

connections

ISSUE NO. 96 | TERM 1 2016

ISSN 1440-2089

scis SCHOOLS CATALOGUE
INFORMATION SERVICE



The new librarian: Leaders in the digital age

As school districts confront budget constraints and cuts, one of the first places administrators often look to for savings is the school library. Numerous districts, large and small, have cut librarian staffing to part-time or eliminated positions entirely.

These cuts can impact both students and teachers. Although libraries remain open, they lack trained educators to support students, despite a technological landscape that makes information literacy more important than ever. Student research increasingly occurs outside of the library and with the advent of digital content, new standards, and 1:1 computing, teachers need librarians to help navigate these new choices.

For these reasons, Vancouver Public Schools (VPS) in Vancouver, Washington, has been investing in its librarians while others are cutting back.

The district's cohort of 33 teacher librarians is viewed as indispensable to the vision of a technology-infused path to improved student outcomes. After the community passed a \$24 million technology levy in 2013, the district began its weLearn 1:1 initiative, which by 2017 will provide all grade 3–12 teachers and students with an electronic device in a flexible learning environment, and a personalised digital curriculum.

Teacher librarians at VPS play a crucial role in this digital transformation, as well as other strategic initiatives. As a result, they are expanding their role to spend more time in the classroom, curating digital content and lesson plans with teachers, teaching digital citizenship to students, and even emerging as technology experts within their schools.

VPS Superintendent Steve Webb considers teacher librarians among the district's visionaries. Their story offers a blueprint for maximising the impact of libraries and librarians on student learning.

Reasserting relevance

A decade ago, after several librarians retired and the district's budget continued to tighten, VPS considered not refilling positions at several elementary schools. At the time, librarians reported feeling out of the loop and disconnected from district leaders.

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The teacher librarian cohort banded together and came up with a plan to reassert their relevance in the district. Mark Ray, a high school librarian at the time (now the district's director of instructional technology and library services), was appointed to lead the cohort and better understand how librarians could fulfil the district's strategic goals. For the first time, district leaders and librarians were in the same room, talking about topics of shared interest and importance. These conversations led to significant increases in responsibility for teacher librarians, from digital literacy to support of instructional quality.

To replenish the talent pipeline for librarians, the district worked with nearby Portland State University to offer a one-year library certification program for educators who were working as librarians. VPS also bolstered professional development, with Layne Curtis, the district's director of curriculum and instruction, and its former chief information officer, Lisa Greseth, leading efforts to involve teacher librarians in key projects.

As these efforts began to demonstrate effectiveness, teacher librarians increasingly assumed strategic leadership roles in their own schools and on local and state committees. This tact aligned with Superintendent Webb's push to widen his circle of instructional leaders and foster ubiquitous leadership throughout the district.

Emerging as leaders

Ray understands the value that teacher librarians can bring to the table: 'By virtue of their training, relationships, systems knowledge, and instructional roles ... teacher librarians are ideally suited to lead, teach, and support students and teachers in 21st century schools,' he says.

As such, VPS teacher librarians are designated trainers for a new online teacher evaluation system in the state of Washington, and are adapting the evaluation and instructional framework to their new and emerging roles in the classroom. Ron Wagner, a teacher librarian in the district, runs day-long workshops to train other teacher librarians in teaching students to understand complex texts, read for information, and conduct research.

Many teacher librarians say they now feel connected to something bigger than their own school, namely the strategic plan to redesign instruction across the district. Traci Chun, teacher librarian at Skyview High School, is on a panel that designed the district's new social studies curriculum. Chun is an example of how the gap between the librarian and the classroom instructor is closing. She now spends about half of her time in the classroom, co-teaching with other faculty, leading in-class lessons, and teaching research skills to students in social studies, language arts, and chemistry.

Rising to the 1:1 challenge

The district boasts nationally recognised magnet schools. At the Vancouver School of Arts and Academics, students have access to industry-standard stage production equipment, a recording studio, and film production suites. Skyview School offers an engineering academy within their comprehensive high school. In recent years, the district opened iTech Preparatory and Lewis and Clark High School, which both reimagine traditional ideas of school time and space through competency-based 1:1 learning environments and teacher mentoring. The nature of these programs requires support for teachers and students that create unique roles for librarians.

To that end, VPS is taking a deliberate approach to weLearn. Device rollout for the district's 23,000 students has been staged over a six-year period.

By design, teacher librarians are playing an important role in this implementation. And while they have received technology training for the last five years, the iPads have posed new challenges for them. While some teacher librarians were early adopters of smartphones and iPads, others were new to the technology.

Teacher librarians now receive annual training in instructional technology leadership, and going forward are considered the key point of contact for schools introducing new technology. This is the latest evolution in the constantly changing role of VPS teacher librarians, several years after their positions were almost cut.

Even before the new iPads and laptops arrived, teacher librarians were often approached by principals to spearhead efforts to teach students about digital citizenship. Now, with students more often working online, in computer labs, at home, and in classrooms, the teacher librarian role as a digital maven is even more important. They are no longer isolated behind their library walls.



a quarterly journal by

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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Rethinking library spaces

While Vancouver’s teacher librarians may represent a new breed, changes to the district’s library spaces are happening more slowly across its schools. Some libraries are enclosed, while others occupy spaces within common learning areas. Print encyclopaedias still have a place on the shelves, and computer labs have not yet given way to mobile technology. However, early shifts in the library programs and collections are underway.

Ironically, what Vancouver views as a potential prototype for its future school library opened in 1995: Discovery Middle School, which was created to support project-based learning. The library was part of a large, well-lit, and flexible space called the ‘Toolbox’ that housed computer and science labs and an adjacent pottery room.

With some modifications to account for mobile devices and a more collaborative space, the library could resemble ‘maker spaces’, which foster hands-on, multi-modal learning and creation.

At schools already embracing a mobile, tech-integrated learning environment, like iTech Preparatory Academy, libraries can be difficult to recognise. The STEM academy features two sites: a standalone middle school and high school co-located at Washington State University, in Vancouver.

In the middle school, the library consists of a table with several book kiosks in a hallway. And at the high school, teacher librarian Katie Nedved works out of a corner of what is primarily the lunchroom. With this arrangement, students can access resources during leisure time or, when the cafeteria is empty, there is ample space for students to work in small groups. As each student owns his or her own laptop, a full-scale library space isn’t needed. iTech offers

just 800 print books, which are mostly print counterparts to the digital content the district offers.

For Nedved – a librarian without a library – it is natural to view her role non-traditionally: mentoring students one-on-one, teaching digital citizenship, and helping both teachers and students curate the vast array of digital resources available online.

The year iTech opened without a teacher librarian, logs showed that students accessed the library’s digital resources and databases only 400 times. In Nedved’s first year, after showing students how much information was available to them, they logged on more than 7,200 times before springtime.

