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**LIBRARY**

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# How the Hawthorn campus library is meeting the challenges of high student numbers versus limited space

Ben Conyers

Manager, Logistics & Customer Service

Hawthorn Library

Swinburne University of Technology

August 2009



PEOPLE LEARN SPACE CONNECT

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## Introduction

- > About the library
- > Unsustainable growth
- > Tragedy of the commons model
- > How to manage the commons
  - Discourage use of the commons
  - Grow the commons
  - Manage the use of the commons
  - Help them to use the commons
- > Has it worked?
- > What next?



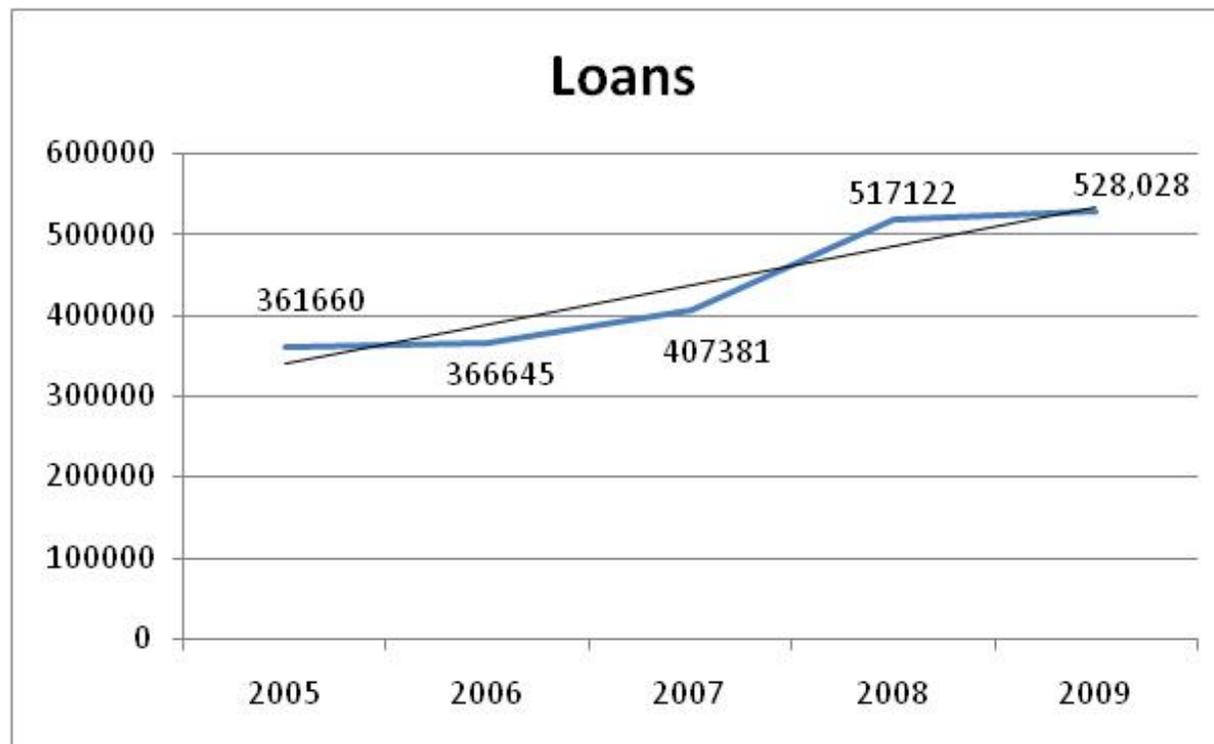
## About the library



- > The Hawthorn library supports both Higher Ed. and TAFE students and is the sole library on campus
- > Last year there were approximately 21,000 students studying at the Hawthorn campus which equates to an EFT of 13,500
- > On average each student visited the library 78 times
- > At last count the library had 1,050 seats, 10 meeting rooms and 285 computers across four levels
- > Door count for 2008 was 1,645,753
- > Over the last five years, the library has experienced dramatic growth

# Unsustainable growth - loans

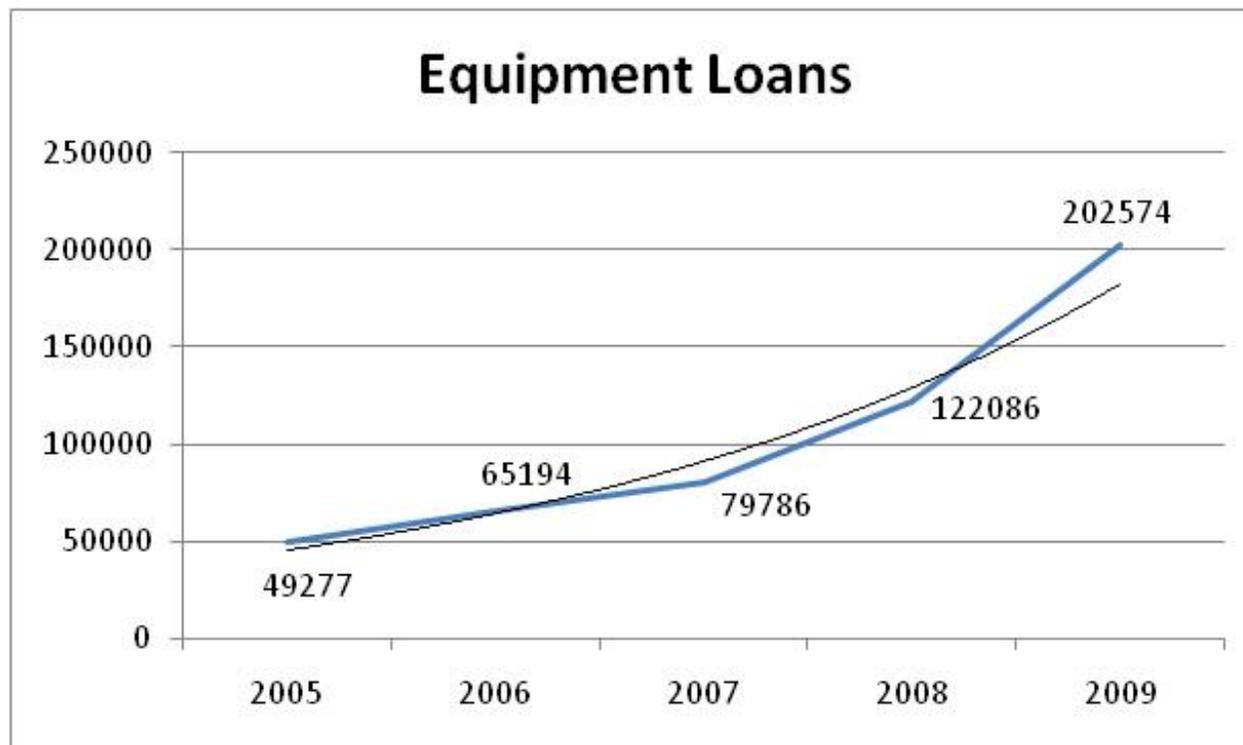
- > Overall loans have increased by 48% in four years



