



The implementation of an information and learning portal

A plan for public libraries.

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Executive Summary

Public libraries have always functioned as informal centres of learning within their communities. Currently, public libraries provide access to learning via courses in computing, ESL or genealogy, hosted talks by guest speakers, publicised events and courses held by other organisations, and sometimes provide a database or directory on their website which lists local community groups. With the ever-increasing demand for information, there is now a need to provide access to information resources in a simple, efficient way. An information and learning portal, which incorporates Web 2.0 technologies, is the logical progression. The portal would be a single virtual access point, provided via the library's website, through which the community could access lifelong learning opportunities from multiple providers.

The aim of this project is to create a plan that can be used by public libraries to establish a community learning portal. The project report outlines three stages for implementation with a strong emphasis on the planning phase. The focus of this project is the successful establishment of an information and learning portal that will provide a value added service which meets the community's needs.

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Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
Introduction	5
Stage One Planning Phase.....	6
Develop a strategic objective - demonstrate the need for an information and learning portal	6
Economic Benefit	6
Develop relationships with potential partners	7
Governance and Management	8
SWOT Analysis.....	9
Financial Planning for Information Portals Funding Considerations	9
Key Cost Elements.....	10
Economic Benefit and Value for Money	10
Stage Two. Design and Operations	11
Web design	11
Audience	11
Website design.....	11
Considerations	11
Marketing and promotion.....	12
Key marketing opportunities	12
Staff training.....	13
Stage Three. Review and continuous improvement.....	13
Conclusion.....	14
Appendix 1 – SWOT Analysis	15
Appendix 2– Web design considerations.....	17
Appendix 3 – Checklist to Implement an Information and Learning Portal	19
Appendix 4- Research checklist.....	21
Appendix 5- Research	22
Portals	22
References	23

Introduction

Lifelong learning is vital for the wellbeing and economic success of a community. Public libraries have always played a major role in facilitating lifelong learning practices. They encourage community participation and provide information to members of the community.

Developments in technology have created a dramatic shift in public library service over the last decade. Lifelong learning, literacy development and enriching communities is no longer restricted to library events, community outreach and literacy programs. Technology has become an important tool for reaching communities to facilitate lifelong learning.

Creating a consortium of information providers and facilitators in an **information and learning portal**, is a way of enhancing access to lifelong learning for the people of a community. An information portal not only offers people more opportunities for self-development, but it also offers the chance for libraries and community groups to become partners in the project which could lead to improved networking opportunities.

The development of information learning portals was created due to the sheer volume of unmonitored information available on the internet. A **need** was identified by providers of information such as public libraries to organize information access on the Internet.

Due to vast changes and improvements in technology, an information and learning portal is no longer simply a single source of information or a directory of community organisations and their services. It is an online link, through a single access point, to a wide variety of information from different sources and to formal and informal learning opportunities such as recreational and educational classes as well as to professional courses from multiple providers. Information Learning Portals are basically a structured community gateway to the internet. The portal can extract information from various websites and integrates them into a unified view to represent learning opportunities for a specific community.

The portal's scope reflects the information and learning needs of a specifically defined clientele or community with content that is considered relevant and useful to the group. It is an effective mechanism to match users with comprehensive information and the right learning providers.

This report will outline the steps libraries should take to develop an information and learning portal for lifelong learning in their communities. It will highlight the factors to consider when creating the portal, and will identify potential problems and issues that may occur and strategies for avoiding them.

Stage One Planning Phase

Develop a strategic objective - demonstrate the need for an information and learning portal

Most public libraries have developed policies to assist in improving and strengthening lifelong learning opportunities in their communities. Such opportunities have been shown to enhance economic prosperity and social wellbeing. One of the ways this goal can be achieved is through an information and learning portal.

A public library may have anecdotal evidence to suggest a need for an information portal. High unemployment rates or a large proportion of the community who do not speak English can be part of this evidence. Library staff may report that they are frequently asked about the availability of courses or clubs. This type of informal evidence can be substantiated by comprehensive research about the local community.