Helping navigate the noise

With student research moving online and VPS progressing through its weLearn 1:1 initiative, school librarians have also emerged as key advocates for digital citizenship.

Like many districts, Vancouver employs policies to meet district, state and federal guidelines, and uses filters that apply to school and home technology use. Currently students cannot access Facebook and YouTube on school devices, nor play games or download music. However, filters and policies only go so far, so to prepare students for college, careers, and life beyond high school, digital citizenship is an explicit component of VPS’ flexible learning environments. Teacher librarians have completed a gap analysis to identify resources, develop a scope and sequence, and recommend policies and principles to the district. In addition to a focus on cyberbullying, students learn about online safety, digital identity, and data security.

A new outlook for libraries

Ray said it has taken nearly a decade for teacher librarians to get to where they are now in Vancouver. ‘My strategy has been advocacy based on results rather than on some platonic form of what the library should be’, he said. ‘It’s not waving a flag for school libraries. It’s about how they support student learning.’

Overall, Vancouver is like other districts in that it sees technology as an opportunity to empower learning for all students and overcome some chronic barriers to success. Given the infancy of Vancouver’s instructional and technology initiatives, it is too early to say whether the iPads and laptops are meeting these goals, or what the results will look like when both students and teachers have years of experience with them in the classroom.

Webb thinks it will take three or four years for technology to transform the classroom, but he sees early indicators that things are moving in the right direction. Student engagement is up, and absenteeism and disciplinary problems are down. In a city of both wealth and poverty, Webb believes these digital learning tools ‘have the potential to be the great equaliser in public education.’

Vancouver Public Schools is counting on teacher librarians to help make that happen.

Digital Promise staff



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To view the original article, please visit <http://www.digitalpromise.org/blog/entry/teacher-librarians-chart-a-new-course-in-vancouver-public-schools>.



Marianne Grasso
Teacher Librarian
Bonnyrigg Public School
Bonnyrigg NSW

Marianne is the Teacher Librarian at Bonnyrigg Public School in NSW. She is the treasurer of the CBCA Sydney West Sub-branch and a committee member of the PMBW Teacher Librarianship Professional Learning Group. Marianne's areas of interest include incorporating multicultural literature into the curriculum, guided inquiry, and e-learning. She is a strong advocate for the teacher librarianship profession and is working closely with the staff at Fairfield City Open Libraries on joint initiatives.

The importance of multicultural literature

Australian primary schools are more culturally diverse now than ever before. By including multicultural literature in the school library fiction collection, teacher librarians ensure they provide their students with texts that represent the culturally diverse classrooms and home environments in this country, and those across the globe. With recent global events, it has become increasingly important that students do not become ethnocentric. Exposure to a variety of multicultural literature can assist in breaking down cultural barriers.

What value does multicultural literature add to the school library fiction collection?

Multicultural literature serves as a powerful tool in enabling students to gain a better understanding of both their own culture and the cultures of others. Through this deeper knowledge, relationships can be strengthened, bridging the gap between students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Hseu & Hetzel, 2000). As students of the 21st century are global participants, it is important that they possess cultural sensitivity. Through extensive research, Norton (2009) has discovered that when students can relate global events to the themes, conflicts and characterisations found in multicultural literature, it helps them to better understand current world issues. Students therefore develop greater cognitive skills as they learn to engage with and critically evaluate the texts that they read.

Suzanne Evans (2010) conducted research on critical literacy using a range of multicultural picture books. Her aim was to determine whether student perspectives on diversity and the acceptance of others altered once they were exposed to multicultural texts. Evans concluded that exposure to multicultural literature increased

students' awareness of the various social practices, values and belief systems of other cultures. These themes are a major focus in the Australian Curriculum, with a general capability strand dedicated to intercultural understanding, which is incorporated throughout each of the key learning areas.

Promotes empathy and unity

Multicultural literature fosters positive self-esteem and prevents students from feeling isolated. It has the ability to nurture respect, empathy and acceptance among all students (Steiner et al, 2008). *Whoever You Are* (Fox, 1997) is an older publication that illustrates perfectly how multicultural literature can promote unity among different cultures. The story highlights the fact that all children feel the same emotions no matter where they live in the world, what language they speak, or how they look. It suggests that although people have many differences, there are common traits that unite us.

Another text that focuses on commonalities is *Mirror*, written by Jeannie Baker (2010). The design of this book is unique, as two storylines sit side by side and are to be read simultaneously. This picture book is about the day in the life of two boys: one who lives in Australia, and the other in Morocco. It eloquently reveals the external differences and inner similarities that define their lives. This book teaches children that they should not be fearful of those who may seem different to them, as their daily lives and routines may be very much the same.

Promotes cross-cultural friendship

Multicultural literature promotes the interaction of children across differing ethnic backgrounds (Steiner et al., 2008). Stories portraying cultural diversity can foster the belief that race is not a barrier, but rather a contribution to the beauty

of our multicultural world. This ideal is portrayed in Kobald's *My Two Blankets* (2014). A young girl named Cartwheel relocates to a westernised country to escape the war that is occurring in her homeland. She feels lost and lonely until she meets a young girl in the park. Over time their friendship develops and the young girl helps Cartwheel to understand her new world.

This theme is mirrored in *Just One Wish*, a lovely story by Sally Rippin (2009) about overcoming diversity. Penny, a new arrival to Australia, initially struggles with the English language and feels alienated until she befriends her hearing-impaired art teacher, Mr Whitehorse.

Helps students look critically at the world

Multicultural literature can help students develop global awareness by introducing them to current cultural issues. When students vicariously experience the feelings and emotions of others through literature, they are encouraged to look critically at the world and gain a greater understanding of the global community (Monobe & Son, 2014).

Texts such as *Ziba Came on a Boat* (Lofthouse, 2007), *The Little Refugee* (Do & Do, 2011) and *Mahtab's Story* (Gleeson, 2008) are representative of actual events. The main character in each story is a refugee who immigrates to Australia with their family via an old, overcrowded fishing boat. These books reveal the hardships that refugees often experience when seeking a place of safety. They allow students to reflect upon and critically analyse the issue of asylum seekers and the idea of a fairer community.

John Marsden portrays the above issues in a unique and thought-provoking manner in his book *Home and Away* (2008). This compelling story is about





a typical Australian family who must flee their country when it is ravaged by war. This story presents a complete role reversal, as it is Australians who are being displaced. This text forces students to think critically and consider global issues from a different perspective.

Encourages identity formation

Multicultural literature can also assist students with their identity formation (Hseu & Hetzel, 2000). Identity formation is important in the social development of all children, as it gives them a sense of belonging and acceptance in society. Inclusion of multicultural literature in library collections confirm that the beliefs and experiences of minority students are valued (Steiner, 1998). When students see themselves reflected in the pages of literature, they are more likely to engage with a text. Smith's (1995) case study confirms this, revealing that African-American students prefer to read texts they can relate to culturally, increasing their interest in reading. Familiar concepts in multicultural literature help to build security, familiarity, and confidence, which can lead to an improvement in student learning (Agosto, 2007).

