

ALIA Information Online 2017 conference paper submission

Bringing it together, putting it online: A consistent, strategic and student centred approach to online orientation

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## **Abstract**

### **Introduction**

Monash University Library (MUL) has for the first time incorporated an innovative online space for commencing students into its Orientation 2016 program: <http://guides.lib.monash.edu/orientation/home>

This pilot adopted a student-centred approach and unified the Library's online orientation message across the seven branch libraries in Australia. The orientation period represents an important opportunity for the Library to connect with new students. However, it can be challenging to compete with other university services also vying for students' attention. It is imperative that the Library ensures that, along with face to face contact, it has an intuitive and consistent online presence during orientation that enables students to access information about the Library and its services in a way that is adaptable to students' needs and technology use. This paper reflects how we set out to create a virtual space to orientate students, and what we learnt along the way.

### **Methods**

Orientation for MUL has historically been conducted on both a branch- and Faculty Team basis, meaning that each branch or Faculty team may create similar resources with varying levels of quality and design. There has been no centralised online space for orientation content and no unified Library orientation message. A working group was formed to address these issues. The group consisted of staff of varying HEW levels working across five of MUL's branches. From the planning stages the group aligned all decisions with the university-wide 'Orientation Transition Framework'. The framework states that orientation and semester weeks one to four are the key times to engage with students and this provided the basis for our design. It was decided that the Library Guide software would be the platform used to house the resources. Four key aspects of the Library were brainstormed. For each of these key areas a short video was created. Students' voices were essential to ensure that we created student centred content and it was decided that current Monash University students would be incorporated into the videos. Scripts for each of the videos were created and approved by the working group. The content was filmed on an iPhone 6 using the FiLMiC Pro app. Editing was done using Adobe Premier. The videos were uploaded to YouTube and then embedded in the Library Guide. Weeks one to four content was repurposed from existing Library content and added to the Library Guide on a separate tab so that students could access the content when they needed it, at the appropriate time.

## **Results**

The analytics from the Library Guide show strong student engagement. Since the guide was officially released in the week before O-week up until the end of week four the guide was viewed over 6,300 times. During orientation week the guide was viewed over 1, 600 times. The analytics from the four videos uploaded to YouTube tell a similar story - the videos were viewed over 1, 700 times from the week before O-week till the end of week 4 with each video having an excellent retention rate with 79% of viewers staying to watch the entire video.

## **Conclusions**

MUL's pilot online orientation program achieved its aims. The strong levels of student engagement warrant developing content and refining the Orientation Library Guide for future orientations. The focus will be on creating new resources for weeks one to four and incorporating student feedback into the changes.

## **Relevance**

The paper discusses how the pilot project aimed to create experiences that feel intuitive for users, and brought a blended, multi-branch and cross-Faculty Team approach to an information service that has been previously presented offline and in silos, presenting an innovative step towards creating a cohesive online presence. Content innovation and knowledge collaboration are key areas aligned to this project.

## **ALIA Online 2017 conference paper**

### **Introduction**

Monash University Library (MUL) has created, for the first time, a suite of online library orientation resources for new Monash University students commencing in semester one, 2016. Traditional orientation offerings at MUL have included library tours, presentations on available resources, and instruction on how to use the MUL's catalogue to locate these resources. The creation of an online space for commencing students to orientate themselves with MUL's resources, programs and physical spaces aimed to provide an equivalent virtual environment where students can access this same information about MUL at the point of need. This pilot adopted a student-centred approach and unified the Library's online orientation message across the seven branch libraries and ten Faculty Teams in Australia. The orientation period represents an important opportunity for the Library to engage with new students. However, it can be challenging to reach news students who have many university services and groups wanting to connect with them. It is imperative that the Library ensures that, along with face to face contact, it has an intuitive and consistent online presence during orientation that enables students to learn about the Library and its services in a way that is adaptable to students' needs and technology use.

### **Literature Review**

The literature on orientation in general suggests that engaging students directly before the commencement of their studies can better help students develop a sense of belonging within their selected university environment as it lays the foundation for student expectations (Robinson, Burns & Gaw, 1996; Mayhew, Vanderlinden & Kim, 2010; Larmar & Ingamells, 2010; Soria, Lingren Clark & Coffin Koch, 2013). It also helps with "integrating students into the campus culture" (Robinson, Burns & Gaw, 1996, p. 55). This has been shown to facilitate students' "adjustment, rates of performance, retention and graduation" (Mayhew, Vanderlinden & Kim, 2010, p. 321) as, according to Larmar and Ingamells (2010), students are more likely to continue with their education if they actively participate in activities within both the academic and social aspects of the university community. Larmar and Ingamells (2010) demonstrate that if this behaviour is proactively encouraged early in a student's

academic life, it can greatly reduce disengagement by alleviating negative emotions such as confusion and a sense of failure. According to Soria et. al (2013), connecting with students early on through orientation programs is highly important for institutions as 75% of first-time students who withdraw do so within or after their first semester, and orientation falls within a “very small window of opportunity” (p. 34) to engage with such students. If engaged within that window of opportunity, given more support, and encouraged to foster a deeper sense of belonging, these students are more likely to continue with their studies (Soria et. al, 2013).

