



ALP's Stephen Conroy on skills shortages



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Uni develops knowledge manager training

Diana Thorp
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THE University of South Australia is developing a cutting-edge suite of education programs designed to produce a new generation of information management professionals.

The first intake of students is due next year, says the inaugural chair of business information management, Paula Swatman.

The world first program will produce leading research, Professor Swatman says.

Its graduate will be skilled information managers, she says.

"We're going to offer this degree online worldwide because it's the first of its kind," she says.

"There is no degree in electronic document and records management systems.



*Cutting edge: Paula Swatman
Picture: Brett Hartwig*

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"There are degrees in records management, but that's just records management which is not seen as very exciting or sexy."

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The programs will be offered on campus in Adelaide for a few years as well as online, she says.

Pool site on cue

Declining student interest in technology will not affect the courses, she says.

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LAW

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"This program is not going to lead people into a standard hi-tech job. This is for people who want to work with information in almost any area."

Labor warning on skills shortage

The chair has been established by the University of South Australia, State Records SA (part of the Department for Administrative and Information Services), the State Library of South Australia and Fuji Xerox to develop a suite of programs to educate information professionals.

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TELECOMS

Telstra to lift mobile services game

Programs should be ready for students next year, she says.

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These will be followed by a graduate diploma, then a masters degree. A research program is also being developed.

BlackBerry rescue plan

Electronic documents and records management systems are growth areas, she says.

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WORLD

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"EDRMS is a generic term that refers to the holistic management of information, knowledge, records, documents, every form of information," she says.

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"It covers the whole area from, at one extreme the technical storage of information, to things like how do we store information electronically in such a way that 20 years later we can still access it.

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"It ranges from the most technical right through to knowledge management inside organisations and corporations, and how we manage knowledge in an organisation. In between it covers areas such as archiving, preservation of records, access to information, things like corporate records management systems and the actual management of information inside organisations effectively, which is also a governance issue.

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"It really covers a very wide area."

South Australian administrative services minister Michael Wright, who launched the chair last week, said collecting and managing information was becoming an increasingly important industry.

"These new degrees are unique across the international spectrum of university offerings because they teach the full range of business information management skills," he said.

State Library of South Australia director Alan Smith said the initiative was important.

"This is probably the most information-literate generation that the world has ever known, but it's also the most information-confused generation that the world has ever known, if only because there's so much more information about - and most of it is utter rubbish," he says.

"It's really about mining that information, preserving what's worth preserving and accessing it in such a way that it actually makes it usable.

"So we're very concerned about where people are going to come from to do that."

The Australian

