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Nsic2014

Hi thank you for coming today, I know there's a lot of other interesting sessions on as well.

Let me introduce myself.

My name is Christine and I'm the librarian for the National Sport Information Centre at the Australian Sports Commission, located at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra.

This is my first special library role, I've previously worked in public libraries in Queensland and New South Wales as a youth and reference librarian respectively, so I didn't come into the role with much government or specialist library experience. It's been a very interesting experience however, and, as I'm sure many of you are aware this is a particularly trying time for government libraries with the closure and reduction of services to several since the budget.

In many ways however, I have been lucky to come into a library which was already on the way to developing a new way of interacting with our clientele and other services to provide a better service for everyone and it is that project that I'll be talking about today. As soon as I heard the theme of the conference I thought 'that's us' because what the Clearinghouse has demonstrated to me is that 'together we really are stronger' and I think that sharing that message is important.

A bit of background on our industry –

Sport is an important contributor to Australian society both socially and economically –

In 2010 95,590 people were directly employed in sport and recreation (4156.0 - Sports and Physical Recreation: A Statistical Overview, Australia, 2012, ABS)
And 2.3 million were volunteers (Sport and Physical Recreation: a statistical overview, Australia 2011 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Catalogue Number 4156.0)

Outside of employment and volunteerism sport plays a role in various government objectives including health, physical activity, crime prevention, community engagement (youth, indigenous, CALD etc.) and diplomacy.

Australia prides itself on being competitive and innovative – consistently desiring to 'punch above it's weight' and competing on the international stage. Domestically we consider ourselves an active and sport loving society. Achieving this requires timely access to current research and information from around the globe on innovation, technology and developments. Without this information Australia will lag behind, particularly in the high performance environment. This is the role that sport information services have traditionally fulfilled.

However, in recent years the number of sport information services within Australia has declined and those still existing have been under pressure to demonstrate relevance and cost effectiveness and to continue delivering high quality services to existing and emerging stakeholders.

How was this going to be achieved? Enter the Clearinghouse for Sport

WHAT IS A CLEARINGHOUSE?

- 'a central access point (online information portal and/or physical research library service) [that] serves the needs of users of a specific body of knowledge, and provides information in an audience-appropriate manner to facilitate and support the transfer and development of knowledge'.

The concept of clearinghouses was not new in government, and ones like 'Closing the Gap' were identified by stakeholders as good examples of possible approaches. However, none of the existing clearinghouses addressed such a large domain as 'sport'.

Effective clearinghouses cannot be set up as simple information repositories or 'dumping grounds'. You need to contextualise, index, classify and quality assure the material in order to provide value. One of the goals for the clearinghouse concept was that it should be a major sectoral information management initiative, and not simply a technology undertaking. The Clearinghouse would harness technology to facilitate a cultural change with key players in the sport industry to enable optimal collaboration. It would also lead to recognition by the sport sector of the importance of information (and knowledge) as a valuable asset and source of competitive advantage. The Clearinghouse should implement information management leading practices to get the best value out of current and future information collections.

Today's talk is not designed to give a comparison of different Clearinghouses but to give an in depth overview of how the Clearinghouse for Sport has been developed and used as an example for other library and information sectors for possible future development.

Based on the strength of the recommendations from various reports and strong sector engagement in July 2011, the Clearinghouse for Sport project was initiated. The Clearinghouse is a joint project of the ASC and AUSPIN. AUSPIN was established in 1999 and consists of sport and active recreation information providers and professionals based across Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. Reynolds, Gavin, 'Using a shared governance structure to achieve alignment: Australian sport information network: a brief case study', ASC Leadership Forum, 26 October 2010. (PowerPoint presentation).

Partners in the Clearinghouse project include:

