

# Learning Resource Catalogue

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## Background

### U21 sponsored

The Learning Resource Catalogue (LRC) is sponsored by Universitas 21 and was initiated by the Teaching and Learning Technologies Working Party, chaired by Professor Peter Ford of Nottingham.

The software was developed at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), the Project Director is Tony Koppi of the Educational Development Technology Centre.

### Facilitate exchange of Learning Resources

The goal of the LRC is to increase reuse of learning resources. Its target audience are academics searching for existing resources for use in their teaching. It may be made available to students at some point in the future.

Quote from LRC web site on its purpose '..facilitate the identification, accessibility, sharing and reuse of learning objects...to make efficient use of existing resources and to minimise replicating the creation of costly learning materials'.

It is important to note that the LRC does NOT contain the learning objects. It is a catalogue only, not a repository. It contains information or hyperlinks that allow the user to get access to the learning object, which is stored externally.

### Web based

The software operates as a web-based application. Access is via a web-browser running on a client computer. A user requires an ID and a password to log into the system. A server at UNSW hosts the underlying database and processes requests from client computers for information. There is the option for a University to host the LRC on its own server.

The LRC has the capability to store items with either of two levels of visibility. An item (a learning object) can be made visible to the originating university only (local) or it can be made visible to all universities with access to the LRC (global).

Learning resources can be categorised at one of five levels of granularity. At one end of the scale would be an entire curriculum, at the other, a single item such as an individual graphic or multiple-choice question. The Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences at The University of Melbourne will be populating the LRC from level five to three.

## Status

Currently the following institutions have a presence in the LRC.  
Melbourne,  
Birmingham,  
Queensland,  
Edinburgh,  
Freiburg.

The development team at UNSW are currently working on the next release of the LRC, contact Tony Koppi for details (T.Koppi@unsw.edu.au).

## Trial

Kristine Elliott and I have been trialling the LRC at the University of Melbourne. We have been focussing on usability and the search function.

## Representative records

We loaded a series of representative records to examine the process for data entry and to serve as a basis for conducting searches.

## Usability

From the usability point of view, the LRC provides good support for occasional users through use of extensive on-screen guidance and help. However, this may make the system cumbersome for experienced users.

## Findings

### Catalogue standards

The LRC uses the Dewey system for indexing records. For health related applications it would be necessary to incorporate the 'Medical Subject Headings' (MeSH), the 'Cumulative Index of Nursing and Allied Health Literature' (CINAHL) and possibly 'Educational Resources Information Center' (ERIC) indexing standards.

### Quality Assurance

Procedures or work practices need to be implemented to ensure that quality standards are met and the currency of records is maintained.

### Minor software issues

Not all fields in the base record are searchable.  
User instructions are written for a Windows platform.  
Some minor bugs with scroll bars and back buttons.

Overall the LRC seems quite capable of meeting the needs of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Melbourne.

## Next Steps

### Identify Key Users

Identify in each university who will use the information and who will administer it. See the separate contact list for this.

### Agreement of standards & procedures

Get agreement between the various schools on what indexing standards to use and quality assurance procedures.

Ask Tony Koppi to modify the LRC to suit.

### Load Data

Start loading data concurrently with previous step.

### Modifications to software

As a group, investigate if any modifications to the LRC are required (in addition to the indexing standards) and discuss with Tony Koppi.

### Further Information

The LRC development team have set up a demonstration site at <http://www.demolrc.unsw.edu.au>. The user id is 'demo' and password is 'demo'

For more information about your institution's access to the LRC contact Neil Lavitt, LRC Global Manager, [n.lavitt@unsw.edu.au](mailto:n.lavitt@unsw.edu.au).