

technique

the newsletter of the ALIA National LT Group

January 2006

Welcome to the new look of **technique** for 2006.

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Look it Up!



This edition of TechNique has been edited by Tania Barry and designed and produced by Rob Thomson. Created in stunning 75mm LibraryVision™. Not suitable for ages 3 and under. May contain small parts that are harmful if swallowed. Contents of box may differ from those displayed. Accessories sold separately. Batteries not included. Produced by the Sovereign Republic of Rob! for the ALIA National LT Group.

Happy New Year to everyone and welcome to the first issue of a new look TechNique for 2006. I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome Rob Thomson on board as Assistant Editor. Finding and recruiting writers to submit articles for TechNique has been a time-consuming effort and the chance to share the workload with Rob is much appreciated. Many thanks also go to those who have submitted articles for this edition of TechNique.

The primary aim of TechNique is to *"share information about what is happening that affects library technicians and associated fields, to introduce and read about people in and beyond the industry and to give you an opportunity to share your stories"*, however it is impossible for us to do this alone. We rely on your contributions to keep going. Let us know what you would like to read about, your interests, what your Group is doing and what your workplace has been involved in. TechNique is a great avenue for networking and knowledge sharing, so make sure you utilise it as fully as you can!

This edition brings us some great stories – Sharon Uthmann writes about a Charles Sturt University meet and greet and how to apply for research grants; Rob Thomson introduces his new column, the 'Magnificent Seven' websites and Gemma Willcocks tells us about her role as a Library Technician at Ballarat Health Services. There is also an interesting article from Fran Monaghan on 'Succession Planning'.

Good Reading to you all!

Tania Barry
Editor



QLD CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY (CSU) LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE STUDENTS MEET & GREET @ RIVERBEND BOOKS – BULIMBA

My first use of the new integrated ticketing system of Qld transport occurred this morning! I used both the train and ferry services with the one ticket!!! 8-)

Rowena (non CSU student but maybe in future once completed History), and I departed from Goodna station early, for a Sunday, at 9.30am, to embark on a day of meeting and greeting fellow CSU students.

A entertaining ferry ride – which included a “real life” demonstration of why people should pay attention to safety warnings about emergency braking, resulting with small child hitting head on window (entertaining for me not the kid!!) – deposited us at the Bulimba ferry station where we alighted (new word for disembark) from the ferry.

A rather long walk up Oxford St to Riverbend Books followed and ...finally meeting and greeting!!!

Although the weather was slightly cool, we braved the outside seating (don't think there was any other available) and commenced chatting. A total of 10 CSU students arrived and met, some for the first time.

Topics of discussion ranged from surviving the first semester, biased marking, contradicting instructions on how to complete the assessment, and fear of what was ahead... semester 2!!

Friends were made and laughter shared. The meals were quite good – although I will personally avoid the Winter Roasted Vegies – not sure what some of the vegies were!! The discussion much better!!

A promise to make these a regular event and to stay in touch concluded the lunch/afternoon – and we headed back down the road for another entertaining ferry ride.

<http://riverbendbooks.seekbooks.com.au/>



Picture 1: Clockwise from left – Sandy, Rowena, Janine, Janet, Elizabeth & Rachel.



Picture 2: Clockwise from left – Janet, Elizabeth, Rachel & back of Rowena's head.



^ Picture 3: Kate, Janine and Rowena



< Picture 4: Janine and Janet share a laugh.

Picture 5: Rachel ^



The organizer!!



QLD CSU LIS STUDENT MEET & GREET LIBRARY TOURS

A beautiful day greeted the 7 LIS students that had decided to embark on a library tour journey starting at Pine Rivers Shire Pathways Library at Northlakes, moving to Redcliffe Library and finishing with University of the Sunshine Coast Library at Sippy Downs.

Much caffeine was gulped at our meeting destination of Muffin Break, Westfield Northlakes. Directly across the road is [Pathways Library](#). Having only opened late last year, the Library has a freshness about it. Perhaps the use of natural light and open spaces, resulted in a calming feeling – even though the busy shopping centre was close by. Pathways Library is a part of the Pine Rivers Shire Library services. Pathways is a multi-purpose community facility combining a new state-of-the-art library, leisure centre, education and training centre, village-green and meeting and function spaces. The staff have adopted a strong customer-focus which made the visit all the more welcoming.