2009 figure based on projections as of end of June 2009

# Unsustainable growth – equipment loans

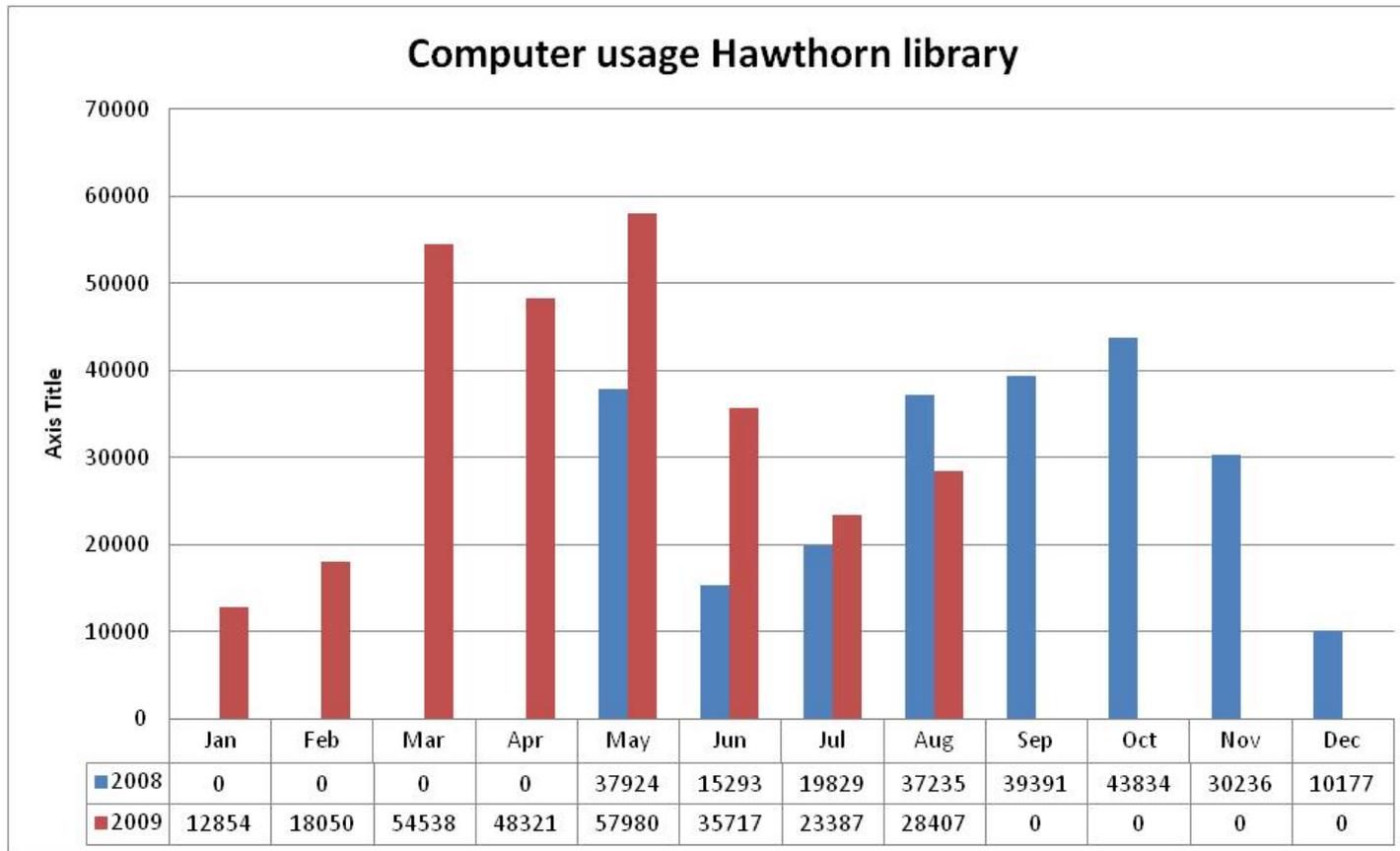
- > Equipment loans have quadrupled since 2005



2009 figure based on projections as of end of June 2009

# Computer usage

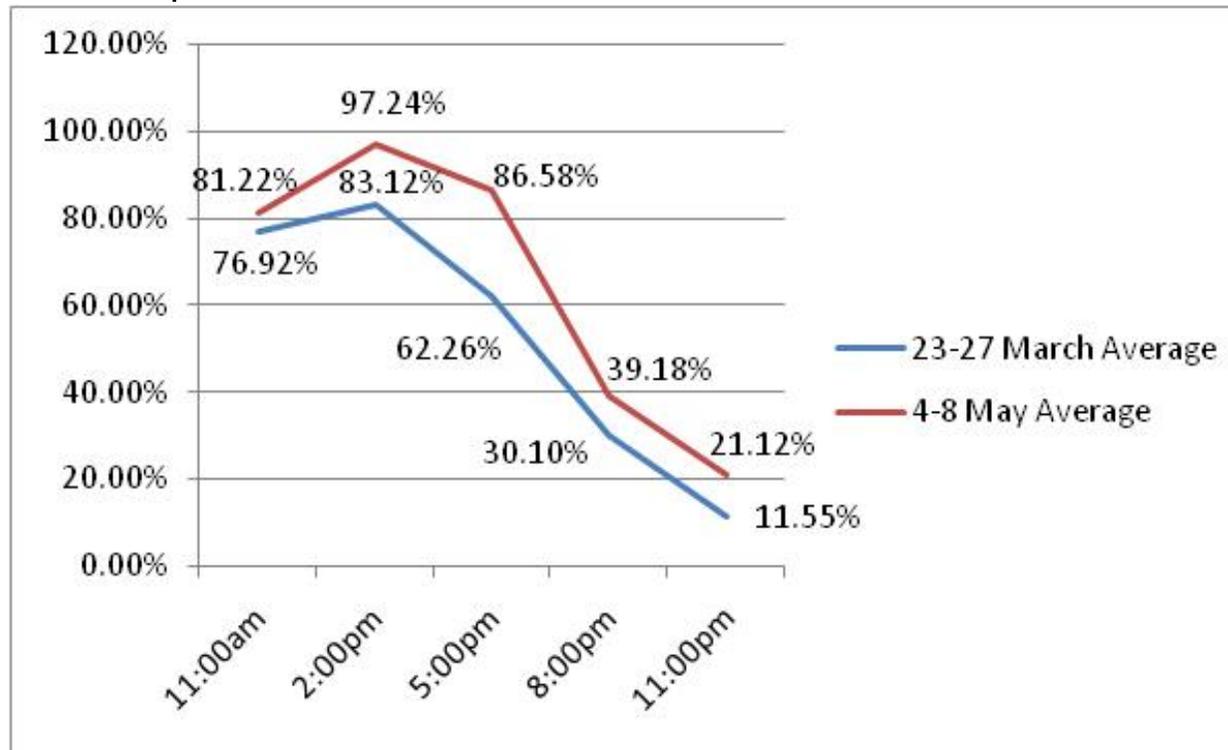
- > Computer usage May to July up 60% on 2008



