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# Liaison 2015 at Swinburne: definitely a work in progress

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May 2010

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- > Dual sector university – in Australia 13,000 higher education students (EFTSU), 13,000 TAFE (technical and further education) (FTE)
- > Rapid growth based on international students
- > Five campuses in Melbourne, one in Malaysia
- > Too technological for the ATN
- > Strong research focus



# Liaison at Swinburne is Complex

- > The library has about 90 staff or around 70 EFT
- > Six higher education faculties: Design, Lilydale, Engineering, ICT, Life & Social Sciences, Business – 8.6 HE liaison staff
- > Five TAFE schools and about 17 departments – each is on several campuses, so liaison is campus-based – 6.3 TAFE liaison staff
- > Swinburne College is now a third teaching division
- > Research Services Librarian – created early 2010 and coordinates research liaison
- > So – liaison is complex and also under-resourced

# Defining Liaison



Library liaison is the promotion of two-way communication and the development of working relationships between the library and academic schools, research centres and administrative programs

It is the key means of integrating information services into the teaching, learning and research of faculties and schools.

(University of Tasmania)

Liaison is important:

- > Liaison staff are the most visible to the university staff
- > We commit 16 staff to this role
- > Liaison work takes up about 25-30% of our salaries budget
- > Liaison staff are widely respected and appreciated

# Traditional Liaison Roles

- > Collection development in both directions
- > Engagement with faculties, centres, schools and departments – with teaching and research staff
- > Face to face information literacy, orientation and training
- > Developing educational resources online, audio and print
- > Desk work

And some new roles too

- > Liaison with external and distance students
- > Adding content to learning management systems
- > Some universities have specialist liaison, like international

# Liaison environment at Swinburne (1)

- > Swinburne has about 1200 teaching and research staff, plus many more sessional staff
- > Each campus has a manager and staff are liaison/reference, or operations
- > The service desk is the main face to face communication – about 160,000 questions per year – plus a consultation desk
- > Most book lending is self-checkout – equipment lending is about 40% of total loans
- > Traffic is about 2.3 million per year, 75% at Hawthorn – up to 15,000 entries per day on a busy semester day

# Liaison environment at Swinburne (2)

- > The environment is complex
- > TAFE liaison and Higher Education liaison have different liaison needs. The main differentiators are
  - The materials budget
  - Research support
  - Extent and nature of information literacy and orientation
  - Organisational complexity
- > Small campus liaison is different to large campus liaison, and multi-campus different again – the cosiness factor
- > Liaison activities are wider than liaison librarians – managers liaise with university staff, and so do other library staff

# Liaison environment at Swinburne (3)

- > Research liaison has evolved
- > Swinburne has a research repository, Swinburne Research Bank, which includes records for almost all research publications in the past eight years – and beyond – and full text for many of them.
- > The repository unit plays a role in ERA, in the HERDC data collection, and in other research activities. In fact the library ran the first Drinks for Researchers, among other essential services.
- > We now call these activities “liaison”.
- > The repositories unit has a customer relations management system using High Rise software to keep track of researcher customers.
- > Our Research Services Librarian works within the repositories unit.

# Liaison environment more widely

- > The role of the library is changing – there are two libraries.
- > On one hand traditional physical roles – printed books and journals, study spaces, friendly staffed information desks, access to equipment and facilities, meeting rooms, place to meet friends – the cosy library. Cosy familiar. All of our libraries have become more like that.
- > On the other hand: hard copy is going and in its place massive digital collections located overseas somewhere and managed by someone else, steep decline book use, migration of the users to offsite, new digital libraries, elearning and the transformation of search – the scary library. Scary different and confusing, not scary like a night in the museum. Liaison is in this library.

## How they see us (1)

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### Percentage of faculty rating these roles of the library as important

Gateway	58%
Archive	71%
Buyer	90%
Teaching support	59%
Research support	58%

## How they see us (2)

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### Percent of faculty rating this role of the library as important – Teaching support – by faculty grouping

Humanities	65%
Social sciences	61%
Science	47%

Faculty Survey 2009: Key Strategic Insights for Libraries, Publishers and Societies. Ithaca S + R, April 2010.

