

Flying high with information

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Qantas Airways has two libraries: the Qantas College Library, and the Qantas Information Technology Information and Research Centre (IRC). The libraries cater to the information needs of various groups within Qantas. The libraries operate five days a week and are managed by library-trained staff. Both libraries use the CAIRS Library Management System for cataloguing, loans, reservations and subscription management. They also have connections to ABN and the Internet.

Qantas College Library was established in 1995 to support the educational requirements of Qantas College, a registered provider of business training for Qantas staff worldwide. The library provides materials and services to staff such as the loan of resources including books, videos, audio tapes and journals. It also offers research assistance via the Internet, and computer-based training (desktop applications), inter-library loans and assistance to the learning centres within Qantas.

The collection has grown from approximately 600 to more than 1700 titles with the majority of the resources in the areas of management and auxiliary services. The catalogue is available to staff via the Internet, providing a convenient search by author, title, keyword and subject. Staff are also able to request resources online, making library resources accessible to staff worldwide.

Qantas College provides structured training in areas such as communication skills, conflict resolution, train the trainer, cultural awareness and problem solving. In the past twelve months one of the major focuses of Qantas College has been the development of Qantas College Online, a fully-integrated online system for the delivery of self-paced education. Learning is embedded within a virtual airline company that provides the facility for experiential action learning.

The Qantas Information Technology Information and Research Centre (IRC) aims to make the jobs of the staff of Qantas IT and its parent company Qantas Airways Ltd more productive by providing information in a timely and efficient manner.

The primary function of the IRC is to provide access to information and expert

research services. Staff also provide training in effective information-gathering techniques and provide access to training materials for various computer packages.

The IRC staff manage journal subscriptions and company memberships in addition to evaluating and purchasing information resources. Where possible and practical, the IRC is moving away from collecting and storing paper towards electronic storage and delivery of resources. The main focus of the IRC collection is information technology, with smaller collections of airline industry information, business/management information and training material.

While there is a physical collection, the importance of accessing information from people's desktops has been recognised. A wealth of electronic information is hosted on the IRC's local area network, making information accessible to staff at Qantas sites around Sydney and beyond. The IRC has also begun using Lotus Notes to host several new databases which has proven to be a popular means of information delivery.

The aim of the IRC is to provide staff with the tools and knowledge so that they can search for information themselves. The IRC staff can then concentrate on providing value-added research services — such as assisting with queries that require the unique skills of an information professional.

The real benefit to the company is realised when high levels of analysis are applied to any information gathered. All major research is tracked, enabling IRC staff to avoid duplicating work. Tracking also helps IRC staff to put clients in touch with other people with similar interests, or to find people in the company who may be able to help with a particular problem.

It is almost passé to talk about the changing information environment, and the changing nature of information work — however, if the information profession is to progress, we need to look for opportunities and be prepared to take action. The ongoing aim at Qantas is to ensure that the Qantas College Library and the Qantas IT IRC continue to meet the needs of all staff, and are regarded as valuable assets to the organisation. ■



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