

# **Librarians becoming competent: Technology acceptance in the workplace**

**Saravani, Sarah-Jane, Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec), Hamilton, New Zealand**

## **Rationale**

The ubiquity, power and adaptability of the range of technologies libraries use to drive operations provide opportunities for interconnectedness on a scale hitherto unrealisable. Libraries are facing constant and substantial change (Lakos & Phipps, 2004) and technology is forcing consideration of optimised information delivery, streamlined work methods, networking and interrelationships and heightened user expectations. Increasingly, the environment within which many libraries operate is characterised by the development of information and service delivery via mobile devices. Librarians are being urged to understand the trends in mobile use, incorporate that knowledge into professional skill sets and engage with user technology expectations and preferences (Cartwright, Cummings, Royal, Turner & Witt, 2012; Greenall, 2010; Walsh & Godwin, 2012).

A move to increase staff capability characterises the way in which libraries have responded to the impact of technology. The ability to develop confident and competent staff, to predict and explain response to innovation and to link acceptance and use of technology innovation with institutional goals promotes robust organisational planning.

This presentation explores findings from a research study determining the competencies vocational education and training (VET) sector library staff planning or engaged in mobile delivery believe are crucial, and the most effective means of acquiring such knowledge and skills through professional development and workplace learning opportunities.

## **Project methodology**

A representative sample of staff from 14 VET libraries across Australia and New Zealand were selected. Three positions from each library, including Library Manager, Systems Librarian and Qualified Librarian, were included. Data from the sample were exposed to two levels of analysis, both qualitative and quantitative. A slightly-modified version of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model was employed as a predictor of behavioural intention and use behaviour. This model allowed granular level of detail to emerge through the capacity to drill down to individual characteristics influencing predictability to accept technology innovation.

## **Discussion**

The study revealed that the impact of technology implementation raised strong awareness amongst library staff for the need to acquire skills to realise the associated benefits. Staff were keen to acquire mastery of mobile devices, they saw such competency acquisition as crucial to working effectively in the mobile environment and to offering the sorts of services and assistance to students were increasingly expecting of them. Overwhelmingly, staff wanted access to mobile devices and time to experiment with them. They believed attitude was important, adaptability and a willingness to try things out, as well as the ability to link new technologies with opportunities.

Findings from the UTAUT model revealed that longer-serving library staff were more likely to view positively the benefits mobile technologies would bring to their professional environment and were prepared to make the effort to learn new systems. Personal levels of competency with mobile devices did not appear to influence staff attitudes either in relation to the benefits to be gained from acquiring the necessary skills or to the effort required. The impact of position on technology acceptance indicated Library Managers placed greater emphasis on planning for technology impact while other staff positions realised the benefits of positively accepting mobile technologies.

### **Relevance**

This presentation relates to the theme of roles and skills of librarians and will be of interest to all librarians facing the impact of technological change upon their work environment.

### **References**

- Cartwright, J., Cummings, S., Royal, B., Turner, M., & Witt, J. (2012). Exploring student engagement with mobile technologies. In G. Needham & M. Ally (Eds.). *M-libraries 3: Transforming libraries with mobile technology* (pp. 101-108). London: Facet.
- Greenall, R. T. (2010). Mobiles in libraries. *Online*, 34(2), 16-19. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?nobk=y&vid=9&sid=6c42fede-b0f0-429f-8f6b-a0ca396474a6@sessionmgr112&hid=103>
- Lakos, A., & Phipps, S. (2004). Creating a culture of assessment: A catalyst for organizational change. *portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 4(3), 345-361. Retrieved from [http://muse.jhu.edu.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/journals/portal\\_libraries\\_and\\_the\\_academy/v004/4.3lakos.html](http://muse.jhu.edu.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/journals/portal_libraries_and_the_academy/v004/4.3lakos.html)
- Walsh, A., & Godwin, P. (2012). It's not just the same: Mobile information literacy. In G. Needham & M. Ally (Eds.), *M-libraries 3: Transforming libraries with mobile technology* (pp. 109-117). London: Facet.

Audience: All library sectors