2009 August figure as of 20/08/2009 and no figures recorded prior to May 2008

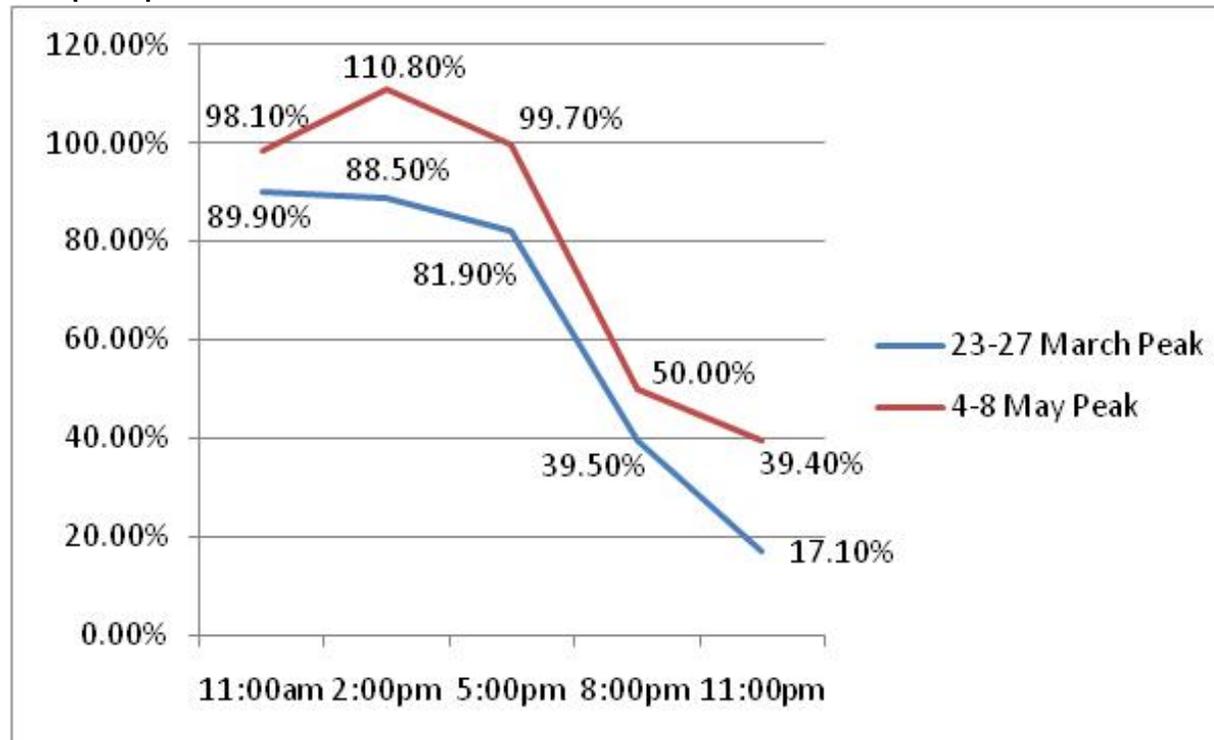
# Unsustainable growth – occupancy

- > These readings were taken a full month before our semester one peak



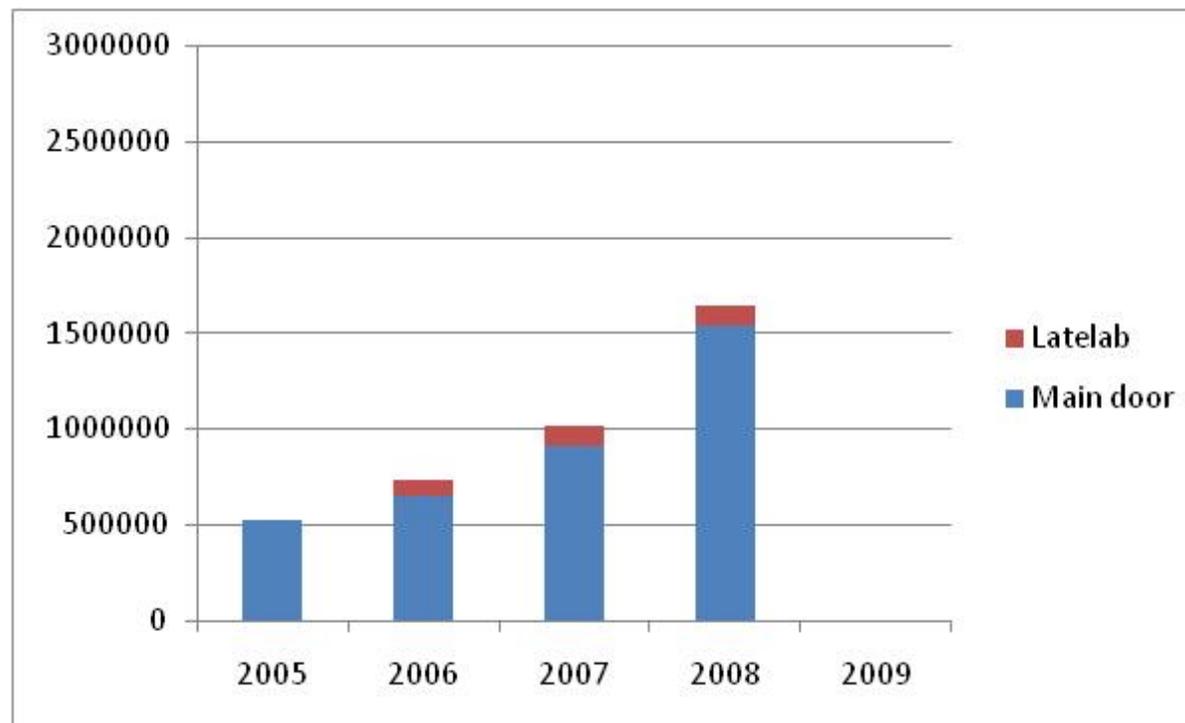
# Unsustainable growth – occupancy peak

- > Even so, at our busiest times that week, the library had more people in it than seats for them to sit on



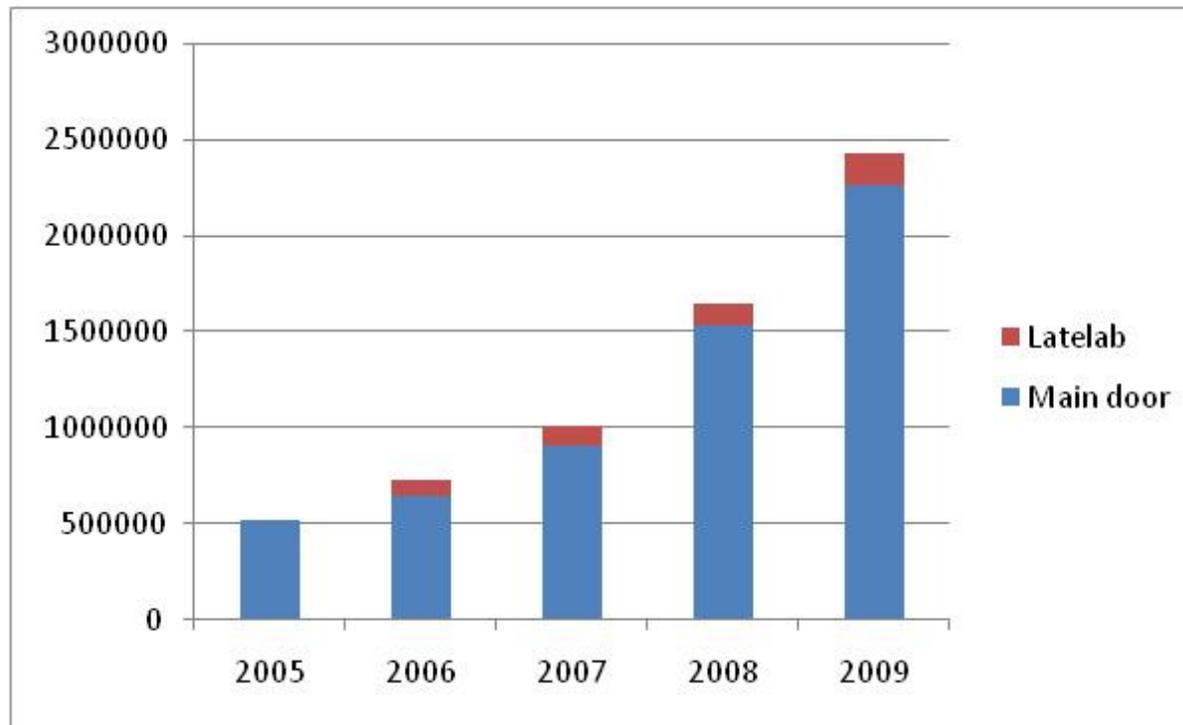
## Unsustainable growth – door count to date

