



Darebin Historical Encyclopedia (DHE)

An Online Local History Resource

What Is DHE

<http://dhe.darebinlibraries.vic.gov.au>

- Online local history resource for Darebin
- More than a simple catalogue / database
- Features in excess 800 entries
 - bringing together information from original source material, photographs, newspaper articles and other documents
- Provides 24/7 access to resources

Why DHE Online



- Darebin Libraries has a strong commitment to local / family history study
- Provide public access to a wide range of materials in one place
- Access with preservation
- Capacity for ongoing development
- Allow for community interaction and participation

Developing DHE



- Review of comparable projects
- Development of project plan
 - scope and content
 - funding
 - potential users
 - design format and functionality
- Contracted out the development of the public interface and site administration

Developing DHE



- Content developed by library staff
 - researched topics
 - scanned images
 - brought the research and related documents together in individual entries
- Commenced scoping project in early 2004
- Public launch in April 2006

Challenges & Lessons



- Project was larger than first envisaged
 - revisit the scope
 - redesign of the structure
 - extend the delivery time frame
- Information Technology issues
 - an IT plan within the project plan was required
- Allocation of time and resources
 - in-house staff teams primarily responsible for building and developing the site

Challenges & Lessons



- Selection of topics for inclusion
 - driven by customer queries
 - staff interest
 - availability of materials
- Visual look, design and ease of navigation are critical
 - extensive usability testing was conducted
- Keep to your vision!

Achievements of DHE



- Accessibility with preservation
- Reference tool for
 - students
 - general public
 - local / family history researchers
 - staff
- Increased awareness of Darebin's history
- Positive reaction from both the local community and beyond

Achievements of DHE



- Received queries and contribution of materials and information from both within Darebin and beyond
- Further developed Darebin Libraries connection with the community
- Well received across Council
- Commendation in Victorian Community History Awards 2007

The Future for DHE



- Ongoing development of new topics and updating of existing entries
 - customer feedback and involvement
- Refinement of site structure and design
- Second stage planned for 2008
 - increase interactivity and community involvement through wiki's, blogs, podcasts, e-postcards