State departments of Sport & Recreation, State Institutes and Academies of Sport and Peak Sporting Bodies such as the Australian Olympic and Paralympic Committees.
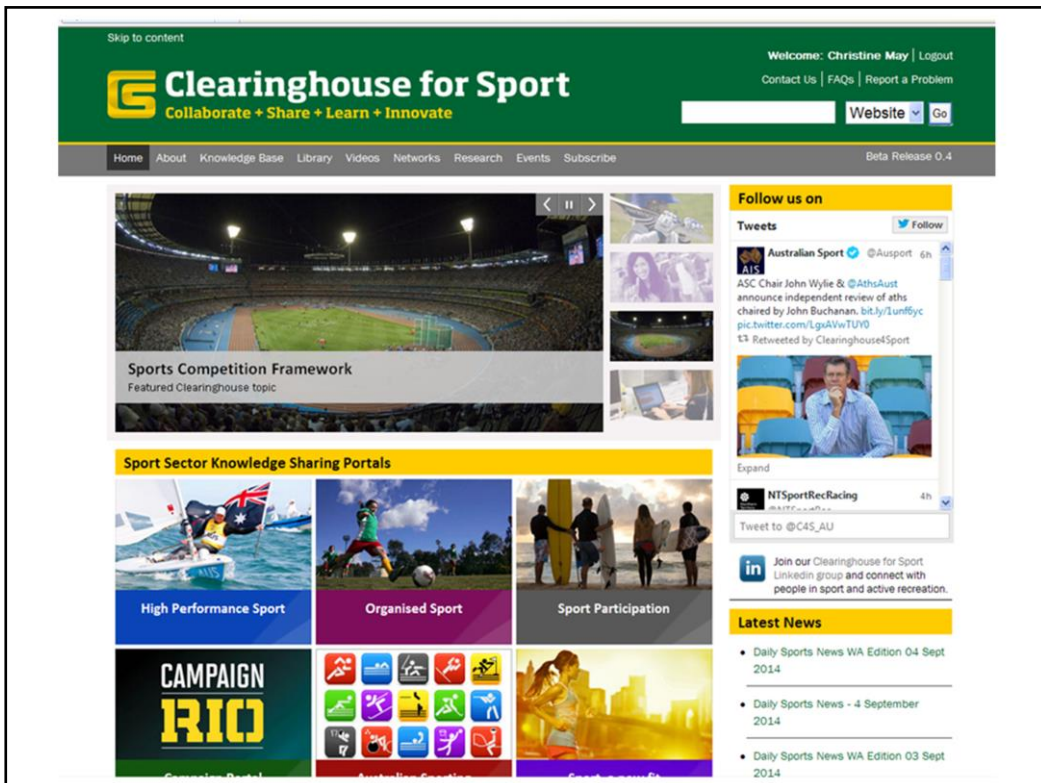
Since its inception the main outcomes for the Clearinghouse have included:

- successfully providing library services in a changing research and information environment

- attracting and interacting with key decision makers and professionals across the Australian sporting sector

- providing the Australian community with high-quality information on sport, physical activity, and active recreation. It needed to facilitate 'Know-how' (practical knowledge—best practice and/or training guides), 'Know-what' (factual knowledge—statistics, results, sports facts, dates), "Know-why" (scientific knowledge—research reports, scientific literature), 'Know-who' (network knowledge—expert directories, key contacts).

To achieve these outcomes has required the following:

- identifying the information and resource needs of the sport sector, and the most effective delivery methods

- building the required networks and membership to ensure that the information is not only relevant but utilised by the sector

- fully developing the project resources so that it can become a sustainable, inclusive and stable platform for information and knowledge-sharing and facilitating collaboration.