There are various statistical tools such as [ABS census data](#), [SEIFA](#) (Socio-Economic Indexes For Areas) and [AEDI](#) (Australian Early Development Index) that will assist in researching the community in terms of the levels of social wellbeing, standards of living, employment and education. These tools can provide the evidence to confirm and validate the decision to implement an information portal.

It is imperative that a library thoroughly review and investigate its reasons for wanting to establish an information and learning portal, to ensure that there is a genuine critical and demonstrated need in your community. A good example of this was the creation of the Community Learning Centre in South San Francisco, and its portal on the South San Francisco Library website. There residents and staff from the City, Library, School District and community-based organisations worked together to respond to the needs of its multi-cultural residents to improve academic performance in their children, improved work skills for employees, building confident English language learners, and assisting immigrants in becoming involved in their community.

Libraries should also investigate the learning organisations in their area, in order to locate any similar existing services to evaluate their strengths, identify gaps, avoid duplication and optimise the potential of a portal.

Economic Benefit

The ability to obtain funding for a portal, input and cooperation from partner organisations, and user satisfaction, will be enhanced if a library can demonstrate persuasively the clear link between a portal, lifelong learning, economic benefit and social wellbeing in the community. A good example of this link can be found at www.wendoureewest.com, an information portal specifically designed for community lifelong learning based at Wendouree West near Ballarat, Victoria.

In evaluating and reporting on the success of a portal a library may need to highlight the positive changes in the statistical evidence in the local community in areas like:

- Education levels, youth engagement and school retention rates
- Employability and increased participation in the workforce
- Standards of living reflected in higher average earnings
- Social indicators such as recreational opportunities and engagement
- Mental health rates, issues and life expectancy

Develop relationships with potential partners

A learning portal is a gateway to information about formal and informal educational opportunities within the community. There are many different types of learning portals, but they can basically be divided into two categories:

The first is a portal aimed at a specific part of the community. For example, jobseekers in the Silicon Valley in California can access the Job and Career Help Centre, a portal established by the Santa Clara County Library. The proposed portal at the Whistler Public Library in Canada will target tourists and new arrivals to the Whistler community, and will showcase the town and all the local businesses and tour operators in the area.

The second type of portal is a general information portal. Its aim is to promote lifelong learning, and therefore the target audience is a cross-section of the entire community, encompassing all age-groups, both sexes, and all cultural backgrounds.

The clientele of a general learning portal could therefore be divided into broad categories:

- **Parents** seeking learning opportunities for themselves about parenting, and classes and events for their children. Potential partnerships could include: Maternal and Child Health Centres, Community Health Centres, Neighbourhood Houses, Breastfeeding Association, playgroups, kindergartens, schools, sporting organisations like football, netball and tennis clubs, Scouts/ Girl Guides, museums and art galleries, orchestras, bands, choirs, youth theatre groups.
- **Adults and older adults** looking for courses about hobbies, languages, the arts, craft, special interest groups, health, and/or social, sporting or service groups. Potential for partnerships could lie with service organisations like Rotary, Apex, choirs and amateur theatre groups, bridge clubs, art societies, environmental groups, U3A, and short course providers like the Council for Adult Education.
- **Adults and school-leavers** in need of formal tertiary education. Partners would include universities and TAFEs within the local area.
- **Adults** seeking information and training provided by government departments. Partnerships could be fostered with Centrelink.

- **Migrants or non-English speakers** needing resources to help them to learn English and settle into their community. Partnerships could be established with local community ethnic groups, Migrant Resource Centres and Neighbourhood Houses
- **Children and young adults** looking for social, sporting, cultural, and educational opportunities.
- **Adults and children** in need of support groups for health problems, family or social problems. Examples of possible partners would be Alcoholics Anonymous, Parents Without Partners, and the Coeliac Society of Victoria
- **Adults and children with a disability** wanting to find support groups, social, recreational or sporting clubs, and educational courses.

Partnerships could be fostered with groups like Inclusion Melbourne, Scope, the Special Olympics, Riding for the Disabled Association.