Libraries in higher education institutions can take advantage of the opportunities presented by orientation to create a sense of belonging as, according to the University of Waterloo, library introductory sessions “offered before school work intensifies....will foster a calmer and more positive learning environment” (Collins and Dodsworth, 2011, p. 2). Generally, it is agreed that the objective of library orientation programs is to do just this; reduce “library anxiety” (Harrington, Ditkoff & Young, 2011, p. 1), “encourage feelings of comfort” (Collins & Dodsworth, 2011, p. 2) and provide “personal interaction with librarians” (Ingalls, 2015, p. 84).

With the ever-expanding demands placed upon new higher education students during the first weeks of semester, however, the “overload of information students receive” (Gill, Ramjan, Koch, Dlugon, Andrew & Salamonson, 2011, p. 65) during orientation can negatively impact their “readiness for engaging with their studies” (Smyth & Lodge, 2012, p.83). Blackburn (2010) and Burhanna, Eschedor Voelker and Gedeon (2009) argue that library orientation tends to take place “before the student has need to use the library” (Burhanna et al., 2009, p. 319). This issue can be countered by presenting orientation content ‘just-in-time’, right when students need it, which works to “allay anxiety and empower students to be an active participant” (Gill et. al, 2011, p. 64). This is something that can be facilitated by the flexible nature of online orientation content.

In moving content online, the general principles of library orientation sessions are applied to the online/digital environment, to recreate the physical experience of library orientation. Ingalls (2015) posits that “moving an orientations program online involves fairly closely translating the traditional method of orientation and applying it to an online setting” (p. 81). Aside from providing content ‘just-in time’, the motivation in developing and implementing such initiatives are centred on a few key tenets. Libraries are adapting to technological changes, and to an increase in open and distance learning, as

well as improving student retention and the efficiency of time poor staff and students, as library staff time can be repurposed to other tasks (Brown, Hughes, Keppell, Hard & Smith, 2013; Farrell, Driver & Weathers, 2011; Gall, 2014; Gill & Sidoryn, 2014; Madhusudhan & Singh, 2010).

The findings predominantly indicate that online library orientation programs are equal to, but not an improvement on, traditional face-to-face instruction (Ingalls, 2015). Satisfaction for web based instruction has been increasing gradually (Benoit, Benoit, Milyo & Hansen, 2006), as has student self-efficacy (Gall, 2014) and self-learning (Madhusudhan & Singh, 2010, p. 431). However, there are several disadvantages to implementing this type of initiative within academic libraries. Madhusudhan and Singh (2010) conclude that although their program was successful, “no form of virtual orientation can be a substitute for a live human interaction” (Madhusudhan & Singh, 2010, p. 438).

## **Method**

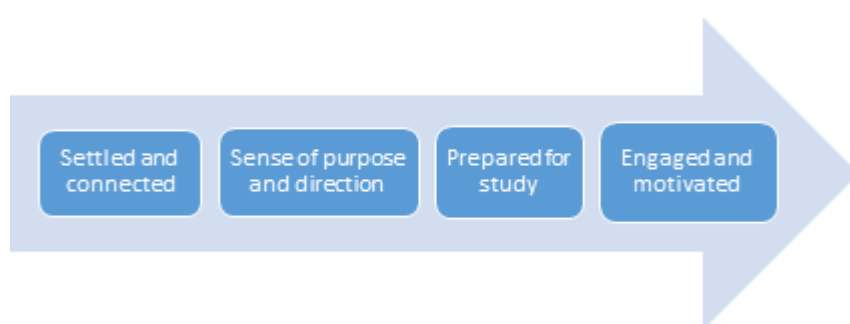
The need for orientation, as outlined in the literature review above, is clearly demonstrated. For this reason orientation is an integral part of Monash University’s induction of new students. The Library plays a vital role in the orientation process, as reaching new students through orientation enables MUL to better achieve its strategic goals, which align with the direction of the University. These goals are to ensure information resources are relevant, to create environments that are conducive to research and learning, to build capability for research and learning through skills development, and to enhance the reputation and impact of Monash (Monash University Library, 2016). Orientation allows the Library to implement two of these goals, creating conducive learning environments and building skills development, by engaging with students and introducing them to what the Library can offer in terms of academic and employability skill development, alongside its resources and learning environments.

