

Slavery Links Library: Profiles of users to be served

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User profiles have influence on ...

- How the Library collection is organised
- How the library's activities are managed.

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HOW IS THE SLAVERY LINKS LIBRARY POSITIONED?

The Slavery Links Library refers to one subject area: slavery. The Library appears to have the best collection of book materials [about slavery](#) in the country. The Library also has a useful collection of non-book materials on the subject.

To develop such a collection it is necessary to arrive at an understanding of the subject area. This appreciation of [topics to be covered](#) determines the library’s [collection development](#) policy. The decision about scope involves a normative judgment: the Library applies expertise and offers leadership.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED?

How can the collection be managed to develop and maintain its *utility*?

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What are the requirements of “utility”?

The Slavery Links Library collection is to be available to the public. So, in addition to the requirements of subject specialty, and within the limits of available resources, the needs and interests of library users will influence:

- How the Library collection is to be organised, preserved, maintained and made available
- How the library’s activities, staffing, advertising and membership will be arranged.

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Who are the Library users?

What is meant by the term “public”? This paper identifies:

- Who will be served by the Library, what are the user segments?
- How can the Library identify the needs and interests of each user segment in order to:
 - meet user needs in each transaction; and
 - attract new users in each segment?

**WHO WANTS INFORMATION ABOUT SLAVERY?
FOUR USER SEGMENTS**

The Slavery Links Library is in the business of human rights education. Therefore the Library has considered how a response to a user’s question can be framed to encourage deeper understanding and further questions.

The Library has differentiated its user segments according to their needs, interests and the problem(s) they might want to solve. There are four user segments to be catered for. These can be grouped according to the type of question being asked, as follows:

- Questions about a particular form of slavery, which often lead to further questions about what forces enable slave *systems* to persist.
- Questions about organisations: Who is doing what work, where?
- Questions about strategy, in other words how relationships work, to contribute to co-ordinating or harnessing anti-slavery activity.
- Questions about the ethics that can rationalise or propel slavery; and the ethics that are on offer to guide anti-slavery thinking or initiatives.

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How were these user segments ascertained?

From 2009-10 the Slavery Links Library has collected data about questions asked of search engines such as Google and Alta Vista. These first steps in identifying user segments were also informed by staff from AusTrade, who included this writer in an all-day session for Design Victoria regarding how to optimise a trade-related presence on the internet. The next steps were also taken in 2009-10 by Slavery Links with staff of the Design Centre at Swinburne University, as part of the process of developing the Slavery Links identity and ensuring its relevance to users.

Further work was undertaken by the Slavery Links Library, from 2010. The user concepts were tested with the assistance of a Swinburne student on field placement with Slavery Links at the Borderlands Cooperative in Hawthorn. This work enabled the segments to be clarified during a process of refining the Slavery Links’ model for responding to slavery through community development. The user segments were further clarified during development and testing of [sixteen Workshops](#) by the Library. In these Workshops, real people in a real room ask real questions arising from real activity. We acknowledge the contribution of such people to the process.

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Segment 1: Questions about forms of slavery

From live audiences and on the internet, a major segment of questioners regarding slavery are framing questions about ‘forms of slavery’.

Such questions might be prompted by a school project (I want to find out what products are tainted by child labour); or a television program (how does forced marriage relate to alleged misuse of spousal visas); or a campaign on social media or the internet (where are there child soldiers?).

People in this segment will likely use search terms that refer to the ‘official’ forms of contemporary slavery. They ask for information about some aspect such as ‘child labour’, ‘child soldier’, ‘child trading’, ‘debt bondage’, ‘forced marriage’, ‘forced labour’ or ‘slavery in war’.

In addition to providing information about the nature and extent of some aspect of modern slavery, such questions as these enable the Slavery Links Library to respond with information that relates to *systems* of slavery and forces that enable slave-making systems to persist. These forces, the four “engines” of slavery, have been set out in [Australians and Modern Slavery](#) and summarised in the pamphlet [What is slavery?](#) to be found on the Slavery Links web site.

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Segment 2: Questions about organisations

Another large group of enquirers consists of people who ask about the anti-slavery work that particular organisations are doing. These queries seem to come from three sources:

- From staff of the organisation. Staff (and volunteers) apparently seek to establish where the questioner’s organisation sits vis à vis other similar organisations. There is perhaps an element of competitor analysis
- From members of a not-for-profit group, enterprise or association. They apparently want to know “have we got this issue covered” or “how well are we doing”. There is perhaps an element of measuring effectiveness
- From current or potential donors to the organisation. They appear to want some measure of the effectiveness of philanthropic giving

By informing staff; by educating members; and by encouraging donors to be more discerning, these questions may encourage such organisations to recognise their anti-slavery role more fully.