Individual libraries setting up a learning portal would have to decide which organisations would be eligible to be listed on it. Generally speaking, those groups automatically eligible for entry would be those that are free, or charge an annual membership fee or charge for organised activities in order to recover costs, schools and other educational institutions. Public libraries would need to determine whether organisations that charge for services for the purpose of making a profit would also be eligible.

The content of portals varies. Some portals consist of links to organisations and institutions. Others also publicise individual events being held by various organisations. The latter requires more monitoring and input by library staff to keep the portal current, but could be even more beneficial to users. A great example of this is Skokienet, an initiative of Skokie Public Library in Chicago. Skokienet was developed by a group of university students, but once adopted by the library, has become a powerful tool for uniting and invigorating the community by listing coming events and community groups.

An important consideration is that it takes time to develop relationships with potential partners and that libraries looking to establish a portal need to plan to gradually build relationships with their partners. Sometimes portals have been set up with too few partners, and this has led to a lack of use by the community. The expectations of all partners need to be clear from the outset to avoid problems later on.

Governance and Management

An important part of planning a learning and information portal is deciding how it will be operated. There will need to be a formal agreement between the partners of the portal to make sure that all parties are clear about their roles and expectations.

Libraries should investigate the need to set up a company, or to incorporate, and should seek legal advice in this regard. A clear policy would also need to be developed that has either been approved by Council and or the library board. Good governance is vital for a successful portal.

Criteria for inclusion of organisations in the portal should be clarified from the outset. A good example of a portal which is well managed is the Community Links page on the Northern Territory Government's site, which is called Bushtel. On Bushtel, only not-for-profit organisations may be listed, and sites which promote illegal or anti-social activities or are offensive, out-of-date or of unknown authorship are ineligible.

On the portal itself the criteria for inclusion should be clearly stated, and the library should explain that it has the right to refuse inclusion or remove links without notice, if these criteria are not met. Organisations wishing to be listed should be informed that it is their responsibility to notify the library if there are any changes to their contact details or URLs.

The library should perform regular checks on the links on the portal to ensure that they are still accurate, and the staff time required for this should be considered during the planning process.

There should also be clearly defined criteria for information which organisations should submit in order to be included. Organisations that contribute or update should be given specified/agreed timelines, failure to provide the necessary information should invalidate the submission.

SWOT Analysis

An analysis of the potential strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of an information and learning portal should be undertaken by a library service planning to establish one. This is a very helpful tool for articulating all the considerations of such a project, and weighing up if it is viable. A general SWOT analysis of an information and learning portal is included in **Appendix 1**.

Financial Planning for Information Portals

Funding Considerations

There are a number of ways to fund an information and learning portal. The approach taken and decisions made will depend on many carefully investigated factors surrounding the intended use of, and access to, the proposed portal.

The following points may need to be taken into account when considering the probable cost and available budget to fund an information portal:

- The library service's ability to articulate clearly and convincingly to pitch the portal proposal successfully to potential funding bodies and sources
- Possible partnerships with council, community organisations and professional bodies
- Availability of initial one-off grants to create and implement the portal and recurrent funding sources to update and maintain portal effectiveness
- In-house resources such as staff availability, staff expertise and technological capacity

Depending on these factors, costs may vary widely from as low as a few thousand dollars to many thousands

Key Cost Elements

Costs and budgeting need to be considered at each stage and in each area of the information and learning portal project, not only in the initial creation and implementation phase.

Funding may need to be found for the following potential costs of the portal:

- Project management
- Design, creation and set up of portal
- Technology needs, construction and infrastructure
- Content - depth and breadth of information
- Implementation and access
- Training for staff, community stakeholders and portal users
- Portal launch
- Marketing, promotion and community liaison
- Feedback system from all stakeholders and users
- Continuous updating and maintenance of portal
- Evaluation and review of portal

Economic Benefit and Value for Money

It is possible that when the portal is established (and is hopefully successful) the costs incurred in its creation may be offset with cost savings elsewhere. There may be a reduction in the duplication of information and effort within other parts of the hosting library service and the other participating community groups.