What is the role of the teacher librarian?

There are important characteristics that teacher librarians should consider when selecting multicultural literature to include in their school library fiction collection. Firstly, cultural contexts should be accurately depicted in the books by the presentation of correct and current information. It is important that teacher librarians find texts that portray the life of unique individuals and avoid stories that reinforce stereotypes. The dialogue in the book should also be considered, as it should accurately represent culturally-specific

oral traditions (Landt, 2006). Teacher librarians should also consider the power play within texts to ensure subservient roles between cultural groups are not illustrated.

It is important to ensure that multicultural literature is not isolated, but incorporated in library activities and throughout the library program. ASLA & ALIA (2004) suggest that an effective teacher librarian provides professional development opportunities for other teaching staff. By working together to organise units that include culturally-diverse literature, teacher librarians and classroom teachers ensure that multicultural themes are woven throughout the curriculum. Once multicultural literature is seen as an integral component of the curriculum, libraries and classrooms can become safe arenas for open discussions on culturally sensitive topics (Dietrich & Ralph, 1995).

Online digital resources

There are numerous online resources that can be used to engage students and extend their literary experiences. *The International Children's Digital Library* (<http://en.childrenslibrary.org/>) provides free access to quality digital multicultural and multilingual texts from around the world. This resource offers a great extension to the school library fiction collection, especially for bilingual students.

And then I was a refugee... (<http://www.redcross.org.au/mobile.aspx/>) is an interactive tool that explores real-life scenarios faced by refugees. The aim of this application is for students to discover the refugee experience, demonstrating the crisis experienced by millions of people every year. Along their journey, students must make critical choices and learn about the results of their actions.

Conclusion

Creating a culturally diverse library collection and instilling its use throughout the school curriculum helps to build a school community that is supportive, empathetic and accepting of others. Multicultural literature creates a sense of belonging, forging a connection between home and school environments, and across cultures. Multicultural literature serves many purposes, but its greatest accomplishment is its ability to bring people closer together, regardless of culture and ethnicity.

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Kay Oddone
Teacher librarian
PhD student

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.

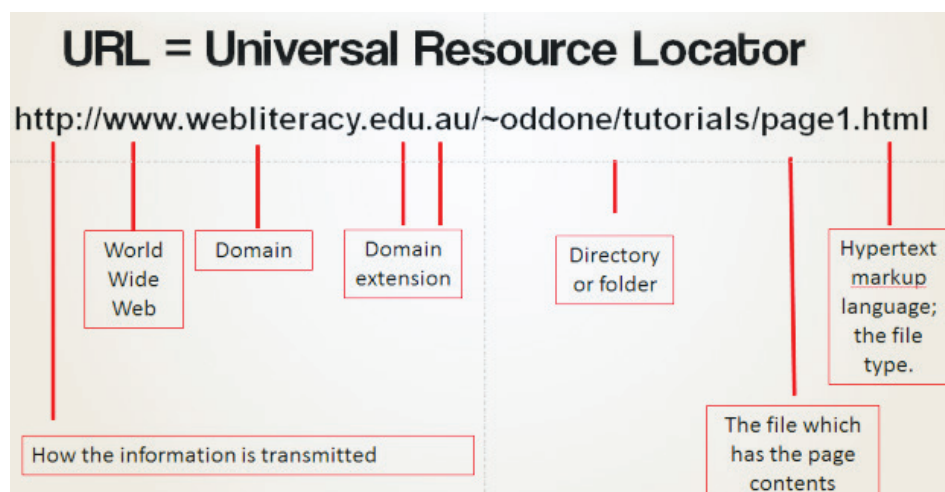
Information and critical literacy on the web

The democratisation of content creation is a wonderful thing. Thanks to thousands of content creation and distribution platforms available, including WordPress, Scribd, Weebly, Storify, and YouTube, millions of voices which might have never been heard now have a channel to communicate their message. Whereas content previously had to pass through extensive editorial processes prior to being published, there is no such requirement on the internet.

For students, the internet is the dominant medium, and the first place they go to for information. In a world of information overload, it is vital for students to be able to determine the validity and appropriateness of the information that they find.

For teachers, it is not only necessary to have these skills themselves, but also to be able to educate students in becoming informed, literate, self-directed learners. Mandy Lupton (2014) has found that inquiry skills and information literacy are embedded in the Australian Curriculum in the subject areas of Science, History, Geography, Economics and Business, Civics and Citizenship, and Digital Technologies; and in the general capabilities of Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT) and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). An effective researcher and critical thinker should be able to identify *quality* information, and know where to source it from.

Alan November, an international consultant known for his work in educational technology, presents a great strategy to be applied when you need to confirm the reliability of a source of information. He calls it the 'REAL' test. REAL stands for:



Breakdown of a standard URL

Read the URL

When researching or browsing the web, it is easy to follow one link after another, ending up somewhere completely different to where you started. Reading the URL is the best way to answer the question 'where am I?' It is a good idea to get in the habit of looking at the URL regularly to check the credibility of the website and its information. The diagram above provides a breakdown of a standard web address.

Most web addresses begin with the letters 'http', which stands for Hypertext Transfer Protocol – the protocol which allows two computers to communicate. If you see an 's' added (https), this indicates a secure protocol is being used. You are most likely to see the secure protocol being used on sites where personal information such as banking details are being communicated, like when shopping online.

The **domain** is the part of the URL which commonly identifies which company, agency or organisation may be either directly responsible for the information, or is providing the computer space

where the information is stored. The domain name may give clues as to whether the information can be trusted, but it is not the only part of the URL that is useful. The **domain extension** usually identifies the type of organisation that created or sponsored the resource. For example, **.com** is used for company or commercial sites, **.edu** for educational sites, **.gov** for government sites, and **.net** for internet service providers or other types of networks.

If the domain extension is two letters, it identifies a country. For example, **.us** is used for the United States, **.uk** for the United Kingdom, **.mx** for Mexico, and **.ca** for Canada. This can be useful if you are researching country-specific information. I often add **site:.au** to my searches if I am only looking for Australian results.

Information after the main web address is the file path, which shows where the page you are looking at is stored. The file path in the URL breakdown image provided is **/~oddone/tutorials/page1**. While the domain name is useful to identify the validity of a website, the file path is also important to look at.



If the file path has a personal name, a tilde (~), a percentage sign, or the words 'user', 'people' or 'members', it suggests you are on a personal site. This is common on educational websites, in which case the information does not have the same quality assurance as the institution's official webpage.

Examine the site's content and history

The currency of a webpage can often be determined by the date at the base of the page. However, this only tells you when the page was copyrighted or last published. How can you see if the information is regularly updated, or if the website has changed over time? We can chart the progress or history of a website thanks to the Internet Archive Wayback Machine (<https://web.archive.org/>).