Orientation is important to MUL, but historically the Library’s orientation has been conducted on a branch and Faculty Team basis. Each branch library and Faculty team may have created similar resources with varying levels of quality and design that are incorporated into the face-to-face tours, events and workshops that are run for commencing students during O-week and the first few weeks of the semester. Prior to 2016, there had been no centralised online space for orientation content and no unified MUL orientation message. The Library’s Communications team identified this gap and created the library-wide orientation message “The Library: Your Shortcut to Success”. This initiative involved a strategy to unify the physical spaces of the branch libraries, by placing colourful arrows and signs

leading to the libraries in various thoroughfares on each campus. The need for a cohesive online presence was also identified, as it would enable the timely and relevant provision of information by promoting resources when students would both need and want them. For this reason, the Communications Manager formed a working group in November 2015 in preparation for the Library's Semester 1, 2016 orientation program. The group consisted of eight staff of varying Higher Education Worker (HEW) levels engaged across five of MUL's Australian branches. This ensured that branches and Faculty Teams had a representative who could voice any specific requirements, which could then be flagged for incorporation, if appropriate, into the MUL-wide orientation content. The majority of participants were staff who were also responsible for the creation and delivery of the face-to-face orientation programs for their branch libraries. This ensured that the online content was supplementary to, and supportive of, existing face-to-face orientation programs.

### ***Aligning the Library's online content with the Orientation Transition Framework***

From the planning stages, the orientation working group aligned all decisions with the university-wide Orientation Transition Framework (Monash University, 2016). The Orientation Transition Framework's purpose is to ensure that students connect with the university community early in their course and remain connected throughout. This has the benefit of increasing student confidence, preparing them for academic life and increasing retention rates (Monash University, 2016).



*Figure 1 Monash University Orientation Transition Framework goals (Monash University, 2016, p. 1)*

The Orientation Transition Framework recommends that students need to be made to feel comfortable in the University and should be made aware of academic and personal support services available to them at the time these services are needed. In order to achieve this, the framework suggests that students should receive timely, relevant and engaging messages that have, if possible, included students in their planning and delivery (Monash University, 2016).



The timing for orientation messages is also laid out in the Framework and was adhered to by the working group. The critical time period for transition messages was identified as orientation week and weeks one to four (Monash University, 2016). This is before the census date, when disengaged students are more likely to withdraw from their units.

The orientation week and weeks one to four time frame provided the basis for the design of the online pilot project. The working group constantly circled back to the Orientation Transition Framework to ensure that the content produced fit within the Framework's guidelines so that new students received relevant and timely transition messages. The online pilot included the faces and voices of students to further align with the Framework. Following the Framework also had the advantage of ensuring that the Library's content was linked with the University's strategic plan.

### ***Choosing an online platform for orientation content***

Springshare's Library Guide Content Management System was chosen as the platform used to house the Library's online orientation resources. There were a number of advantages to using a Library Guide to house the content that we identified; one being the ease in creating the page and subpages, along with the speed of being able to upload and arrange content. Another advantage identified was that students, introduced to Library Guides via the Orientation guide, would subsequently find the interface familiar and be better able to navigate their way around their discipline specific and other relevant Library Guides. Springshare's Library Guide pages have advanced search engine optimization techniques, which helps Google and other search engines index Library Guide content and the working group were able to harvest the analytics that track how many 'hits' the resources have received in order to assess how they were being used.