- > In 2008 we experienced growth of 62.7% on the previous year's visitor count



# Unsustainable growth – projected door count

- > If current growth rates had continued, this year we would be expecting a door count of 2.4 million



# Growth projections

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- > Swinburne is predicting annual growth rates of 4% per year through to 2015
- > A large proportion of this growth is through international students who tend to both use the library more frequently and more often than domestic students
- > More student spaces are being built around campus but this all takes time

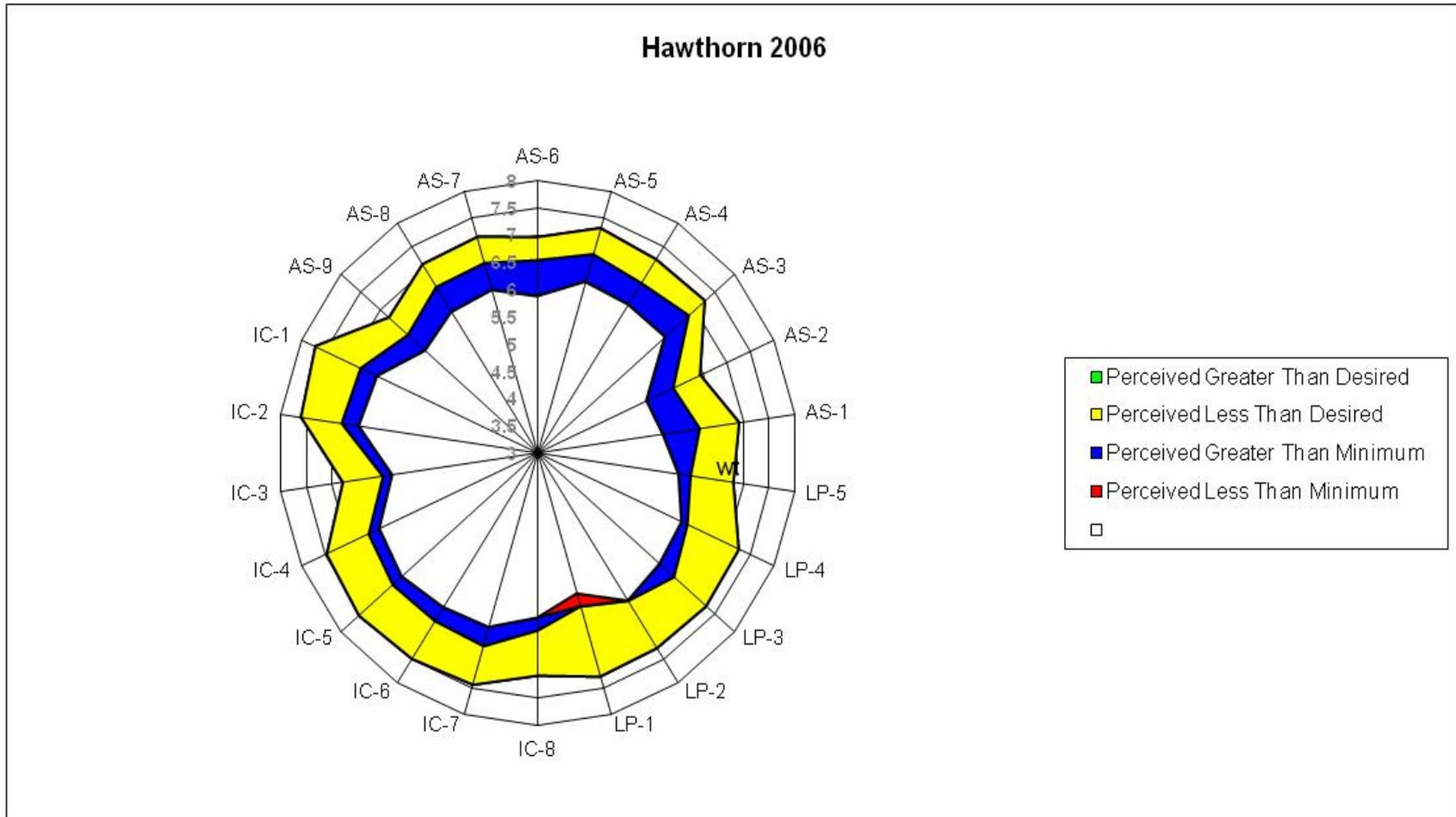


## What LibQual 2006 identified

- > Overall Swinburne and Hawthorn achieved great results with two notable exceptions:
  - LP1: “Library spaces that inspire study and learning” &
  - LP2: “Quiet space for individual activities”
- > Since 2006 our visitor count has at least doubled



# What LibQual 2006 identified



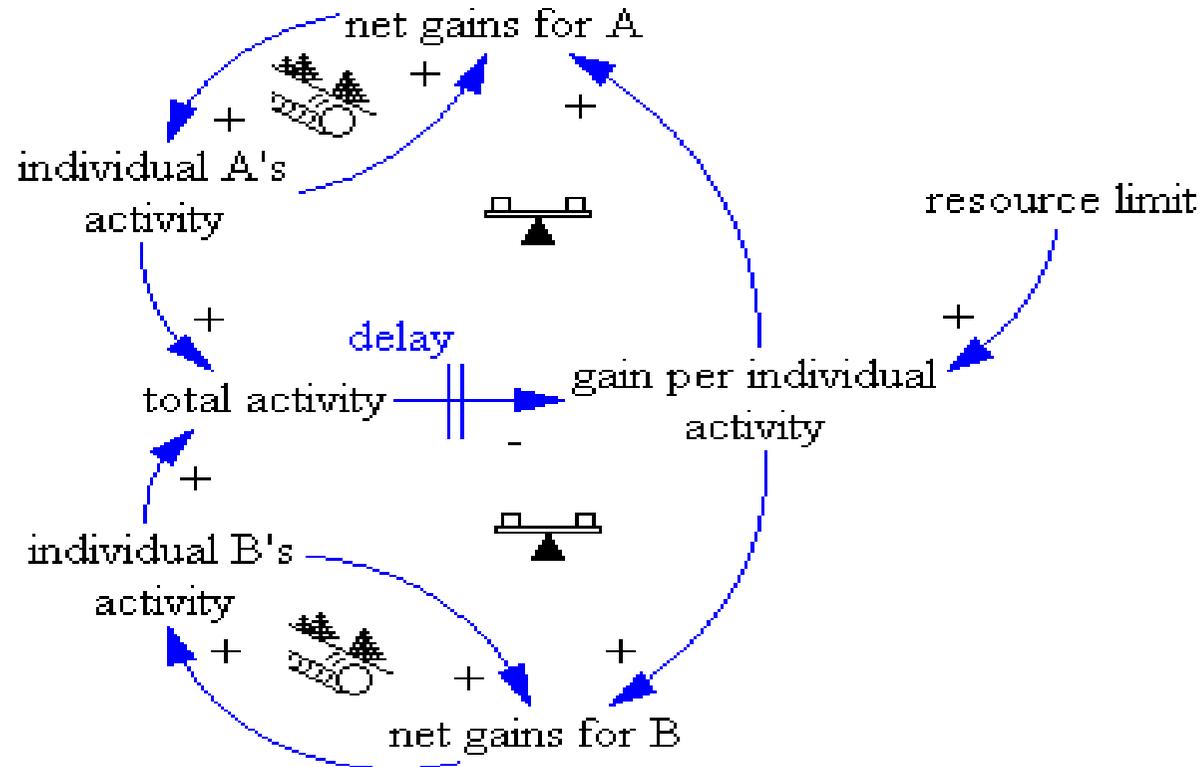
# In Summary

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- > Although we can continue to make improvements, we are physically constrained by the size of the library
- > Student numbers are continuing to rise
- > Leads to more and more people using what is a finite resource
- > Classic systems thinking “Tragedy of the Commons” case



