

THE ROLE OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN TRANSITIONING TO DIGITAL CONTENT - THE CASE OF THE RMIT VIETNAM LIBRARY

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ABSTRACT

The 21st century requires educational institutions to equip learners with the skills needed for their work and life. These skills include the ability to navigate to quality and reliable resources in an increasingly digital world. With these aims in mind, a group of researchers started the Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills (ATC21S), a collaborative international project sponsored by Cisco, Intel and Microsoft and led by the University of Melbourne, to build "the foundation for assessing and teaching 21st century skills to students worldwide" (ATC21S, 2009).

McFadden (2012) has predicted the near and long-term future of digital materials along with technologies. Print learning materials will still "dominate the market for the next 2-3 years with a growing use of digital resources in problem based learning." (McFadden, 2012, p. 96). Along with the prediction of the increment of digital resources, the tablet market is also forecasted to develop with vast memory, connectivity, and convenient applications for educational purposes. This can be seen in the recent development of digital resources and mobile. So what do educational institutions need to do to prepare for this rapidly emerging and ubiquitous trend?

This paper presents the best practice demonstrated by RMIT Vietnam Library in supporting the university to transform to digital content in learning and teaching. Collaboration among different units at RMIT University Vietnam has brought to both Academics and students a digitally enabled learning experience.

INTRODUCTION

Digital content nowadays plays an important role in learning and teaching especially in the higher education settings. This is due to the convenience in transportation, engaging in interaction and enjoyment in customization, digital content is really enhancing learning opportunity (Goolding, 2016) According to SETDA (The State Educational Technology Directors Association), there is a number of advantages of digital content in the learning and teaching context. "Digital materials provide many teaching and learning benefits to educators and students"; "they can be updated more quickly than traditional print materials, may be adapted to address students' learning differences and styles (with an appropriate license), and can offer interactive functions that pique student interests" (SETDA, 2015).

There is no doubt that the use of digital educational content is expanding worldwide. McFadden (2012) anticipates print learning materials continuing to dominate for the next 2-3 years, but that there is "a growing use of digital resources in problem based learning." (McFadden, 2012, p. 96). So what can university libraries do in response to this new challenge? Lea and Jones (2011) note: "universities need to respond immediately to this new generation of students, in aligning their teaching and learning activities with students' digital worlds"(p.378). RMIT University Vietnam is in the process of transitioning to digital content to adapt to the current trends.

RMIT VIETNAM UNIVERSITY CONTEXT

RMIT University Vietnam is an Asian campus of Melbourne-based University RMIT-Australia's biggest tertiary institution. What makes RMIT different from others has been demonstrated in our RMIT Vice-Chancellor and President's declaration:

"RMIT exists to create transformative experiences for our students, getting them ready for life and work, and to help shape the world with research, innovation, teaching and engagement" (Switkowski & Bean, 2015).

This statement has been formalized by RMIT in their strategy to 2020. In the strategy, the Life changing experience is prioritized as the foremost direction. A key action in this strategy is to provide students with a transformative, digital enabled learning experience. In doing so, RMIT aims to make students ready for work and life and become active lifelong learners. In other words, after graduation, students will be able to "acquire and assess information and its relevance to particular tasks and projects" (RMIT University, 2016) which shows the importance of student's abilities in navigating information during their life- long learning in a digital world.

In regards to the University's strategic plan, the library in Vietnam has been restructured with new roles to better align with digital learning trends. To facilitate support for digital learning, the librarian roles have been redesigned to provide one dedicated Research Librarian, two Learning and Teaching Librarians, and five Liaison Librarians. In addition, to align with the University strategic plan, the 2016 library business plan has been created, which draws on the objective of digital content orientation. In the plan, the RMIT Vietnam Library leads the embedding of digital subject guides into Blackboard, and linking all course reading materials to the RMIT digital collection, increasing the number of library digital literacy workshops and the number of attendees.

Financially, the Library budget has been allocated to meet the requirement of expenditure in promoting electronic resource usage. For instance, increasing subscriptions to electronic resources and to digitalise Vietnamese collection needed. The budget also extends to library events promoting

digital content usage including organising meetings between publishers and academics to update publication trends, such as e-book replacements..