Through access to online databases, a union catalogue, reference and alerting services, the Clearinghouse provides library services to a broad range of clients across Australia, integrating traditional library staff and other professionals to provide a seamless service to all clients. This model also allows smaller libraries and information professionals to be backed up when unavailable due to leave or absence without delays to service. It enables smaller departments and organisations to access resources and services that would not normally be possible. In particular, access to databases has been negotiated to enable anyone working for a core sport sector organisation such as state and territory departments of sport and recreation, state institutes and academies of sport, Australian government departments, national and state sporting organisations and clubs to access resources that few of the individual organisations/departments would be able to afford independently. Moreover, experienced reference staff are available to help with locating resources through services including document delivery, research profiles and literature searches.
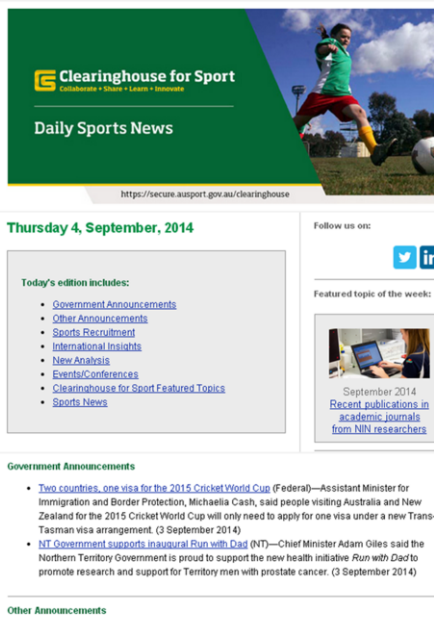
THE CATALOGUE
(of Australian Sport Sector Library collections)
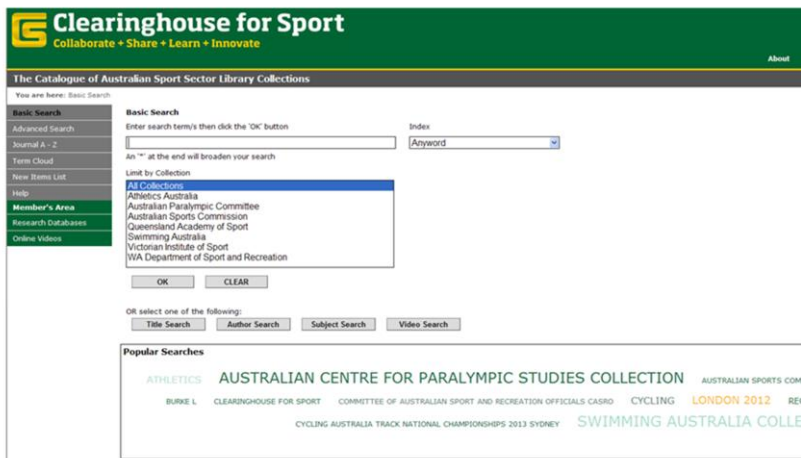
One of the identified gaps within the sport sector was the ability to search online for information relating to resources. A union catalogue, using the Libero Library Management System now provides the ability to do so. This catalogue is open to membership from any national, state or peak sporting body or department. The Catalogue of Australian Sport Sector Library collections (the Catalogue) has allowed sports libraries to make their records available online; many of these were previously undiscoverable. Furthermore, the Catalogue has also allowed national and peak sporting agencies—such as the Australian Paralympic Committee, Athletics Australia and Swimming Australia—to have the same privileges. As part of the process professional library staff have supported knowledge management across the sector by using library expertise to preserve and catalogue resources. They have assisted sporting organisations in developing an understanding of the need to preserve information and resources, and have provided the skills required to do so. In particular, digitising and preserving video recordings and documents enables access to current and future generations, as well as ensuring accurate cataloguing to enhance discoverability. The Catalogue is becoming a powerful tool for research within the sport sector by providing access to information on available resources, research and, where possible, immediate access to electronic resources such as reports, portfolios, articles and videos. As it is publically available, I have also noticed an increase in the number of times catalogue records have appeared in relevant Google searches; this indicates a good online presence.

CURRENT AWARENESS ALERTING SERVICES

- Daily Sports News
- Sport Monthly Updates

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Daily Sports News

https://secure.ausport.gov.au/clearinghouse

Thursday 4, September, 2014

Follow us on:

Today's edition includes:
- Government Announcements
- Other Announcements
- Sports Recruitment
- International Insights
- New Analysis
- Events/Conferences
- Clearinghouse for Sport Featured Topics
- Sports News

Featured topic of the week:

September 2014
Recent publications in academic journals from NIN researchers

Government Announcements
- Two countries, one visa for the 2015 Cricket World Cup (Federal)—Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Michaelia Cash, said people visiting Australia and New Zealand for the 2015 Cricket World Cup will only need to apply for one visa under a new Trans-Tasman visa arrangement. (3 September 2014)
- NT Government supports inaugural Run with Dad (NT)—Chief Minister Adam Giles said the Northern Territory Government is proud to support the new health initiative Run with Dad to promote research and support for Territory men with prostate cancer. (3 September 2014)

Other Announcements

Some of the most popular and relevant services the Clearinghouse provides are the current awareness alerting services. The *Daily Sports News*, a weekday digest that is delivered via email is the most popular. Feedback on this service, to which there are over 5,000 subscribers, is that it provides a timely and relevant summary of current sports news, trends and research. The service is highly valued and not available through any other public or commercial product/service. Where possible all links are open source and do not require access to subscriptions or pay walls.

