', along the way.

The challenges in the LLS are stand-alone learning experiences; assessment is built in, along with audio support for new vocabulary, and short quizzes that test progress. They can therefore be used as homework or for sub-groups within the classroom that require support or extension activities.

Teachers can monitor student progress through the challenges via 'Your Classes', which functions as a learning management system and creates spreadsheet reports for teachers.

Large-scale resources: augment the textbook

Many languages teachers rely on textbooks for delivery of the curriculum. The LLS includes some large-scale resources that can be used to augment textbooks in some instances. To find these, select your preferred language from the drop-box in the top right corner of the site, and search or browse through

the 'Resource Bank'. Here are some samples of content from each of the target languages.

The Meaning Engineers



The Meaning Engineers is aimed at students who have completed two years of Chinese at upper primary or lower secondary level. It is a narrative unit that provides a comprehensive, scaffolded introduction to Chinese grammar, and how it is used. Through an adventure story, the unit presents explanations and explorations of key elements of Chinese grammar that are problematic for second language learners.

Bahasa Bites



Bahasa Bites is a series of quirky videos purposely made to address common topics in the teaching of Indonesian language and culture. These include the weather, how to plan a movie date, how to bargain, and who owns the best pet.



Robot Suspect focuses on the use of formulaic phrases in Japanese language.



Inanimate Alice Interactive Journals



The *Inanimate Alice Interactive Journals* re-create the experiences of Alice, a first-time visitor to Japan. She travels to Osaka + Kyoto, Hiroshima + Shikoku, and Tokyo; in each locale, Alice creates a journal that includes videos, photos, games, and a virtual gadget of information that help her to learn Japanese. A similar resource also exists in the Indonesian section of the site.

This is just a small selection from the huge range of resources available in the 'Showcase' section for each of the target languages. There is also an extensive set of online interactive activities in the 'Languages Online' resources developed for each language, which would provide an excellent supplement to textbooks.

Support for teachers new to teaching languages

Many primary schools are in the position of offering a language for the first time, or supporting a teacher who has limited experience of the target language and/or of teaching languages. Library staff may be called on to provide additional support. The LLS website offers a lot of resources for educators in this situation. For example, the two-year Scope and Sequence outlines provide a set of lesson plans and links to resources.

Modules such as 'New to Teaching Chinese' provide advice about sample programs, resourcing, and suitable apps. These modules can be found in the 'Professional Learning' section of the site.

Resources for library staff

Library staff are often at the forefront of promoting the use of digital technologies in schools. The LLS site contains a range of modules that provide support to languages teachers wishing to extend their use of ICT in and out of class.

'Professional Learning' modules explore the ways in which the target language might be supported in a range of curriculum areas. There are links to Australian Curriculum learning areas such as English, History, Geography, and the Arts. These links will enable the accumulation of a collection of resources that strategically support the target languages and cultures across the school.

'My Flipped Classroom' has many practical tips and examples of software that could be used by the teacher of any learning area in the school. There are language-specific modules providing advice about apps, and there is a useful module with examples of how to run an effective digital storytelling class that emphasises language acquisition and engagement.

Selecting appropriate texts

Working out how to best represent the target culture in your collection can be tricky. Pandas are cute, but may not present the most up-to-date and rounded picture of contemporary China. It is important that our students are exposed to many facets of the target country and its culture/s in the course of learning a language. To resist 'geishafication' of your collection, the LLS hosts a couple of checklists that may help you to select appropriate resources for the school library's acquisition, or to help with the teaching of texts from other cultures in English, humanities, or arts classes.

You'll find these generic checklists in all the modules that have a cross-curriculum focus, for example in 'Focus on Japan across the Secondary Curriculum': <http://www.lls.edu.au/teacherspace/professionalllearning/1619>.

Social media and celebrations

Your library is likely to be the locus of school-wide celebrations for events, displays, and special days. This makes it a go-to place for the languages teacher/s who are looking to increase engagement with the target language and culture. The LLS has several resources that provide inspiration. *Promoting Indonesia (and Indonesian): A Case Study* has some great ideas for energising the languages program and engaging the whole school

in Indonesian-focused activities. These ideas would work equally well for any other target language.

Social media

There are several Facebook groups that provide a significant level of dynamic support for the languages teacher. Links to these groups can be found on the 'Connect' section of each language area of the LLS website or via Facebook itself.

