

# Pin Your Library

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The Australian Catholic University (ACU) Library has had an interest in Pinterest for some time now; as have many libraries, museums, companies, and individuals throughout the world. Over the past couple of years Pinterest has become an extremely popular social media platform, particularly for women. CNN labelled Pinterest “the 2012 hottest website.”<sup>1</sup> It began in 2010 and has been growing and evolving ever since.

So what’s all the fuss about and why should libraries be involved? Pinterest is an online tool that makes it easier to find, store and share online resources like websites, photos, blogs, videos etc. It is freely available as an App for the iPhone, iPad, and Android mobile devices.<sup>2</sup>

The New York Times summed it up perfectly - “Pinterest actually makes sense. You pin things based on your interests.”<sup>3</sup> They also state that “Pinterest is unlike Twitter, Facebook and their ilk because you’re not just broadcasting, or even principally broadcasting. You create Pinterest boards for your own use, your own memory-jogging, your own inspiration.”<sup>4</sup> You find a website, you create a visual bookmark.

Remember when you used to read print magazines and you came across an interesting article (that also had a great photo)? Did you ever cut it out, but only - and this is important - if you owned the magazine? Then physically pin it to a cork or noticeboard so that you could keep the photo and article? Perhaps you still do? Perhaps you even do this electronically? When locating a really good website, do you bookmark it or add it to a website such as Delicious? Well now you have the option to do all of this using Pinterest instead.

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1 Pete Cashmore, “Why Pinterest Is 2012’s Hottest Website.” <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/02/06/tech/web/pinterest-website-cashmore>, accessed May 10, 2012.

2 “Pinterest Finally Comes to Android, Ipad.” <http://mashable.com/2012/08/14/pinterest-finally-comes-to-android-ipad/>, accessed May 10, 2012.

3 David Pogue, “A Scrapbook on the Web Catches Fire.” <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/16/technology/personaltech/reviewing-pinterest-the-newest-social-media-site.html>, accessed May 10, 2012.

4 Ibid.

*“Click on the Pin It icon, and Pinterest will help you add the information within the site to a board within your Pinterest site. The pin created will be a picture from the website e.g. a book cover.”*

To get started simply visit the Pinterest website (<https://pinterest.com/>) and create an account. It is open to all including libraries! You can create an account using Facebook, Twitter or an email address. Get in quick to choose your unique Library Pinterest username (before they are all taken). Remember, you want your users (and the world) to find your library.

Once you have created your Pinterest account you can enter the world of Pinterest and begin pinning and repinning. To access your profile information, select your profile picture. Currently this is located at the top of the Pinterest website. Here you can modify your details and account information. Your boards are listed below your profile.

What are boards? Well, they are a collection of pins. You can create a board to organise your pins within a certain topic, and as librarians we *love* to do this don't we? To access the pins within a board simply click on the board. Did you know that the URL to your board never changes? It doesn't matter what you add or remove from it. David Lee King offers some suggestions when organising a board e.g. create boards that “focus on the library, on things our customers might be interested in”, “wear your library hat”, “think like the library rather than an individual when pinning something.”<sup>5</sup> ACU Library created a board called *Displays*. Within this board we have added pins relating to the board title, for example various photographs of the different displays we have had in each of the campus libraries.

So what are pins? You may have noticed that websites now offer a variety of tools to share information found within their site, such as a Facebook or Twitter symbol. Some websites, such as Amazon and Goodreads, now have also included a Pin It button. Even the database Emerald hosts a Pin It button on many of their journal articles. Click on the Pin It icon, and Pinterest will help you add the information within the site to a board within your Pinterest site. The pin created will be a picture from the website e.g. a book cover. Choose the board you want to pin the picture to, and then add a description (unless the site does this for you). If you or someone accessing your Pinterest site clicks on this image or pin, they will be taken directly to the webpage or item you have pinned. The image represents the content you want to share.

You can re-pin items from other boards also, or have your pins re-pinned by others. It can be exciting when this happens, especially if one of your pins is re-pinned by another library.

Unfortunately there isn't always a Pin It button embedded on the object you want to pin; and you may come across an object, such as website, picture, and video that you want to pin to one of your boards. So what do you do? There are a few options; however a recommended

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5 David Lee King, “Pinterest for Libraries: What We're Doing.” <http://www.davidleeking.com/2012/03/15/pinterest-for-libraries-what-were-doing/#.Ug2osdI3DbP>, accessed May 10, 2012.



*“As well as Pinterest receiving a lot of attention for good reasons, it has received a lot of bad publicity also. Basically it is all to do with copyright. Have you ever noticed those teeny tiny words “Terms of Service” and “Privacy Policy” on a page when you created an online account?”*

option is to install a Pin It button onto your bookmarks bar from the Pinterest website.