## "Tragedy of the commons" model



- > Jana, B (2009) "Causal loop diagram - system archetype "Tragedy of the commons"" accessed at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tragedy\\_of\\_the\\_commons.PNG](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tragedy_of_the_commons.PNG)

# Tragedy of the commons continued

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- > Initially the more people use the commons, the more benefit they each gain from that use, however...
- > Eventually the commons gets so overused that the gains start diminishing
- > This continues to the point where no one gains anything from using the commons and it is abandoned
- > As this is happening, we tend to react to the symptoms of overuse which may provide a short term fix, but actually does nothing to change the systemic problems
- > Key example, people talking on mobile phones in silent study area – do so because if they leave, they will lose their seat

# Tragedy of the commons continued

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- > We can't ignore the symptoms but change will only occur if we tackle the systemic problems.
- > We have four ways to do this:
  1. Discourage use of the commons
  2. Grow the commons
  3. Manage the use of the commons
  4. Help them to better use the commons

## Reacting to the symptoms

- > Very easy to spend your whole time just reacting to the symptoms of overcrowding
- > Not enough power leads to power cords causing OHS tripping hazards
- > Reacted by placing signs everywhere – no effect



## Reacting to the symptoms continued

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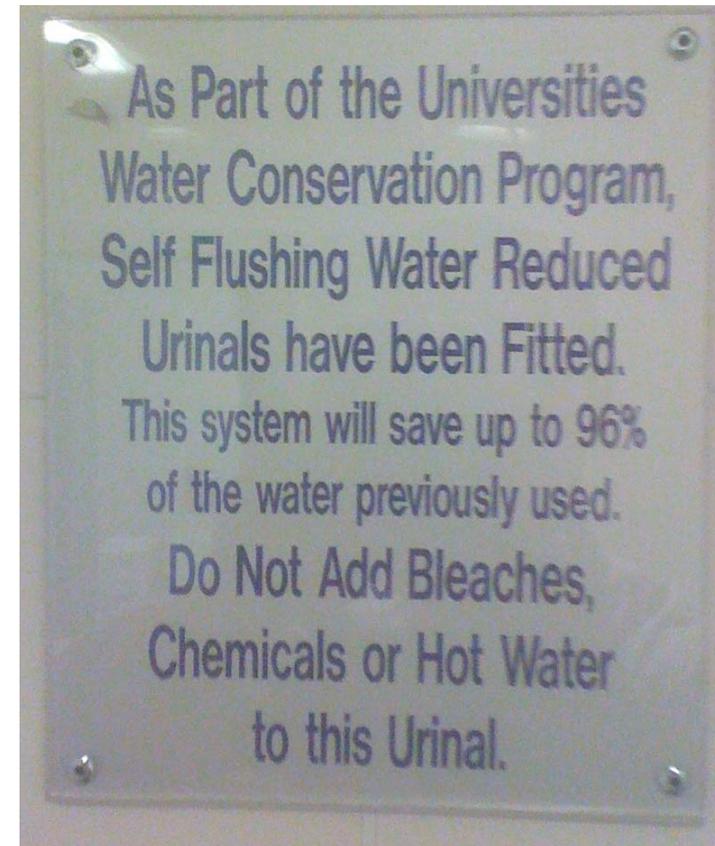
- > Instead we changed the direction of the carrels
- > Not perfect but much better
- > We now also consider the potential tripping hazard any time that we install a new power point



## Reacting to the symptoms continued

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- > 20% of all written feedback about cleaning and toilets
- > Initially we reacted by increasing the cleaning
  - No reduction in number of complaints
- > Ultimately however we rebuilt the toilets
  - Not one complaint since



## Discourage use of the commons



- > Hawthorn is the only place I have ever worked where we have needed to discuss strategies for actually keeping people out of the library
- > Three things we have done which have helped are:
  - Opened our after hours return chute all day
  - Buying laptops rather than more desktop computers
  - Having power points installed outside the library

# After hours return chutes

- > Library users previously had no choice but to return items through chutes in the service desk
- > This also made our service desk queues longer
- > By opening up our after hours return chutes 24 hours a day, people now no longer have to enter the library to return their items



# Laptops

- > Unlike desktop computers, laptops can be used outside the library
- > Hawthorn library now loans 305 laptops, two thirds of which can be loaned for 48 hours which means that ideally we don't see the students for two days



# Power outside of the library

- > However students still need power to use the laptops so unless they can find somewhere else with power, they will still use their laptops in the library
- > We have worked to get more power points installed around the campus



## Grow the commons



- > Simplest solution to overcrowding would be to build a library twice the size – however in the short to medium term this simply is not possible
- > Instead we have still been able to grow the commons by:
  - Extending our opening hours
  - Increasing the number of seats
  - Shifting the balance from group to individual seating
  - More computers and laptops
  - More power

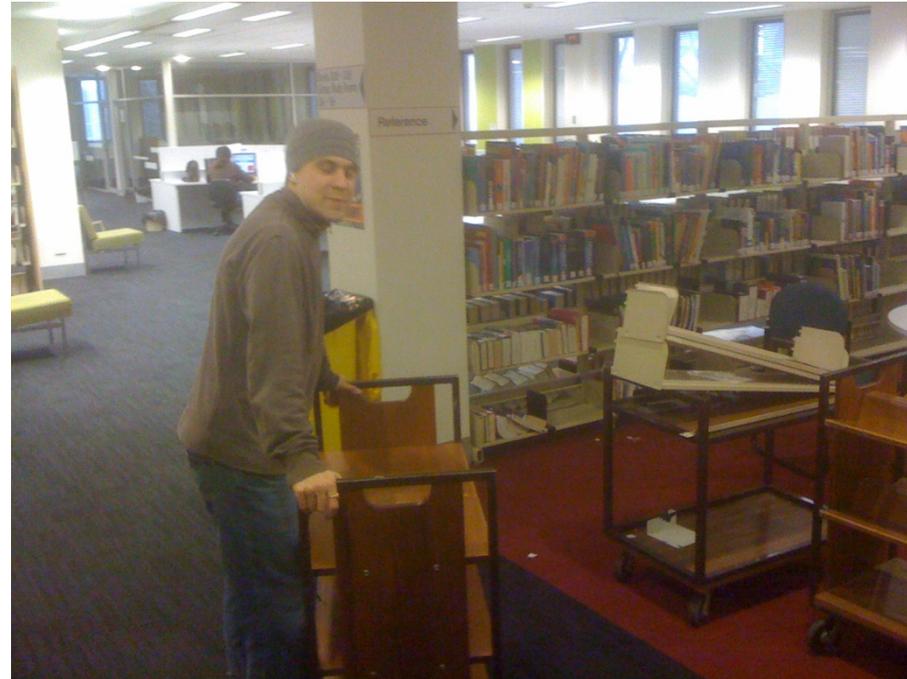
# Extending our opening hours

- > In 2006 we opened up two floors of our library 24 hours a day
- > 111,988 people used the library last year after hours
- > However this does not reduce numbers of people that wish to use the library during the day, it just allows these people to use the library more often or for longer