The value of an information portal may extend beyond this cost saving to deliver more highly skilled library staff and engaged information users in the community. There is also the likely additional economic benefit resulting from increased levels of education and employable skills among your community members.

Research conducted by [DMH Associates](#) on the evidence and impact of career and guidance-related intervention shows that by providing access to an online professional

resources, (an information and learning portal) young people have become more employable. The educational portal provides resources through face to face internet. This has developed lifelong learning skills, namely increased self-esteem, self-confidence, motivation, independence, and better ability to cope positively with stress. This gives them employability and self-management skills. Career is now thought of as a lifelong journey and this journey may take many different learning and work role paths. There is also an economic benefit to the community from the social inclusion facilitated by information and learning portals. Simpler access to finding community groups fosters increased community activity. This in turn improves people's mental and physical wellbeing, allowing them to work, stay active and lessen their reliance on healthcare.

Stage Two. Design and Operations

Web design

Web design incorporates the structure of the website including the information architecture, the layout and the conceptual design with branding. All website design should begin with a clear strategy, enabling the design to fulfil defined goals.

Audience

Defining the audience is a key step in the website planning process. The audience is the group of people that are expected to visit the website – the market being targeted. These people will be viewing the website for a specific reason and it is important to know exactly what they are looking for when they visit the site. A clearly defined purpose or goal for the site as well as an understanding of what visitors want to do or feel when they come to the website will help to identify the target audience. Upon considering who is most likely to need or use the content, a list of characteristics common to the users should be considered including languages, skill level and age.

Taking into account the characteristics of the intended audience will allow an effective website to be created that will deliver the desired and relevant content.

Website design

The content of the website which includes the substance and information on the site should be relevant to the site and target the area of the public that the website is concerned with. Usability is vital. The site should be user-friendly, with the interface and navigation simple and reliable. The appearance, including the graphics and text should include a single style that flows throughout, keeping consistency. The style should be professional, appealing and relevant.

Considerations

Consideration also needs to be given to Web 2.0 and social networking compatibility, search facilities, languages and website hosting. These areas of website design are explored in **Appendix 2**.

Marketing and promotion

A thorough marketing and promotions plan is vital for the success of the information and learning portal. To create a successful marketing campaign the information portal will need to focus on satisfying the needs and wants of both:

- the community, and
- partner organisations, through an exchange process.

In the initial developmental stages of the information and learning portal an inclusive approach should be adopted. Identified partners should be included where possible from the early stages of development to give opportunities for new ideas, wider coverage and generating interest.

Partners in the information and learning portal should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- local educational providers such as schools, universities, TAFES,
- the local community
- library and council staff
- community organisations
- local members of parliament
- community learning organisations such as U3A, and community centres

The exchange process must be continuous and is vital for the project's success. Each partner will have something to gain with the development of the portal, and something to contribute, thus creating the exchange.

For example, local educational providers would submit their current information on a regular basis to the portal, and would receive more publicity and more potential clients for their own organisation. This will result in an updated functional project, with long term success. However such success could be threatened if the needs of the partners are not met. For example, if library staff were not adequately trained in the use of the portal, they would be reluctant to recommend it to potential users. If the portal was not being well used, partner organisations would not be motivated to update their information, and the portal would become irrelevant. There is a mutual dependence among the partners of the portal.

Key marketing opportunities

Information and learning portal promotion strategies:

- A committee should be formed at the beginning of the project that includes partners so there are more opportunities for feedback and ideas.
- There should be a series of focus groups from each of major partners to identify potential problems and opportunities.

- A public launch with local press and important members of the community should be held to promote the portal.
- A thorough training schedule for partners on how to use the information and learning portal will create higher usage from the partner organisations that will be uploading information onto the portal, and the people who will inevitably use it to obtain information.
- A series of presentations for various partners is important so staff and partner groups are fully aware of the product, and are better equipped to advise potential users about the portal.

Marketing and Promoting the product must not stop at the launch. Information and learning portal users will tire of the resource if it is not continuously updated and changed to meet growing and changing consumer needs.