<http://www.ithaka.org/ithaka-s-r/research/faculty-surveys-2000-2009/Faculty%20Study%202009.pdf>

# Why Liaison 2015?

- > We are at a turning point – the environment is changing – our roles are less well accepted
- > There is a clear need to re-prioritise
- > At Swinburne we must combine what we have learned from Swinburne Research Bank and what we have learned from liaison
- > We need to manage the way we present ourselves to the university so that we stay relevant
- > In particular, we need to maintain and build our relationship with teaching and research staff – liaison is the key to that
- > We need to work out how to add the most value to the work of teachers and researchers
- > Most other CAUL members are thinking the same thoughts

# Liaison 2015 – the process

- > 2015 is Swinburne's planning horizon – so it is ours
- > An open process involving everyone – we began with a survey of liaison staff; we have created 7 working groups
- > Open to other universities and TAFEs too – willing to learn, willing to share – thank you Newcastle and Tasmania in particular.
- > We will develop a strategic vision and a strategic framework – a plan ahead to 2015
- > We are working on performance indicators & role documentation – performance planning has a strong focus at Swinburne
- > Liaison 2015 involves prioritisation – what are our main priorities? – we are working on that now

# Priority 1: liaison itself

- > Liaison as defined is the main role of liaison staff
- > First of all about communication with staff and research students
- > Our primary strategy is about organising communication so that we communicate better – libraries are good at being organised
- > Effectiveness is both quantitative and qualitative which means
  - Good communications with key staff and all staff
  - Interactions which provide a valued service to staff
- > Local factors have a big impact on the ease of communication – liaison is easier in some situations
- > Profile, visibility and targeting of services are all important
- > Loved the ambitious Newcastle example information resource plan

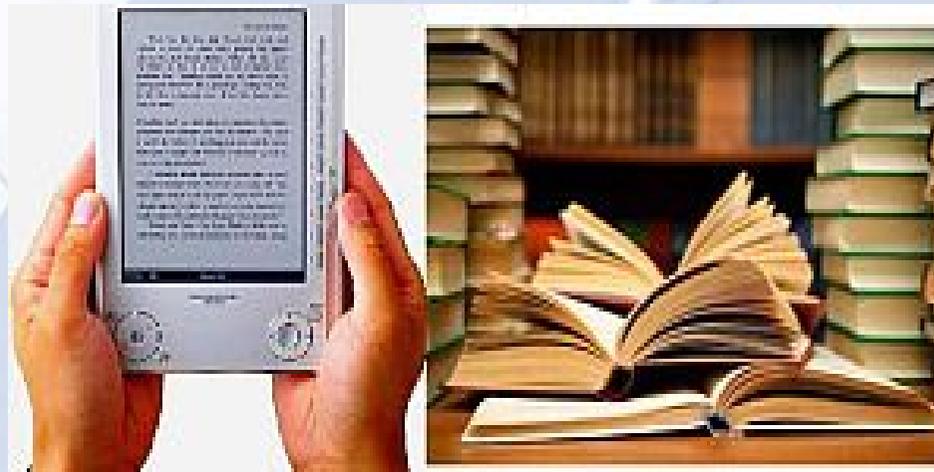
# Priority 1: liaison itself

We have established two working working groups dealing with key issues for liaison proper

1. Templates: a group to create a template for liaison plans – a liaison plan has a focus on making sure that we communicate with key people in the faculty, or the campus, or the department. Completion: June/July. Trialling: semester 2.
2. High Rise: the research repository uses a customer relations management system to manage its relations with Swinburne's researchers. We have a group to plan how we can extend this systematic management to other liaison roles. Completion: June/July. Trialling: semester 2.

