

# Library services, Gen X & Gen Y

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# Who?

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- **Generation X**

- Baby busters; Twentysomethings; Why Me Generation
  - Born between 1961 (1965?) and 1980

- **Generation Y**

- Generation Next; Digital Generation; Millennials; Y2Kids
  - Born after 1980

# Generational differences...

- **Gen X – “disillusioned, pessimistic, sceptical, individualistic”**
- **Gen Y – “positive outlook, confident, goal-oriented, short attention span”**

## Consumer marketing concept

On what does this cohort spend its money?

How are purchasing decisions made ?

How can products be pitched to appeal to them?

# ...and similarities!

- **Early adopters of technology**
  - High degree of technical competence
- **Discerning purchasers**
  - Sophisticated consumers
- **Value personalised service**
  - Ability to tailor service/product to fit needs
- **Time poor**
  - Focus on instant access
  - Focus on immediate task/need

# Expectations of Gen X and Y

- **Instant gratification**
  - Easy access, “short cuts”, feedback
- **Service customised to their needs**
  - What I want, when I want it, how I want it, where I want it
- **Participation within broad community**
  - Based on common experiences, values

# How are TAFE libraries doing?

- **Library websites**
  - OPAC + extended beyond home institution
  - Other borrowing functions – holds, renewals
  - Electronic resources
  - Guides to resources (pathfinders, infogates)
    - Pre-digested – selected, evaluated, packaged

# How are TAFE libraries doing?

- **Other services & facilities**
  - Electronic notification of overdue
  - Email and chat reference queries
  - Extended opening hours
  - Equipment - PCs, printers, scanners...
  - Free Web, email, chat...
  - Datapoints, wireless networks
  - Study/ meeting spaces

# How are TAFE libraries doing?

- **Instruction/ training**
  - **Online tutorials**
    - **Information literacy skills**
      - Searching the catalogue/ databases/ Internet
      - Citations / Referencing/ Style guides
      - Research help
    - **Generic skills**
      - Essay writing
      - Time management
      - Oral presentations
  - **Face-to-face workshops/ training sessions**



# Problem 1- Information seeking skills

- **Tendency to over-estimate ability to find, critically evaluate and use suitable information sources**
  - Search strategy skills
  - Critical thinking
  - Responsible use

## FOR MORE INFO...

- Kate Manuel “Teaching information literacy to Generation Y.” *Journal of library administration*, vol. 36, no. 1/2, 2002, pp. 195-217
- Philip Calvert “Web-based misinformation ...” *Asian libraries*, vol.8, no.3, 1999, pp.93-

# Problem 2 – Quality vs Availability

- **Tendency to compromise on quality in favour of ease of access, low cost**
  - ability to discriminate?
  - devalues the research process

# Problem 3 – Short vs long term view

- **Tendency towards short term “immediate need” over longer term investment of time and effort in learning**
  - **what about “lifelong learning”?**

# Learning style preferences

- **Technology based**
- **Visually oriented**
- **Desire for customised information**
- **Low threshold of boredom**
- **Active involvement in learning**

**Why does it matter?**

**Students are more motivated and learn better when 'instruction' matches their preferred learning style.**

# Some ideas for IL training

- **Emphasise outcomes not techniques**
- **Provide a range of learning options**
- **Make learning experiential**
- **Integrate into other teaching where possible**
- **Is group work an option?**
- **Build in feedback + measurable criteria**
- **Involve your Gen X & Y staff in planning and delivery**

# Conclusion

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- **Information resources & services provided by libraries to students can be viewed as commodities**
- **Understanding the likely patterns of user behaviour, attitudes and service expectations of our customers will help libraries remain relevant into the future**