

Sharing what we have!



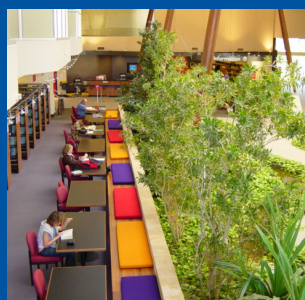
Information and people: e-resources to improve health and well-being

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Abstract:

It is possible to revolutionise the way health libraries in developing countries work by introducing access to online resources that provide information services for improving human health and wellbeing. Many health libraries in the Western world take for granted their ability to provide their clients with a vast array of electronic information resources, even if it is within a climate of budgetary control.

The University of Queensland in Australia offers a 'Creating a Cybrary' program to visiting librarians worldwide. The UQ Library, often known as the Cybrary because of its combination of physical space and cyberspace, real and virtual resources and in-person and online assistance, runs the program. Comprising six modules—with a management, resources, services and technology overview, plus elective courses and full-time work experience—the program enables participants to learn new skills to transform their own libraries.



Case History:

In 2002 and 2004 librarians from the Myanmar (formerly Burma) Institute of Medicine 2, Yangon, participated in the 'Creating a Cybrary' program. Six training modules were undertaken as well as a placement at the Herston Medical Library, located within the largest teaching hospital in Australia. From the Institute of Medicine 2, U Thi Tar undertook the program between 9 February and 3 May 2002, followed by U Tin Win who attended from 27 January to 5 March 2004.

The module topics included strategic planning, collection development, managing staff and other resources, marketing, working with information technology (including website design), budgeting and measuring services.

The Myanmar librarians also visited other libraries in the region and were exposed to a wide range of electronic services available in the medical field. The stay also included visits to many of Brisbane's popular cultural attractions.

From their 'Creating a Cybrary' experiences the librarians have opened up new opportunities for the Institute of Medicine Library Service in Myanmar, resulting in improved access to health information for medical students, clinicians and—ultimately—patients. They have converted their manual catalogue to an electronic system, introduced the HINARI service (Health InterNetwork Access to Research Initiative) and the BMJ free full-text journal service for developing countries. In addition, they are creating a Library website and training their staff and other librarians in Myanmar, based on the program.

According to one of the participants, 'we use the Cybrary as the ideal standard we want to achieve—we have experienced world class training at a world class institution and it has been very effective. The Cybrary website is a like a reference bank for us.'

Following completion of the program Myanmar library staff still obtain advice and assistance from the Herston Medical Library - the spirit of **sharing what we have** continues!



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"This course has helped us transform our manual system to an electronic one."
U Thi Tar