

U21 Information Services Group Newsletter March 2006

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Information Services meeting

It's some time since we had an Information Services meeting, so I thought I would canvas thoughts on the potential for a meeting this year at the E-Learning Conference that is being planned for early December in Mexico.

Provisional dates are 7th & 8th December, with a social event on the evening of the 6th. We could have a one day event on the 6th if enough people are planning to attend. Since Tecnologico de Monterrey is or has just joined U21, I think that one of the sessions will be around the Tech Monterrey virtual university. The rest of the programme has yet to be finalized, but I am told by Jane Usherwood, the U21 Secretary General, that there will be some interesting stuff going on.

Please let me know if you are interested – the alternative would be to meet up at Educause which is in Dallas this year. I myself am not going, but I will be sending someone. I may have missed an obvious venue, so please let me have any alternative suggestions!

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Universities news

National University of Singapore Libraries

Mobile access to library catalogue

The NUS Libraries launched AirLINC to give mobile access to its Library INtegrated Catalogue (LINC) on 15 December 2005. Owners of Internet-enabled mobile devices like PocketPCs, Palm, personal digital assistants (PDA) and 3G/GPRS/WAP-enabled mobile phones would be able to access LINC anytime and from anywhere.

With AirLINC, a student can use his PDA to search for materials and check the status of a book that he cannot find while browsing the library shelves or when he is on his way to the library. He can view his loan record and even renew the loan of a book using his PDA. We hope this service brings an added convenience to our users. AirLINC is available at <http://linc.nus.edu.sg/airpac>.

University of Nottingham

Learning Hub planned as part of Libraries facilities review

Library users and staff have been informing detailed plans to develop a 'Learning Hub' at the University's Hallward library.

Information Services is working with consultancy MoveCorp to design the space and, as part of the preparatory work, ran a series of focus groups and individual interviews to gather information.

The Centre for Integrative Learning is also involved in the design of the new facility.

Refurbishment will be completed in time for the new Session and features will include:

- Flexible space, including individual study places and group study areas;
- 24x7 opening hours;
- State of the art equipment, including individual PCs, plug-in points interactive whiteboards, audio-visual equipment; and
- A relaxed atmosphere in modern and stylish surroundings.

IS is also considering developing facilities for the James-Cameron-Gifford Library at Sutton Bonington, as part of a plan to review and improve services at all of the University's libraries.

University migrates email to Exchange/Outlook

Information Services (IS) at the University of Nottingham is starting on a full rollout of Microsoft Exchange/Outlook across its UK campuses, with completion set for Christmas 2006.

The decision to migrate to Microsoft Exchange/Outlook (the email and calendar system) was taken by the University Management Board following a review of current GroupWise email services during 2005. The decision to choose this particular product was based on proof-of-concept testing, wide consultation and the recommendations of a small strategy group of staff from IS, Schools and Central Services departments.

One of the projects in the IS 'Connected Campus' strategic initiative it is an example of how the department is working in collaboration with the rest of the University. The project team, which is responsible for its design and for decision-making, includes IT representatives from Schools involved in the pilot projects.

IS is the first of a group of 'Early Adopters' and is migrating to Exchange/Outlook at the end of February/beginning of March.

Rollout of latest WebCT gives Nottingham the edge

The University of Nottingham is one of the first academic institutions in the world to roll out the latest version of WebCT.

Version 6 of the Campus Edition was released last summer, having undergone beta testing at the University but, whereas other institutions used it for pilot schemes or among small groups, Nottingham deployed it fully across the University.

Collections recognised for international importance

A group of collections cared for by Manuscripts and Special Collections at the University of Nottingham, has won recognition through The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) Designation Scheme, for having national and international importance.

The Portland (London), Portland of Welbeck and Newcastle of Clumber family, estate, political and literary papers stretch from the 12th to the 20th centuries and provide a rich source for local historians and international scholars alike.

Generations of researchers from around the world have used the collections since the University started looking after them in the 1940s.

Last October, the University launched a website based on the politics and diaries of the 4th Duke of Newcastle. The site also links to visual resources including, for example, political cartoons of the period.

Information Services at Nottingham undertakes benchmarking study of services

Information Services at the University of Nottingham has undertaken one of its biggest ever data collection projects.

Part of the departments 'Connected Campus, strategic initiative, the study compares IT services against other similar organisations in the education, public and private sectors. It also includes interviews with Heads of School to test whether their views are in line with those of department's senior management team.