The most active of these groups is the Japanese Language Teachers of Australia. It was created in July 2014 and now has over 1,500 very active members. It is proving to be an invaluable means of support for both new and experienced teachers. Posts range from a recent plea for help in managing disruptive and disengaged students, to sharing some new hiragana resources, to a request for help with a database of useful comments for report writing. You'll find ideas for celebrating special days and events; new texts, videos, and online links; and a community that can provide feedback about the best materials for your school. Membership of this Facebook group will help you to effectively resource your library and provide invaluable professional support for those teaching Japanese in your school.

Other language-teacher-focused communities include the Primary Indonesian Language Teaching Facebook group, the Indonesian Language Teachers in Australia Facebook page, and the Mandarin Chinese Language Teachers Facebook group.

Finally . . .

The LLS is a deep repository of riches. If you or your language/s teachers would like a personalised webinar tour, or have questions or comments about the site, please contact the Language Learning Space team: languagelearningspace@esa.edu.au.

If you would like to download the library catalogue record for the Language Learning Space website, you can search via SCIS number 1680949.



Dr Ben Chadwick
Manager, SCIS
Education Services Australia

SCIS is more

SCIS has always sought feedback from subscribers, most recently through a handful of surveys. These are not hollow exercises: the aim is to better understand the needs of our subscribers and to provide solutions where possible. I want to overview a few 'research projects' we have undertaken lately, and some of the changes resulting from them.

New Zealand bank account

Results from a survey of our New Zealand subscribers strongly indicated that paying for subscriptions in Australian dollars was a real barrier to their getting payments 'through the system'. So, on 18 May 2016, we opened a New Zealand bank account to make life just a little bit easier.

Curriculum alignment

In February 2016, we published an online survey called 'Resourcing the Curriculum with SCIS'. We had an enormous response to this survey, and have since been spending time trying to understand if and how SCIS can assist you in identifying resources that support Australian Curriculum outcomes.

One thing is clear: Australian school libraries see the value in data that links resources to curriculum outcomes. Respondents suggest it would increase usage of those resources, benefit teaching and learning in the school, and help to promote the library and better integrate it into a whole-school approach to curriculum. This was equally true across all education jurisdictions.

Many schools are already making efforts to support the curriculum by putting together collections of relevant resources and promoting them to teaching staff; but these kinds of efforts are especially apparent in larger schools, where libraries have more staff, and where that staff includes a teacher librarian.

Implementing this kind of work has its challenges for SCIS. One of them cuts to the heart of the philosophy of library cataloguing: a principle of

descriptive cataloguing is to avoid making judgments about how, by whom, or in what contexts a resource should be used. We have to balance that against the strong demand for this service, and seek out a middle road.

Respondents indicated that they would like any such alignments delivered inside the SCIS records themselves, so they will be available for staff and students to perform searches on. This means SCIS will be challenged to find a way to make this data available for those of you who want it, but not for those who don't.

A third issue is that of data maintenance. Curriculum changes over time, and we are concerned about 'hardcoding' our records with data that may become irrelevant at some point in the future.

Resource classifications

Describing the 'thingness' of a resource is important when your staff and students are searching for an item that meets their needs, satisfies their preferences, and will work on the equipment they have at their disposal. SCIS currently puts a General Material Designation (GMD) such as 'electronic resource' or 'videorecording' with the title of all non-book resources. The current RDA cataloguing standard does not include the GMD, and SCIS is planning to conform more closely to RDA by dropping the GMD from our records. SCIS is already using RDA's alternative to GMD: three fields referred to as 'Content Type', 'Carrier Type', and 'Media Type'. Now, rather than the GMD 'videorecording', the RDA fields would describe a DVD as a 'two-dimensional moving image', on a 'videodisc', which is played using a 'video' device.

SCIS wants to learn how your users understand different types of resources. What types of resources are they exposed to? Will the RDA terms do the trick for making resources findable and identifiable, or is there something we can do to make these classifications more intuitive?

Genre headings

One set of questions in our survey asked about the use of genre classification in school libraries. About one-third of you indicated that your collection is organised by genre in some way.

SCIS has traditionally catalogued genre terms such as 'Horror stories' as a type of subject heading, in the MARC 650 field. But there is also a MARC field specifically for genre headings, the 655 field. This field enables library systems to search and display genre headings in more specific ways than placing them within the broader subject headings.

