



iResearch: information skills for life

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Abstract: The provision of information skills training and resources is a core service, which the University of Sydney Library has developed over many years. Annually, over 33,000 participants attend Library information skills training sessions to develop generic and specific information literacy skills.

Although some clients enjoy visiting the Library, preferring face-to-face contact with a helpful staff member when they need assistance; the new generation of students is primarily made up of technologically literate individuals who use IT solutions regularly for functions such as social networking and learning. Students are increasingly using 'Web 2.0' applications such as blogs and wikis, and social networking services such as YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/>), del.icio.us (<http://del.icio.us>) and MySpace (<http://www.myspace.com>) as part of their everyday activities. Research tells us that students expect to access information and resources online 24/7, and engage in absorbing learning experiences that mirror social use of technologies and allow learning at point-of-need.

The challenge was to create a common quality framework for information literacy resources that meets best practice for content and presentation, allow materials to be easily adapted at point of need and over time; and most importantly, that offers an excellent student experience for range of learners from all Faculties.

In Semester 1, 2008, the University of Sydney Library launched a series of short, interactive online learning objects, designed to address the challenges mentioned (<http://elearning.library.usyd.edu.au/index.php>). At present, the topics cover a range of core information skills, such as, plagiarism and academic honesty and how to reference, and includes 'real experiences' through scenario-based learning, humour and fun and interactive games and activities.

Usability testing results and other feedback from students have indicated a positive response to the learning objects approach. Feedback from staff have also been encouraging.

The poster presentation will discuss the development of the learning objects in detail and the feedback/responses that we have received so far.

Glimpses of Science revisited: 'Multimedia-assisted' science activities for primary school teachers and their students

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Abstract: Glimpses of Science presents some concepts and techniques of science to the primary school classroom through a student-centred approach that utilises hands-on activities accompanied by instructional multimedia resources. The project was funded by Australian School Innovation in Science, Technology and Mathematics (ASISTM) and represents a collaborative effort between the School of Physics at the University of New South Wales and a cluster of primary schools in the Sydney metropolitan region. The modules were developed in conjunction with eight primary school teachers through a series of professional development workshops and consist of a number of inexpensive kits for hands-on activities accompanied by illustrative material in the form of teacher's notes, film clips, animations and so forth. The multimedia resources are presented in an interactive slide show. Each slide shows some information, but presents a question or instructional cue that lead to small group participation in the hands-on activity under investigation. The four modules developed cover the physics topics of sound, energy, light and the pendulum. The supporting multimedia was designed to assist the teacher in facilitating the small group work and can be viewed at <http://www.phys.unsw.edu.au/ASISTM/catalogue.html>. Feedback from both teachers and students suggests that the activities are engaging and informative.

Glimpses of Science can be viewed at <http://www.phys.unsw.edu.au/ASISTM>