Whilst you are pinning away, keep in mind some pin etiquette. Britney Fitzgerald suggests some things pinners should do:

- Link to the original source, as well as note the source (i.e. the photographer etc). If ACU Library locates a fantastic image on the web, permission from the copyright owner/s is obtained first before it is pinned.

- Create organised boards.

- “Don’t post images that are too big or too small.”

- Be careful not to over sync your sites; for example, don’t have everything from your Twitter/Facebook accounts on Pinterest (and vice versa).<sup>6</sup>

As well as Pinterest receiving a lot of attention for good reasons, it has received a lot of bad publicity also. Basically it is all to do with copyright. Have you ever noticed those teeny tiny words “Terms of Service” and “Privacy Policy” on a page when you created an online account? Yes? But did you read them? No? Copyright is a grey area for Pinterest users, but don’t let these concerns put you off using the site. Just be cautious. Take Anne Clark’s advice “make sure the source is correct.”<sup>7</sup> If you are pinning something from a blog, for example, make sure the pin takes the user back to the original source. Give credit where credit is due! Does the site have a Pin It button? If so, pin it but credit the source. Jonathon Pink, a lawyer, advises that you can play it safe on Pinterest by adding your own content, and linking to your own content.<sup>8</sup> Take your own photos of objects. Unless the content clearly states otherwise (e.g. a Creative Commons licence etc.), obtain permission from the copyright owner to pin their property.

So what is the ACU Library Pinterest story? At first we signed up, and like most we didn’t take a lot of notice of the terms and conditions. Then we heard about the copyright issues and were a bit more cautious, but still continued. In 2012, however, we were asked by our library management to delete almost everything within our Pinterest account, as it was deemed too risky to continue. Consequently a proposal was written and sent to library management requesting that our Pinterest account be reinstated; and they agreed, but as long as there were guidelines. These included:

- We could pin content if we owned the copyright (e.g. our own artwork and photographs).

6 Britney Fitzgerald, “Pinterest Etiquette : 9 Things Pinners Should Never Do.” [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/03/pinterest-etiquette-tips-what-not-to-do\\_n\\_1720258.html?](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/03/pinterest-etiquette-tips-what-not-to-do_n_1720258.html?), accessed May 19, 2012.

7 Anne Clark, “Pinterest for Librarians” <http://www.sotomorrowblog.com/2012/01/pinterest-for-librarians.html>, accessed May 10, 2012.

8 Steve Eder, “How to Use Pinterest without Breaking the Law.” <http://blogs.wsj.com/law/2012/03/13/dont-get-stuck-by-pinterest-lawyers-warn/>, accessed May 10, 2013.



*“What better way to show off your library than through a visual medium like Pinterest? We have at ACU, as have many libraries throughout the world. Tell everyone about that wonderful book display you have created, or that very old book you have in your special collection.”*

- We would need to obtain the express permission to pin others’ content.

- We had to keep copies of the permissions in a central location.
- We could pin objects that have the ‘Pin Me’ button within their website (as it implies permission to pin).

- The ACU Library Pinterest account will be moderated by a few library staff who understood copyright issues. We would also have the right to immediately remove any dubious pins.

- We would need to provide training and guidelines for all library staff that wished to contribute to the ACU library Pinterest account.

All agreed upon the guidelines, and the ACU Library Pinterest site once again became active.

So how can your library use Pinterest? Some suggestions include...

Collaboration! Why not share a board with another library? Perhaps your library could enable a group of library staff to pin to a board, like ACU Library does? It is possible to share a pin board and enable others as contributors, but to add them to your board you must follow at least one of their boards. In early 2012 the organisers of the ALIA Online Conference created a Pinterest account specifically for the conference and created boards on various topics relating to the conference theme. Conference delegates were invited to collaborate on the board and pin resources relating to the topics. It was an effective, innovative method encouraging online collaboration; and even after the conference has concluded, contributors are continuing to pin to the boards.

Promotion and Marketing! What better way to show off your library than through a visual medium like Pinterest? We have at ACU, as have many libraries throughout the world. Tell everyone about that wonderful book display you have created, or that very old book you have in your special collection. Promote your Library Pinterest account by adding the “Follow Me on Pinterest” button to your website or the “Pin It” button to other web pages.

ACU Library has created an ANZTLA Libraries board within Pinterest, to help promote the association; and we welcome any ANZTLA members to contribute to it. We would recommend that ANZTLA also consider creating an ANZTLA Pinterest account to market and promote the many services it provides, such as AULOTS, ARI, annual conferences etc.

Overdrive, the eBook distributor, have a Pinterest presence and have created a board *Where are you eReading?* They encourage libraries and users to send Overdrive photos that are then pinned to the Overdrive board. When clicked upon, the pin directs the user back to the library. A great way to market your eBook collection.

The San Francisco Public Library have a fantastic Pinterest account. They have included pins of amazing historic images of their city, as well as historical photos of their library.

