

ask.monash: creating a positive, satisfying customer experience

How does a library deliver a service that creates a positive, satisfying customer experience and encourages them to reuse, trust and value the service?

This was a strategic question that required a strategic response and paved the way for one of the major initiatives the Monash University Library has undertaken over the last twelve months. The library participated in the ask.monash service, the University's official online inquiry service, and joined a number of other campus divisions already using the service. The library has, however, led the way in making use of ask.monash for external Monash clients.

A web-based help system, ask.monash enables enquirers to find answers to questions at a time which suits them, rather than limiting them to the hours a service desk is open. The system has three main features: a searchable collection of frequently asked questions (FAQs); the ability to submit questions online to support staff who respond to the query,

and a personalised area where progress of submitted questions can be monitored.

Recognising the level of professionalism required for written communication with customers, our initial involvement in the ask.monash service was to provide a standardised, knowledge base for library staff answering queries on library services and resources, to improve workflow and reporting capabilities for enquiries, that is improved statistics and monitor the quality of responses. Moving the library's enquiry services to a single point also meant enabling a self-help service for students and other users seeking information.

ask.monash has improved the user's experience by enhancing access to information. The FAQ service has increased staff productivity through reducing the number of repetitive telephone calls and email requests freeing staff to focus on other tasks. The FAQs can be created in response to an increase in a particular query or an anticipated change.

Since the service was launched for the library in August 2006, usage statistics have steadily increased with a growing take-up among library users, particularly the FAQs.

FAQs relating to overdue fines and borrowing entitlements received some of the highest level of interest from Monash users, while large numbers of users also viewed answers relating to online tutorials, loans renewals and requests. Monash students and staff log in to access the wider range of FAQs, while non-Monash users only have access to the more general questions available on the public site. Non-Monash customers may also submit an enquiry electronically.

Enquiries are expected to decrease as the library is developing the right FAQs to answer most of the enquiries, improving the website navigation as well as the content.

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Who's where

Former State Librarian of NSW and Bulletin/QANTAS Businesswoman of the year, **Alison Crook AO**, has joined the Board of Suters Architects as non-executive Vice-Chair.

Sue Henczel, most recently of CAVAL Collaborative Solutions, is now Manager, Faculty Library Services at the Waterfront Campus Library of Deakin University.

Nora L. Martin has been appointed Library Manager at the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC) in Chatswood. Nora was previously at Manly Library (for nearly 21 years), and Research Librarian at Fairfax Media.

David Sidebottom has been appointed Regional Sales Manager for Serials Solutions Australia, New Zealand and SE Asia. Serials Solutions remains part of the ProQuest family after the merger of ProQuest and CSA.

Clare Bristow has become Client Services Manager for Swets' Australian office. Clare has more than 30 years' experience in academic, corporate, public, special and national library sectors.