Users are now able to change the Advanced Settings in their SCIS profile to include genre headings in the 655 field instead of the 650. As with all the profile settings, these only take effect when records are downloaded from the SCISWeb Orders Page, so if you download catalogue records via z39.50, you will need to stick with the 650 field for the time being. Please see our blog post for more information: <http://scis.edublogs.org/2016/06/23/preference-for-genre>.

Rhyming picture books

Traditionally, SCIS has classified children's rhyming picture books with the Dewey Decimal notation denoting poetry. In response to feedback suggesting that users wanted these books shelved with their non-rhyming counterparts, the Information Services Standards Committee (ISSC) agreed to change practices so all rhyming picture books will be classified as fiction. We received an overwhelmingly positive response on social media, but subscribers have also questioned whether we will 'retrofit' this change to our backlog in the catalogue.

The responses received in these surveys will be invaluable in helping us make crucial decisions. As we reach conclusions on each research project, we will let you know about them here in *Connections*.

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Why SCIS prefers to catalogue with the item in hand

So you have an item you'd like catalogued — maybe it's a book complete with an ISBN. That makes it easy to track down information for it, so SCIS should be able to catalogue it without seeing the physical item or digital file, surely? But SCIS has a preference to catalogue from the original, and you may be puzzled as to why we encourage you to send your items in.

SCIS's preference for cataloguing resources that we can see or pick up lies in providing the most accurate record we can, which increases the likelihood of students and teachers finding and identifying the resources they need in your catalogue.

Cataloguing without the item in hand, or without seeing it on the screen, can mean that we might be taking some stabs in the dark for SCIS and ScOT subject headings, call numbers, and even metadata such as the publisher of a resource.

Subject headings

Consider the following titles: are they fiction or non-fiction?

- *How to disappear completely and never be found* by Sara Nickerson
- *I survived the attacks of September 11, 2001* by Lauren Tarshis
- *Goblinproofing one's chicken coop: and other practical advice in our campaign against the fairy kingdom* by Reginald Bakeley

By looking at the title alone, the first one could be either a novel or a factual book. The second one sounds like a memoir. And the last one has to be fiction.

However, if we were to have these items in hand, we'd see that the first one is a novel, which has been nominated for

a swag of US children's book awards. The second one is a novel, too. Think the third one is definitely fiction? Well, if SCIS held it, we would see that the book should be in the non-fiction wit and humour section, 818.602.

You're probably thinking, 'But no one should be assigning subject headings from the title alone'. This is true, and we agree. On occasion though, cataloguers only have a bare minimum of information to consult.

Even when we have additional information such as a blurb, it is sometimes not enough. For example, the blurb for Danie Ware's novel *Ecko Endgame* mentions the key character, but if you're unfamiliar with the series, you may not know that Ecko is a cyberpunk assassin — information which affects subject identification.

Cataloguing standards: what you see is what you get

SCIS follows international cataloguing standards that depend on:

- Transcription of descriptive elements from the resource itself — adhering to these standards means we need to record exactly what is on the item. What we see is what you get.
- Subject classification coming from the resource itself.

Pagination and publishers: examples of metadata elements and why they're important

At its broadest level, descriptive metadata lets users know whether they're searching for a website, a computer app, a physical book, an ebook, software, streaming media, or a DVD.

Pagination

You might think the page numbers of a resource are not so important: isn't it enough to know it's a book? Not always. Knowing a book has portraits of Australians in the 1940s might be useful. Knowing an item contains maps can be useful for those interested in history and geography. Users might pause before selecting books such as the 832-page novel *The Luminaries* by Eleanor Catton. And if you're downloading an ebook or software, it's useful to know how its size will affect your data limits. This kind of information is hard to determine without a copy of the physical or digital item.

Publishers

Publisher information is useful to identify the exact edition of a resource. Many resources have multiple publishers. Think about how different the Popular Penguin edition of F Scott Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* would be from the Harper Press edition: the former has 363 pages, and the latter 446.

But publisher details are also useful for searching. For example, many publishers have a specialist focus, such as VIZ Media for manga.

These are just a few reasons why, where possible, SCIS prefers to catalogue from the original item. It provides us with all necessary information to maximise the chances of your staff and students finding, identifying, and selecting resources in your collection.

Raring to get items catalogued? You can find our cataloguing services here: http://www2.curriculum.edu.au/scis/cataloguing_services.html.



