

# Bridging the gap – engaging distance education students in a virtual world

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# **Background**

- **SIS dominates library education provision in Australia**
- **Large faculty, range of specialisations, 100 subjects (all distance education)**
- **Review of faculty and curriculum in 2008 resulted in new courses, and online delivery**
- **Designed to improve student experience, reduce attrition, consolidate position in the LIS education market place**

# **DE: facing the challenges**

- **DE suits our student profile**
- **Fits with CSU commitment to regional education**
- **But entails challenges**
  - **Communication difficulties**
  - **Lack of student motivation**
  - **High drop out**
  - **Supporting students at a distance**
  - **Student isolation, lack of community**



# **Bridging the gap**

- **Need to build connections, increase student engagement**
- **Fully online learning environment provides opportunities to exploit affordances of ed tech and social networking**
- **Student-centred curriculum enables active and collaborative learning**
- **OLE helps address two major issues: amount of reading required, and lack of communal student experience**

# Students now read, listen .....

... let us save what remains: not by vaults and locks which fence them from the public eye and use in consigning them to the waste of time, but by such a multiplication of copies, as shall place them beyond the reach of accident (Thomas Jefferson, 1791, quoted on the CLOCKSS website).

Preservation (or conservation) is often, but not always, part of the collection managers responsibility. Preservation is necessary because materials that come into the library or archive do not remain in pristine condition:

- paper-based materials undergo chemical deterioration and become brittle and crumble. Poor quality paper and newsprint materials do this quite quickly;
- items are misused and mishandled;
- audiovisual items get scratched, jammed in machines, broken, or become unusable due to format obsolescence; and/or
- digital data becomes corrupted or unstable, or no longer readable due to hardware and/or software upgrades, or, if it is on the internet, it may simply disappear. While books do go out of print, a copy somewhere can usually be found BUT already thousands if not millions of websites and computer files are irretrievably lost, with whatever consequence that may have for the preservation of the records of humanity.

While the preservation problems posed by print and audiovisual materials remain important and should not be overlooked, the issues relating to digital resources are receiving most attention at present.

In addition, in a separate but related activity, there are two fundamental reasons, and they are not necessarily mutually exclusive, why libraries and archives digitise physical materials:

- to improve access to information, and
- to preserve existing sources of information.



## Read

This BBC news article, [British Library warns UK web heritage could be lost](#).



## Listen

Listen to the Week 11 mini lecture given by Bob Pymm about preservation and digitisation of resources.





# ..... watch, interact



## Consider

What impact do you think the internet has had on the information cycle? How does this affect the traditional information agencies and their role? To answer these questions think about the following:

- Does it make a difference if the creator, publisher and distributor of information is the same person? That is, is it still a cycle?
- Are there still consumers of the information and, if so, has the way they use information changed?
- Does the fact that more information is available "free" on the internet mean that the role of authorised agencies (libraries, archives etc) has lessened - or, simply, changed? Why or why not?



## For further investigation ...




### Watch


Clay Shirky's talk on your tube titled *How cognitive surplus will change the world* (13:39) in which he explores how digital technology combined with human generosity enables people to collaborate in the sharing of information.


Clay Shirky: How cognitive surplus will change ...







# ... and network

**facebook**   









 **Lyn Hay** [Find Friends](#) [Home](#)

 **Lyn Hay**



**FAVORITES**

-  News Feed
-  Messages
-  Events
-  Find Friends


**GROUPS**


-  **INF506 201190 Social N...**
-  INF206 201190 Soci... 13
-  INF506 201160 Social Netw...
-  ICTEXP 201160
-  MED TL CSU 15
-  INF506 201090 Social Netw...
-  Icentre 20+
-  Create Group...




**APPS**




-  Between You and Me 8
-  App Requests 6

**LISTS**

-  Subscriptions




**INF506 201190 Social Networking for Information Professionals**    
 Closed Group — inf506.201190@groups.facebook.com  
53 Members 1 Photo 7 Docs





 **Write Post**  **Add Photo / Video**  **Ask Question**


**UPDATED POSTS**

 **Lyn Hay**


This is an interesting infographic of the status of social media in China and the range of 'copycat' social media platforms that have been created due the censorship of mainstream Western platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and the like <https://www.gplus.com/Infographic/INFOGRAPHIC-A-Social-Media-Revolution-Chinas>





 **INFOGRAPHIC: A Social Media Revolution - China's Answer to Social Networking | GPlus.com**  
[www.gplus.com](http://www.gplus.com)  
G+ provides a place for people to start new conversations, ask the important questions and propose ideas online and at in-person meetings.