The other main alerting service is aimed more specifically at sophisticated information needs within the sector, the *Sport Monthly Updates*. These updates highlight the most recent academic articles from the SPORTDiscus database on over 70 selected topics of interest, along with recently released books, videos, reports and web resources. SPORTDiscus is a comprehensive research database of sport and sport science literature. Core clients have access to direct links to the database, including links to the full text article where available. Non-core clients have access to the references, including abstracts, but not the links to the database. The *Sport Monthly Updates* have proved a valuable service for alerting clients to recent, reputable research in a variety of high-performance, participation, sport-specific and government policy subject areas, and have been increasing in usage, particularly in the past 12 months.

All alerting services can be sent either centrally or by specific state partners, allowing them to customise the product as required, and ensuring that feedback and requests generated by alerts are sent to the relevant staff. Clearinghouse administrators can use the platform to deliver both secure and non-secure sport information services to members within and beyond their state and territory jurisdictions. As a result more Australian sport sector members can now access a quality range of online sport information services and research resources. Overall, the Clearinghouse averages over 100,000 transactions per month, including page opens/views, electronic document and media downloads. This is a significant indication of interest and need within the sector. As a comparison, in the 2008–09 financial year, the National Sport Information Centre (NSIC) facilitated approximately 20,000 transactions per month.

In any subject area there is a requirement to identify common information needs, whether the questions asked are routine, essential to normal operations or simply topical. The *Knowledge Base*, which is at the core of the Clearinghouse, has identified many of these topics through the broad knowledge of the sport sector available to the partners and users. The aim is to proactively provide information to the sport sector on both high performance and general participation. The *Knowledge Base* actively seeks to anticipate what the sector needs and to ensure that the information is available when there is a query. Topics are not locked but are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain current, relevant and that they continue to meet the needs of users.

The *Knowledge Base* satisfies clients' queries by providing what are effectively peer-reviewed research articles. Many of these topics, such as 'Sport Participation in Australia', 'Concussion in Sport', 'Women's Sport' or 'Social Media' are relevant to all levels of the sport sector and of particular interest with regard to policy and procedures. Providing explanatory information, case studies and links to relevant research supports clients to develop their own resources or information and also helps to eliminate duplication of effort; there is no need to 're-invent the wheel' if someone has already provided the blueprints.

One of the more recently identified gaps within the sport sector has been for business intelligence and the basic information required to know how individual sports are structured, organised, funded, supported and any significant documents, policies and case studies that demonstrate this.

Developing strategies and evaluating the success of policies and planning is hampered when one cannot effectively compare the same information about multiple organisations or time periods. Effectively, sports and government bodies were often attempting to 'compare apples with oranges' rather than 'apples with apples'. The *Australian Sports Organisations* profiles are an attempt to redress this gap.

Using a mixture of open source and proprietary information, this area of the Clearinghouse allows, for the first time, a clear, concise and consistent way to compare sports, measure effectiveness and increase the opportunity for sharing successful actions to strengthen the whole sector. There are some restrictions on access to resources that could potentially provide a competitive advantage to other organisations, either Australian or International, commercial or not-for-profit.

In total Clearinghouse researchers have developed information for each of the ASC's recognised NSOs and NSODs—a total of 94 organisations. Information includes competition results, participation rates, high-performance programs and research activities. Examples of publications covered are annual reports, strategic plans, financial reports, case studies, organisation and performance reviews, investment agreements and other significant documents.

In progress is a similar project aimed at developing competitive intelligence on international countries, particularly those that Australia competes closely with in Olympic and Paralympic sports. The *International Sports Systems* profiles provide information resources and contacts for high-performance organisations in major sporting nations.