The Wayback Machine allows you to browse through 450 billion webpages archived from 1996 to now. To use this site, enter the URL that you would like to research, click the 'Browse history' button, and if the search is successful, select from the archived dates available. This gives you an idea of how the site has developed over time, whether changes have been made, and how regularly the information is updated.

Ask about the publisher or the author

Using a domain lookup service such as easywhois (<https://www.easywhois.com>) can often provide details about who owns a website or who has published its material.

Alan November uses martinlutherking.org as an example as it is one that students could easily use: it appears high in search results and looks appealing to students. Using easywhois.com to find the owner of the site reveals it is hosted by the server stormfront.org. If you search 'stormfront', you will find that it is a white supremacist organisation. If you are looking at information which could be controversial or open to bias, or if you would like to know more about a website, this can be a handy tool to use.

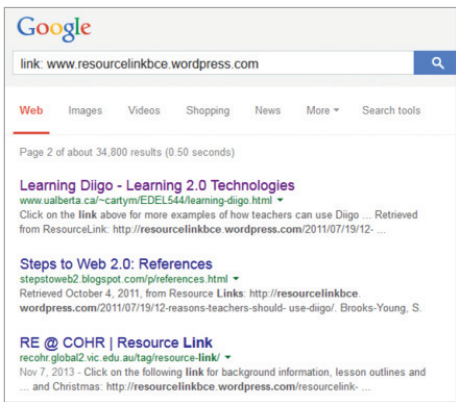
Look at the links

Students usually search using only one search engine. Many students also believe that the top hits are the most

important, which is not always the case. Many businesses specialise in Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), which is all about improving the visibility of a webpage in search results in order to receive more website visitors. The process of getting a website to appear high in the listings returned by a search is based on a complex series of strategies, including how the website has been built, and what keywords are embedded in the website's metadata.

A search engine looks at a search query and tries to return relevant content. When several pages have similar titles or content, it is the links to the page that make the difference. Wikipedia, for example, usually appears at the top of a search because it is popular, and also because there are so many sites – internal and external – that link to each Wikipedia page.

You can find out what websites link to the webpage you are evaluating by typing the word *link*: into the search bar, directly followed by the URL. It will then return a list of webpages that link to that site. Often, the more links the website has to it, the higher it appears in search results.



Screenshot of Google search to see what external websites link to a page

This is a good way to check a website's credibility: for example, if an educational institution considers a website valuable enough to share with their readers, it is more likely that the content is reliable. The links to a site will allow students to build a map of related commentary: who uses this site and considers it important enough to share?

Online resources to support information literacy

Verification Handbook

The Verification Handbook (<http://verificationhandbook.com/>) is an interesting read that offers a range of tools and strategies that journalists use to verify information, using real case studies as examples. Of course, students who are researching will not necessarily go to the same lengths that journalists do to identify the veracity of information they find online, but it is useful to be aware of strategies that are easy to apply if they are not sure of the accuracy of information.

Tin Eye

A useful tool for establishing the provenance of images is the Tin Eye reverse image search tool (<https://www.tineye.com/>). Tin Eye begins with an image, and then searches back to attempt to establish where the image came from, how it is being used, if modified versions of the image exist, or if there is a higher resolution version available. This is particularly useful if you suspect that an image has been doctored. You can install the Tin Eye plugin to your browser, or you can use the feature directly from the website.

To access more resources to support information literacy, head to <https://www.pinterest.com/kayo287/critical-literacy-with-online-resources/>.

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Sandra Watkins
Diploma of Teaching
(Primary)
Master of Educational Studies

During her 40 year career as a Queensland primary teacher, administrator, home school teacher and tutor, Sandra has been passionate about promoting involvement and engagement between content and learners. She wants children to feel at home with history, and finds a good social history story to be the catalyst, especially for reluctant readers. Her website is a storehouse of information to make teachers' jobs easier and more interesting (<https://sandrawatkins.wordpress.com/useful/>).

The value of social history

Who is your hero?

Mine is Andy Thomas, an Australian astronaut. How did a boy from Adelaide talk his way into the US Space Program? I would have to say that I am less interested in where or when he did his training, or what degrees he has, as to how he managed to teach himself enough Russian in order to work alongside cosmonauts on the Mir space station. These are not your everyday 'order a coffee' or 'catch a bus' language skills, but technical, scientific and mathematical language for 130 days in space.

If you ask children who their heroes are, their eyes will often swivel to the popular children for their choice of sports stars. What about the unlikely heroes such as the farm boy who went to war for his country, or the family of shopkeepers who served the Chinese at a goldfield against public opinion? I once read about a postman who climbed tortuous Mt Hotham in snow, delivered mail across the top, then went down to Dargo, several times a week – a return journey of about 97km on foot!

This is social history. It has a significant place and long-lasting value in our history curriculum.

As a Year 7 student in Queensland in 1968, I was required to memorise all of the towns along the Sunshine Route and the other rail lines in the state. I had never been on a train, nor had I visited or even seen pictures of these places. Although the teaching and learning of history (formerly social studies, then SOSE) has developed magnificently with the inquiry approach, we still learn the facts of the great and the mighty when the *why* of the small and unremarkable is where our lives begin and end.

History is the compendium of facts and concepts of times past, whereas social history is lived in our everyday lives by thousands of family researchers, weekend railway enthusiasts, and medieval re-enactors. Social history reflects who we are and what is

important to us. Matthew Flinders had a cat called Trim who sailed with him, and Tom Petrie learnt more about the local Turrbal people by playing with them as a child in Brisbane in the 1840s than most anthropologists ever did by asking questions. It is about the ordinary people, or finding the human face of the people who achieve big things.

Historians debate their views of the big questions, leaving authors to fill in the gaps for children with quality historical fiction such as *Playing Beattie Bow* (Ruth Park) and *The Rat Catcher's Daughter* (Pamela Rushby). This is a strong and valuable way to understand history, although children need to learn how to differentiate between historical fiction based on accurate research, and that which is based on fantasy.

The books I write are about the sideline stories of the big events, such as the outbreak of the plague in Brisbane: telling children about the ordinary townspeople who lived and died at the time, how the plague was dealt with (plenty of rat-catching dogs), as well as the men and fox terriers who still maintain pest management in the city today. There is a clear link between the past and the present with reference to what people were thinking.

Lesson plan: How to teach social history

Social history in the community

Ask the children to tell you the oldest person, object, or structure they know from their area. Choose one and explain that you are going to model some social history research. Together, you are on the trail of discovering your own area's history.

The problem with this kind of research is usually a lack of resources, but some material is archived by local councils either in their workplaces or sent to their state archives, which are good places to check first. These sources, along with a list of museums that have good social

history collections are catalogued on my webpage (<https://sandrawatkins.wordpress.com/social-history/>).