## Priority 2: service profile for teachers

- > We have a problem making clear what services we provide
- > We need a profile of services to university staff
- > The services are not all provided by liaison staff but they are all promoted and communicated by liaison staff
- > Promoting services is about listening as well as telling – we are really interested in the services that would be most helpful to teachers – we know some will be NEW services



## Priority 2: service profile for teachers

- > Services Framework working group. This group will look at the services we offer teachers apart from the obvious ones they all know about, and will aim to construct a services profile which can be pushed to teachers in a variety of ways. Deadline is December 2010. We would like to review all of our services, and we have a current focus on one high priority service.
- > My Subject Materials Online working group. This is our online reserve (its former name). And is an important We digitise material which teachers want to copy in reliance on Part VB. In the past we have seen it as a compliance measure – now we want to re-brand it as a service which provides digital materials to help teachers teach. The target is June 2010.

# Priority 2: service profile for teachers

Services framework. For example

- Reserve system (rationing books)
- My Subject Materials Online (articles and chapters digitised & online)
- Linking (helping you link from Blackboard / WebCT to MSMO)
- Books, ebooks and journals (recommending and purchasing)
- Commercial databases (we buy them and help you use them)
- Films, radio, TV – off air recordings for use in class or through the library
- Learning object repositories – not yet, but we can
- Sources of free pictures and other things
- Copyright support and advice
- Participation in curriculum development & learning technology

# Priority 3: services to researchers

We provide (or have thought of providing) many services to researchers, some through the repositories unit and some through the liaison staff

- > New Research Services Librarian to coordinate
- > Swinburne Research Bank
- > Referencing training for research students & researchers
- > Collection of the HERDC data
- > Provision of researcher pages for each researcher
- > The ANDS project in 2010 will look at providing support in data management
- > Regularly issue a newsletter to research staff.

# Priority 4: Services to students

- > This heading is mainly about information literacy and desk work – lower priorities for liaison, but not for the library
- > Library skills working group: In semester 1 we produced a n orientation and marketing video which showed new students what the library does. In semester 2 we plan to develop online tools to replace some of the formal information literacy work we do. We will work with other institutions where we can, and with our ITS Department. Completion: December.
- > We are looking at ways of scaling back face to face classes
- > We are looking at ways of scaling back desk work for liaison staff – although some desk work may keep them in touch

# More working groups

- > Online voice group. We have to get ready for the time when our users are even more overwhelmingly online. This group will look at statistics and feedback from online users. "The invisible user has a say." The group will start at the semester break and conclude by December 2010.
- > College group. Swinburne has established a third arm, Swinburne College, which poses new liaison challenges. A small group is exploring these in conjunction with the College itself.

# The new digital library

- > Libraries manage content. But can content management transform liaison?
- > Repositories – a way of organising things
- > Not really much like a backpack
- > More like a library
- > We hope



# Content management



- > Libraries manage content
- > At Swinburne we have many ideas for ways of managing content – research repository, image bank, multimedia / digital media, learning objects, publications of journals and monographs, My Subject Materials Online, research data management, iTunes U, and more.
- > Our goals are client-centred and service-oriented
  - Save the staff member time – we do the work
  - Provide a high level of quality control
  - Bring to bear a good knowledge of managing information
  - Simplification and clarification of processes
  - Sound approach to intellectual property
- > New range of services based on information management skills

# Managing Liaison



- > So bringing that thinking together, we have a new management structure for liaison
- > We have combined liaison with the repositories unit (Online Services and Strategies) and put the head of the latter in charge of both – we've brought together some bits of the scary library with the people we think should be our best communicators with the university
- > We want to achieve new synergies and escape stereotypes
- > To locate liaison in the scary library not the cosy library – out there with the academics, making ourselves even more indispensable

# Work in progress



New digital libraries + Communication & Service + Technology

Definitely a work in progress – though we aim to finish the first stage by the end of 2010

We are doing it because liaison is important – our face to the University's staff

The goal is to provide real services that save our university staff time, leave them better organised, & add value to their teaching

University information management is a complete dog's breakfast : the skills and knowledge of libraries are needed more than ever.

Libraries are better placed to do this kind of thing for than anyone

Someone has to make sense of it all. Us.

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