



Margaret Ferguson, Head of Collection Services at Victoria University of Wellington Te Whare Wānanga o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui

Te Whare Wānanga, 'The place or house of higher learning', is the meaning of the first part of Victoria University of Wellington's Māori name. The second part says that the University is located 'at the head of the fish of Māui', which derives from Māori legend about a Polynesian explorer, Māui, who hauled up the North Island of Aotearoa from the sea using a magic fishhook. His waka (canoe) was the South Island. Māui navigated from Hawaiiki, the mythical ancestral homeland of the Māori. Aotearoa is the Māori name for New Zealand and means 'Land of the Long White Cloud'.

As befits the Te Whare Wānanga definition, Victoria is known for its far reaching and thorough research programmes. In fact, they're ranked within the top three New Zealand universities for research quality by the Government's Performance-based Research Fund. The University is recognised as a thought leader in a number of international growth areas, with key partnerships with a number of Crown Research Institutes. Victoria has more than 40 research institutes and centres that collectively play a significant role in their graduate teaching and research programmes. These institutes and centres are involved in applied research projects as well as programmes that advance fundamental understanding. As a result, Victoria offers continually developing graduate programmes and access to the latest thinking across a wide range of fields.

Margaret Ferguson is Head of Collection Services at Victoria University of Wellington Library. Part of her job is to

manage the acquisition of Library resources, the cataloguing and processing services for all formats across all libraries and the development of overall Library policy relating to collection management.

"I have been a librarian for over 25 years and when I think about the early years, when we didn't even have computers, technology has made a huge difference to the way academics do research," says Margaret. "We spend nearly 50% of our collections' budget on electronic resources. In terms of workflow and assessing what we want, because there is such a large number and range of products, we have to carefully evaluate the resources we decide to purchase. We chose to invest in *ProQuest Historical Newspapers* because it was recommended by academic staff after a trial. As the Library already had access to a number of other ProQuest products, we were familiar with the operating platform and the way the resources are delivered."

Asked how long *ProQuest Historical Newspapers* has been used at Victoria, Margaret says it has "been a gradual building up over the last three years. We started with the most requested collection, *The New York Times*, but now we have nearly all of them – *The Atlanta Constitution*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*. Online newspaper archives give access to a wealth of research content, and we're planning to get them all".

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Margaret says that there has been a "real partnership with academics" when selecting resources. Associate Professor in the School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations, Dolores Janiewski "has been great. She prioritises which newspapers are most significant for her and her colleagues. Dolores has built some of her teaching around it, and students have volunteered that it is invaluable. One PhD candidate is looking at psychological experimentation from World War II onwards and will use news reports where personal letters are not available. It is ideal as primary source material for American history undergraduate and postgraduate classes".

Whilst a strong partnership with the History academic staff is to be expected with the *ProQuest Historical Newspapers*, Margaret adds "I'm really looking at interdisciplinary resources. Newspapers are a core resource because of the focus on research in New Zealand, where primary material is vital".

Margaret says that feedback from subject librarians indicated there was "definitely a Commerce application for newspapers old and new", that the English department find them "really useful in a number of areas", Media Studies say "honours students have been using them for their projects" and "some of our lecturers in Architecture find access to these most useful for research and have commented favourably on *ProQuest Historical Newspapers*".

With so many disciplines using *ProQuest Historical Newspapers*, training is essential. Margaret says that most training on electronic resources is done by Reference & Research staff of the Library. Even the most experienced

librarians learn something new about a resource from the vendor. Webex sessions and interactive tutorials are becoming more and more common, but, I would say, there is actually a need for more training rather than less. This is because electronic resources continue to offer more and more varied functionality, search enhancements and content updates. ProQuest products are excellent, but while they are, to a large extent, intuitive, it's always good to have a refresher."

Another part of Margaret's job is to negotiate licenses and other contracts with information providers and vendors for the supply of electronic resources to the Library. She says "it is a real plus when we can purchase an electronic resource, rather than lease it. The best products aren't cheap, but we're always looking for return on investment, and *ProQuest Historical Newspapers* provides us with value for money as a primary research resource".

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