A well run marketing campaign will result in a well-used and continuously updated portal. Partners, whether providing or seeking information, are continuously using the portal, thereby ensuring its success.

The first evidence that marketing has been unsuccessful is lack of use of the portal. Only a well-executed marketing campaign can ensure the community's awareness of the portal. Another clear indication of a failed marketing campaign is the presence of out-of-date information. This indicates a lack of interest on the part of the partners who are providing information for the website. Either there has not been enough publicity for information seekers or the partner organisations have not been included enough in the development and governance of the information portal.

Staff training

Library staff will require training to ensure that they can use the portal themselves, so that they can effectively show the public how to use it, and can recommend it with confidence.

Stage Three. Review and continuous improvement

After a prescribed period of time, an evaluation of the information and learning portal should be undertaken. This review should include the initial criteria used in the planning phase of the portal. An important element of this review is to show that the portal satisfies the **need** established at the beginning of the project. Areas of review should include strategic objectives, costing, marketing, accessibility, content, partnerships and software. This information can be collected via customer/staff surveys, and by statistics of use. A survey of focus groups and partners should also be conducted to gain their perspective of the portal's strengths, weaknesses, and potential for improvement. A review of the SWOT is also recommended.

A checklist for the implementation of an information and learning portal by a public library service can be found in **Appendix 3**.

Current economic conditions place greater emphasis on individuals and organisations being accountable for their expenditure and investment in service. In reviewing the performance of a portal, a hosting library will need to show that it justifies the expenditure and effort involved in both its creation and on-going operation. This review would not be a one-off review but rather a process of ongoing review just as with the continuous improvement.

Conclusion

This project plan outlines the requirements to create, implement and sustain an information and learning portal. The Plan identifies the 3 stages necessary for an effective portal:

- Planning
- Design and operation
- Evaluation and continuous improvement

It is essential to establish a clearly defined **need** and strategic objective for the portal prior to any work commencing on it, and to thoroughly research the information and learning needs of the likely portal users. It is also important to consider the existing resources within your organisation to produce a worthwhile portal.

As an information and learning portal is a collaborative project between the public library and the community it is crucial to nurture and develop positive relationships with potential partners and stakeholders from the outset. Ultimately the success of an information and learning portal relies on its ability to address the issues that link lifelong learning, social wellbeing and economic benefit in the community.

Appendix 1 – SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>High visibility Library websites already exist, and register high numbers of visits, so the audience for the portal is already available.</p> <p>Simple access Having a single access point makes searching more convenient for the user. Disparate learning opportunities are centralised, which saves the user looking through multiple sites.</p> <p>2.0 Technologies Features such as RSS Feeds and alerts can be used in a portal. These notify the user when a course or event matches their search criteria. There is also the opportunity to use social software, incorporating reviews, comments and feedback into a portal, making it both interactive and accountable.</p> <p>Access to PR and Marketing Promotion of the portal could be undertaken by trained personnel in Council’s marketing and promotions department, since this initiative would be of benefit to the whole community. This would be a cost saving for the library service.</p> <p>A Resource for Library Staff A portal would be an excellent tool for library staff who frequently field enquiries about courses and community organisations. Referring customers to a single gateway will save staff time.</p> <p>Moderation of content The content of the portal would be under the control of the staff of the library service, ensuring that only those organisations which met the objectives of the portal could be included.</p>	<p>Restriction of Use The portal is only available to people with internet access.</p> <p>Content When setting up the portal the library will need to ensure that it controls the content. If open authorship is allowed, constant vigilance will be needed to ensure that content is suitable for the whole community.</p> <p>Maintenance The content of the portal will need to be continually monitored and updated, which will require ongoing staff time. This needs to be fully considered when budgeting for the portal.</p> <p>Cooperation with Council Difficulties may arise when working with Council’s IT department when setting up a portal. A new venture accessed via the Library’s website will have to conform with Council’s presentation guidelines, and existing online structure.</p> <p>Long Term View A portal will take time to evolve and for its content to build up. Both council and library will need to commit to a long term view, and evaluate its success over a substantial period of time.</p> <p>Technological Change The speed with which technology changes may require changes to the portal as it becomes outdated. This may be costly for the library service.</p>