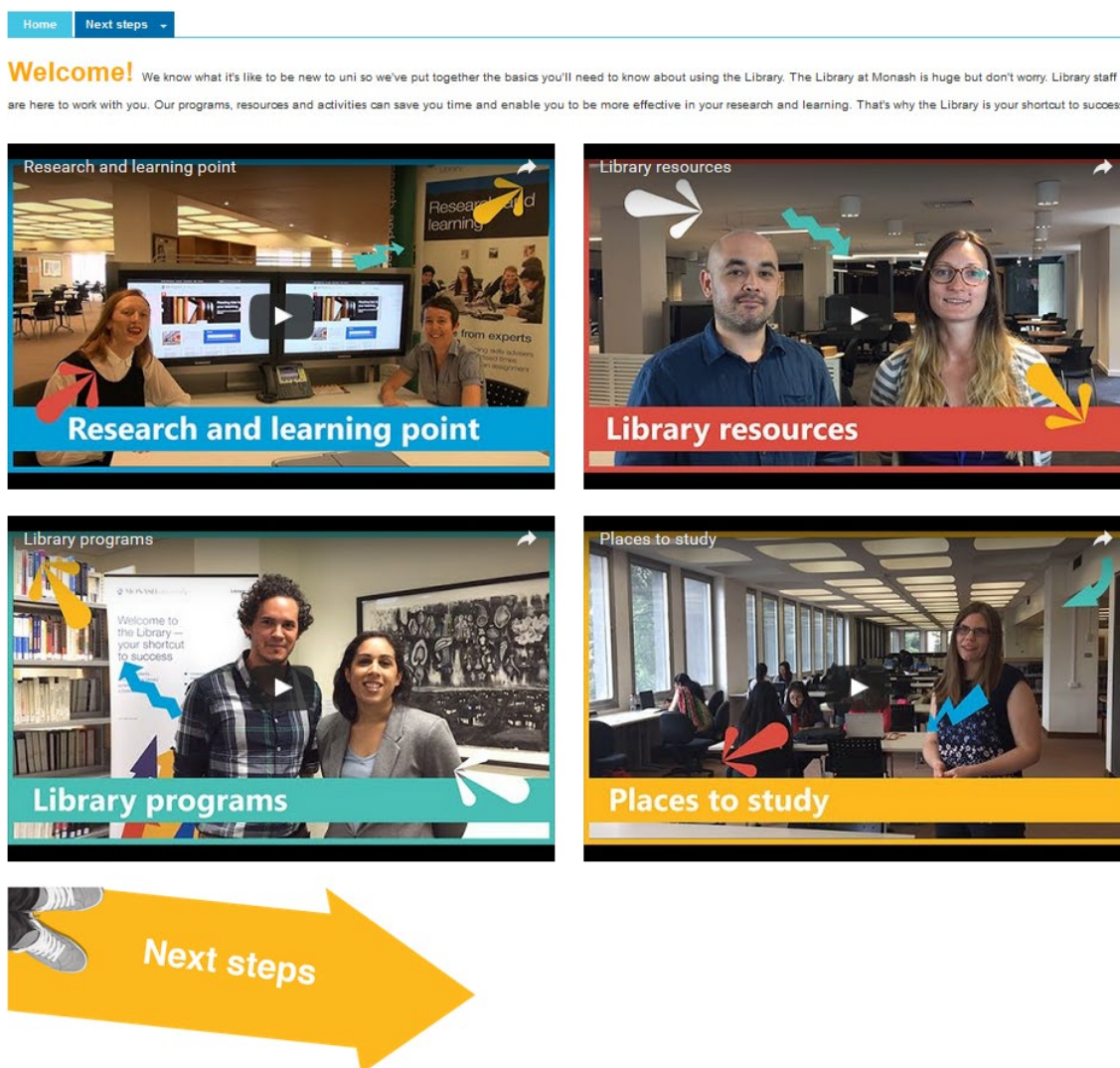


Figure 2 [Monash University Library Orientation Library Guide](#)

### **Online orientation content and video creation**

The working group decided on essential content for commencing students. After discussion it was decided that four key aspects of the Library would be showcased:

**Research and Learning Point** - MUL's drop in service, available at every branch, where all students are able to work individually, or in groups, with Librarians and Learning Skills Advisers on their academic performance and approaches to study

**Library resources** - MUL's enormous collection of print and electronic resources available to students

**Library programs** - introducing MULs approach to embedded skill development within students courses and units, together with the many additional workshops and programs that focus on essential

research and study skills, for example note-taking, database searching, essay writing and exam preparation.

**Places to study** - introduction to the different types of study spaces that are available for use at MUL.

For each of these key areas a short video, no longer than two minutes, was created. Students' voices were considered essential to ensure that we created content that commencing students would find relatable, and that would align with the Orientation Transition Framework. It was decided that current Monash University students would be incorporated into the videos to encourage new students to feel comfortable in and empowered by their new learning environment. Scripts for each of the videos were created by members of the working group and were then approved by the working group party. These scripts were brief because the working group decided that students do not want to be overwhelmed by content and that a short, snappy video would be the best method of communicating MUL's orientation welcome message in a fun and effective way. Current Monash University students studying a range of disciplines were recruited for filming and asked to learn a few lines. Students both introduced and ended each of the four videos. The working group obtained written consent from each student, an important step given that these students were included in videos promoting MUL.

