

Here, there and virtually everywhere. Library services for distance learners.

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Q: When is a reference desk not a reference desk?

A: When it's a **virtual** reference desk.

The Waikato University School of Education VERD (Virtual Education Reference Desk) provides a simple multi channel method of meeting the needs of distance and online learners. This Moodle based online resource combines web technology and learner-focussed service to help distance students find the resources and information they need. Although we use Moodle, the VERD concept can be implemented in many learning environments.

The VERD is a place where students can:

- request library items be sent to them in the mail
- ask for help by email and in public Q & A forums
- download PDF and web based guides on topics such as referencing and databases
- view short video demonstrations of various library and information finding processes
- find answers in the FAQs.

Attendees will learn:

1. the value of the VERD in the lives of distance students
2. how Q & A forums generate a permanent knowledge base for staff and students
3. how bite size point of need tutorials are created using the free screen capture software JING
4. how individualised reference help becomes a resource for others to use
5. how 'giving students the fishing line, not the fish' develops happy independent learners.