A short drive landed us in the seaside suburb of Redcliffe and saw us visiting another relatively new library, [Redcliffe City Library](#). Fellow Charles Sturt University BALIS student, Narelle Jackson, kindly offered her first day of long service leave to provide us with an informative tour of her library. Redcliffe Library is environmentally sound, using natural light and contours to utilize as much of sunlight as possible. It has its' own weather station, which controls the automated louvers which will open when the temperature drops to a certain level. Air-conditioning vents come up from the floor to allow for a climate that is book friendly. The library's architecture is based on Redcliffe's famous red cliffs. This gives it a personal touch for the community who uses it.



By this stage of the day, lunch was a necessity before the 45min drive to University of the Sunshine Coast. A lunch venue was sought and we picked a café with the best view of the ocean. Although the wind caused the umbrella's to become lethal objects, it was an enjoyable break.



Another architecturally new library greeted us in the form of [University of the Sunshine Coast](#). Situated 20mins from the beach, the Library has encapsulated the use of natural light and beachy themes. The deck leading into the Library, has the beach sidewalk feel, and the spaces within allow students and staff to relax in a serene habitat with palm trees swaying in the sea breeze outside. Information desk staff member, Sam, kindly gave her time to give us a tour and overview of the Library. They use LC classification and have since

expanded the collection into the neighbouring building. The student population continues to grow and as the Library is still relatively small for a university library, the staff are quite close-knit. From a personal perspective it was interesting to learn that due to the size of the student population, a lot more one-on-one training occurs, rather than the formal information literacy classes that happen at QUT.

With the Library Tours over, the participants found time to share study hints and seek advice from each other before departing home to Brisbane.

Sharon Uthmann (QUT Library, CSU LIS Student)



My Library And Me

Hi, my name is Gemma Willcocks and I am the Library Technician at Ballarat Health Services Medical Library in regional Victoria. As we are the only medical library in Ballarat we cater for the acute, geriatric and psychiatric sites along with the private hospital and outlying rural hospitals. This provides us with a broad range of topics and patrons and as it is a specialised library it allows us to get to know our patrons on a more personal level. Working in such a small team (2.4 EFT), allows me to gain skills and experiences in a variety of different areas.

My main tasks include handling of all inter-library loans, distributing current awareness materials such as bulletins and table of contents alerts and serials accessioning. Other tasks include literature searching, shelving, training, maintaining audio visual equipment, shelf reading, statistics and end processing to name a few.

The health library industry in Australia works cooperatively in a number of ways. [GratisNet](#) inter library loan system is a reciprocal system in which you supply one article to another library free of charge in exchange for an article from their collection. This system works fantastically with colleagues around Australia working together to provide staff with much needed health information. It is also an extremely efficient system with fast turn around times. Colleagues also share duplicated and unwanted items allowing hospitals to fill their missing gaps in order to provide a completed collection.

On a monthly basis we prepare a current awareness bulletin for staff members highlighting new journal articles of interest. Categories such as general medicine, nursing, surgery, rehabilitation, psychiatry and specialty are included. This coincides with sending out table of content alerts to interested parties from new journals that we have received. It also allows us to highlight articles written by staff members.



The variety of journals we receive and can access is enormous. Currently we subscribe to approximately 100 hard cover journals and have access to almost 1000 online journals through databases such as OVID and ProQuest. Many are well known journals such as the Medical Journal of Australia or Australian Nursing Journal down to the more specialised such as Topics in Stroke Rehabilitation, Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology or Age and Ageing.

I thoroughly enjoy working at [Ballarat Health Services](#) due to the variety of tasks I get to perform and the number of different people I get to work with. Medical libraries are a fantastic place to work and I am always learning new things.

However I am still slowly learning all the medical terminology even after doing a course in it. Thank God for the medical dictionaries!!



LT ONLINE CHATS

To date we have had 3 online chats. We had 17 people participating in the first one and 5 participating in the second and third. Although, there were only 5 for the second and third chats, providing an opportunity to members, active and not so active, to discuss issues or have a chat is important.