 Like ·  Comment ·  Unfollow Post ·  Share · 6 minutes ago


 **Lyn Hay**

Facebook is facing quite a bit of heat at the moment with a number of countries investigating FB privacy issues within the context of their regulatory policies. See <http://www.allfacebook.com/facebook-ads-europe-2011-11> and <http://www.allfacebook.com/facebook-ftc-privacy-2011-11> for US and Europe examples. What are your thoughts re these?


 **European Commission Targets Facebook's Targeted Ads**  
[www.allfacebook.com](http://www.allfacebook.com)  
Facebook is facing more regulatory fire in Europe over how the company collects and uses members' personal information.

 Like ·  Comment ·  Unfollow Post ·  Share · 13 minutes ago


**OLDER POSTS**

 **Sue Carr**


A useful list of hashtags.....

 **#HASHTAGS** **The A-Z Dictionary of Educational Twitter Hashtags | Edudemic**  
[edudemic.com](http://edudemic.com)

**Members (53)** [See All](#)




CSU's INF506 201160 class space on Facebook. A place to connect, share, debate and celebrate our Web 2.0 journey as information professionals.


 Add Friends to Group


**Sponsored** [See All](#)

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**YOUR DOG**  
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**INF506 201190 Social N...**  Chat (5)



... some participate in the  
SIS Second Life Learning Centre





... where they meet, discuss,  
debate, role play



# in groups





# or one-to-one



# present assignments





# ... professional development





# ... and party





# Second life getting started

- Standard training kit provided for all subjects (reduces workload for academics and is a resource for students)
- Small group tutorials to start the program

## Getting-Started-in-Second-Life-¶

For your second assignment you are required to give a presentation in the virtual world, Second Life. This guide will take you through the basic steps of creating an avatar and getting to the CSU School of Information Studies Learning Centre in world. ¶



- ➔ Got to <https://secondlife.com/whatis/?lang=en-US> and view the video tutorials there. This will give you some idea of the features of the program. ¶
- ➔ After viewing the short videos, click on the "Join Now" button. [Join Now >>](#) ¶
- ➔ You will be prompted to make your avatar and then to download the Second Life client software. <http://secondlife.com/support/downloads/?lang=en-US> ¶
- ➔ Read through the Quick Start Guide at <http://secondlife.com/support/quickstart/>. You won't need to become familiar with all the topics there. Concentrate on the ones relating to moving, seeing, chat and using voice. ¶
- ➔ Once you have created your avatar, make your way to the SIS Learning Centre by clicking on this SLURL: <http://slurl.com/secondlife/Iokaydia%20III/210/200/21> ¶
- ➔ The Second Life client will open and you will be prompted to login using your avatar name and password. Choose advanced mode to login as below. -¶

Username	Password	Mode	Start at
<input type="text" value="cas geordie"/>	<input type="password" value="*****"/>	<input type="button" value="Log In"/>	<input type="button" value="Advanced"/> <input type="button" value="Iokaydia II/21020021"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Remember password			

- ➔ My avatar's name is [Cas Geordie](#) and Bob's is [Coolhand Bentley](#). ¶ I will be meeting you in The SIS Learning Centre for the training sessions and to help you through your presentations. ¶
- ➔ Visiting the virtual world before you do your presentations will help you become more familiar and comfortable there. ¶
- ➔ You will need a microphone and either a headset or speakers to be able to hear and to talk in Second Life. Most laptops have built-in microphones. ¶
- ➔ If you have questions please ask me via the subject forum. ¶
- ➔ I have included some snapshots of last year's presentations below to inspire you! ¶

# Challenges

- Steep learning curve
- SL has busy interface, not user-friendly
- Needs a fair amount of commitment, time and mind, from staff and students if it is to work
- Can be hard for students who don't have good internet or fast computer