SFX provides link to full text

The service delivered by search interface Google Scholar has been enhanced with the addition of SFX, from Ex-Libris, providing a direct link to the full text of the publication, subject to users having online access.

Where no text is available, a link is provided to the University of Nottingham Library Online Catalogue (UNLOC) so that local print holdings can be checked.

24x7 library opening scheme extended

The 24x7 library opening scheme, piloted at the University's main library, Hallward, during the summer exam period last year, was extended to two more libraries last month.

The decision to extend the scheme was taken as a result of student feedback on the summer extended opening. Of the users who responded 96 per cent said it had been a good experience for them, providing access to additional quiet study areas.

It is planned to run the scheme again in the run up to summer exams.

New online access boosts collections

The number of records held in the University of Nottingham Online Catalogue (UNLOC) has increased by nearly 20 per cent, with the recent addition of catalogue records for all the printed titles and editions that make up the Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO).

The University originally purchased access to ECCO in 2005, and was one of the first in the country to sign up to the agreement, made with the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) and publishing company Thomson Gale.

University of Melbourne

Change of name to Information Services

From the beginning of Semester One 2006, the University of Melbourne's Information Division's new name is Information Services.

The proposed change of name reinforces the importance we place on services, which underpin the University's priorities of Research, Learning and Teaching and Knowledge Transfer. It also reflects the fact that we are developing a shared approach to IT services. The name change removes the word 'Division', a word which may encourage 'silo thinking' (although we are still a division, it will not be given prominence through our name). E-research collaboration is indicative of the way we work and was featured in UniNews on Friday 17 February (http://uninews.unimelb.edu.au/articleid_3177.html).

The motivation for this name change is to reinforce the purpose of the internal realignment process we have undertaken over the past year.

Information Services supports the University of Melbourne's vision of world-class research, learning and teaching through leadership, innovation and quality in information and education services, systems and technologies. Information Services encompasses library and information services, educational and information technology services, systems and infrastructure. For more information see www.infodiv.unimelb.edu.au or for our organisation chart see www.infodiv.unimelb.edu.au/org.pdf.

If you have any comments or feedback please contact either me (x45382, linda.o'brien@unimelb.edu.au) or James Beckford Saunders (x44106, jamesb.saunders@unimelb.edu.au).

University of Auckland

The University of Auckland Library has a number of electronic products freely available on the web which other libraries might be interested in accessing:

1. OFFSTATS: Official Statistics on the Web - <http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/subjects/stats/offstats/>

This metasite has been compiled by the University of Auckland Library for many years and is regularly listed in the ALA RUSA Machine-Assistance Reference Section "Best free reference websites".

The latest list only includes two sites from outside the US, OFFSTATS and Lund University Libraries" DOAJ: Directory of Open Access Journals - 2 U21 libraries!

2. The Index to Common Law Festschriften database - http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/databases/learn_database/public.asp?re cord=iclf

The Index to Common Law Festschriften was released in September 2005 and is the culmination of a three-year project funded by the Law Foundation and undertaken by a small team at the University of Auckland Library and Law School under the direction of Professor Mike Taggart. This is the first index of contributions to common law Festschriften and fills a serious bibliographic gap in the literature of the common law. There are some 270 common law Festschriften indexed on this database, amounting to over 4,500 chapter entries. In addition, there are more than a thousand entries of English language contributions to predominantly foreign language, non-common law Festschriften from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

3. Early New Zealand Books - <http://www.enzb.auckland.ac.nz>.

This is the beginning of a new digital initiative to provide access to a corpus of significant material published about New Zealand in the first two thirds of the 19th century. Several hundred books were published about New Zealand in the first two thirds of the 19th century, with over 800 books being published by 1900. It was agreed that the project would start with

the classics of the earliest period; 28 volumes have now been completed representing a large proportion of the classics. For each book there is a reformatted text version (which allows for searching of the text) as well as links to images of the pages of the original print editions.

4. New Zealand Electronic Poetry Centre - <http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/>

This is an extensive site developed in collaboration with the University of Auckland's English Dept and the Auckland University Press.

University of Birmingham

Staff changes

In January 2006, Fiona Parsons took up the post of Assistant Director for Learning and Research Support Division. Fiona was previously Assistant Director for Public Services Division. The name of the division has been changed to Communications and Customer Services and Mark Rose has been appointed as Interim Assistant Director.

Sue Worrall joined as the new Head of Special Collections, within the Learning and Research Support Division.

Have we listened to our users?