The Kansas City Library ran a *Pin Your Perfect Library Pinterest Contest*. They asked their clients “if you were to build your perfect



*“How would having your library have a Pinterest presence benefit your clients, even your library staff? As already stated, Pinterest is a tool that enables collaboration and communication.”*

library, what would it look like? What books would you stock on the shelves? What kinds of furniture would you set out for patrons to lounge in as they read?”<sup>9</sup> Instead of enabling their clients to pin to a library board, the library encouraged their clients to create their own Pinterest account and produce their own perfect library board, add pins, then email the Pinterest URL to the library. The Helsinki Airport ran a similar competition within their Pinterest account using the board *The Helsinki Airport Book Swap*, and asked users to pin ideas.<sup>10</sup> What fabulous concepts!

Social Curation! Elad Gil uses the term “social curation” and looks at how we “share on the web.”<sup>11</sup> Sharing is becoming a lot easier. More visual and topic centred. What better platform for a library to share resources than by using a pin board? Mark Carrington highly praises curation tools such as Pinterest, stating that they help us overcome information overload.<sup>12</sup>

Research! Pinterest is a repository that is used to store data. Researchers in your library could be encouraged to create a pin board to store resources and collections. Deborah Lupton, a sociologist, does exactly this. Deborah particularly likes the ability for pinners to make comments underneath their pins. She suggests that “academic departments or research groups could use Pinterest to promote their research and teaching initiatives.”<sup>13</sup> Companies like Altmetrics also focus upon sites like Pinterest for “mentions of scholarly articles.”<sup>14</sup>

Clients! How would having your library have a Pinterest presence benefit your clients, even your library staff? As already stated, Pinterest is a tool that enables collaboration and communication. Jeff Dunn suggests a number of great areas, including reading lists, info graphics, drawing attention to the local community, and

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9 Kansas City Public Library, “Pin Your Perfect Library Pinterest Contest.” <http://www.kclibrary.org/blog/kc-unbound/pin-your-perfect-library-pinterest-contest>, accessed May 10, 2012.

10 “Helsinki Airport Book Swap” <http://pinterest.com/qualityhunters/helsinki-airport-book-swap/>, accessed May 10, 2012.

11 Elad Gil, “How Pinterest Will Transform the Web in 2012 : Social Content Curation as the Next Big Thing.” <http://blog.eladgil.com/2011/12/how-pinterest-will-transform-web-in.html?cnn=yes>, accessed May 10, 2012.

12 Mark Carrington, “A Researcher’s Survival Guide to Information Overload and Curation Tools.” <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2012/07/16/researchers-guide-info-overload-curation/>, accessed August 10, 2012.

13 Deborah Lupton, “More Than Just a Pretty Picture? How Sociologists (and Other Social Scientists) Can Use Pinterest.” <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2012/06/22/pretty-picture-pinterest-social-science/>, accessed August 10, 2012.

14 Gary Price, “Alternative Metrics : Wiley Begins Six Month Trial of Altmetric Service with Some Subscription and Oa Titles.” <http://www.infodocket.com/2013/05/20/alternative-metrics-wiley-begins-six-month-trial-of-altmetric-service-with-some-subscription-and-oa-titles/>, accessed May 30, 2013.

*“Pinterest offers analytical tools to help you with this. Within Pinterest you can click on any pin and see what has been pinned from the same website, as well as where your pin may have been repinned to. Currently this information is displayed beneath each pin.”*

book clubs.<sup>15</sup> Many libraries throughout the world are already using Pinterest in these ways. *New York Public Library*, for instance, has a major Pinterest presence and has received a lot of attention. Users can spend hours exploring the NYPL boards and pins.

If you do decide to create a Pinterest account for your library, it won't be long until you or library management will want to know if it was worth it. Pinterest offers analytical tools to help you with this. Within Pinterest you can click on any pin and see what has been pinned from the same website, as well as where your pin may have been repinned to. Currently this information is displayed beneath each pin. For a more in depth overview of your analytics, Pinterest have introduced *Pinterest Web Analytics* for businesses. You can also observe what has been pinned from your own library website by adding the URL - <http://pinterest.com/source/> - in front of your website URL. There are also a variety of third party companies that offer further options; for example, *Curalate* and *Pinpuff* help measure your Pinterest activity. Of course if you use any or all of these tools and you discover Pinterest isn't generating the levels of interest you had hoped, there are a number of other similar tools available online for your library to try. These include - *the Fancy*, *Gooru*, *History Pin*, and *Scoop it* to name a few.

Pinterest is an online tool that is constantly evolving. Libraries can keep up-to-date through *Facebook*, *Twitter*, the blog (*Oh, How Pinteresting*), or *Pinning 101*. Follow *Pin Your Library*, a board created by Sarah Howard and Joanna Shori, to further discover how libraries are using Pinterest. Perhaps your library may decide to run a Pinterest trial, like *ACU Library* has? The possibilities are endless.

The online version of this presentation can be located at:  
<http://prezi.com/adm67jlonjxb/pin-your-library/>.

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