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Segment 3: Strategies and relationships

A third user segment wants to find out ‘what works’, and ‘how it works’ to address slavery. In common parlance this user might start off with a search for ‘strategies’ or ‘tactics’ and then move on to consider the relationships that underpin lasting change. Slavery Links has found that good design enables a user to be drawn easily through this difficult territory. There is no need to ‘dumb down’. Australian audiences can understand the issues.

What does it mean, to be ‘drawn through the territory’ about relationships? For the Slavery Links Library it means linking the questioner with information about processes that have been found to work. The book [Australians and modern slavery](#) identified community-based projects that utilise bottom-up approaches to overcome powerlessness and the other engines of slavery. Sometimes these bottom-up approaches operate within a context of top-down change. Sometimes the change process works only from the bottom-up. In either case lasting change comes via relationships that can continue over the long term.

Research and experience indicate the obvious: that a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach does not work for every country or for every form of slavery. It is necessary to unpick each situation, each form of slavery, to understand the processes or mechanisms that underpin it, and express the strategy or relationships that will address how people have become trapped.

Organisations can afford to pay for such questions on a fee-for-service basis. For private individuals, the Slavery Links Library has been preparing formal papers to be downloaded, to respond to such questions remotely.

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Segment 4: Questions about ethics

Each possibility of anti-slavery action is guided by values or ethics, such as:

- The fair trade ethic of promoting justice back through the supply chain
- Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the triple bottom line
- Ethics or values embedded in the human rights treaties of the United Nations and labour standards of the International Labour Organisation
- Sustainability principles, in particular as applied to lands of first peoples
- The ethic that business enterprises can embed human rights through the practices such as the Global Compact and the Ruggie principles

WHAT HAS THE SLAVERY LINKS LIBRARY DONE FOR THESE USER GROUPS?

In 2009-10, Slavery Links worked with the Design Centre at Swinburne University to map out the features that would be sought in an on line library and web portal. The proposal was tested by a student on field work in 2010-11. The web portal would require the support of staff and resources beyond those currently available. It is 'on hold' pending funding.

At the current level of funding and resources the Slavery Links Library has a solid record with the following achievements. The Library has:

- A set of subject headings ([thesaurus](#)) with a sound theory-base
- A well-defined Library policy for [collection development](#)
- The best [catalogue](#) of book materials [about slavery](#) in the country
- A useful collection of non-book materials on the subject
- A track record in research or information support for:
 - Development of a book ([Australians and modern slavery](#))
 - Development and testing of [sixteen Workshops](#)
 - Three papers, setting out a theory base for anti-slavery work in Australia, and delivered to groups having national standing, viz.:
 - Staff of the [Australian Human Rights Commission](#) (AHRC)
 - [Judges and Magistrates](#) (AIJA)
 - [Family professionals](#) (AIFS)
- Assisted in preparation for evidence-giving (at the invitation of two parliamentary committees) to Inquiries in 2012 and 2013 which have delivered slavery reform proposals that achieved bi-partisan support.

What else can the Library do for users with current resources?

The Library can provide a hierarchy of access, as follows:

- Any member of the public can download digital resources and links.
- By arrangement with the Librarian, any member of the public can get on-site access to books listed in the catalogue. Such personal services will be provided on a fee for service basis at \$100 per hour.
- By arrangement with the Librarian, any member of the public can ask for information or research services, to be provided (at \$100 per hour).

WHAT IS THE SLAVERY LINKS LIBRARY?

Slavery Links is a [community association](#) with a six-year track record of research and action to minimise the harm arising from modern slavery.

The Slavery Links Library has a [solid catalogue](#) of evidence-based and historical works about slavery. The Library supports research activities and [exhibitions](#) as well as academic seminars, briefings about slavery, evidence-giving to parliamentary inquiries, and workshops with adult education groups, community groups, interest groups, secular and faith groups.

The Slavery Links Library also supports the development of education materials. The Library has supported the development of [sixteen workshop topics](#). The Library supported the book [Australians and Modern Slavery](#). The Library has supported the preparation of papers for [judicial officers](#), [human rights staff](#) and [family practitioners](#).

How does the Library operate?

The Slavery Links Library is funded by members, not by Government, philanthropic trusts or appeals for public money. We do accept donations.

What difference do we make?

The internet is not a reliable source of information about slavery.

The Slavery Links Library collects and disseminates information to support better business decisions, more informed consumers, more engaged members of Non Government Organisations. The Library supports increased community awareness and community action. Library information assists organisations to recognise their anti-slavery roles more fully.

We encourage you to [join the Library](#), as:

- A member
- A student member
- A donor member

We invite your support, to:

- Provide professional advice
- Provide practical support
- Donate an early edition of a book about slavery
- Donate original research or historical papers about slavery