Opportunities	Threats
<p><i>Building Partnerships</i> The portal will provide the opportunity for a library service to foster important new partnerships with community organisations and other learning providers.</p> <p><i>Increased Participation in Lifelong Learning</i> Use of the portal will help more people to find opportunities to build their skills, education, capacity and wellbeing. Participation numbers in courses and activities should increase.</p> <p><i>Social Inclusion</i> A learning portal is consistent with the aim of building social inclusion, helping people become involved in community activities.</p> <p><i>Assistance to Community Organisations</i> A learning portal will raise awareness of the community organisations that it includes, and improve their viability. It will help achieve the goal of building on the community. A portal can assist organisations which don't have the ability to pay for the marketing and promotion of their courses and events.</p> <p><i>Social Capital</i> The profile of the library within the community will grow as is it recognised as a facilitator of lifelong learning.</p> <p><i>External Funding</i> Some of the larger learning providers like TAFES and universities may provide financial assistance with the establishment of the portal.</p>	<p><i>Competition</i> There is existing competition for a learning portal in the form of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Major search engines like Google, Bing and Yahoo 2) The websites of TAFES, universities, schools and community Centre's 3) The websites of government departments. <p><i>Lack of Content</i> The unwillingness of learning providers to participate in the portal would make it less effective. The depth of content would be a major determinant of its success.</p> <p><i>Funding</i> There is a need for substantial financial backing to establish a portal, and then to keep it operational. Expenditure would include software, marketing, staff training, and staff time to maintain and administer the portal.</p> <p><i>Technology</i> If technology advanced, and the portal did not implement these changes, it would quickly become obsolete. This happened to the traditional community directory established by many libraries. It became slow and difficult to navigate.</p> <p><i>Demand</i> If the assessment of the community needs is not accurate or effective, the portal may receive little use.</p>

Appendix 2- Web design considerations

Web 2.0 compatible i.e. Facebook, Twitter, RSS feeds

With the emergence of Web 2.0 topology throughout the internet, consideration needs to be given to all areas of social networking, to not only give people access to information from the portal, but to assist in raising awareness of the portal. Facebook, Twitter and RSS feeds from the information portal can be utilised to promote upcoming events, programs and news from partner organisations

Various access levels for content management

A hierarchy of access levels is required for adding content to the portal, in the form of program facilitator having access to only their programs, coordinators having access to programs run in the centres, and system administrators having access to all content. There needs to be the facilities to moderate the content.

Ease of use.

The site would need to be easy to use and accessible for people with little computer knowledge. Many non-experienced users need graphical representation for ease of use, and this needs to be taken into consideration during the design phase.

Search Facilities

Various searching options are required to allow basic and advanced searching including additional features such as geographical, subject, accredited etc

Functional design

The design of the portal would need to be flexible to allow for the change in the way it will be used over time as the community and libraries change, CSS compliant to ensure flexibility of layout, without overhauling the databases.

Database interaction

The website would need to be SQL/Database compliant to allow for the dynamic content management, recording of statistics, etc.

Ensure that site is assistive technology friendly

To allow for people who use assistive technologies the website should be screen reader friendly, have adjustable font sizing, etc.

Resize text: Except for captions and images of text, text can be resized without assistive technology up to 20% without loss of content or functionality.

Multi-lingual

When considering the audience of the site, you should also consider the various languages of the community involved, and offer the site translated into the popular languages. This is vital in sites offering English as a Second Language courses.

Mobile Friendly

With the emergence of mobile technology the site would require design that could easily be used with the latest mobile technology, ie. iPhone, iPad, Android

Hosting

The hosting of the information portal is an important component of the web design. The recommended solutions for web hosting include the following (including issues relating to):

- Through the council website: Depending on council guidelines this could limit access and flexibility of the portal, in access and design.
- Through Vicnet: Vicnet has the experience and ability to host portal services and include web design facilities, design and hosting cost would be required.

