

# Help or hinder: usefulness of library help guides

## CAVAL Reference Interest Group Forum

August 2007

**Date & Time** Friday 17 August 2007 1.00 for 1.15pm start

**Venue** Swanston Library, Seminar Room 1,  
Level 5 RMIT University Library  
Melways ref 579 J7 Building 8, entrance on level 5.  
Online map <http://www.rmit.edu.au/about/maps/city>

### Program

1.15: **Welcome and Introduction**  
Daryl Bailey, Australian Catholic University, Chair of CRIG

1.20: **Evaluation of library help publications**  
Stephanie Foott, Web Manager Monash University Library

In early July 2006, a consultant was commissioned by Monash University Library to undertake a research study into the effectiveness of the range of "self-help" publications offered to library users. This presentation will outline the process and discuss some of the key findings.

2.00: Questions to Stephanie

2.10: **Online Subject Resources Pages – dinosaur or phoenix?**  
Linda Sheridan, Albury Wodonga Campus Librarian LaTrobe University Library

In 2005/2006, as part of a revamp of the Library website, the Subject Resources Pages were reviewed. This presentation will share the outcome of the review and explain some of the challenges of producing collaborative pages that are manageable to maintain, relevant to a wide range of students across many locations, and with scope for Subject Librarians to share their expertise.

2.30: **Designing from the users' perspective**  
Thomas Rutter, Library Web Coordinator, and Dana McKay, Usability Analyst, Online Projects Swinburne University of Technology Library

Redesign of the Swinburne Library website is very much a "work in progress". Tom and Dana will talk about the general approach being taken, the hows and whys of some of the recent changes implemented, and some of the background research on making navigating and searching easier.

2.50: Questions to all speakers  
Comments about other libraries' approaches welcome

CRIG Forum General Discussion and close

- 3.25: Close - Daryl Bailey
- 3.30: Afternoon Tea & Informal networking
- 4.00: Tours of the Swanston Library

### **Transport / Access**

- Parking: Commercial car parks in Cardigan Street, Carlton and LaTrobe Street.

Note that street parking around Swanston, Cardigan and Queensbury Streets is usually only for 1 – 2 hours.

- Public transport: Train to Melbourne Central Station  
<http://www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au/>  
Trams to corner, Swanston and LaTrobe Streets

### **The Speakers**

#### **Stephanie Foott**

Stephanie has worked at Monash University Library in various roles including Subject Librarian, Publicity and Publications Librarian and Information Literacy Librarian. She is currently Library Web Manager and has managed several projects.

#### **Linda Sheridan**

Linda has worked as an English teacher, cataloguer, and reference librarian. After a few years juggling library work with working as a Research Officer with the Department of Human Services, Linda became Head of Reference Services at the Albury-Wodonga Campus of La Trobe University and then in 2004, was appointed Campus Librarian.

#### **Thomas Rutter**

Thomas manages content and design of the Swinburne Library website. He is currently implementing a new website design for the 2006-2007 Website Structure and Usability Project, which adopts a user-centric approach to improving access. Prior to Swinburne, Thomas worked for 4 years as a web developer at a Melbourne company.

#### **Dana McKay**

Dana has completed a PhD in human information seeking, and has worked with the Usability Laboratory at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. Her experience in various usability techniques, and passion for providing the right information systems to information seekers, have proven useful to her current role of making usability improvements in the Swinburne Institutional Repository, Swinburne ImageBank, and the Library website.