# Increasing the number of tables and seats

- > Increased from 920 to 1050 seats in two years without any increase in library floor space
- > Achieved by making better use of wasted or low use spaces
- > Reference collection weeded and then moved. The space that it had occupied now has 8 carrels and two tables plus our language and literacy collection



## Shifting the balance from group to individual seating

- > This year we converted three small meeting rooms (16 seats) into 20 individual carrels
- >  $16 \times 50\% = 8$  compared to  $20 \times 80\% = 16$



# More computers and laptops

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- > In the last two years we have increased our desktop computers by 70 (285 total) and our laptops by 60 (305 total)
- > Desktop computers
  - Less staff involvement
  - Ability to be booked
  - Less space for individual study
  - Less power points available for laptops
- > Laptops
  - More staff involvement
  - More power points needed



# More power

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- > Added an extra fifty power points throughout the library
- > All new or replacement furniture is being built with power points



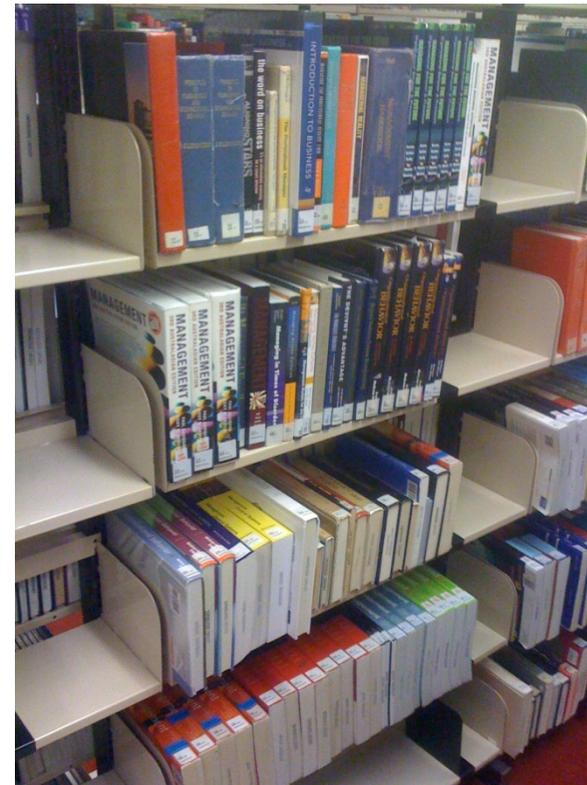
## Manage the use of the commons



- > Overcrowding leads to many problems that can be helped through better management of the space
- > We have achieved this by:
  - Re-spacing the collections and lowering the shelves
  - Making our quiet study areas more quiet
  - Better storage and location of our collections
  - Changing our room and computer booking systems
  - Improving our queue management
  - Managing wireless saturation

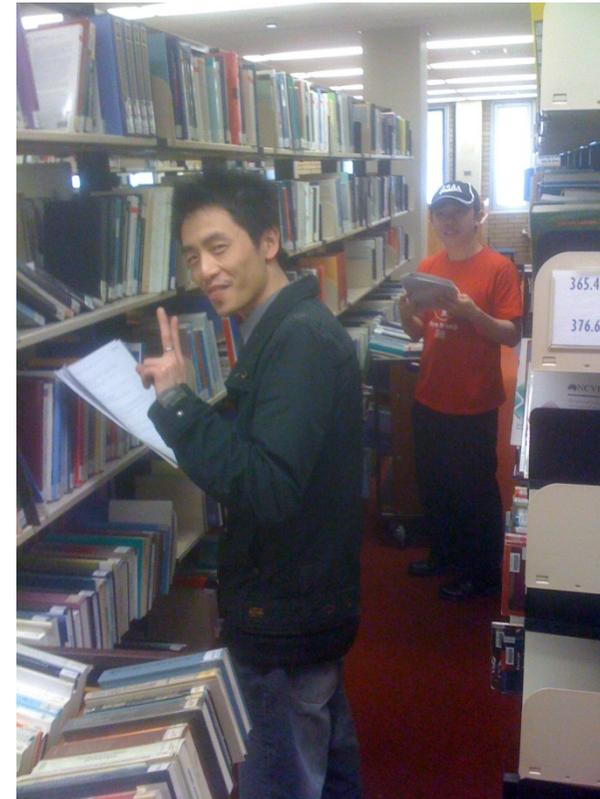
# Re-spacing the collections and lowering the shelves

- > Enormous amount of staff time wasted in re-shelving items when the shelves are too full and too high



# Re-spacing the collections and lowering the shelves

- > We weeded and then re-spaced the entire collection in six weeks over June and July this year



# Making our quiet study areas more quiet

- > Sends the wrong message if you have a group study room in the middle of the quiet study floor
- > Far easier to maintain silence if there is a clear barrier that shows where one section ends and another begins



# DVD and video collections

- > “Where are the DVDs?”
- > Very few students have video players so no point in storing the DVDs with the videos – it just makes them harder to find and makes the collection look out of date



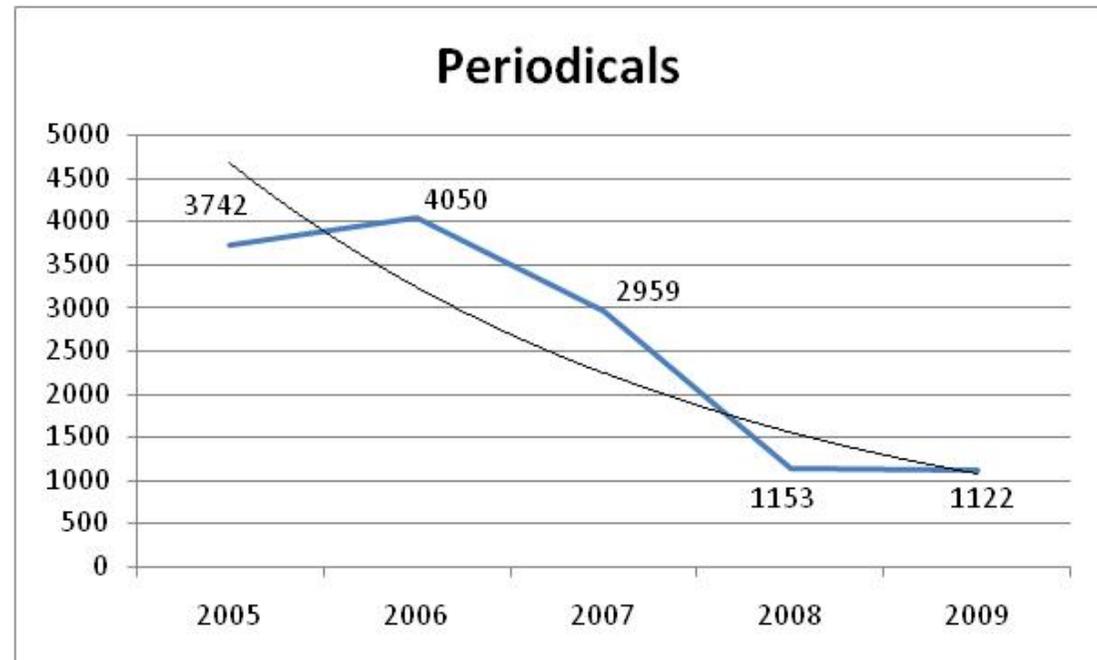
# Reference collection

- > Reference collection has a very low usage so we moved it from one of our prime locations to a walkway
- > Replaced with our language and literacy collection



