Tell us why you are interested in IT, your background, if any, in IT, why you are taking this course and what are your aspirations/dreams/motivations in taking this course. What is something that really interests you in the field of IT?

If you don’t count Max Smart and his range of gadgets and in particular Hymie the Robot, my fascination in computers and what they could do started when I was in University in the late 1980s. My first home computer was an early model Macintosh and I was so proud of it. It made working on assignments much easier than the typewriter even though we only had a daisy wheel printer. Much of my final years of study involved using the new computer technology and preparing to use it in my teaching life once I had qualified. I trained as a teacher librarian in the late 80s just as the use of personal computers was starting to excite people. Information Technology has always interested me as a way of collecting data and being able to present it in a meaningful way for users; one of my first assignments at Uni. was collecting data from the Melbourne Cemetery and manipulating the database. My husband and I went to visit a friend, who had just bought one of the new Apple Macintosh computers. He was an engineer and showed me how he could use inputted data and test his data to fix motor vehicles diffs. But it wasn’t just the data manipulation, I’m unashamed to say the little box of power was extraordinarily cute and I could just see one on my desk while I worked. So, pretty soon we had a computer at home and every few years updated it to the next model with the superseded one going onto the bookshelves. One of my majors is in Information management, which at that time was broken into three arms: programming; data manipulation and entry; and social effects of technology. The manipulation and data entry meshed well with the librarianship major and being able to teach at the ‘cutting edge’ of technology using Boolean searches and online periodical indexes, together with the changing of school libraries to computer data bases rather than card catalogues has stood me in good stead of not being timid about using technology.

Other than the hardware side of information technology I have seen a lot of drudgery disappear from librarians’ jobs. We no longer individually catalogue books because it is much more expedient to download catalogue details from a central agency. There aren’t catalogues in card form anymore, remember the beginning of the movie Ghostbusters (1984) it was a librarian’s nightmare, and even the idea of books to do our research is archaic being more relevant using digital journal databases. Curriculum is presented on platforms that the students can access at home and even assessments have changed from handwritten exams to online multiple choice where you can get your score as soon as you press the last enter.

Generally, in the community, it is becoming more uncommon to not have a personal communication / organiser device, most people have private access to the Internet and delivery of a letter (snail mail) is rare.

So, it makes sense that once you have finished high school any further education happens by choice and the emergence of online courses has really taken off. Education over the internet means its time commitment is flexible, where you go to university does not mean a change of location, and the lecture hall can be unlimited.

I’m taking this class out of personal interest, but also to wet my toes and see if IT could possibly take me forward before retirement at 67. I’d like to understand more about the internals of computers, why they seem to go out of date so quickly, much more about programming and I’d like to work on making apps. I’d also like to be able to design a website from nothing, to create something useful. I’ll be honest, what IT people seem to earn does not look shabby either. This from a 54yo woman who works in a shop for $22 an hour.

IT is so adaptable and can be used in so many ways. It’s not just making a computer and using the computer to do stuff, but the whole area of communications is becoming dependent on IT and medically, there will be so many advances only available because of IT. The television series six-million dollar man fascinated me. Bionic eyes, and cyborg limbs were really fanciful concepts in the early 70s, but they are not anymore. But medical uses of IT need to be considered in ethical and social parameters. I’d like to use my knowledge and skills to work towards responsible use of IT. Out of this subject already I am seeing Information Technology as not limited by a box on the desk, but what the people who use the box can do.