PERFORMANCE & REPORTING

- Over 7000 members
- Transactions
- 1 page report format
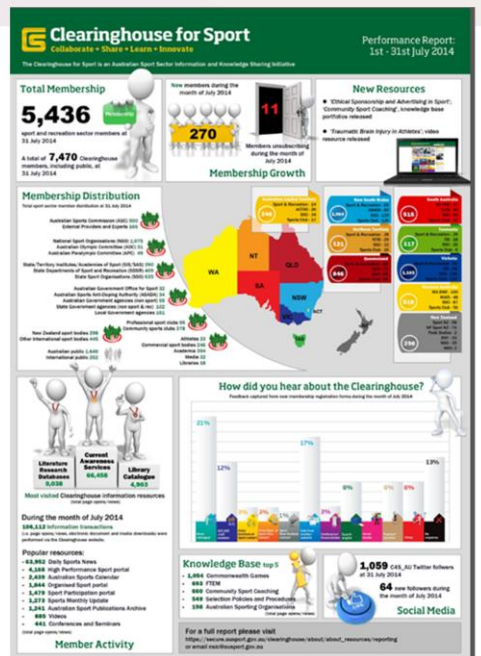
Apart from proprietary and licensed material (such as databases, some videos and ASC-specific resources), anyone can access the Clearinghouse. This general accessibility means that the project provides services to the broader sport sector including clubs, athletes, local government and the general public. It has increased the impact and relevance of all partners involved in the project, and works to improve knowledge sharing within the sector. The success of the project in reaching a broad range of the community is evidenced by the membership breakdown. While the majority of members are from the strategically targeted key sport and recreation categories such as national, state or peak sporting bodies, state departments of sport and recreation, state institutes and academies of sport, other federal non-sport government agencies and the ASC, about one quarter of members are either Australian or international public, non-sport government agencies at the state and local level, commercial or non-commercial sporting clubs, athletes or international sporting bodies.

Referrals are one of the primary reported methods of finding out about the Clearinghouse, either from other websites or work colleagues. The Clearinghouse was never envisioned to compete with the primary corporate websites of partner organisations, but to service key organisations and individuals with more sophisticated information needs. The original membership target was to reach 5,000 sport sector members by June 2014. This target was surpassed in April 2014, the actual total membership on that date being 6,760, of which 5,146 were identified as being part of the core sport sector audience targeted by the Clearinghouse concept. In the future the Clearinghouse administrators hope to increase that number to over 10,000 by including even more key sector members and interested individuals.

As mentioned in the introduction, sport libraries and information services have been under increasing pressure not only to provide services within an often-shrinking resource environment, but to demonstrate relevance and effectiveness. The development of a one-page visual report format, or infographic, has been extremely successful in helping to do this. All partners have been able to use the report without any difficulty to demonstrate progress towards project goals and achievements. The report can be customised to specific regions/departments as required. The monthly Clearinghouse progress reports are made publically available through the *About* page on the website in PDF format, which additionally makes them very simple to share within internal and external networks and has led to a better understanding of the project across the country. The performance reports provide a valuable resource for demonstrating the popularity and increasing breadth of services provided by all partners.

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CONNECTING

- Experts Directory
- LinkedIn – *Clearinghouse for Sport Knowledge Network Group*
- Twitter – *C4S_AU*

Clearinghouse for Sport Experts are individuals who have been identified as specialists in a certain field of knowledge or expertise. Clearinghouse Experts participate in evaluating and contributing to Knowledge Base portfolios. Clearinghouse Experts within this Directory have chosen to be listed as a contact for their field of expertise and be contactable by Clearinghouse members.

Social media provides a medium to connect with other members of the Clearinghouse for Sport. Follow us on Twitter for real time updates, or join the conversation in the Clearinghouse for Sport LinkedIn group

While the majority of this paper is obviously focused on the changing landscape of sport information in Australia, it is relevant to consider whether there are any ways in which other niche libraries and/or sectors with specific information needs can embrace the Clearinghouse model. The obvious answer would be yes. Although every specialist area will have different needs, the overall indications for the future are that information services will need to work hard to provide services and resources to their client base with reduced budgets and staffing levels. Working effectively with partners outside specific library-based institutions allows the integration of broader perspectives on individual sectors or industries and leads to a better understanding of what the sector, and therefore clients, really need. Using online delivery models is now an established technique, and working with various organisations often leads not only to better overall staff support for services, but also an opportunity to rapidly build membership, resources and networks. Individual organisations are increasingly struggling to provide the resources and information that their clients/members need, but a broad network of providers can help to grow, develop and deliver stronger services for all.

Since its inception in July 2011 the Clearinghouse has become a powerful, flexible and reliable resource, enabling sport sector members to be better informed and to have relevant resources to work towards stronger outcomes. Australia has a proud history of excellence in sport and physical activity, but without quality information and research this will not continue. The Clearinghouse has definitely demonstrated that it is possible to revolutionise the information landscape of a sector while strengthening the individual organisations that participate in the project. It has contributed to their ability to demonstrate increasing service and resource delivery and to prove their relevance and effectiveness to organisational and broader sector goals. Individual libraries and departments often struggle to provide the required depth of information; however, by building a network of sport sector providers, the Clearinghouse can—together we really are stronger.

Thank you, questions?