Appendix 3 – Checklist to Implement an Information and Learning Portal

<p>Establish your objectives</p>	<p>Does my community need a portal? Does the library have statistical evidence to support this perceived need? What is the intended target audience for the portal? How will a portal be of economic and social benefit to the library and community, and can this be proved?</p>
<p>Identify potential partners for the portal and develop relationships with them gradually.</p>	<p>Which organisations will be our partners in the portal? Will the organisations be businesses or restricted to not-for-profit groups? Is there a formal agreement between partners in the portal clarifying their roles and expectations? Has the library developed a good relationship with their “internal partners”, Council’s community development, IT and marketing departments?</p>
<p>Financial Planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you developed a thorough funding proposal that can be presented convincingly to potential portal partners? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you confident in obtaining funding from government and community sources? • Have you assessed the extent and breadth of in-house expertise and its impact on funding requirements? • Has the appropriate technology intended for use been identified and selected? <p>Has a costing plan for each stage of the portal project been developed?</p> <p>Have you allocated sufficient funds for project management; portal design, creation and content; training for staff, stakeholders and end users; portal launch, marketing and promotion; feedback; content maintenance system and continuous improvement; portal review and evaluation?</p> <p>Have you attempted to find cost savings elsewhere in your organisation as a result of the implementation of your portal? Are you able to prove positive benefits of your portal project? Can you establish a clear link between your portal, lifelong learning, social well-being and improved employability in your community?</p>
<p>Web design considerations</p>	<p>What website considerations are needed?</p> <p>Who is your website audience?</p> <p>Who will design you website?</p> <p>Who will host your website?</p>

<p>Marketing</p>	<p>Identify key stakeholders both clients and partnerships Ensure the exchange process is working for all parties. Develop an extensive marketing and promotional campaign to generate wide interest in the information learning portal Develop a strategy for the long term promotion of the information learning portal.</p>
<p>Evaluating an information and learning portal</p>	<p>Strategic objective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the need been fulfilled? • Perform user survey that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ease of use • Survey of staff • Survey of community. (see Appendix One for examples) • Is the audience still the same or different [changed]? <p>Costing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff member to monitor operation what was it used for? • Software can it handle the demand and content required is it up-to-date? • Marketing promotion cost <p>Marketing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was it successful? • Could it have been better? Where the right areas targeted? <p>Accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house • External access <p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It up-to-date • Are the stakeholders keeping the information current? • Does it satisfy the need? <p>Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it working? • Are there regular meetings? <p>Software</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it limit the user? • Ease of use • Easy to update?

Appendix 4- Research checklist

KEYWORDS: evaluating, information portals, web portal, learning portal, gateway neighbourhood (neighbourhood) learning, lifelong learning, access portal, business case, Implementation plan, evaluation plan, cost benefit analysis.

What is the definition of the portal?	
How does it work?	
Evaluation – It there one?	
Planning process?	
Funding How? Who by? Generated funds? It there a charge for the use of the portal? Kickbacks for bookings?	
Marketing – It there a plan? - How was it promoted?	
Challenges encountered	
Issues encountered : problems Achievements Strengths / weakness Benefits	
Clientele Who uses it? Range?	
Structure Ease of use Look Software used How is it accessed?	
Maintenance How is it updated?	

Appendix 5- Research

Portals

Bushtel Northern Territory <http://www.bushtel.nt.gov.au/>

City of South San Francisco www.ssf.net

Educational evidence portal www.eep.ac.uk

edna website <http://www.edna.edu.au>

National Library of Australia www.nla.gov.au

New Zealand Literacy Portal www.nzliteracyportal.org.nz

Whistler Public Library www.whistlerlibrary.ca/our-history/strategic-plan

Santa Clara County Library www.santaclaracountylib.org

Seniors.gov.au www.seniors.gov.au

Skills Victoria <http://www.skills.vic.gov.au/>

SkokieNet www.skokie.net.org

Wendouree community hub <http://www.wendoureewest.com/>

WynLearn <http://www.wynlearn.net.au/>

Wyoming's portal to knowledge and learning <http://goWyld.net>

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