# Journal collection

- > First six months of this year:
  - 4.5 million articles retrieved from our online databases
  - 561 loans of our hard copy journal collection



## Journal collection continued

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- > Journal collection condensed into a stack and the space where it used to be was converted into a computer area
- > 143 computers in this space were used 26,181 times in May



# Queue management

- > If you have unavoidable queues, move them where it doesn't effect other activities
- > Unmanageable queues for laptops were simply fixed by getting a sign saying "Please queue here for laptops"



# Changing our room and computer booking systems

- > Room bookings were all handled at the service desk
- > This meant queuing to make a booking, queuing to collect the keys, delays because only one booking could be handled at a time and lots of arguments
- > 2009 – 13,483 PC bookings
- > 2008 – 3,029 PC bookings



# Changing our room and computer booking systems

- > All room bookings now managed online
- > Better utilisation, less queuing and almost no arguments

The screenshot shows the Swinburne University of Technology Library online booking system. The header includes the Swinburne University of Technology logo and the word "Library". Below the header, there is a navigation menu with links: [Admin](#), [Search](#), [Reports](#), [How to make a booking](#), [Bookings](#), [My Bookings](#), [Refresh](#), and [Logout](#). The main content area is titled "Welcome Ben Conyers" and features a search interface with three sections: "Where", "What", and "When".

**Where:** Library (Library Hawthorn), Location (Level 3 Rooms)

**What:** Computer or Room (All)

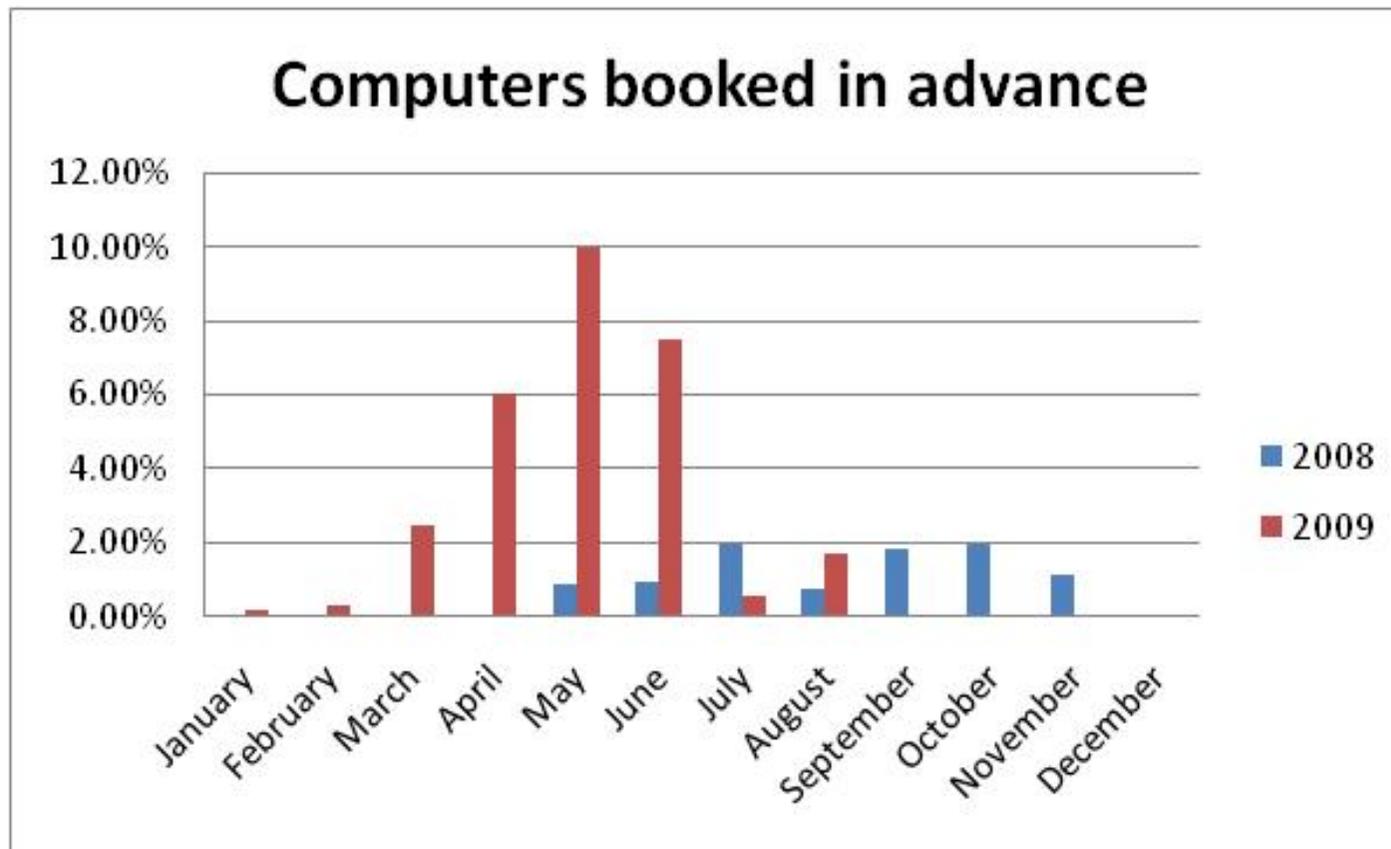
**When:** Today (19/08/2009)

The main display is a grid showing room availability for Level 3 Rooms from 1:00 to 23:00. The rooms listed are 3A Group Room, 3B Group Room, 3C Group Room, 3D Group Room, 3E Group Room, 3F Group Room, 3G Group Room, 3H Group Room, 3I Group Room, and 3J Group Room. Red bars indicate booked time slots. A tooltip for room 3D shows a booking from 19:30 to 19:45.

Level 3 Rooms	1:00	11:00	12:00	13:00	14:00	15:00	16:00	17:00	18:00	19:00	20:00	21:00	22:00	23:00
3A Group Room														
3B Group Room														
3C Group Room														
3D Group Room														
3E Group Room														
3F Group Room														
3G Group Room														
3H Group Room														
3I Group Room														
3J Group Room														

# Changing our room and computer booking systems

- > Real benefit to students and to the library is that they can plan ahead



# Wireless saturation

- > We were saturated in some areas and underutilised in others
- > We modified our furniture to either encourage or discourage people to use their laptops in those locations



## Help them to use the commons



- > Library tours and our Rover service



# Library tours

- > This year 90% of all commencing students have been on a library tour
- > This year we got as many of our staff as possible involved in running the tours
- > Previously tours were just run by reference staff
- > This enabled us to run smaller groups and to keep the student's attention for longer
- > Very obvious flow on effect of less questions later about things like: "Where do I get a photocopy card from?"