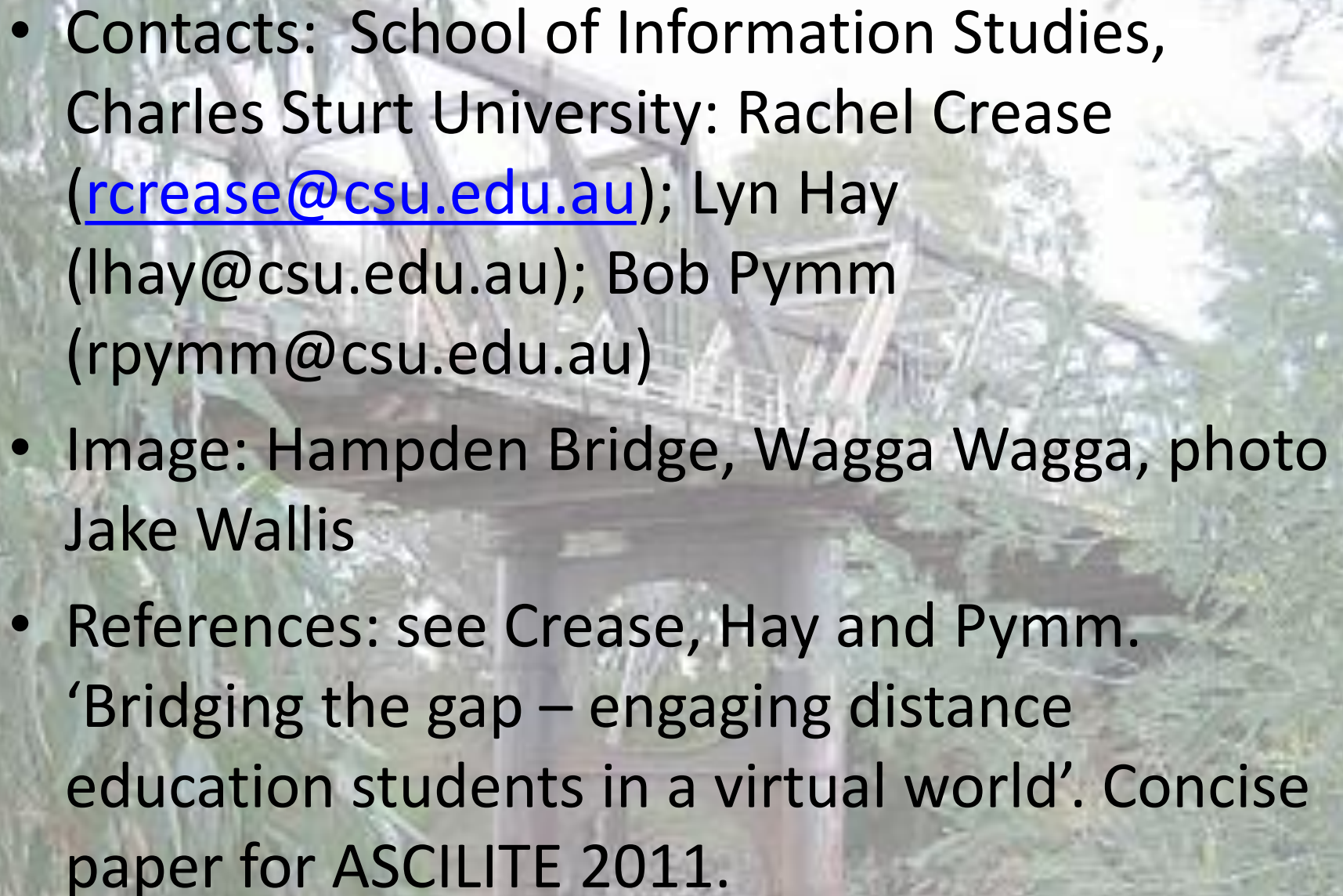
# Evaluation

- Formal investigation after a year asked
  - How did faculty feel about the *Second Life* experience?
  - How did students feel about the *Second Life* experience?
  - Based on student and academic feedback, what recommendations can be made to improve student and staff experiences, and learning outcomes in *Second Life*?

# Findings

- Time consuming ... but benefits of connection and sharing spaces make it worthwhile
- Use often superficial (time constraints) ... activities need careful planning and integration (not an add on)
- Students preferred it for communication to the asynchronous forum tool, more intimate
- Desire for one-to-one or small group guidance a powerful motivator
- Worth extending its use to other subjects



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  - Image: Hampden Bridge, Wagga Wagga, photo Jake Wallis
  - References: see Crease, Hay and Pymm. 'Bridging the gap – engaging distance education students in a virtual world'. Concise paper for ASCILITE 2011.