

## News from Libraries : E-learning @ Ngee Ann Polytechnic Library

**B**lackboard Learning Management System (LMS) has been chosen as Ngee Ann's campus e-learning delivery platform since 2002. With e-learning, students look forward to seamless access to resources at any point in their learning activity. For students to gain connectivity directly to a wide range of resources when accessing a particular course module, lecturers will have to integrate all the relevant e-resources to their course modules. Not only will it make learning more challenging, it will also expose students to more opportunities for learning.

These changing expectations have led the Ngee Ann Polytechnic Library to focus more on the e-learning approach to package and deliver information services. These include :

### 1. Online resource guides

The online resource guide is a compilation of select resources covering print and non print from our library collections, subscribed e-databases and

resources from the Web. Reference Librarians work closely with the lecturers to develop the topical guides, which are accessible on the Intranet via the Library Home Page. The processes include links to:

- search strategies. This value add approach free staff and students from having to formulate searches across different databases
- e-book titles, e-journal titles and journal issues
- specific full-text articles

Clicking on these topical links will immediately retrieve a dynamic set of results. Lecturers may select from any of these links to integrate into their course modules on Blackboard.

Lecturers went through a series of hands-on sessions demonstrated by the Library on the integration possibilities of resources to Blackboard. This has resulted in a growing trend of lecturers who have taken ownership of building up their own resource guides with the assistance of librarians. As one of our Film and Media Studies lecturer commented, *"The library resources are a treasure trove that is waiting to be discovered and the library staff are the best treasure hunters you can employ to help find it and better still, to help you make use of it for the benefit of students. Building an online resource for students is not really as difficult as it may seem at first. This is mainly because of the tremendous support and professionalism of our library staff without whom the task would have been an onerous one."*



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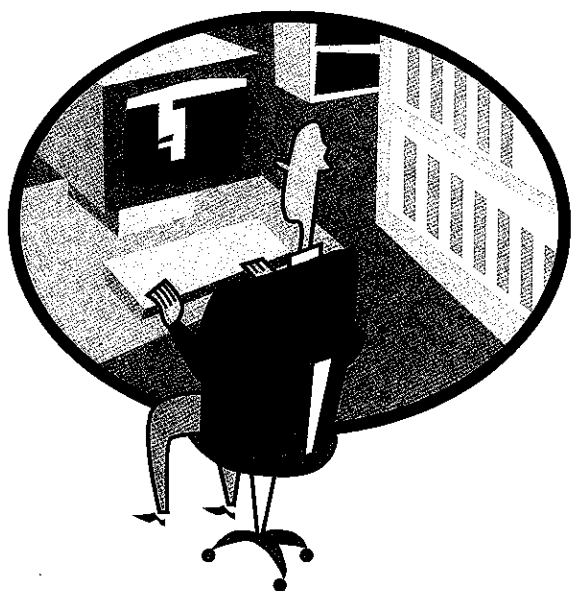
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## 2. Online demos of databases

We have prepared Databases Quick Guides & Demos to facilitate “just-in-time learning”. Demos of searches in databases are recorded live with a screen capture software. This provides for the incorporation of sound and text instruction and high quality compressed videos segments. The recordings are done in segments to enable users to approach the database through preferred options such as basic search, advanced search, browse by journal, keyword search, print, save or e-mail.

For those who do not use databases frequently, these quick demos enable them to refresh themselves over specific approaches at the time of need. It has also enabled the Library to reach out to users whom we have not been able to demonstrate to due to time constraints.



## 3. Visual Quick Guides

It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words. This holds true in the case of our experience with developing database search guides. By means of a screen capture software, sequential steps to using a database could be illustrated graphically. Users have been able to follow the Guides with ease. The visual appeal has also been a source of motivation for use, and has helped comprehension, recall and knowledge retention.

## 4. Online media listings

To save users time in locating media resources through our integrated catalogue, we have compiled dynamic media subject listings to support curriculum needs. These dynamic links via embedded search strategies keep the listings current, and free users from having to construct search strategies themselves to retrieve results. As records are always displayed in a LIFO sequence, this enables the latest additions always to be dis-

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played first, thus responding to users' preference for viewing of the latest information on any topic of interest.

## 5. Customised Courseware on Information Literacy Skills

We also work together with lecturers to integrate information literacy skills into their course modules to tie in with its learning objectives. As it is customised to specific information needs, this makes learning more effective as students find immediate application to the information retrieved

To reinforce learning, online quizzes and assignments were designed and incorporated as part of the assessment for the subject modules.

## Content Development

Reference support staff who is familiar with multimedia tools also assist the professional librarians in developmental work. The challenge that our Reference librarians face is to develop greater proficiency as instructional designers, so as to guide the developer to design pedagogically sound online courseware which will enhance students' learning.

## Benefits

The advantages of e-mode of delivery are many. The online courseware is available anytime, anywhere with 24 x 7 virtual access. Although

higher initial investment in terms of manpower and time are needed to train librarians to develop the courseware, this will be offset by the savings in manpower cost for repetitive face-to-face delivery in the long run. Students also have the flexibility to engage in learning to fit their own individual schedules at their own pace and learning styles.

The move towards e-learning has opened up new opportunities for libraries to design and disseminate new services. It has enabled the Library to shift its focus to the integration of the Digital Library in the e-learning process. Librarians now collaborate more closely with lecturers in the packaging and presentation of information resources which support their modules, providing them with relevant and value added information to meet their teaching, learning and research needs.

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