# Rover service

- > Added a service that students feel really comfortable using
- > Rovers are a mixture of library staff, IT staff and current or recent students – very easy to approach
- > At Hawthorn alone, it is estimated that in 2008, Rovers answered over 25,000 queries
- > Many of these involved setting up wireless connections



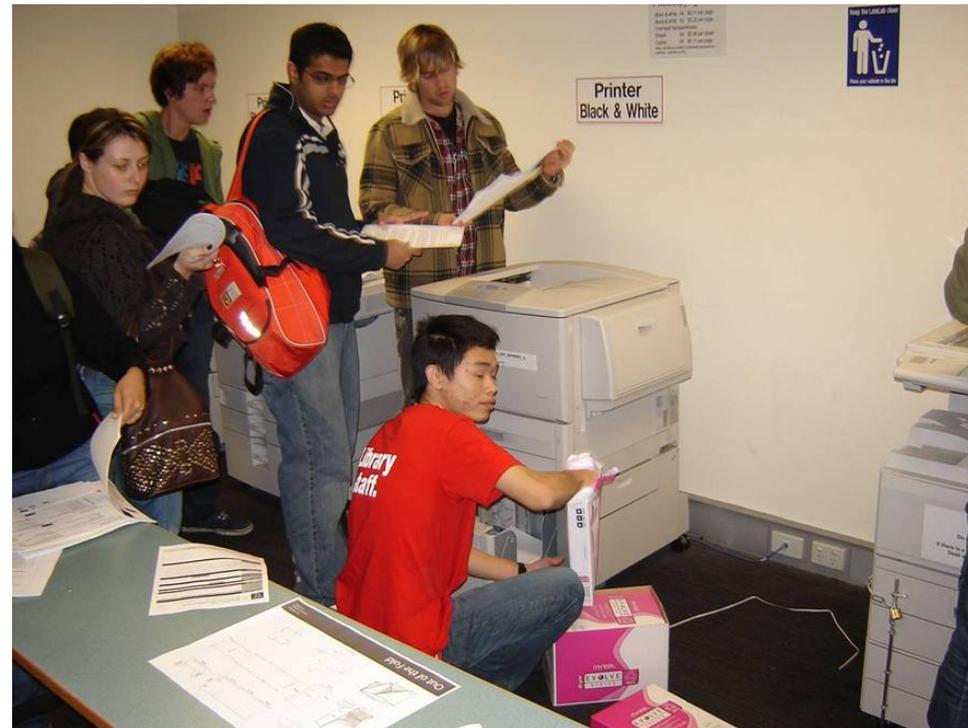
# Rover service

- > All of our Rovers are very visible and are “Here to help”



# Rover service

- > The Rover service works extremely well in conjunction with our other service points
- > Rovers often field questions at the point before they lead to frustration
- > Last year the Rovers fielded 25,000 queries that were answered without having to queue at the Service desks



## Image counts

- > A library that looks professional and cared for is better respected by the students
- > We have done a lot of work to improve the look of the library – most of which has been relatively cheap to do



## Image counts continued

- > And some not so cheap improvements



## If something is broken, hide it

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- > “Out of order” signs never look good
- > If something is going to be broken for longer than 48 hours then it is better to move it out of sight



## Has this worked?

- > Feedback is still very good
- > Occupancy remains high but door count looks like it has actually steadied this year
- > The real test will be to see the results of the LibQual 2009 survey (with a door count twice that of 2006)
- > Top three
  1. Project Hub and extra seating
  2. Computer and Room booking system
  3. Rover Service



# Project Hub

- > For all of the changes that the library itself has made, the single biggest impact on halting our growth, has been from a new 350 seat student space opening this year next to the library
- > Seat count over last two years has increased from 920 to 1400
- > 1050 library 350 Project Hub
- > This space used to be a car park



## More seats leads to lower door count

- > Part of the reason for such a high door count is because people can't find a seat. They leave the library, grab a coffee and try again later i.e. two counts

<b>10 seat library</b>				
	<b>Visitors</b>	<b>Find seats</b>	<b>Can't find a seat</b>	<b>Door count</b>
9am	15	10	5	15
10am	5	3	2	20
11am	2	2	0	22
<b>15 seat library</b>				
	<b>Visitors</b>	<b>Find seats</b>	<b>Can't find a seat</b>	<b>Door count</b>
9am	15	15	0	15

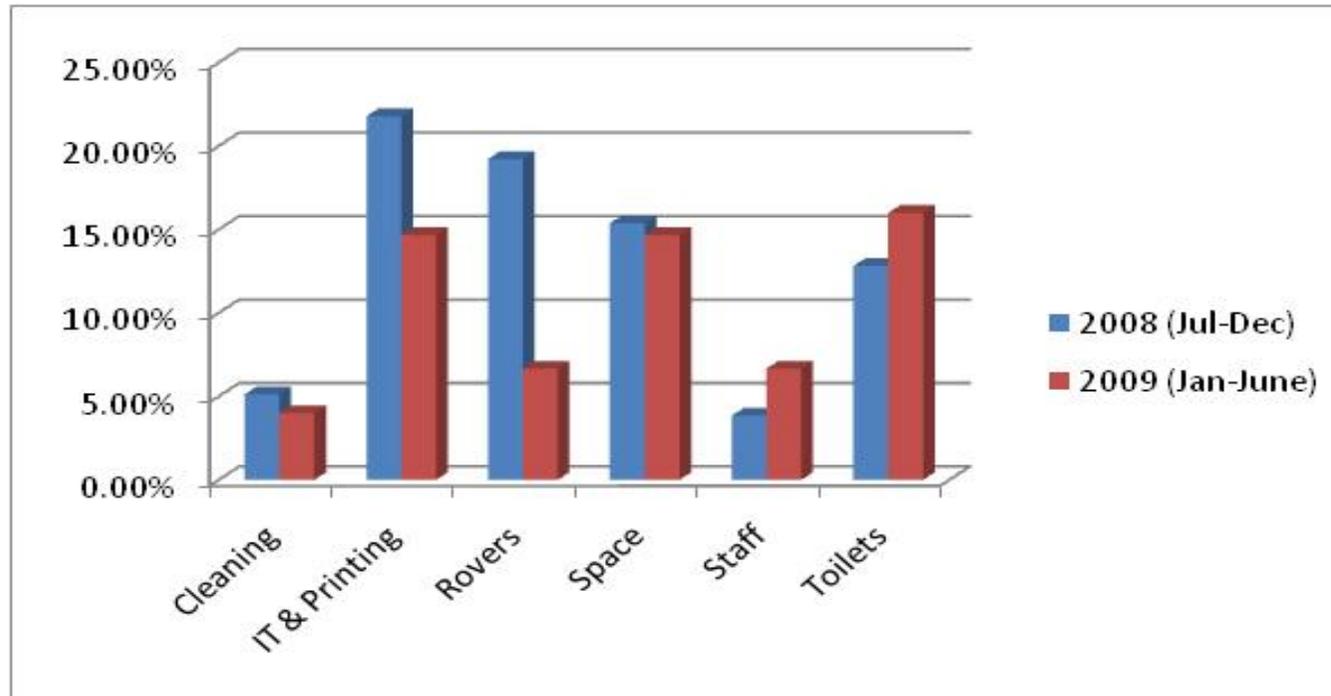
# Planning ahead

- > The computer and room booking system allows people to plan when they wish to use the library – which also lowers door count

<b>10 computers - no booking system</b>				
	<b>Visitors</b>	<b>Find a computer</b>	<b>Can't find a computer</b>	<b>Door count</b>
9am	15	10	5	15
10am	5	3	2	20
11am	2	2	0	22
<b>10 computers - with a booking system</b>				
	<b>Visitors</b>	<b>Find a computer</b>	<b>Can't find a computer</b>	<b>Door count</b>
9am	10	10	0	10
11am	5	5	0	15

# Feedback

- > Feedback about lack of space roughly the same
- > IT & Printing complaints decreased
- > Staff positive feedback running at 12%



## What next?

- > More seats, more laptops and more power
- > New library operating system
- > Work on improving findability of resources in the library
- > Continue to expand the Rover service



Thank you



> Questions?