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The Electronic Information Literacy Cocktail:
a mix of online training, information, and support using multiple technologies.

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Today’s presentation will focus on two key services introduced to meet student needs and provide them with the best learning outcomes for the time, location, and technical environments in which they learn.

- Training delivered via synchronous web conferencing
- Journals and new services alerts via RSS within the University portal
Evaluation of program outcomes (1)

> Surveys were emailed to a random group of participants after most sessions
> Feedback was both positive and enthusiastic
> Students noted the benefits of training delivered to their desktop at a time and location that suited their needs

“Thank you for the opportunity – I was excited to connect and talk to other people – I really hope that more subjects become structured this way because it provides another medium for students to engage and learn together.”
Evaluation of program outcomes (2)

> Survey respondents agreed that they had greater confidence in accessing online information resources

> Those who participated expressed few concerns about mastering the technology

“… It is a most useful … stimulating and fun option. It is convenient, and Deakin should look to make use of the technology that will allow students (esp time constrained and off campus students) to stay connected and informed.”
Moderators’ observations and reflection

> Moderators were excited by the strong positive participant response

> Some concern over low participation rates on actual day of training indicated technical problems
Journal and news service alerts via RSS feeds within the University Portal

> Portal history
  - University wide initiative (initially developed during 2003)
    - Requires authentication
    - Personalised information
    - Customisable
    - Choice list of relevant services in one place
    - Single sign-on

> What the Portal environment offers
  - Tabs / over 30 Channels
  - Resources include: University news, calendar/diary, personalised channels, Library, IT links, Pay and HR, Online learning, WebMail, Policy/Procedure, classifieds, “Did you know..”
Portal Tabs

> *Short Cuts* may be customised by the user
> *Me, Work, Support* and *What’s On* are standard to all users
> *Library* appears only to staff within the budget centre
Portal Channels

> The individual can choose to display or minimize each channel within a Tab – this depends on personal preference.

The difference is Deakin University.
Portal can support RSS feeds

> A Portal view of news and research information allows simple access to RSS in a broad University context.

> RSS content on the web is often indicated by ⚡RSS ⚡XML

> RSS feeds can be displayed with dedicated viewers or web browsers (This is a personal preference).

> Some people may prefer to access RSS based information in other ways – particularly for hobby or personal interests.
The Library Channel

> Simple offering of quick catalogue search and some links to high use web pages
> ‘My Online Journals’ is the prominent aspect of the channel
> The title listings and content are derived from publisher RSS feeds
The Library Channel
My Online Journals

> Content selection based on
  - Likely user interest
  - High historical use of Journal titles by Deakin users
  - User requests
  - Availability of an RSS feed from a publisher

> Content made available includes
  - News
  - Current affairs
  - General interest
  - News journals
  - Research journals
My Online Journals

- Publishers include:
  - The Age, The Australian, BBC
  - National Geographic, BRW, Nature, New Scientist
  - CSIRO
  - Blackwell Synergy
  - Oxford Journals
  - Cambridge journals
  - Project MUSE
  - IEEE

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Top fifteen Titles/RSS feeds (those with the most Portal subscribers)

- ABC News - Top stories
- The Australian - Higher Education
- National Geographic News
- BRW
- New Scientist
- The Economist
- Nature
- Review of International Studies
- ELT Journal
- Nature
- BBC World News
- Community Development Journal
- BMJ.com - British Medical Journal Headlines
- Health Education Research
- IEEE Communications Magazine

*120 Titles/RSS feeds are available for selection

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Why put an RSS feed into the Portal?

- You could use an RSS aggregator readers like: Pluck, SharpReader etc
- You could use a Web browser extension like Sage from Firefox
- You could just use an email alert of selected journal contents pages
- Authentication
- Authentication
- Authentication
- Authentication
- Simplicity for the naive user
- Value adding

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User response to “My Online Journals”

> Since December 2005 over 6,000 individual decisions to view specific RSS feeds have been made by people – i.e. they have chosen to add a feed to their own Portal view of the Library Channel

> Between October 2006 and December 2006 there was a 13.35% increase in people subscribing to one of the available feeds (from 5,333 to 6,045)
Conclusion and future directions

- Initiatives positively received and indicate a high level of user satisfaction
- Will investigate using RSS feeds to alert users to new acquisitions and subscriptions
- Tie Library training into DSO unit/course learning space
- Ensuring that students have choices – for when, where and how they access information, services, support and training via the technology that suits their needs best – is essential to meeting learners’ needs in an evolving teaching and learning world.