Trove (<http://trove.nla.gov.au/>) is also a good resource with a huge collection of scanned newspapers and magazines that provides access to primary sources. Sometimes the advertisements reveal as much as the articles themselves.

Ask the class to brainstorm search words for your research item. Begin your research using a smart board and nominating a reliable student to operate the laptop, leaving you free for questioning and crowd control. The larger screen gives everyone a good view. Of course, no good lawyer or teacher asks a question to which they don't already know several answers, so it helps to do some preliminary research yourself.

Follow research threads as a whole class with children involved in note-taking on sticky notes (one fact per sheet), depending on their abilities. For example, a couple of children could catalogue what interested them; a second group could be looking for questions to ask about what came up; a third group could be making notes on what the information made them think of; and a fourth group could record how information on a site relates to the project. Print out the sites you found useful.

For the following lesson, gather the sticky notes onto a large sheet of paper as a whole group. This will become the mind map for your research. As a new sticky note is read out, it goes up on the board grouped with others like it. Groups can be rearranged according to new information. Have a child who reads well talk through the grouped items so the whole class can decide if there is something missing or a point of interest to follow. This process enhances a child's schema by relating a new topic to their real world. For example, linking the date that a bridge was built with the year the school was built, or linking the



age of an object as something a child's grandmother would have used, helps to make it real. Add photos, printouts and timelines from other studies to this research as a link. Social history is meant to be real and tangible.

Brainstorm a method of presentation: it might be a series of photos with some poetry, a recordable interview for the school's webpage, a booklet for the local council's archives, or a model to demonstrate to a younger class. Try to include multiple intelligences. Finish this one yourself at home, and then do a presentation as child would; remember that you are modelling.

Personal social history

Show the students a collection of things your family values: a photo of your grandmother, a pen and inkwell, a toy train, an old map, a photo of your pop on his horse on the way to school, or an old wedding dress. Ask the children to have a quiet two-minute think and make a note or two about an idea they have

for a similar presentation, based on their own family. Glue it into their home book so they can check with their families over the weekend. Anything valuable might have to be photographed, although a big lockable box lined with some soft velvet might add to the drama and historical value. My class once received a lockable trunk of resources from the Queensland Museum which seemed like a pirate's treasure box.

Go through the whole process again as you modelled, but this time on individual laptops or home question sheets. Let the children make their notes, sort out a mind map, and choose a presentation style themselves. Ensure that their presentations are short and at the right depth for all levels of achievement. This is their *personal* social history.

Self-directed research

The third step is to let them choose a person, item or structure from the district (brainstorm or use a prepared list) to work on as individuals, pairs, or small

groups. This might be a bridge, signpost, elder, shop, song, or house. Check the local council or state archive records beforehand so you know that there is a resource available for each research project; a teacher aide, parent or community member could help you with this. Alternatively, you can enlist the help of locals through the school newsletter or community paper. The object is to find a remarkable story from the past.

I was checking out a garage sale years ago and found a heavy collection of beautiful silver cutlery wrapped in a brown paper bag, sitting in a plastic dish drainer.

'What do you want for this?' I asked.
'Oh... 20 bucks,' replied the seller. 'It was only Grandma's'.

Poor Grandma – forgotten already! I am sure the cutlery had its own story to tell.

..... <<

Exciting non-fiction for reluctant readers



Reader ages 5-7




Reader ages 9+



Reader ages 7-9



sandrawatkins.wordpress.com



Les Kneebone
Metadata Services Manager
Education Services Australia

Architecture of genre

If you have participated in any kind of professional learning event in the last couple of years, there is a good chance you would have encountered the 'genre' presentation. Genre is a hot topic in school libraries, and who doesn't like to hear the good news stories we often hear in these presentations? Children are reading because they want to, and it is now easier to find books they like

in the library. Out-dated non-fiction collections are being weeded as library spaces are transformed into fiction-friendly environments replete with room to browse, display-focused shelving, and innovative furniture.

I attended the SLANZA conference in Christchurch in September, wanting to bring sobriety and a serious tone to the

discussion. Genre is not just a buzzword; curriculum actually requires students to recognise and distinguish the language features and conventions within genres. Curriculum even asks students to explore genre reading preferences in preparation for a lifetime of reading.

But the sobriety was not all mine. There was another presentation by Linley

» Architecture of genre (cont.)

Earnshaw that provided an excellent case study about implementing genre at a school in Christchurch, New Zealand. Earnshaw's paper focused on the practical considerations and associated risks involved with genre projects. It was a well-thought-out and cautionary tale that also managed to foreground the warrant for the genre approach.

My cautionary tale was a little more theoretical, in part driven by my own professional learning in the area of enterprise architecture. In a nutshell, deciding to organise your fiction collection by genre will be a significant business impact. Like any business decision, changing the fundamental principle by which you organise your collection will present a risk, although I would suggest that organising fiction by genre should at least be considered. If you are considering a new genre solution, it is worth approaching the task with a framework. I am calling it an architecture framework because libraries, like other enterprises where information and technology are core offerings, face similar challenges.

Architecture frameworks assume that any business can be thought of as comprising four or five conceptual layers, depending on the flavour of your architecture model. A fairly typical stack of layers looks like this:

- Business
- Data
- Applications
- Technology

Your library already contains all of these layers. Firstly, your library is a **business**. It provides services to stakeholders: students, teachers and parents. You know these stakeholders and what they want because you are in constant communication with them: they provide feedback, you may ask them to participate in surveys, and, of course, they drive circulation.

But how do you know what is circulating? And how do *they* know what is available? Are stakeholders getting the services that they need? You can analyse these problems, and decide what to do about them, if you have **data**. This is where your specialties lie: librarians are data specialists. Your library represents

a thoughtfully, thoroughly described and classified collection of resources. Catalogue records help stakeholders access resources, and they assist librarians and library managers to identify what is being used and what needs to be acquired – and removed.

Your data is largely inaccessible without **applications** that store and manage the data, and hopefully present it as meaningful information for you and your stakeholders. 'Application' is often used synonymously with 'software', and of course software is absolutely necessary in libraries as an interface for staff and users. But a bookshelf is an application too. Think of a shelf as an interface between your stakeholder and the data elements within a resource. Shelves allow classification according to some convention, whether it is alphabetically, by subject, or by fiction genre. Shelves that support cover displays allow significant access points (title, author, cover image) to be readily available to stakeholders.

Finally, there is a **technology** layer. In the context of library management systems, the technology might be the server architecture, operating system, or the programming languages used to write the application software. For shelving, that would include things like materials and manufacturing processes.

I recommend that genre projects are approached with this framework in mind, but I am not going to talk about the full stack here – the technology layer is important, but out of reach for many professionals. But there is a risk in jumping in at the application level.

Innovative shelving presents itself as a seductive solution for better access to resources and fiction collections. Similarly, library system software is always improving and has the capacity to present and foreground fiction collections to users in new faceted ways.

