

Catastrophizing or Critiquing: A COVID-19 Case Study

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I am the librarian at the Emmaus Library at the Australian College of Christian Studies. This paper presents a case study on how the library has transitioned through the COVID-19 period, and how new services to students were created to cater to their needs.





Background

The Emmaus library was set up in the late 1950s when the Emmaus Bible College began in Epping, New South Wales. The physical collections that you see in the picture is a result of the merger between Tabor College and Emmaus Bible College (to form the Australian College of Christian Studies). A lot of culling was done prior to the move to our current location in Burwood a few years ago, as there were several duplicates and outdated materials.

The Australian College of Christian Studies (ACCS) offers counselling courses in both English and Korean, as well as Ministry and Theology. There has been a transition over the years from mainly face to face to online with the many distance education students who study at the college. There is also a Korean cohort who continue to study face to face and come into the college to this day. This paper aims to highlight the various innovations introduced during COVID-19.

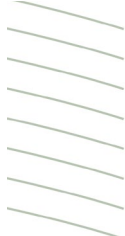
ACCS offered courses online long before the pandemic, with some being offered face to face (e.g. our Counselling courses conducted in Korean). Our student body consists of online students (approximately 70%), who are domestic as well as international students, and in-class students (approximately 30%) who are the Korean counselling students.

The Library Under Lockdown

When COVID-19 struck in 2020, all staff were instructed to work from home during the two lockdowns (March-May 2020, and again from June-October 2021). The Emmaus library was closed to visitors and was prepared to provide all its services online. Students were informed via email that the library was open by appointment only during the two lockdowns.

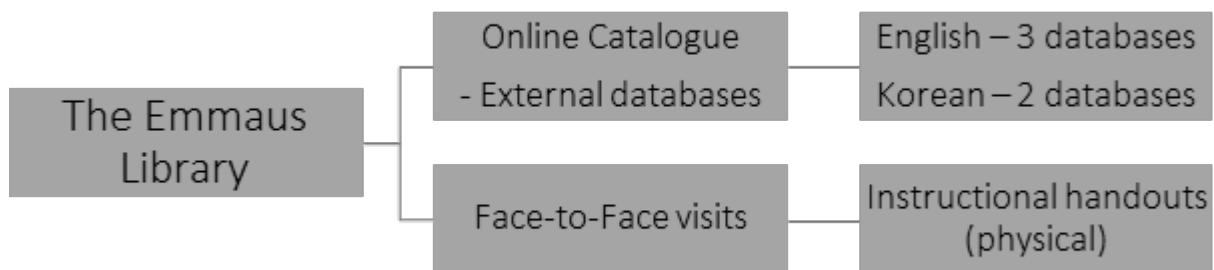
We needed to adapt to a new normal of customers needing to make an appointment before they visited the physical library. I needed to verify that all customers who visited the library met the entry requirements, meaning they did not have COVID-19 nor had encountered anyone who had COVID-19 in the last seven days. All customers needed to mask up, sanitize, and practice social distancing. This measure was an attempt to curb the spread of the virus, but it also meant that a restricted number of visitors was allowed in at any one time. This was to protect staff members as well.

Initially, I found it difficult during lockdown as there was a lack of student and librarian contact face to face which we had all been so used to. Also, I found it difficult to maintain the level of service I had previously provided to our customers when the library was open. Students could not simply walk in and talk with me, and it was a difficult time of adjustment for some of our students who were so used to coming in or calling our main line and asking for assistance. I found the adjustment to working from home difficult, but eventually got used to it by the second lockdown.



There was a lack of online textbooks for our students, and we started purchasing from the EBSCO eBook collection so our students could access these from home. Students were also missing the ease of visiting and browsing our collection as well as asking for help on similar resources. And lastly, our students were also missing interacting with their lecturers, which could only happen well in a face-to-face environment.

