



## Janette Nicolle, Central Library Information Services Librarian at the University of Canterbury

As the second oldest of New Zealand's universities, the University of Canterbury has a distinguished historical heritage. By 1890, barely 17 years after its founding, Canterbury College boasted staff, course offerings and degrees in science, engineering, law, the humanities and fine arts. Today the University has around 15,000 students and an impressive international profile in research, learning and advanced scholarship, as is evidenced by its strong performance in the first and second rounds of the Performance-based Research Fund.

The University of Canterbury Library dates back to 1879. Books for the original library were donated by the University of Oxford and significant connections with Oxford and Cambridge still continue. Now the Library collection is distributed across six libraries across the campus, with the Central Library providing services and collections to support humanities, social sciences, commerce, biological and geological sciences, music and fine arts, and Antarctic studies. There are separate Education, Engineering, Law and Physical Sciences libraries, and there is also a sixth library, the Macmillan Brown Library, which houses a research collection of New Zealand and Pacific Islands materials.

Janette Nicolle has worked as a librarian at the University of Canterbury for several years. As the Central Library Information Librarian, she supervises a team of subject librarians who provide information services for academic staff in the arts and humanities, social sciences, commerce and natural sciences. The

Library purchases a range of databases, electronic journals and ebooks to support the teaching, learning and research of the University, and Janette says that electronic resources have made a huge difference to students and academics, who can now "do their own searching from their computer".

The Library has had *The New York Times* via *ProQuest Historical Newspapers* for about four years now, and other ProQuest resources for much longer, "so we're familiar with the platform," says Janette. Asked why they chose to invest in this resource, Janette says "we had considerable historical holdings of *The New York Times* on microfilm, as well as access to current issues through *ProQuest 5000*, so the archive was an easy way to ensure complete coverage."

"*The New York Times* via *ProQuest Historical Newspapers* possesses superior searching functionality. *The New York Times* has a long chronological span and features such as the date limit search are very important. The advanced search capability is particularly useful, so that you don't retrieve too much information. Online is the favoured means of access for our users, and this resource provides academic staff with the capacity to incorporate *The New York Times* material in their online teaching modules via Blackboard".

Janette cites the fact that *The New York Times* is recognised as one of the world's leading news sources, and that it "records America's historical contribution to international affairs, social milestones such as the abolition of slavery and

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universal suffrage, discoveries and inventions, the lives and times of America's diverse population, cultural and artistic achievements, and sports".

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*The New York Times* via *ProQuest Historical Newspapers* is "useable at all levels by undergraduates, postgraduates, academics and library staff, onsite and – by authenticated access – offsite" and "the licence also covers walk-in access by members of the public". Janette says that people use it as primary source material on historical events such as World War I, for contemporaneous film, theatre, art exhibition reviews, and to search for historical advertisements for discourse analysis, for example Coca Cola. "There is an advantage in having the full paper. People like to see other things like adverts and contemporary things going on."

Not only accessible to a range of levels, Janette says the resource is used by a wide range of disciplines too – American studies, history, political science, diplomacy, mass communication and journalism, literature, sociology, anthropology, economics, fine arts, music, theatre and film studies. "It's a good financial investment if a resource can be used by many different disciplines and levels of student. In the past only postgrads could be bothered to fight with microfilm and primary sources." She adds that "we like to buy things that have a one-off cost. Once paid for, it's ours".

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