The content was filmed at four branch libraries to ensure that new students would recognise a library on their campus. All filming was done on an iPhone 6 using the FiLMiC Pro app. FiLMiC Pro was used because it allowed greater control of focus and aperture and allowed for the capture of video clips at higher bit-rates. The advantage of using an iPhone 6 was that staff filming the content were able to be nimble and efficient. Editing was done using Adobe Premier Pro. The graphic design elements from MUL's posters and fliers were incorporated into the thumbnails for each video to ensure a unified look across both the online and print orientation content. The physical arrows on campus directing students to the branch libraries mirrored this design. This was done using Adobe Illustrator software. The mp4 video files were uploaded to MUL's Research and Learning YouTube channel and then all four were embedded in the Orientation Library Guide homepage. The scripts were uploaded to each video on YouTube to ensure accuracy of the closed captioning. As this was a pilot project, content for weeks one to four was repurposed from existing Library resources to ensure deadlines were met, and staff were not overloaded with work. The repurposed content was added to the Orientation Library Guide on

a separate 'Next Steps' tab, and then again into separate sub-tabs for weeks one to four so that students could access the content they needed at the appropriate time.

### ***Promoting the Orientation Library Guide***

New students could access the Orientation Library Guide from MUL's homepage where it was part of a rotating banner of select resources. The Orientation Library Guide was also given a central place on MUL's Library Guides home page. New students were directed to the guide by MUL staff conducting face to face library tours. Subject Librarians and Learning Skills Advisers presented these resources to new students at induction lectures for various faculties, including playing the videos to these large cohorts. MUL staff working at the Information Point and Research and Learning Point located at each branch library were encouraged to introduce new students to the online resource during orientation week and throughout the first four weeks of semester. The Orientation Library Guide was also promoted via MUL's social media channels, Facebook and Twitter.

### **Results**

One of the main aims of the project was to create resources that could be used across multiple library branches and Faculty Teams. It was hypothesised that these resources would reduce the time required for each branch and Faculty Team to create its own orientation materials. Another advantage to this approach was that it created consistency in MUL's orientation message across orientation programs. In this respect, the project has been a success. Staff from all library branches, including colleagues at Malaysia, enthusiastically promoted the resource to students as part of their orientation programs. Feedback from staff who utilised the content indicates that it has not only saved them time, but has made their content more interesting and appealing to new students. Library colleagues in Malaysia were so impressed with the project, they were inspired to create their own version, specific to their students' needs. When presenting the project at library committee meetings, the team was given positive feedback by Library Management. The team has been encouraged to continue to improve the content, and collaborate with other areas of the University in order to promote the resource more widely into the future.

### ***Using analytics to evaluate the Orientation Library Guide***

As the orientation project is hosted online, detailed analytics that track how many 'hits' the resource has received, and where they came from, have been obtained. Analytics can help determine whether the

content is relevant to students, particularly throughout weeks one to four, and whether improvements could be made. One of the drawbacks of relying on online hits is that they cannot capture how many people actually viewed the resource, only the number of devices used. In many cases, the Orientation Library Guide and the videos were shown to large groups of students simultaneously. For example, the Library Guide and the 'Research and Learning Point' video were demonstrated to 550 students at a single orientation presentation. Though these views cannot be counted, the available statistics still show a high level of engagement, which is promising. The data gathered this year will also provide comparison metrics and processes through which to analyse the effectiveness of the resource in the future. This will be especially valuable in providing for a quick analysis of whether changes made to the content have had positive or negative effects on engagement.

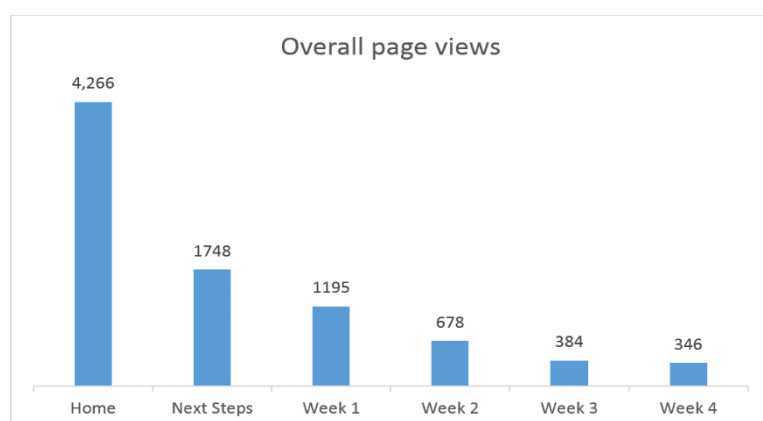
### ***Analysis of the data collected from three software programs***

The data presented and discussed within this section has been collated from three separate software programs. For the Orientation Library Guide; the main hit count has been taken from the local Library Guide statistics, with Google Analytics providing extra information on engagement. This extra information includes the average time a user has spent on a page. This process ensures that the data collected remains simple and easy to replicate, yet still relevant to the project and its aims. The analytics from YouTube have been used to analyse how often the videos were watched from inside the Orientation Library Guide, and for what duration. This will assist with determining the appropriate length of each video, and whether the content met the expectations of students and other viewers.