We are committed to improving the library environment to ensure that it is a comfortable and inviting location, as well as a library that inspires study and learning. We undertook an International Library Survey in March 2005 and user feedback from this has enabled us to make sure the improvements we make meet their expectations, as well as provide the services required of an academic library.

Since Easter 2005 we have been making improvements to our facilities and services and a year on have been communicating to users what we have done.

Plans for the University Library

MoveCorp the Australian facilities planning company who have been working on a project to develop a master plan for the University Library, have presented a plan to the Senior Management Team. The plan has also been presented to a number of university committees and was favourably received. The next stage is to produce a detailed plan for approval.

Extended opening hours for services

The Computing Helpdesk will be extending its opening hours from the end of March, working towards 24/7 opening. The Helpdesk is aiming to offer three levels of service, service level 3 is the full range that users are currently accustomed to. The extended opening hours and level of service they can expect from March 27th will be Service level 2.

This year, for the first time, we will open the Main Library and Barnes Library over Easter on the University Closed Days, but not the Public Holidays. These arrangements will benefit all students, but in particular have been made in response to requests from international students for longer opening at Easter.

WebCT at Birmingham one of the busiest in the world

Since moving to WebCT Vista, as the core of the University's online learning service, the University of Birmingham has continued to see a sharp rise in the use of online learning. The main use of online learning is among our campus-based students, although distance learning

courses are also making extensive use of the facilities with learners logging in to our systems from as far afield as Australia, Africa, the Far East and North America.

During busy parts of the term a typical week will see 90,000 accesses to online materials, with up to 2,500 users accessing the system at any one time. This level of access makes our online learning service one of the busiest in Europe and the World.

Benchmarking of computing services

For the first time, Information Services are embarking on a benchmarking project. We have engaged Gartner, the world's leading provider of research and analysis, to benchmark the following services Helpdesk; Midrange computing and Distributed Computing. The project will enable us to measure and improve our performance to ensure we deliver the level of service expected by our customers.

Award winner

We have scooped an award for our innovative work on the University portal – my.bham

The Talis Insight 2005 award for 'Embracing the power of Community: improving student access to Information Award' was presented at the Talis Insight annual conference in Birmingham by Poet Laureate Andrew Motion. Talis Information Ltd supply the library management software (LMS), which includes the online catalogue and reading lists.

We were nominated for the award as Birmingham have been early adopters in terms of establishing and developing an online portal (my.bham) for staff and student use. The integration of the Talis user account information within my.bham in 2004 via the 'My Library Account' channel brought the vision of my.bham as a 'one stop shop' a step closer. In 2005 this was supplemented with 'soft messages' via the 'My Library Messages' channel to make the information more meaningful.

Exploring Plagiarism

Alison Davies, Research Project Officer in the Learning Development Unit, has recently been awarded a Teaching Fellowship to work with staff and students across the University of Birmingham to examine their views and experiences of plagiarism. In particular, the project will evaluate and monitor staff use of two electronic plagiarism detection systems: JISCPAS plagiarism detection software (PDS) and CopyCatch.

The project also aims to explore the extent to which plagiarism occurs within individual Schools at the University, and the kinds of formal and informal strategies and mechanisms that staff adopt to deal with it. In addition, student views on plagiarism and the use of detection software will be examined to try to understand their attitudes towards plagiarism. From these investigations the project hopes to identify good practice in the implementation and use of the detection methods that staff adopt to deal with the problem.

Mingana Collection Gets Special Recognition

The Mingana Collection of Middle Eastern manuscripts, one of the University's special collections, has been recognised as having outstanding national and international importance.

Under the Designation Scheme, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) has announced the collection as one of 38 listed across England celebrating and safeguarding the nation's heritage held in libraries and archives.

Universitas 21 Global

- U21 Global has been awarded the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) Certification of e-Learning (CEL) for its MBA program. This international accreditation recognises the high quality of management courses at U21Global and affirms the graduate school's benchmark-setting standards in pedagogy, assessment, student services and learning outcomes.
- U21Global has launched a Master of Science in Information Systems Management (MISM) program, to cater to the fast-growing demand for technology management skills in today's global economy. Commencing in 2006, the program is organised into eight clusters which enables students to select and develop key competencies around their needs, interests and aspirations.
- U21Global and NSRCEL (N.S. Raghavan Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning) of Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIM-B) will offer a joint certificate program on Entrepreneurship and Family Enterprise, targeted at entrepreneurs and operators of family-run businesses. The collaborative program will be delivered in a blended format, comprising both online sections and face-to-face classes.