But are these solutions in search of a requirement? Perhaps. We can't really know what stakeholders require without data. A few questions to ask when considering implementing genre classification in your library include:

- How is genre encoded in your collection data? Is there any consistency?

- Are controlled vocabularies used? Are they flexible enough to accommodate local variations or emerging trends? And what are those trends?
- Do we know what genres our users expect, can identify with, or understand?
- What about collection management – do we need a common language with which to report gaps and acquisition priorities?

Planning genre in your library should be done with business requirements at the front of your mind. Firstly, work out what is going to accommodate your library users' needs and make your library easier to run. The second step considers what data is available to make the necessary business decisions to provide improved services. In library collections, this includes bibliographic and authority data, but other sources could aid decision making. Once you have decided that you have a good fit between your business and data architecture, you may have the right foundations to specify and invest in new or upgraded applications like software and shelving.

SCIS needs to follow this pattern too. SCIS does a lot of work in authorities management so that a common language around fiction genres can be referenced. SCIS genre terms can be used 'as is', or as the basis of a mapping to locally preferred approaches to organising, filtering or foregrounding fiction works. The SCIS standards committee is actively engaged in schools, education agencies, and school library associations with a view to observing trends in fiction cataloguing, storage and retrieval. SCIS genre headings have been informed by many years of involvement within the industry and by collaboration with other industry stalwarts such as Syba Signs. For the same reason, they are not set in stone. As preferences for genre access evolve, SCIS will be providing solutions in the data layer while watching developments in schools.

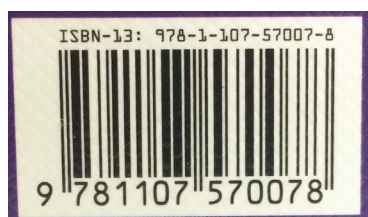


Julie Styles
Cataloguer, SCIS
Education Services Australia

Demystifying barcodes

As cataloguers, we understand that it can sometimes be difficult to match the exact resource you have in your hand to one of the 1.4 million records available in the SCIS catalogue. This article will look at the identifying numbers many resources are assigned, what they mean, and how each number can be located in SCISWeb and the SCIS OPAC to find the record you need.

International Standard Book Number



Many of you will be familiar with International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs). An ISBN is assigned to each edition of a book, excluding re-prints. ISBNs are purchased by publishers from the ISBN registration agency, which is often attached to the national library in each respective country. ISBNs were designed to provide unique book numbers, and as such, are predominantly created for printed books. However, manufacturers have also been known to assign them to e-books, DVDs, kits, and games.

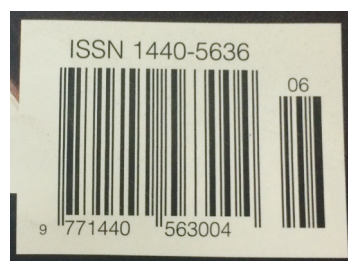
ISBNs were first introduced in 1970 and were initially ten digit numbers. Traditionally, ISBNs were easily identified by their country of publication, due to the number they began with: 0 or 1 for English language resources; 2 for French; 3 for German; 4 for Japanese; 5 for Russian; and 7 for Chinese resources. However, all ISBNs assigned from 2007 onwards have 13 digits and begin with the numbers '978'.

An ISBN is usually represented in barcode format on the back of a resource, but occasionally it can be found on the verso side of the title page with the publication and copyright details of the book. If you

are manually entering an ISBN into the 'Create orders' page in SCISWeb, please ensure that you enter it without any spaces or dashes.

It is important to note that while most books are assigned a unique ISBN, some publishers use the same ISBN for a number of books within a series. For this reason, we strongly recommend that you set your 'My Profile' basic preferences to 'Prompt me to choose from a list' under 'ISBN duplicates'. It has been our practice to include a note within a SCIS record if the ISBN used on a particular resource has been duplicated.

International Standard Serial Number



An International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) is an eight digit number used to identify a serial publication.

Unlike ISBNs, the same ISSN is used for each issue in a serial publication. The ISSN is particularly helpful to distinguish between serials that have the same name. This number can be searched in both the ISBN box in SCIS OPAC and the 'Create orders' box in SCISWeb.

International Standard Music Number

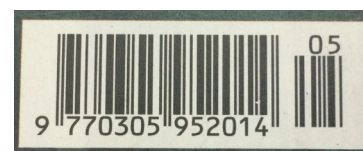


An International Standard Music Number (ISMN) is a 12 digit number for printed music. Please note that a publication

may be assigned both an ISBN and an ISMN.

This number can also be searched in both the ISBN box and the 'Create orders' box in SCISWeb.

International Article Number



International Article Numbers were originally known as European Article Numbers, and are still known by the abbreviation EAN. They have 13 digits, are presented in barcode format, and though they may look like an ISBN, are essentially a product identification number used by retailers. EANs are often found on DVDs, games, and kits. It is important to note that EANs serve a different function than ISBNs, however, the EAN can be searched as an ISBN in OPAC and entered in the 'Create orders' box in SCISWeb.

Universal Product Code



Similarly, the Universal Product Code (UPC) has 12 digits and is widely used for retail purposes in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. The UPC is often found on games and kits.

It has become the practice of SCIS cataloguers to include EAN and UPC numbers within a catalogue record. It is very important to note that when using the SCIS OPAC, you can only search by these numbers with the search option 'Anywhere' using the Basic search, or 'Keyword Anywhere' using the Advanced search functions. However, they can be



» Demystifying Barcodes (cont.)

used to retrieve records in the 'Create orders' box in SCISWeb.

DVDs and games often include publisher stock numbers on the spine, disc, or box that are also used as identifiers within SCIS catalogue records. For example, the SCIS record 1686278 for *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (DVD) includes the number 57580SDO that is printed on the DVD case. Non-barcode information is

usually added to a record exactly as it appears on the resource, meaning any spaces or dashes are included. However, if your OPAC search is unsuccessful when using the spaces and dashes, it is worth searching again without them. You can only locate this number in a record by searching 'Anywhere' in the Basic search or 'Keyword Anywhere' in the Advanced search of SCIS OPAC. Unlike

the barcode numbers already discussed, it cannot be used in the 'Create orders' box of SCISWeb to retrieve the record for download.

As different barcodes and identifying numbers serve unique functions, it is important to keep in mind the differences between them and how they can be used to both locate and describe resources.



Nicole Richardson
Communications & Projects Coordinator, SCIS
Education Services Australia

Supporting Australian book creators

We often celebrate libraries for providing free access to information, but rarely think about what this means for the authors, illustrators, editors, and publishers responsible for the books currently sitting on library shelves.

If we are interested in reading a particular book, whether for leisure or for information needs, we are able to head to the library to see if it is available. For every book accessed via educational and public libraries rather than a bookshop, the chances of book creators and publishers receiving well-deserved income are lowered.