For expertise support, Melbourne Library plays a vital role in the transitioning process of RMIT Vietnam with sharing the extensive electronic collection of 300 subscribed databases including thousands of electronic books, journals, videos, and images. Further, Melbourne counterparts are supporting the digitisation activities, namely scanning book chapter to post it on our repository collections and seeking copyright permission to upload films online...

Moreover, the working style of library has been changed accordingly. The library media tools strategy states, "to improve access to information for RMIT students and staff, the Library has progressively been switching to an e-preferred buying strategy. This means that whenever an online version is available for new Library purchases or subscriptions - the online version will be preferred. This has been made easier as publishers have developed more effective models for electronic publishing" (RMIT Library, 2016)

TRANSITIONING TO DIGITAL CONTENT IN RMIT VIETNAM

The three core benefits of moving to digital content have been stated clearly by RMIT library. First, the library provides "24/7 instant access, which means students and staff can access online Library resources whenever and wherever they need it". Second, "Simultaneous user access to the same resource" and "increased search relevancy: Ability to search at the journal article, and eBook chapter level in LibrarySearch". Third, through "Better Integration: Academic staff can permalink to online books/journals/streaming videos in LibrarySearch within Blackboard for immediate student access" (RMIT Library, 2016)

Six months since the implementation, there are a significant increase in the number of digital resource viewings. The change is brought about by a variety of RMIT communities, including RMIT students, Academics, researchers and professionals. Of the past five months from January 2016, the number of pages views by visitors increased to more than 160 percent, accounted for over 50 percent of 2015's

The RMIT library has been supported by a very clear and effective strategic plan. This involves working actively with both the Learning and Teaching and Research communities, as well as working on many projects targeting to the entire university such as issuing Library weekly updates, organising book review contests...

Learning and Teaching approach

Thinking about learning and teaching, the traditional delivery mode tends to be mono-directional lectures while students sit passively receiving the information, sometimes responding to the lecturer's questions (Biggs &

Tang, 2011). At RMIT University, our learning and teaching strategy is to encourage learner-centred orientation. The student learning experience is facilitated through problem and discovery based learning of new concept/ideas with minimum guidance from lecturers and tutors. This style has been proved far more effective than the traditional teaching methodology (Jansson et al., 2015).

Students are now required to read relevant readings materials prior to the class since it has been proven that learners proactively contribute more to in-class discussions and achieve deeper learning outcomes (Biggs & Tang, 2011). To make this easier and accessible, students are encouraged to utilize digital rather than physical resources for pre-class preparation. The importance of moving to digital content has been understood by Academic Managers as it clearly supports the University teaching and learning strategy. To facilitate implementation, all Academics have a key performance indicator to demonstrate evidence of using digital course content. The library's responsibility is to support academics to move away from hardcopy textbook and to include digital content into their Blackboard course shells.

There is a number of reasons why we chose to transition from printed textbook format to electronic textbook format. One of the core ideas is that the e-textbook enables users to expand the use of interactive functions such as two-way sharing of notes between lecturers and students during their interacting with the e-book. Also, it reduces the transportation time and costs which can be reinvested in the digital strategy.

A range of library activities has been implemented to further support the digital strategy. There is an ongoing process of expanding and updating the e-book collection; organising meetings between academics, administration and key publishers to update electronic alternatives; the design and delivery of student focused training sessions for the use of digital resources to provide the smoothest transition within the community; supporting course leader with the transition from physical to digital course books; and coordinating the process to embed the library digital subject guides into all courses and to link all course reading materials to the library e-collection.

Regular face-to-face meetings and conference calls as well as informal chats, are used to ensure regular communication in support of the digital transition strategy. Our Manager has met all program leaders to discuss the importance of digital transition; learning and teaching librarians regularly communicate with all course coordinators; Liaison Librarians aim to reach all the academics in person to promote this new library project. In addition, many other give-away items have been published such as flyer, brochure and book-mark. What are the results for all of these activities: around 20 out of 200 course coordinators contact the library for help to embed the library digital subject guide into course BlackBoard sites. During follow-up

communication, all the librarians would promote the library linking service to Academics.