The pilot project has taken place over both semester one and two, 2016, and this needs to be reflected in the collated data. In order to accurately capture the statistics, and maintain consistent and relevant results, statistics have been gathered from the 14th of February to the 20th of August, 2016. This is to ensure that the analytics capture the most important teaching periods for orientation in semester one, identified as occurring between the 14th of February and the 26th of March, as well as the same time frame for semester two; the 10th of July to the 20th of August. The relevant periods for semester one have been identified as pre-orientation (14<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Feb), orientation (21<sup>st</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> Feb), week one (28<sup>th</sup> Feb – 5<sup>th</sup> March), week two (6<sup>th</sup> March-12<sup>th</sup> March), week three (13<sup>th</sup> March – 19<sup>th</sup> March) and week four (20<sup>th</sup> March – 26<sup>th</sup> March). The segregated statistics for these periods are detailed in Figure 4. These periods were chosen to ensure that the statistics support the aims of the project, one of which was to engage

students throughout orientation and the first four weeks of semester. For the purposes of the project and analytics, 'pre-orientation' is the equivalent of orientation week for international students, whereas 'orientation' describes the orientation period for domestic students. 'Orientation week' therefore refers to orientation for domestic students rather than international, as this is the period that has the largest intake of new students, and thus the highest potential for student engagement. The data for semester two, compared to semester one, demonstrates the overall statistics and does not segregate according to teaching periods, yet still captures the same teaching periods as the semester one data. The decision to present the overall statistics for semester two is due to significantly lower engagement during that time as a result of a lower mid-year intake.

Based on analysis of the data, the project has had a high level of engagement. This can be clearly seen in the number of hits on the Library Guide (see Figure 3). Overall, from statistics gathered in 2016 from the 14th of February to the 20th of August, the orientation Library Guide has received 8,617 views. Each of the pages of the guide have been engaged with, as can be seen in the statistics presented in Figure 3. The most prominent pages have the highest number of views, with the most popular being the 'Home' page, with 4,266 views. As the graph demonstrates, each of the subsequent pages have gradually received fewer views. This decline was expected, and the site was designed with this in mind, by ensuring the most relevant content was placed on the home page.



*Figure 3 Total number of views for the Orientation Library Guide, separated by page*

In creating the content for the project, one of the team's main aims was to capture the attention of students not just through the orientation period, but additionally throughout the first four weeks of semester. Despite the gradual decline in views for subsequent pages, when segregating the statistics for semester one into the relevant weeks we find engagement with the content for all pages. The data in Figure 4 demonstrates that students are returning to the content relevant for that week. During week one the number of views on the 'Week 1' page overtook the 'Next Steps' page, and came close to meeting the 'Home' page views. This was also true of the content on the 'Week 2' page. The 'Next Steps' page overtaking the 'Home' page throughout weeks three and four may indicate that students are taking the advice on that page, and bookmarking the content to return to later.