Website and app reviews

The boat

www.sbs.com.au/programs/go-back-to-where-you-came-from/learn/boat

This website links the award-winning interactive graphic novel *The Boat* with classroom activities and background information. Based on the poignant story from Nam Le, this multimedia adaptation offers insight into the Vietnamese refugee experience, and is suitable for secondary students.

SCIS no. 1764455

Caring for your collections

natlib.govt.nz/collections/caring-for-your-collections

Emanating from the National Library of New Zealand, this informative guide provides practical advice on how to best preserve and care for collections of books, artworks, digital images, photographs, and sound recordings. Its content also includes digitising collections, disaster recovery, and links to further information.

SCIS no. 1764496

Digital learning resources

nfsa.gov.au/learning/digital-learning/
The National Film and Screen Archive offers links to thousands of Australian video and audio clips that are available to download or stream. The website features teaching notes, resources, and classroom activities related to the audiovisual content.

SCIS no. 1212021

Ice and sky: the history of climate change

education.iceandsky.com/

This comprehensive, interactive website outlines the career and discoveries of glaciologist Claude Lorius, 'the first scientist to prove the impact of human activity on our climate'. The website unfolds the history and ramifications of climate change. Students will be absorbed by the visual presentation,



Nigel Paull

Teacher librarian
South Grafton Public School
npaull@telstra.com

The internet sites selected in *Website and app 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 are subject to change.

and teachers will appreciate the range of quality material available.

SCIS no. 1764544

Indigenous Literacy Foundation

www.indigenoussliteracyfoundation.org.au/

ILF is a charity that aims to address the literacy levels of children in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Founded by members of the publishing industry, ILF focuses on supplying culturally and developmentally appropriate books, publishing books in the communities' first language and in English, and raising awareness of remote Indigenous literacy needs.

SCIS no. 1534140

Inside a dog

insideadog.com.au

An initiative of the State Library of Victoria's Centre for Youth Literacy, this site encourages young adults to explore the works of Australian and international writers, share reviews, contribute to blogs and forums, and join a book club.

SCIS no. 1276536

Learning potential

www.learningpotential.gov.au

Published by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training, Learning Potential presents advice for parents on how to increase their involvement in their child's learning, which is likely to enhance learning outcomes. Relevant information and resources are available for all school years. The app is available from the App Store and Google Play.

SCIS no. 1764560

LEGO Movie Maker

itunes.apple.com/au/app/lego-movie-maker/id516001587?mt=8

This free iPad and iPhone app allows students to create stop-motion movies using their own LEGO minifigures. The app has several useful features, including soundtracks, speed adjustment, colour filters, dialogue and title cards, and sound effects.

SCIS no. 1764595

Librarian art, posters & framed artwork

www.zazzle.com.au/librarian+art

If your library is in need of a spruce up, this commercial website offers an array of artwork and posters. Find a wide range of librarian-related items, including T-shirts, coffee mugs, ties, stickers, mousepads, postcards, and bags.

SCIS no. 1764715

Science360 for iPad

itunes.apple.com/au/app/science360-for-ipad/id439928181?mt=8&ign-mpt=uo%3D4

Hundreds of science and engineering images and videos are available within this app, which was developed by the US Government's National Science Foundation. Science360 features a breaking news feed, and the capacity to save images within the app for later use or to share them via social media or email. Also available from Google Play.

SCIS no. 1764741

Splash : STEM

splash.abc.net.au/home#!/stem

The ABC Splash website has a broad selection of STEM resources, offering K-12 teachers pertinent curriculum-linked videos, games, discussions, and news. Topics include makerspaces, robotics, coding, nanotechnology, engineering, design, construction, and careers. You can browse by subject or by year level.

SCIS no. 1702474

Walker Books classroom

classroom.walkerbooks.com.au/home

Walker Books have developed bibliographies, primary and secondary teaching notes, and classroom ideas mapped to the Australian Curriculum for their range of books. Cross-curriculum resources include sustainability, the cultures and histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and Australia's engagement with Asia.

SCIS no. 1764780



Nicole Richardson
 Communications & Projects Coordinator, SCIS
 Education Services Australia

Supporting Australian book creators

According to an article published by *The Conversation* last year, the average Australian author receives an annual income of AUD\$12,900 (Zwar, Throsby & Longden 2015). One-fifth of authors are able to call writing their full-time profession, but most rely on other paid work or their partner's income to pay the bills. The same article indicated that 69.7% of literary fiction authors, and 58.6% of children's book authors, received *insufficient* income from their writing, hindering their ability to continue producing creative works.