Every year, the Department of Communications and the Arts administers the Educational Lending Right (ELR) survey, an initiative of the Australian Government to make payments to eligible creators and publishers on the basis that income is lost from the availability of their books in public and educational lending libraries.

The Schools Catalogue Information Service (SCIS), on behalf of the department, asks 600 schools across the country each year to retrieve a book count of particular titles that are held in school libraries. A minimum of 300 schools are needed to participate in the

survey. The data collected is then used to generate payment for eligible book creators and publishers, encouraging the growth and development of Australia's writing and publishing industry.


As we wrap up the end of ELR for another year, it is encouraging to see so many schools participate in this survey and recognise the great benefit it provides to the wider industry. Schools selected have helped us to collect the data by running a quick survey in their library management system to gather their book counts, or by running a backup of their library management system so that the relevant data can be extracted.

We are very grateful for the contribution of over 330 schools in this year's survey, plus the kind support of several library vendors, education departments and Catholic Education Offices. We encourage schools invited to participate in future ELR surveys to get involved and to help support the writing and publishing industry.

So often we celebrate the role of the library in providing free access to information; the Educational Lending Right allows us to also celebrate the role of the great minds behind each book.

What a great way to say 'thank you – your books are making a difference'.

**A message from
Simmone Howell**



At a very basic level, an ELR payment always feels like a surprise gift – I never know exactly when it will come or how much it will be, but I'm always grateful for it.

Writing is such a financially unstable profession, so every little bit helps. Often an ELR payment is the difference between paying an electricity bill and twitching in darkness – and I'm not being metaphorical. On a wider cultural level it gives me an indication that my books are being read; books that are no longer 'fresh' are still borrowable, and that in itself is an even greater gift. It is so rewarding to visit a school, see your books in the library, and know that even if students aren't rolling in pocket money, they can still access your work. The ELR initiative is vital to sustaining Australian literature and culture.



Dr Ben Chadwick
Manager, SCIS
Education Services Australia

SCIS is more

'I have been here all the time,' said he, 'but you have just made me visible.'

'Aslan!' said Lucy almost a little reproachfully. 'Don't make fun of me. As if anything I could do would make you visible!'

'It did,' said Aslan. 'Do you think I wouldn't obey my own rules?'

C.S. Lewis, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*

However you choose to interpret this passage, one thing is clear to me: C.S. Lewis is referring to the importance of cataloguing rules. It is through the consistent application of rules that SCIS is able to make some amazing properties of educational resources visible in your catalogue. Ultimately, that means helping your students to experience success and develop efficacy in searching for and finding quality resources.

There are a few developments in SCIS cataloguing in 2016 we are quite excited about – a few ‘magical golden lions’ we are looking forward to making visible. I’d like to focus on a recent initiative arising from 2015: the successful collaboration between Education Services Australia (ESA) and the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to register five Australian Curriculum codes with the Library of Congress (LOC). This creates some interesting potential for our subscribers who use the Australian Curriculum.



The 658 ‘Curriculum Objective’ field in MARC catalogue records ‘denotes the curriculum or course-of-study objectives applicable to the content of the described materials’¹. Traditionally, subject headings group resources by their ‘aboutness’, but this field allows

records to be searched for and grouped according to educational outcomes. You can imagine how appealing such content packages could be to your staff. This is a great way to promote your service as the information hub of the school.

However, the 658 field requires a registered ‘source code’ specifying the curriculum from which the objective originates. As of November 2015, one third of the fifteen Curriculum Source Codes registered by the LOC are now from the Australian Curriculum². They are five of only six registered codes that are hyperlinked back to their source, and the only codes on the page that are published as machine readable linked data. Four of the codes are from the Australian Education Vocabularies: Australian School Level (denoting the year level to which a resource may be relevant), Australian Curriculum Framework (denoting the broad Learning Area, Strand, or Subject), Australian Cross-curriculum Priority, and Australian General Capability. These vocabularies are owned by ACARA but hosted and managed by ESA. The fifth is from the Australian Curriculum itself, and denotes the specific Content Description to which a resource may be relevant.



Like Lucy, you can work the magic to make ‘The Australian Curriculum’ the magical lion visible in your catalogue. The 658 field can be used in records in your own catalogue to specify that ‘this record is relevant to that curriculum outcome’. The idea is that users will be able to find and group relevant resources by searching on any of the text or codes placed in that field.

Schools such as Mentone Girl’s Grammar have started trialling this kind of curriculum tagging already, and SCIS

looks forward to working with schools that want to get on board. If you are interested in beginning to collect this kind of data in your catalogue, let us know. Fill in the brief survey at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/scis_feb2016 to register your interest with SCIS and help us understand how we can best support you.

We’ll have more to say about this and other developments in SCIS. Keep an eye on our blog (<http://scis.edublogs.org/>) and subsequent issues of *Connections*, or catch up with us in person. I will be speaking at VALA in Melbourne in February 2016, and you may also catch us at EduTech in Brisbane in May, WASLA in Perth in June, and ALIA in Adelaide in August.

SCIS will be running a series of training webinars on three Tuesdays from 16 February 2016. We’ll also be running workshops in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch in March, Melbourne in May, and Perth and Brisbane in June. See our professional learning page for more details (http://www2.curriculum.edu.au/scis/professional_learning.html).

I’d like to thank Nicole Richardson for this great issue of *Connections*. I hope you enjoy it.

We look forward to being in touch with you throughout 2016. Have a happy and safe year.

Image credits:
[Australian Curriculum and Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority \(ACARA\) logos](#). © ACARA. Used with permission.

1 <http://www.loc.gov/marc/bibliographic/bd658.html>

2 <https://www.loc.gov/standards/sourcelist/curriculum-objective.html>



Website and app reviews

25 awesome apps for teachers, recommended by teachers

<http://blog.ed.ted.com/2015/09/19/25-awesome-apps-for-teachers-recommended-by-teachers/>

Educators who are familiar with the inspired ideas presented by TED will be delighted with the content of this TED-Ed blog, which showcases 25 pertinent apps relevant to various stages of education. Teacher librarians are recommended to investigate this indispensable resource and share it with other teaching staff.

SCIS no. 1744220

ABC veggie guide

<https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/abc-vegie-guide/id600755873?mt=8>

All members of the school community will find this absorbing guide useful. Content includes recommendations for planting vegetables in local climate zones; information about growing seasons, harvesting times and keeping crops healthy; and other assorted facts.

SCIS no. 1744515

Best book apps for kids

<https://www.commonsemmedia.org/lists/best-book-apps-for-kids#>

This comprehensive website lists exemplary book apps for infants and students in pre-school, primary, and secondary school. Examples include e-books, interactive books, and graphic novels. Details and device compatibility are listed for each app; however, as this is a US website, teachers are recommended to check individual apps to see if they are available locally.

