Developing digital and information literacy: using the VLE for information skills training

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The Background

- Growth in numbers of undergraduates needing information skills training
- Increase in our range of specialist commercial databases
- Limited resources to offer hands-on training to large student groups
- VLE Course introduced in 2002 – *A Guide to Business and Economics Databases*, replacing an earlier workbook
- VLE course ‘cloned’ for specific groups of students
Aims of the VLE Course

Contributing to Digital and Information Literacy by:

• Developing student’s understanding of key business and management databases by encouraging hands-on experience

• Helping them recognise what each database covers and when to use it

• Giving the opportunity to practice database searching skills – constructing a simple search and refining the results

• Giving students more confidence in using databases for their assignments and dissertation work
What does the course look like?

Why should I do this course?
Need for information and learning outcomes

The skills of searching
How to construct a search and database activities covering business and management journals, market research, company accounts and news

Assessment
Self test for each database and a concluding self test
Example of an activity instruction

Showing are the index fields you can search. Click on **SU Subject Terms** after both small business and market* to search the subject index only (see section 2 of this Virtual Learning course). This means that you will retrieve articles that the indexer has decided are focussed on those subjects. Click on **Search** again, and at the time of …
Example of a self test question
How the course is used

- Self or course registration
- Students can work at their own pace
- Content can be tailored to suit the course
- A cloned version, *Sourcing Information for Business Management Students*, was embedded in U51016 Introduction to Business and Management. It contained a compulsory course requirement test and logon activity was monitored.
- Distance learners – 2 cohorts of 60+ students on the Global MBA Programme. As part of an induction seminar they use the course to find information for their first case study
The Family Tree

A Guide to Business and Economics Databases

- Business Databases for Distance Learners (Global MBA)
- Sourcing Information for Accounting, Business, Management and Marketing undergraduates
- Business and Economics Databases for collaborative FE colleges (Abingdon & Whitney, Solihull, Swindon)

Directorate of Learning Resources
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How well have we done?

Comments obtained by modular evaluation or informal feedback

Global MBA 2011 Induction Session:

• “The quality of the training and guides are top notch – thank you very much”
• “I tried to find info on unrelated topics and was amazed by the depth and quality of the journals available”

U51000 Critical Thinking for Business (Berry O’Donovan):

• At the end of the module students usually put the information course as either the most useful thing they had learnt or equal to academic conventions (referencing etc.)
What happens now?

- Embed the course in undergraduate introductory modules covering academic literacies
- Encourage academic colleagues to use a course requirement test and monitor student’s use of the course
- Add an evaluation section to the course to get more feedback
- Currently, there are no plans to migrate the course to other subject areas at Brookes