



text  
Row Booker

photograph  
Peter Eve

above  
Bill Wade

## Nomad finds a home in e-learning

As an adventure-seeker and nomad by nature, it came as no surprise to Canadian-born **bill wade** to find himself living in the Northern Territory's Top End.

From an early age, the newly appointed Associate Professor and Head of the School of Creative Arts and Humanities caught the wandering bug, inherited no doubt from his father who worked in international construction.

His father's career dictated that the young Bill Wade would spend his formative years far from his native Ontario.

At the tender age of 12, Bill lived in Iran while his father trained locals in the production of pulp and paper. Later the family relocated to Israel, again following his father's work this time in aircraft hanger construction.

And his global odyssey continued into adulthood with Bill and his young family now calling themselves "Territorians".

Similarly, the seeds of his career path grew out of his own educational experiences as a youngster and his life-long passion for the creative and performing arts as a musician, audio engineer and producer of numerous CD projects and multimedia titles while working in Canada's Northwest Territories.

"I was schooled entirely by distance education for both Year 8 and Year 11 while I was living in the Middle-East," Bill said.

"Later in life I again studied externally to complete my Master's in Distance Education at Canada's University of Athabasca, so through my 10-plus

years of self-directed distance learning, I have become a huge advocate for its merits."

First and foremost Bill describes himself as a teacher by profession. He began his career as a primary schoolteacher before transitioning out of the classroom to chair teacher education programs for Canada's Northwest Territories.

In 2006 he moved the 22,000 kms from the Northwest Territories of Canada to Darwin to take up a lecturing post at Charles Darwin University.

Since arriving at CDU, Bill has immersed himself in the fields of creative arts, new media, distance education, flexible and online learning, and e-learning in general, an interest he attributes to his own experience as an external student.

"I'm passionate on the merits of e-learning and have written articles, papers and delivered numerous presentations promoting its worth as an educational strategy. Evidence proves that it can further engage youth in the creative arts and go some way towards levelling the playing field in terms of closing the gap on educational disadvantage," Bill said.

For more than 20 years, Bill has championed how technology can enhance the teaching and learning experiences of both teachers and students

In 2000 his work as both an educator and researcher was recognised with the Canadian New Media Educator of the Year award and in Australia he is fast gaining recognition in the field of e-learning through his coordination of the annual distance education technology conference MobilizeThis.

Since arriving at CDU, Bill has won the respect of his colleagues and peers, being named the CDU 2008 Champion of the Year for Teaching and Learning Leadership for the Faculty of Law, Business and Arts.

He also has a vested interest in opening critical discourse and debate on "innovation tensions", which he explains as the juxtaposition that exists between ICT systems needing to offer safe environments for students and VET or Higher Education educators wanting to use innovative technologies and to engage in "authentic innovation".

He is currently analysing a pilot implementation of CDU's e-portfolio system, which is designed to engage students in self-directed learning and he is working towards providing guidelines and suggestions for implementing this system within the School of Creative Arts and Humanities and broader CDU, HE and VET sectors.

### web byte

Visit the annual distance education technology conference MobilizeThis at W: <http://mobilizethis.wikispaces.com>. See Associate Professor Bill Wade's recent lead article in the Knowledge Tree on innovation tensions W: <http://kt.flexiblelearning.net.au>.