SCIS no. 1744289

Book list

<https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/book-list-bookshelf-manager/id476621639?mt=8>

Applicable to anyone who regularly lends



Nigel Paull

Teacher librarian
South Grafton Public School
npaull@telstra.com

out their own books, this app allows you to keep track of your personal library. Similar to library software, books are scanned into your device, creating a catalogue record that allows you to monitor who has borrowed your prized books. Other features include art covers and the 'shake to select' random book selector.

SCIS no. 1744510

The Conversation

<http://theconversation.com/au>

The Conversation is a free independent source of news and views. Although emanating from the academic and research community, it is publically available, and promises 'academic rigour' with 'journalistic flair'.

SCIS no. 1593557

Desert river sea

<http://desertriversea.com.au>

The Art Gallery of Western Australia (AGWA) initiated this project to celebrate the range of visual traditions from the Indigenous communities of the Kimberley region in WA. The portal features information about artists and their works, art centres in the region, the Visual Arts Leadership Program, and the AGWA.

SCIS no. 1744315

DK findout

<http://www.dkfindout.com/uk/>

Publisher Dorling Kindersley (DK) has developed a free, online interactive encyclopaedia for primary school students. This engaging resource allows students to select from a variety of vetted categories to explore the topic of their choice. There are also sections for both parents and teachers.

SCIS no. 1729733

eSafety issues

<https://esafety.gov.au/esafety-information/esafety-issues>

This website, developed by the Office of the Children's Safety Commissioner, deals with many aspects of eSafety including cyberbullying, online gambling, sexting, inappropriate or illegal content, and trolling. The site offers background

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.

information and a variety of content for students, schools, and parents.

SCIS no. 1744317

Get started with LEGO robotics!

<http://www.legoengineering.com/get-started/>

Schools wishing to develop a robotics program will find this website useful, as it includes detailed information about the various LEGO robotics kits that are available. The website offers product support, news, blog posts, and tips to manage a robotics program at both school and classroom levels.

SCIS no. 1744330

Guggenheim – collection online

<http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/collections/collection-online>

The Guggenheim database allows users to view over 1,600 artworks from more than 575 artists, with relevant information about the individual artists and their works. Artworks are searchable by artist, dates, medium, movements, and venues.

SCIS no. 1744448

QR codes in the classroom

<http://www.schrockguide.net/qr-codes-in-the-classroom.html>

Kathy Schrock has assembled a comprehensive guide to using Quick Response (QR) codes in the classroom. Her website includes links to QR code readers and QR code generators, informative video clips, and resources that offer tips on how to use them in the classroom for a multitude of applications.

SCIS no. 1744455

Educational video sites

http://www.refseek.com/directory/educational_videos.html

Refseek have compiled a list of online video providers for primary and secondary teachers searching for educational video resources. Most of the websites listed are free and do not require registration.

SCIS no. 1744464

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Daniel Hughes
Teaching and Learning Advisor
Education Services Australia

Filters in Scootle

In the last edition of *Connections*, we investigated learning paths and how they work. At the end of the article I promised to explore collaborative activities and filters in this edition; however, as Scootle’s collaborative activities will soon be revamped, this article will instead focus on Scootle’s search filters.

Why filter?

Scootle users often tell us, ‘I know there are great resources in Scootle, but when I search for something I often end up with too many. I don’t have time to look through all of them to find the ones I want.’

Where are the filters?

Scootle has a number of filters. The ones you are most likely to use appear after

The image shows the 'Refine results by' sidebar in Scootle. It has four sections: 'Year level' with checkboxes for F-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, and 11-12; 'Resource type' with checkboxes for All types, Learning Object, Image, Audio, Video, Collection, Teacher resource, Assessment resource, Dataset, and Text; 'Learning area' with a dropdown menu set to 'All Learning Areas'; and an 'Apply filters' button at the bottom. Red arrows point to each of these four sections.

you have entered a search query. Let’s say you are looking for resources about *World War I* for Year 9 history. If you enter the search term *World War I*, you will be presented with 215 resources, some more relevant than others.

By default, Scootle includes results for all year levels. You then have the option to refine your search by de-selecting any unwanted year levels. You can also filter the search by ‘Resource

type’; or by clicking on the dropdown list under ‘Learning area’, you can narrow your search by subject. For my *World War I* search, I am going to filter out all year levels other than years 9–10, as well as removing audio files, teacher resources, assessment resources, data sets, and text resources from the search. I will also use the ‘Learning area’ option to search by History.

The image shows the top of a search results page for 'World War I'. It displays 'Free (100)' and 'Purchase (1)' buttons, followed by the text 'Your search for 'World War I' returned 100 results'. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: 'Listed under: Society > Social relations > Conflict (Human relations) >'. At the bottom, there are pagination links: '1', '2', '3', '4', '5', and 'Next'.

Now I am down to 101 resources.

Are there any other ways to filter searches?

The image shows a 'Sort:' dropdown menu with 'Relevance' selected. Below it is a breadcrumb trail: 't (Human relations) > War > World wars > World War I'.

Yes. On the right-hand side of the screen, there is a button called ‘Sort’. The default sort setting is ‘Relevance’. Using my search example, this means that the search algorithm will prioritise resources that feature the term *World War I* in their metadata. The more often the term appears in the metadata, the higher the resource will appear in the list of retrievals. Any resource with *World War I* in its title also gets preference in the search results.

Relevance is a great way to sort, as is sorting by ‘Popularity’. If you choose

to sort by popularity, the resources will appear based on a number of criteria:

- How often resources have been saved to learning paths;
- How resources have been rated;
- And how often resources have been viewed.

The only disadvantage in sorting by popularity is that relevance is no longer a priority. In my *World War I* example, when sorted by popularity, the third resource retrieved is about convict transportation to Van Diemen’s Land. It appears in this list because it is a popular resource and the term *World War I* is included in its metadata record, but it is not relevant to a search on *World War I*.

A useful tip

If you are using a search term that includes more than one word, such as *World War I*, it is helpful to place inverted commas before and after the term; for example, “*World War I*”. This is a common search convention that asks Scootle to look for resources that have an exact term in their metadata. Without the inverted commas, Scootle might search by each individual word, retrieving resources that match any of the words entered in the search field.

Filtering can be very rewarding in narrowing down search results, and I encourage you to give it a go.

Happy filtering.

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

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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 webinars

In Term 1 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 approximately 45 minutes.

An Introduction to SCIS (FREE)

Tuesday 16 February 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 23 February 2pm (AEST)

How you can turn a set of resources, whether they are 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 1 March 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.

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 assist to provide a more effective library service for school libraries. Participants will enhance their understanding of SCIS as a database of consistent catalogue records for educational resources, created to international standards.

Melbourne

Tuesday 3 May 12.30–3.30pm

Education Services Australia
Level 5, 440 Collins Street
Melbourne, VIC 3000

Brisbane

Wednesday 1 June 12.30–3.30pm

O'Shea Centre, 19 Lovedale Street
Wilston, QLD 4051

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