While the awareness of digital content option within Academic community is improving, it appears a bit in slow progress. This is due to Academics are being occupied by many different time-consuming activities during class, marking, researching... Obviously, they need the support from the Library in fulfilling the task that is showing the evidence of using digital resources.

In response to the circumstance, the Library manager made a strategic decision on the process. Librarians are no longer going around advertising about its importance of having digital content to be embedded to the course shells. Instead, with the agreement between Academics and Library, the Librarians directly embed the subject guide to all courses offering by RMIT Vietnam. After 5 weeks, all the courses are embedded with the library subject guide. The statistics on accessing to e-resources are expecting to increase in this coming semester.

In the next phase, RMIT librarians will support lecturers to link all the reading materials with digital resources, and this process has begun with some course leaders. What happens is that the lecturer sends the reading list to the Liaison or Learning and Teaching Librarian requesting the e-resources collection. A google shared file will be created then by the Library. The process is very simple if all the titles are readily available online, although some titles are not yet accessible. In this case, if the source is available elsewhere in Melbourne, we will seek support from Melbourne library Digitisation Services Unit, which helps to scan and put it in our reserve collections. There are some copyright rules that we need account for. For example, we cannot scan the whole book but only apart. According to the Commonwealth of Australia- Copyright Regulation 1969, Part VB Statutory Licence (CAL) Scheme for the Copying and Communication of Print and Graphical Works, for the purpose of non-commercial, it is not permitted to scan the whole book and publish it publicly but only 1 chapter or 10% of the book (RMIT University). If there is a course that requires students to read more than one chapter, then the previous uploaded chapter should be removed before the uploading of the next chapter. Also, the scanned copy is usable in a certain time until the next order is placed.

The sources are varied, it can be an image, a film, an article, a book chapter, a piece of music, a recorded lecture, a blogging, or a podcast. After having it accessible in RMIT collection, Vietnam librarians will insert these links into the appropriate reading titles.

Resources which are available in Vietnam will also be scanned, and are stored in the Library management tool called Digital Assets. The Copyright issues in Vietnam are covered by the Law on Intellectual Property of 2005. Guidance on the Law on Intellectual Property is provided by the

government Decree issued in September of 2006 (cited in RMIT University, 2009) Students and academics can access to that collection via the permanent links provided.

Research Support

Research at RMIT should be “a source of inspiration for our students, a catalyst for innovative solutions and a driver of impact” (Switkowski & Bean, 2015). This is one of RMIT goals setting to 2020 and the library is actively getting involved in supporting the research activities in the whole community. We provide rich resources for researchers including a tool to keep track on citation impact, journal impact or researcher impact. RMIT University is subscribing to many research databases including Scopus and Web of Science and researchers use those online resources to enhance their research capability.

RMIT library is also aiding researchers with the searching tasks as an initial research support. The research librarian will assist researchers searching on particular subjects. The first priority of the resource option is the online resources which are then shared with researchers.

Disability support and inclusion

Digital inclusion plays an important role for every community, and therefore has to account for disabilities. Both Castells and Warschauer (1997, 2003) anticipated that “Digital Inclusion is an increasingly important social issue, reflecting imperatives, opportunities, and considerations about human rights, equity, issues of identity, language, social participation, community and civic engagement, and opportunity pertaining to the digital world (cited in Chadwick & Wesson, 2016)

There is an obviously close connection between the digital inclusion and disability in the learning and teaching context. As a consequence, an important target of the strategic plan is to make the information accessible to everyone in RMIT, the Library is involved in this process.

To support disability, RMIT Library is actively involved in the process to ensure information resource accessibility for all. In particular, to overcome visual impairments we contact publishers to obtain resources in PDF format. This PDF file will be shared with particular disabled student prior to the start of new semester. For those textbooks published in electronic formats, a purchasing priority will be placed on these titles in order to make it accessible for students with disability.