You may wonder how this impacts you as a library professional. Look at your library collection: is it filled with books that intrigue, challenge, and move its readers? Books that help readers to understand the hopes and fears of people across the globe? Is there anything we can do to support the people behind these books?

Indeed, there is. In Australia, we are lucky to have government-funded Lending Right programs that see eligible book creators and publishers compensated for having their work held in libraries. Look at those copies of *The 65-Storey Treehouse* or *Tomorrow, When the War Began* sitting on your library shelves: how many students have read these books? Students are able to read books like these, building their literary repertoire — and the wealth of knowledge that comes with it — without stepping into a bookstore because *libraries provide*

access; this is what makes us stand tall as librarians. And this is why ELR is the modest yet necessary cornerstone of educational libraries in Australia.

The ELR School Library Survey is managed by SCIS on behalf of the Department of Communications and the Arts. Every year in Term 4, we invite over 600 schools around Australia to participate in the ELR survey, calling on library staff to run an automated book-count report in their library management system.

This data is matched against a list of works by eligible authors, publishers, and other book creators who have registered with ELR; it is then collated at a national level, and the estimates are used to determine payments. To ensure the estimates are sufficient, at least 300 schools are required to participate.

The Educational Lending Right program keeps the production cycle flowing: it allows authors and publishers to continue to create books, which, in turn, allows students to continue to access them.

Keep an eye out to see if you're invited to participate in this year's ELR survey.

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What Australian author James Moloney says about ELR

I can put the importance of Educational Lending Right into very simple terms: *without it, I would struggle to keep writing*. It's not just me, either. Recently I drove a fellow children's writer to an event in Brisbane and she said the same thing: 'Without Lending Rights, I wouldn't survive at the moment'.

Authors have good years and bad years, but ELR is always there for us, which is why we are so grateful to the library staff who take the time to facilitate the survey. What we want most is to be read, and school libraries mean that more children and teenagers have access to our books than ever before.

The down side is that one copy in a library, which can bring delight to dozens, even hundreds, returns only a small royalty to us, the creators, even though so many have enjoyed the fruits of our imagination and hard work.

The ELR scheme is a just and necessary — and let me say, highly efficient — way of balancing the needs of reader and writer. Both get to go on doing what they love: reading for the former and writing for the latter, so that the joyful circle rolls on to the enrichment of every Australian.

Connections

Connections is a quarterly journal produced by the Schools Catalogue Information Service (SCIS), a business unit of Education Services Australia. SCIS is committed to helping school library professionals keep abreast of the latest in information services and technology, as well as wider literacy and educational strategies. Current and past content is available online at www.curriculum.edu.au/scis

Submissions and advertising

Please forward inquiries to connections@esa.edu.au and include your contact details.

Disclaimer

Views and opinions expressed in *Connections* do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, SCIS or Education Services Australia, or imply endorsement by them.

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SCIS Professional Learning

SCIS provides a range of professional learning workshops and webinars to help you get the most out of SCIS products and services.

Upcoming workshops

Making the most of SCIS

These workshops are open to all school library staff. The workshop offers an in-depth understanding of how SCIS can support the provision of a more effective service for school libraries. Participants will enhance their understanding of SCIS as a database of consistent catalogue records for educational resources that have been created to international standards.

Sydney

Thursday 28 July, 9.30am–12.30pm

North Sydney Boys High School
Crows Nest, NSW 2065

Heatherbrae

Friday 29 July, 9.30am–12.30pm

Hunter River High School
Heatherbrae, NSW 2324

Upcoming webinars

In Term 3, SCIS is running three webinars that will include information relevant for both Australian and New Zealand users. Each session is scheduled at 2pm AEST and runs for about 45 minutes.

An introduction to SCIS

Tuesday 2 August, 2pm (AEST)

A free overview of SCIS products and services and how they can help to organise resources in schools. The webinar includes an overview of how SCIS subscribers can request and download records.

Downloading SCIS records

Tuesday 9 August, 2pm (AEST)

How you can turn a set of resources, whether they be digital or physical items, into catalogue records that your students and staff can find and use for teaching and learning outcomes.

Search and selection on the SCIS catalogue

Tuesday 16 August, 2pm (AEST)

This webinar will provide you with a range of techniques for searching on the SCIS catalogue and using SCIS as a resource identification tool.



For further details on our professional learning sessions, or to register, please visit the professional learning page on our website:
www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/professional_learning.html