The details from the October and December chat will be on the website soonish. The November chat was just that, a chat, and we didn't get a copy of what was chatted about.

Some members are having trouble getting onto the chat site. It is important that members organise this well in advance and have a couple of practices at logging on. We are having another one on Wednesday 11th January. Stay tuned for further Online Chat dates.

Kevin Dudeney, group convenor.

ROB THOMSON'S MAGNIFICENT SEVEN WEBSITES:

(Rob works as the Senior Library Technician at the BlueScope Steel Library at Port Kembla and was responsible for Follows and Leeds at neXt 2005 – amongst other things!)



At work (and at home) these are 7 of the most helpful websites I like to access:

1. As part of my job role I get to order in a lot of books. To check for the cheapest price I go to:

FetchBook.InfoTM

New & used books - Find the lowest price - Compare 131 bookstores, 60,000 sellers, in a click.

<http://www.fetchbook.info/>

2. We all need help to do our jobs better and so I subscribe to:

FreePint[®]

<http://www.freepint.com/>

3. When the occasion arises that we need to find a second-hand book I go to:



<http://www.alibris.com/> (although <http://www.bookfinder.com/> is good too)

4. I'm kind of addicted to fonts. I don't know why. I just am. But to deal with my addiction I go to:

dafont.com

<http://dafont.com/en/>

SEVEN

5. I also like a bit of music in my life and when I can I like to play music while I work from:



<http://www.abc.net.au/dig/>

6. I like to see what's coming next, so I check out sites like:



<http://www.trendwatching.com/>

7. And because I really do play the bass drum in the only Irish Pipe Band in NSW:



<http://www.nswirishpipeband.com>

(That's my legs you can see emerging from the bottom of the bass drum!)

So – have you got a Magnificent 7 websites?

Email your list to the editor!!



SUCCESSION PLANNING

Presentation by Vicki Whitmell on Succession Planning for Libraries for the ALIA Vic group, July 2004 at RMIT Swanston St Library, Melbourne

Notes taken by Fran Monaghan who attended the event

Succession Planning for Libraries

Problems:

We need to make provision for the development and replacement of key people over time. Librarians are great technicians but are less knowledgeable on the library as an entity, marketing, and the role of libraries in the wider world. Librarianship has never done professional development well- not great at getting people from outside the profession to talk to us...our organisations are functional based, bureaucratic and prone to silos...we hire for technical skills not leadership, we focus too much on the position and not the individual. We are not finding and developing leaders. Current approaches are obsolete, the way we hire people has to change.

There are currently 4 generations in the working environment at the moment; we need an approach to diversity that will accommodate all. Workplace trends at the moment include broad banding- a broad set of skills, greater movement between positions, less rigid job descriptions and skill sets that reach across departments and functional groups. We need people who are risk takers, adaptable and flexible so must place less emphasis on grooming

workers for the one position and encourage the softer skills of getting on with and leading others.

How to address the problems of succession planning

Planning must be a big picture, long-term process with everyone involved, driven by the needs of users and supported by senior managers. We need to focus on developing people that can benefit the organisation as a whole. On a personal level have a 3-5 year plan...think about creating a realistic vision based on the realities of your organisation and the environment in which it operates. Identify the needed skills, assess your strengths, and weaknesses, plot out the skills needed in the future and how you will achieve the.

The ANTA website is a useful place to investigate competency profiles.

- Know your broader environment... who are the non-library employers who are attractive to applicants?
- How can you compete?
- Know what is happening in your library schools..
- Find the right people to create relationships with students...
- Help with their education; encourage them to see librarianship as a career.
- Poach students and keep in touch!
- Create a high profile for your library...
- Get involved with library programs...
- Have ongoing recruitment programs;
- Have a good hiring process that's not too long.
- Have frank and clear discussions, identify training and development possibilities...
- Mentor...
- Know your people's ambitions and aspirations.
- Think organisation wide rather than individual positions, reduce hierarchies, focus on coaching, broaden duties and responsibilities and reduce dead end jobs.
- Hire those who are different, start small.
- Shorten the hiring process and choose people who reflect your users.
- Be aware of local conditions, be a good employer, recognize your weaknesses, recognize that not everyone wants to be a manager, reward well and review your organisational structure.