Events

Every semester, RMIT Vietnam Library organizes a range of events, with the desire is to expand the use of Library resources in general and electronic resources in particular. The library launched an event called “Book review contest” across both campuses. The purpose of the event is

to encourage students to read, and also to extend their use of e-resources. It is acceptable if students review a paper-book but they are particularly encouraged to write e-book reviews. Last semester, there are around one hundred participants joining this contest. Three winners were each given a Kindle fire. This prize was chosen particularly as we target to inspire students to employ electronic resources for their personal and professional life. In addition, the Library is collecting feedback from the winners on the benefit of using Kindle in daily life. This feedback once gathered will be published on RMIT library media with the purpose to encourage the broader community use of digital resources. Students would find the winner as a role model and mimic their activities in reading and learning.

In addition to the book review contest, a weekly Library update was designed to promote electronic resources. There are around 5 resources being introduced in the update. The resources are varied in format counting video, report, e-book, e-journal article,...All the recommended reading must be relevant to all programs offering by RMIT Vietnam including Centre of Commerce, Centre of Design, Centre of Technology, Centre of English and Professional Communication program.

We are proposing a plan to design small electronic collection for every particular programs which are compatible with Vietnamese resources. With the approval from the RMIT Library manager, it is believed as another effective tool to promote our electronic resources

Other approaches

RMIT Vietnam library also organises varied events to specifically promote the library products and services.

Firstly, with the guidance from Library management teams, library staff are running dozens of workshops each semester which can be open to all or tailored to specific course or program needs. Open to all workshops consist of How to use Library resources, Citing and referencing, Internet searching and Endnote workshops targeted to newbie and English students who have no experience in searching both Academic and open access resources or citing and referencing skills. After attending the workshop, students are able to search for academic and non- academic resources by using basic searching skills provided. They also understand the reasons for and the importance of citing and referencing in the academic environment.

To further support this the library encourages students to use the Endnote reference management software. Endnote is not only an effective tool to support users with citing and referencing automatically, it is understood as a powerful tool that can increase the use/view of digital resources. It is simple for users to capture references from RMIT library online databases which means a lot in the duty of changing searching habit in RMIT student community. There are more and more students who have the habit of

using Ebsco, Proquest in searching and locating information and to capture references from online resource records because of the ease of use compared to manual input.

The tailored workshops are those requested by lecturers of a particular course since they find that it is necessary for their students to be equipped with advanced searching techniques with a just-in-time focus. The workshops are therefore designed specifically for a particular course specifically based on the student's course information needs. Students are equipped with the advanced level of searching, evaluating and managing skills which is necessary for them to survive in the digital academic world. During Library workshops, students are introduced key e-books, e-journal that are likely to meet their assignment needs.

Besides offering face to face workshops, we are designing many online tutorials which are tailored for different courses. These online tutorials can be embedded to a course shells that allow student to go through at their own pace and can also be used as part of a flipped classroom.

Last but not least, a range of online tools are being used that help students get familiar with the nature of working and learning in the digital world. For example, we use some online game tools like Kahoot or Socrative in supporting trainers to encourage interactive learning activities and to encourage students to give feedback on library workshops via Google forms. The point here is, the more they become an expert in the digital world, the more likely that they will get familiar with digital content in replacement with the print format.

CONCLUSION

Transitioning to digital content is a contemporary trend in the publishing and library worlds. There are a number of reasons for this trend. One of them is to prepare students with the 21st century skills built into curriculum.

As part of the RMIT Strategy to 2020, the library is successfully contributing to the trend of moving away from printed resources. We are replacing printed materials with electronic materials which is supporting the current University teaching and learning approach as well as preparing the students with set of skills needed for their current and future life.

On reflection, there remain a number of tasks that should be implemented to enhance the project outcomes. The promotional tools for the project should not be limited to email, printed flyer/bookmark/leaflet,...but should expand to different media promotional tools like facebook or twitter; a deeper cooperation between Academics' plan and the library strategy also should be taken into consideration. This would improve the awareness among the many university units and especially the student community. Also, when there are course assignments requiring demonstration of e-

resource use, students would be more adept in choosing and using online academic resources that the University subscribes to.

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