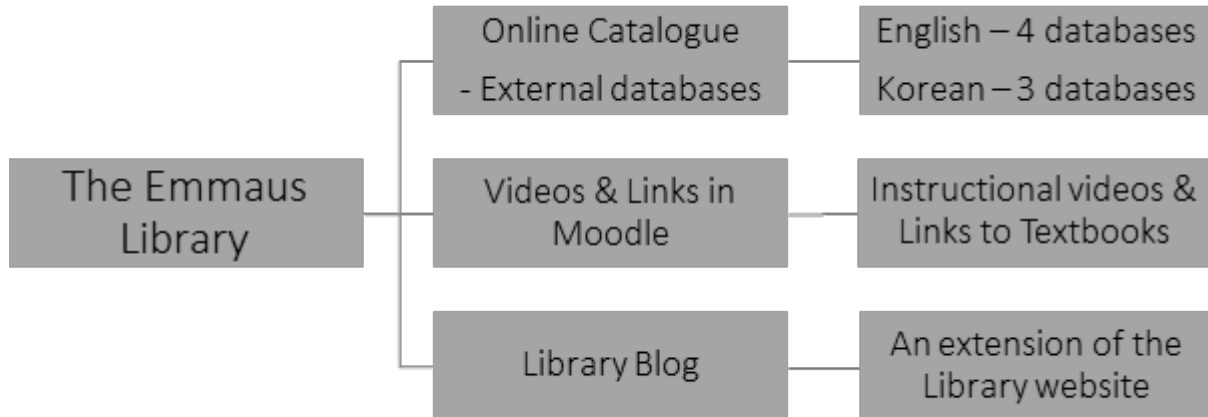
Our Online Presence... Prior to COVID-19



Our presence prior to COVID consisted of an online presence as well as the traditional physical library presence. Our online presence was just our online catalogue and external databases. Our traditional presence enabled face-to-face visits from our students in the library. With our online presence, students could use our three English and two Korean databases. They could come into the library as well and I would provide them with instructional handouts to take home. However, during lockdown, it was vital to redefine what additional services could be provided to not isolate our students and to provide them with the same level of customer service and reference information that they were used to.



Our Online Presence Now... New Innovations

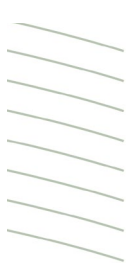


To bridge the gap between how students could get the information they were used to, I decided to make some instructional videos to be placed in Moodle, as well as create a library blog. The blog would feature FAQs such as how to use an online database effectively, how to locate eBooks and other resources, instructional guides and more recently, how to access their textbooks via Perlego, the newest addition to our online databases. Soon, I aim to include reference materials such as statistical websites, Biblical dictionaries, glossaries, Biblical maps, e-journals, Open Access databases, and dissertations.

There is also an online option allowing students to chat with me via *Zoom (Zoom with the Librarian)* should they require guidance on how to use and find resources. Approximately 10-15 sessions have been conducted during the COVID-19 period with domestic as well as international students from undergraduate to master's level.

Digital Textbook List

In Moodle (our Learning Management System), I have also created, with the help of a TAFE library student, textbook links in what we call the Digital Textbook List. The textbook list includes links to prescribed textbooks in Perlego, EBSCO or on Hoopla. The recommended readings are mostly available from Perlego and there are links to them in the library blog. This textbook list is stored in Moodle for students to access.



	Corey, G., & Cengage Learning (Firm). (2013). <i>Theory and Practice of Counselling and Psychotherapy: The Case of Stan and Lecturettes</i> . Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Cengage Learning.
SC7108 Worldviews and Counselling	Sire, J. W. (2020). <i>The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalogue</i> , 6 th ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic. Available on Perlego . Available from Hoopla eBook Also Available from Hoopla as an Audiobook Holeman, V. T. (2012). <i>Theology for Better Counselling: Trinitarian Reflections for Healing and Formation</i> . Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic. Available from Perlego .
SC5202 Grief and Loss Counselling	Worden, W. (2018). <i>Grief Counselling and grief therapy: A handbook for the mental health practitioner</i> , (5th ed). New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company. Available on Perlego McKissock, D., & McKissock, M. (2018). <i>Coping with grief</i> , (5th ed). ABC Books. Available on Hoopla
SC7202 Grief and Loss Counselling	
SC7203 Marriage and Family Therapies	Gehart , D. R. (2014). <i>Mastering Competencies in Family Therapy: A Practical Approach to Theory and Clinical Case Documentation</i> . Belmont, Calif: Brooks/Cole Pub. Available from Perlego
SC7206 Introduction to Psychology	Rathus , S. A. (2016). <i>PSYCH</i> . Boston, MA: Cengage Learning. 6th edition. May be purchased as an eBook.
SC7207 Cognitive Behaviour Therapy/ EFT/DBY	Greenberg, L. S. (2016). <i>Emotion-Focused Therapy</i> (Rev. Ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. close match: Greenberg, L. S., and Rhonda N. Goldman. (2018). <i>Clinical Handbook of Emotion-Focused Therapy</i> . Vol. First edition. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. EBSCO eBook Pearce, M. (2016). <i>Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Christians with Depression: A Practical Tool-Based Primer</i> . West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press. Available from Perlego Van Dijk, S. (2012). <i>DBT Made Simple</i> . Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc. Available from Hoopla

Perlego

Perlego is our latest database and one of our most popular ones amongst students and lecturers. ACCS subscribed to it in August 2021. The take-up was slow but with more promotion, it has proven to be very popular with almost all 50 licenses that we purchased used up. In the library blog, I have created workspaces with readings for each subject and have placed links to each workspace in the library blog. Workspaces work very much like folders in that you can put titles in, and students can click on these titles. I email the post to students at the start of each trimester along with my usual “Welcome from the librarian” email.



