



# NEWS

ADELAIDE  
UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY

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## Information literacy for lifelong learning

**A**DELAIDE UNIVERSITY Library has a strong commitment to developing information literacy skills at all levels. The information literacy program is designed to equip students to be independent in their searches for information to support study and research at university, and later in the pursuit of lifelong learning.

It is designed to do this, whatever the base skill level of the beginning student, and to this end the program provides a number of avenues for the student to gain information literacy skills.

### Building blocks

Every library interaction can be a learning experience to encourage independence. The Library's 'building block' approach to information literacy is innovative and practical, developing skills in a graduated manner, starting with the basics in first year and building through later years. After an initial orientation tour, online tutorials provide the basic 'block' for new students;

delivering the basic skills instruction in this way means that specialist staff are available for a wider range of advanced seminars and are able to maintain in-depth information on the Library website.

Students can build on online tutorials by approaching the Information desk for individual help, which is designed to assist them to develop their skills further. Staff at the Information desk near the Barr Smith Library entrance and at service desks in each of the four Branch Libraries provide help with general queries, using the Library catalogue, web pages and electronic databases.

**Continued inside →**

*'I found this tutorial very useful for future research'*

*'So much information!  
It was a bit overwhelming  
learning how to access so  
many things'*

Students' comments on the  
Science online Library tutorial

***This special issue of Library News provides details of the Library's information literacy skills programs and initiatives.***

***It was prepared by Margaret Emery, Resources Librarian and Maggie Low, Research Librarian, together with Eleanor Whelan.***

## **Building blocks** [continued from front cover]

Because the focus is to develop skills and therefore encourage independence in the quest for information, the staff demonstrate effective techniques rather than finding specific answers.

If students have need for more in-depth assistance, they will be referred to the Research or Branch Librarian for their discipline. At the same time they always have access to the subject websites that the Library staff maintain.

For more formal acquisition of advanced skills, students attend specialised seminars that are normally arranged in cooperation with academic staff, and which address the specific needs of the students' study programs. These are often held in computer-equipped training rooms in the Library where students are able to practise the skills which have been demonstrated to them.

Special needs are catered for by a range of tours and seminars for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and international students, particularly those students whose first language is not English. The service is flexible and responsive to demands expressed by both students and academic and other support staff, in order that programs can be tailored to special learning needs. Library staff are trained to work with students with a variety of learning difficulties.

## **Statistics for 2000**

✓ **1 747 students completed online Library tutorials**

✓ **3 753 students attended 329 seminar sessions in the Barr Smith Library**

## **General orientation, introduction and guides**

- Tours of the Library for first-year students are given in Orientation Week, at the beginning of the first semester each year. The half-hour tour introduces new first-year students to the facilities, services and collections of the Barr Smith Library, the major library on campus, or of the appropriate Branch Library. A more limited program of orientation tours operates throughout the year for new students or staff, or for interested members of the public.
- The Library begins the orientation process before students start at university by offering Year 12 students, through their schools, an introductory session in the Barr Smith Library and borrowing privileges for those who require this. Students are introduced to the Library's web site at

**[www.library.adelaide.edu.au](http://www.library.adelaide.edu.au)**

as well as to catalogue searching techniques and a selection of resources from the Reference Collection. This is followed by an orientation tour of the Library.

- Introductory sessions are tailored to special needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and international students doing the University's International Bridging Program.
- Specialised introductory sessions are arranged on a needs basis for students with disabilities.
- Guides to Library services are available in print and on the web at:  
**[www.library.adelaide.edu.au/ual/serv/](http://www.library.adelaide.edu.au/ual/serv/)**
- Guides to resources for subjects that are taught at Adelaide University, including links to Internet resources as well as pointers to printed and electronic reference sources in the Adelaide University Library, are available on the web at  
**[www.library.adelaide.edu.au/ual/serv/](http://www.library.adelaide.edu.au/ual/serv/)**
- A range of printed guides for using databases is available - some are also available online.
- A floppy disc guide has been produced for mental health professionals which offers step-by-step instructions on accessing the Internet, and using the Library catalogue, databases and web pages.

## Online tutorials

**I**N STUDYING for a degree, students are expected to use a wide range of books, journals, databases and Internet sources for essays, tutorial work and research. When students begin their first year at Adelaide University, online tutorials<sup>1</sup> cover the essential library skills of finding books and topics in the catalogue, finding journal articles on electronic databases, and using the Internet. Different versions of tutorials are available for students in different disciplines.

Those available in 2001 are

Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences

Economics

Health Sciences

Humanities and Social Sciences

Law

Medline

Music

Science

The compulsory nature of the subject-based online tutorials for first year students is intended to ensure that they all attain the same benchmark, regardless of previous experience. They can then progress to the more advanced skills required for later years of their courses, and for postgraduate study. These skills are readily transferrable to the workplace after students complete their university studies.

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<sup>1</sup> The project underpinning this innovation is described in a paper given at the University's *LearnIT Symposium* in 1999, 'Learning library skills: workbook to web'.

The text is available at: [online.adelaide.edu.au/LearnIT.nsf/URLs/Learning\\_library\\_skills](http://online.adelaide.edu.au/LearnIT.nsf/URLs/Learning_library_skills)

## Subject websites

Websites prepared by Research and Branch Librarians provide training and guidance to students in the selection and use of appropriate resources.

They are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from any location.

Subject resources are at:

**[www.library.adelaide.edu.au/guide/](http://www.library.adelaide.edu.au/guide/)**

General interest reference resources:

**[www.library.adelaide.edu.au/gen/](http://www.library.adelaide.edu.au/gen/)**



## Research skills

**T**HERE ARE 14 subject specialist Research and Branch Librarians, as well as a group of general Reference Librarians, who provide training to students in advanced research skills.

- Specific, subject-based assistance is available to first year groups to bridge the gap between the online library skills tutorials and specific assignments. Assistance is in the form of lectures or essay assistance on the web or in print.
- Research and Branch Librarians provide seminars in specific subject areas. In the Barr Smith Library seminars are provided for most subjects, by arrangement with the appropriate Research Librarian.
- Students gain practical experience in seminars in the Library's computer-equipped training rooms, or Research and Branch Librarians can give sessions in the faculties and departments where this is more appropriate.
- Research, Reference and Branch Librarians make appointments for individual consultations with both undergraduate and postgraduate students as well as with staff. In-depth specialist assistance is provided to users in order to foster independence by demonstrating effective techniques.

## Feedback on the information literacy program

- Messages posted to the Library's website express satisfaction with the subject websites and other aspects of the information literacy program
- Evaluation of the online tutorials indicates that many students find the tutorials useful to them in learning how to use Library resources
- Reference, Research and Branch librarians receive many personal expressions of appreciation for the service they provide and repeat requests for seminars and for consultations.

### ***More students' comments about the Science online Library tutorial***

*'The tutorial was very helpful and easy to follow'*

*'Overall the tutorial was good at giving a detailed introduction to how the library and computer system works...I found the tutorial long but beneficial at the same time'*

*'The tutorial was excellent, but maybe have more worked examples as many people like myself learn more from real examples'*

*'I found that this computer tutorial is very helpful. Keep up the good work'*

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