Title:

Keeping up with the Jones's – experimenting with changing technologies and applications for library services

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Abstract:

Students entering University are IT literate in a way not imagined even five years previously. Mobile technology and the pervasiveness of social networking are game-changers. Students constantly engage in an online environment where they expect to discover anything they need to know and access it immediately, either by engaging with online apps or by asking friends and associates.

To stay in the game, Deakin University Library has responded by pursuing mobile friendly applications and interfaces, engaging in social spaces, and experimenting with new technologies including e-reader devices, iPads and other mobile devices. The impact of mobile technologies extends to all service areas - library resources, the library catalogue, support for users, and library spaces, are all changing to accommodate new ways of interacting and connecting with information and students.

Deakin University Library has adopted a whole Library approach to adapt library services to the demands of the rapidly changing environment. It is not enough to monitor – staff must engage and experiment to stay in the game. Critical factors include staff willingness to accept new technologies, institutional ability to accommodate the challenges of social networking and proprietary devices and apps, vendor readiness to provide mobile-friendly products, and organisational flexibility to adopt new ways of providing library services in a connected world.

This paper includes discussion on Deakin University Library's device lending programs and the introduction of Library 'tech zones' for students to interact with new technologies. The Library has a role in proactively engaging with new technologies to explore the potential impact of their application.