Perlego

- Home
- Discover

MY ACTIVITY

- Reading 7
- Want to read 21
- Completed 3

MY WORKSPACES

- MP7209- The Art of Preac...
- TS7311- Doing Theology T...
- M17/8101- Global Missions
- XX9500- Research Metho...
- ML9312 Management in C...
- TB57/8102- New Testam...
- TB9307- Prophetic Litera...
- SC7208- Psychological Di...
- SC7207- CBT DBT EFT ACT
- SC7103- Intro to Marriage ...
- SC7106- Human Lifespan ...

Search by title, author, ISBN & topic

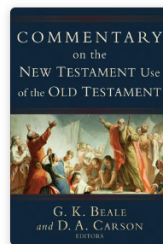
Home > Discover > Theology & Religion

Theology & Religion

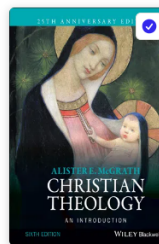
Books 30k+ Reading Lists 19 Subtopics 51

English Publication date Publisher Author Format

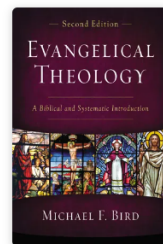
Showing 1 - 60 out of 30,000+ books



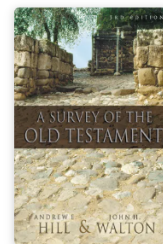
Commentary on the New Testament Use o...
2007



Christian Theology
Alister E. McGrath
2016



Evangelical Theology, Second Edition
Michael F. Bird
2020



A Survey of the Old Testament
Andrew E. Hill
2010

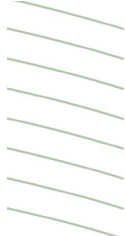
Library Blog

When the library was in lockdown, there was no way for students to easily get information as they couldn't visit the library and speak with me. Hence, I decided that giving reference information via a blog and broadcasting this to students was a good way for them to learn how to use the library well, especially as I work part-time and am not available on certain days of the week. ACCS has international students from Canada, Africa and other parts of the world. Having such information readily available means that our international students can also access this information 24/7, no matter where they are.

I plan to update the blog with more open access materials in the near future. Physical guides were given to walk-in students in the past but now they are also digitally available to students in the blog as a PDF for students to download.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the experience of the Emmaus Library over the last two years has inspired the development of a variety of virtual library services to its customers, many of which may become a permanent service offered by the library, at least in the short to medium term. Many of our



customers have been delighted with the services and this means that we can reach out to more customers who do not necessarily live in Sydney and are unable to visit our physical library.

The COVID-19 pandemic will no doubt continue to impact the way we do business for many years to come. We need to change, adapt, evolve and become more customer focused in these challenging times so as to remain relevant.

I also believe that virtual librarianship is here to stay; digital transformation in the hybrid library environment seems to be the answer. Libraries must think about how we can use technology in order to enhance learning. As we continue to work in a hybrid model, the challenge we face is to continue to bridge the gap between face-to-face and virtual interactions with our customers.

The use of open access and e-resources will continue to rise. This is seen in the case of our students who mostly prefer using Perlego to our physical collection. It is much more convenient. They don't have to lug around heavy books and they can access it from their own home.

I would also like to conclude with findings from this case study of using eBooks. The advantages are:

- they are more portable in that you can bring your books anywhere easily,
- they take up less or no storage space in the library,
- they are less often expensive to purchase compared to physical books,
- they are easily available to students so they can access these eBooks anytime

Some disadvantages include:

- eBooks require connectivity for readers to access,
- there is more eyestrain compared to physical books,
- it requires frequent charging of your iPad, Kindle or mobile device,
- endless scrolling is needed to keep track of the argument made.

And finally, in closing, I'd like to leave you with a question to ponder on, and that is

How can we mitigate the worst effects of the inevitable move to all digital texts?