

# From cardboard boxes to a corporate library

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Almost five years ago I walked into a long room, containing five desks and a huge pile of archive boxes. I had been recruited to create a library or information centre for a small but rapidly expanding energy company, on a six-month contract. The company was expanding so rapidly that it had burst out of its office space and was using an empty, unfitted floor of the building to accommodate its newly-formed gas resources group. My brief was to create order out of the chaos that was the well data for the company's gas field in western Queensland.

Last week I had a colleague come to visit me and I offered to show her around. When I stood next to her and looked at what was before me, I realised that I had a 'real' library, looking very neat and tidy, journals in boxes, standards up-to-date, seismic lines and well logs in tidy boxes — a far cry from the day I walked in. The neat and tidy appearance is all due to Joyce Steveni, assistant librarian. The size and diversity of the collection is the result of the efforts, in five years, of both myself and my staff (Joyce and her predecessors) working to build relationships and trust at all levels within the company.

The motivation for my employment was to get someone to tidy up the well data, set-up filing systems for it, then leave it in the hands of a technical assistant (usually someone with geology background). This is not an unusual scenario in the oil and gas industry, especially amongst the junior players. What the company now enjoys is a medium-sized library (more than seven

thousand items, more than forty journal titles, and well, seismic and engineering data), two full-time professional staff and wide range of information services.

The library now offers inter-library loans, research services, a limited SDI service, an on-line catalogue and a corporate-wide records and electronic document management system. The library has evolved along with the company. From just dealing with the well data (a strange hybrid of records, grey literature and monographs), seismic lines and wireline logs, I expanded slowly into providing inter-library loans for some of the engineering staff, managing the standards collection, establishing and maintaining a corporate e-mail system and Internet access point, and eventually undertook very complex research requests for the company's business development unit, which have direct impact upon company activities.

One of the keys to the growth of the library has been the development of strong partnerships with key people within the organisation. Having a small client base (the library serves between fifty and sixty staff members), it is easy to develop long-term working partnerships.

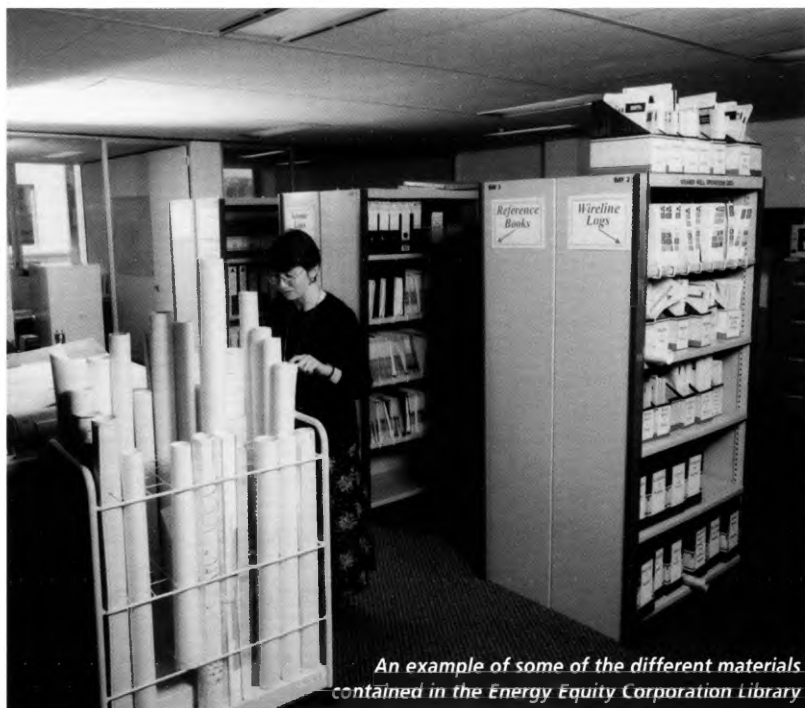
The computer graphics coordinator has been with the company for about as long as I have and we have been able to work together to manage the graphics produced internally (such as maps, montages, charts, and public relations material) such that it meets my 'data management' concept, but is also easy for graphics, gas and engineering

staff to access. Graphics staff enter records on to the library on-line catalogue, into a database I have customised to suit all our needs.

Engineers who once hoarded books, articles, and research papers, are happy to have them added to the library collection because they realise the material will not be whisked off to some inaccessible fortress, but usually given back to them on permanent loan once it has been catalogued. When they no longer require the material, it returns to the library shelves, often located right outside their office doors.

As the company has expanded over the years, the position of the library in the corporate structure has changed from being a purely technical resource, reporting to the manager of a technical area, to having a corporate-wide focus, reporting to an administration manager. The current records and document management project is a result of this changing focus.

I feel the survival and growth of the information and library service over the past five years is due to its flexibility. We deal with staff at all levels of the company from the chairperson of the Board to the most junior employee, and we supply information on a wide range of topics, often well-removed from the library's original, purely technical brief. This flexibility and broad client base has helped to ensure our growth during a time in which libraries in similar companies are being closed. Energy Equity's strong commitment to providing staff with access to good support services has also helped ensure our continuing growth. ■



An example of some of the different materials contained in the Energy Equity Corporation Library