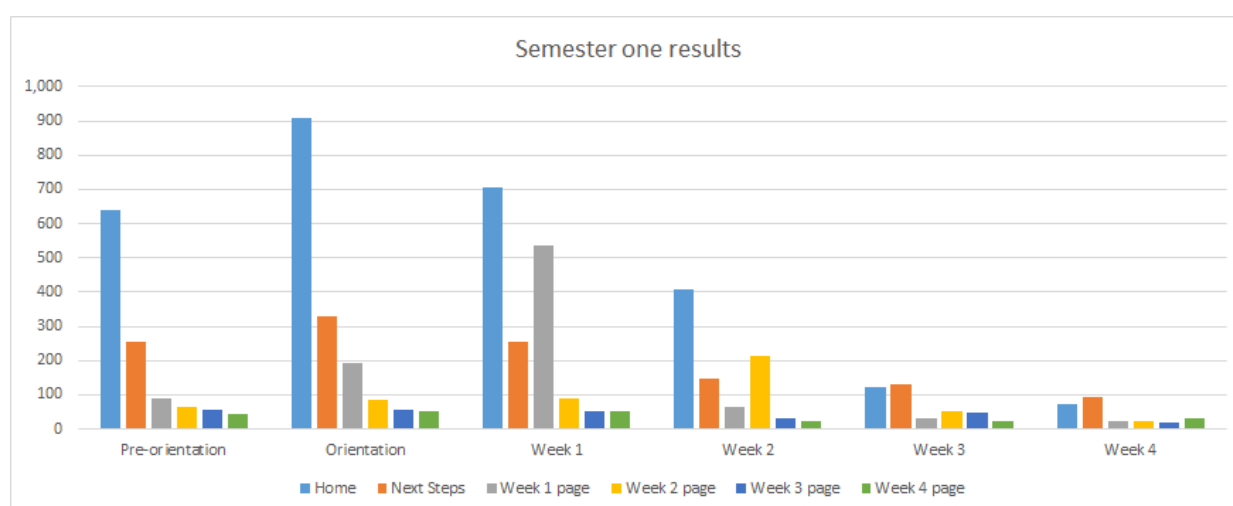


Figure 4 Views for semester one 2016, from pre-orientation week to Week 4, separated into each relevant teaching period. These periods include Pre-orientation (14<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Feb), Orientation (21<sup>st</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> Feb), Week 1 (28<sup>th</sup> Feb – 5<sup>th</sup> March), Week 2 (6<sup>th</sup> March-12<sup>th</sup> March), Week 3 (13<sup>th</sup> March – 19<sup>th</sup> March) and Week 4 (20<sup>th</sup> March – 26<sup>th</sup> March)

Engagement in semester two has been significantly lower than that of semester one, with only 1,804 total views when compared with semester one's total of 6,024 views. In context, this number still shows that students were engaged as the drop-off was expected. Orientation in the second half of the year has fewer enrolments, and some faculties do not have a mid-year intake. There was therefore not as much of an impetus to present the guide to students, as there were fewer students to engage with in library promotions. However, there was consistency across both semesters in the advertisement locations for the guide, including showcasing the guide to groups of students during library tours.

### ***Interpreting analytics for the four videos uploaded to YouTube***

The main focus of the guide is the four videos featured on its homepage; 'Research and Learning Point', 'Library programs', 'Library resources' and 'Places to study'. In creating these videos, the project team's aim was to limit the content to the four most crucial pieces of information that students should know at orientation. It is therefore of great importance that the videos, as well as the Orientation Library Guide, have a high level of engagement.

The data collated from YouTube, particularly when combined with the local Orientation Library Guide statistics and Google Analytics, shows that the videos were engaging. In 2016, from the 14th of February to the 20th of August, the videos combined have received 2,106 views. On average, viewers watched 77% of the content with just over a minute of content watched on average per video. As all the videos are a little over a minute long, this demonstrates a satisfactory level of engagement. Furthermore, an examination of the views directed from the Orientation Library Guide homepage show the retention statistics improve significantly. The videos were viewed on the homepage of the Orientation Library Guide approximately 1,475 times, and there the audience was engaged for longer. There was a much lower drop-off rate with an average of 83% of the content being viewed. The data from Google Analytics on the Orientation Library Guide's homepage confirms the retention statistics from YouTube, as the length of visits on the page was high. On average, viewers were spending almost two-and-a-half minutes on the home page, and the figure was closer to three minutes during orientation week. This could show that visitors to the site were viewing two of the videos on average, with view durations perhaps matching the 84% from YouTube's statistics. According to the analytics from YouTube, the majority of inattentive viewers came from the YouTube Watch pages for the videos, which could indicate that these views came from 'auto plays' from related videos. Unfortunately, there is no way to turn this feature off for viewers and so this needs to be kept in mind when interpreting the total figures.

Despite the discrepancy in attentiveness between viewers watching the content from within the library guide and those watching on the YouTube Watch pages directly, analysing each video to see where viewers drop-off can give insights into how well the content matches students' expectations and whether



the length of the video is appropriate. Each video, despite their varied lengths, shows a similar pattern of viewer behaviour; the longer the videos extend past the one minute mark, the more likely it is that viewers will cease watching. For the longer videos - 'Places to study', in particular, followed by 'Library programs' - the drop-off rate is higher, with just under 60% of viewers watching the video in its entirety. These percentages are low when compared to the 60-70% retention rate at the end of the shorter videos, 'Research and Learning Point' and 'Library resources'. This decline in attentiveness towards the longer videos could demonstrate that, in promotional content, students want information that is relevant to them as soon as possible. In reviewing the project, therefore, the working group must aim to ensure that they deliver only the essentials, rather than providing information that staff may consider important, but that is not directly relevant to new students during the first few weeks of the semester.

## **Future directions for orientation**

Moving forward, the working group for MUL's pilot online orientation project is focused on incorporating the insights from the analytics from the Orientation Library Guide and its content, into improving future online orientation.

First, content for weeks one to four, currently repurposed from existing library content, should be developed and created to best fit the MUL's message to students in these crucial first few weeks of university and to align with the University wide Orientation Transition Framework. This is because the early transition period covers the stage when many commencing students consider whether to stay or leave University, thus is "important to ensure that students have or can form connections, are aware of the support services on offer, able to manage early assignments and gain constructive feedback" (Monash University, 2016, p. 5). To ensure that this content is relevant and useful for students, a number of focus groups with a representative sample of students would be beneficial. By gathering, analysing and incorporating this qualitative data into future planning, the online orientation content, while still remaining concise, can be improved to ensure it is targeted to new students' needs. It may also be worth considering a method to provide the weeks one to four content without linking the students out of the library guide. There is a risk that linking students out of the guide could lead to them becoming distracted before returning to view the remaining content, or not returning at all. By creating a self-contained library guide this risk is mitigated and so may lead to an increase in engagement. In addition,

the look and feel of the library guide must be consistent with the overall Monash University orientation 'theme' that changes from year to year. There are questions around the efficacy of this and how this process may be streamlined to avoid constant updating and loss of staff time.

Second, the YouTube videos can also be improved. As discussed, student engagement drops-off at around the one minute mark. As such, it is imperative to ensure the videos do not extend past this point. The team should consider setting a benchmark of 70% engagement; when fewer than this number of students have watched the video in its entirety, the video duration should be shortened. The content for 2017 videos also requires some updating. For example, information regarding the library programs embedded into course curriculum can be promoted in the 'Library programs' video. Additionally, when the Sir Louis Matheson and Caulfield Library refurbishments are complete, the 'Places to study' video can be updated to reflect these new study areas. Feedback from staff and students on the content of videos can also be collected to incorporate any suggestions that may be required to further meet their needs. In addition to general feedback, formal evaluation of the Orientation Library Guide and videos should be gathered through a survey. This data can supplement the qualitative and anecdotal evidence, as well as the guide and video analytics, to provide a holistic picture of the project's success and any issues to address.

Finally, the ongoing promotion of the resource should be examined. The team should consider how the Orientation Library Guide and videos can be promoted more widely, and in collaboration with other areas of Monash University. For example, partnering with academics could widen the reach of the content. The Orientation Library Guide provides tips on taking notes in lectures, reading, writing, assignments, citation and research. Therefore, is of great value for lecturers to share with their students during the first weeks of semester. This has the added benefit of the Library being able to connect with those students who were unable to attend the MUL's face-to-face orientation activities.

## **Conclusion**

MUL's creation of an online orientation resource for commencing students has been a successful pilot project. Further evaluation and feedback will ensure that the resources continue to be improved. There is demonstrated need for the online Orientation Library Guide and videos, as they provide benefits to commencing students and MUL staff. The resources produce a high level of consistency of the

orientation message across library branches and Faculty Teams, and can be integrated into the face-to-face orientation activities that MUL offers. They allow for more flexibility in student learning, as well as providing more equitable access to library orientations for off-campus and online students. In addition, providing an online resource establishes an ongoing library presence throughout the semester, and allows students to revisit information if required. While this orientation project is not intended to replace face-to-face orientation programs, it is an engaging and effective additional resource.

If an institution is planning on creating their own online orientation there should initially be an investment of time and staffing to ensure that the online resources created are targeted to the intended audience and are of quality. However, continuing maintenance should be relatively low. Further time will be saved in future orientation programs due to the prior development of the resource, so the initial time commitment should not be considered a drawback. It is important to ensure that any resources created are concise and relevant in providing only the essential information required for orientation. Resources should utilise 'just-in-time' learning strategies, delivering information at the point of need.

There is still much work to be done by MUL with its online orientation program to ensure that it continues to provide an interesting, inviting and informative virtual space to orient and engage new students with MUL's resources, physical spaces and programs. It is crucial that data around the effectiveness of online orientation be gathered to build a strong evidence base for these types of programs. Studying the impact of MUL's online orientation program and exploring ways in which this program can be further developed is an important next step for MUL to ensure continued excellence and innovation in its orientation program.

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