Note:

Vicki Whitmell very kindly provided the following information on succession planning and libraries in Canada recently (November 2005)

"A national wide study was completed earlier this year in Canada on the state of staffing in libraries and the need for succession planning. Work is continuing on responding to some of the recommendations on the report. One of them, a training skills gap analysis, is underway. The Canadian Library Association (similar to ALIA) has established a President's Council on the 8Rs study. The group is working on a number of projects, but hasn't released anything quite yet."

Links

The Future of Human Resources in Canadian Libraries (report...pdf file) by the 8R research team: University of Alberta and Tandem Social Research Consulting February 2005

<http://www.ls.ualberta.ca/8rs/home.html>

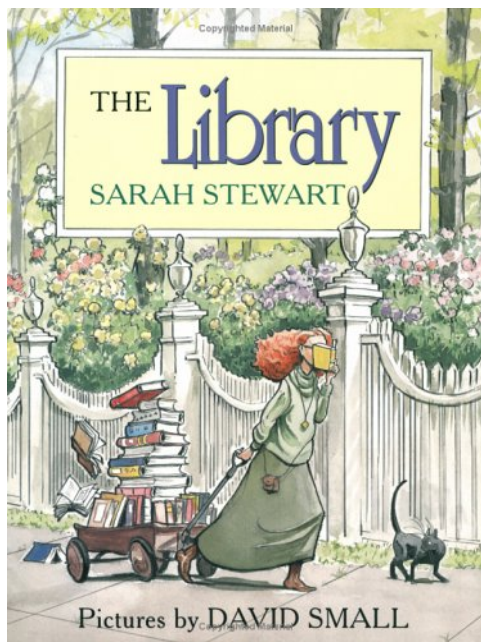
<http://www.ls.ualberta.ca/8rs/reports.html>

Vicki Whitmell

<http://www.whitmell.com>

ANTA website (competencies, reports)

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/nts/



APPLYING FOR RESEARCH GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS: JUST DO IT!

Sharon Uthmann, ALIA Dunn & Wilson 2005 recipient

As some of you may be aware, I am this years' recipient of the ALIA Dunn & Wilson Scholarship. To quote from the ALIA page <http://alia.org.au/awards/dunn.wilson/> :

The Dunn & Wilson Scholarship is a biennial award up to \$5000 (presented at the biennial library technician's conference) and provides the recipient with an opportunity to investigate a particular project relating to the practice of library technicians, which will increase the recipient's professional occupational experience.

The Dunn & Wilson Scholarship is just one of many of the research awards ALIA provides for its members. Others

include:

- [Study Grant Award](http://alia.org.au/awards/study.grant/) - <http://alia.org.au/awards/study.grant/>
- [Ray Choate Scholarship](http://alia.org.au/awards/choate.scholarship/) - <http://alia.org.au/awards/choate.scholarship/>
- [YBP Lindsay & Howes Research Award for Collection Services](http://alia.org.au/awards/ybp.lindsay-howes/) - <http://alia.org.au/awards/ybp.lindsay-howes/>

Some of you may be wondering what I'm planning on researching and why I applied for the award. My project aims to investigate and identify secondment programs offered to library technician's nation wide and in all library sectors. When complete, it is hoped that my research will act as a resource for library technicians to refer to when seeking out secondment opportunities during their careers.

The idea for this research project stemmed out of the paper I presented at the recent ALIA Library and Information Technicians Conference [neXt](http://conferences.alia.org.au/libtec2005/) <http://conferences.alia.org.au/libtec2005/> - titled *Multi-Skill me: Secondment opportunities and issues at QUT Library*. While researching for my paper/presentation it came to mind that it would be good to find out what sort of secondment programs are offered in other organisations. I decided to focus on library technicians as from personal experience, there comes a time when the career ladder stalls and there is no further chance to climb higher with the same qualification under your belt. Library technicians are more likely to reach this point in their career and there is little room for professional development. However, secondments ensure that library technicians continue to develop and learn more skills. Then I saw Tania Barry's e-mail to the ALIA LibTec list advertising the ALIA Dunn & Wilson Scholarship and it all just fell into place!

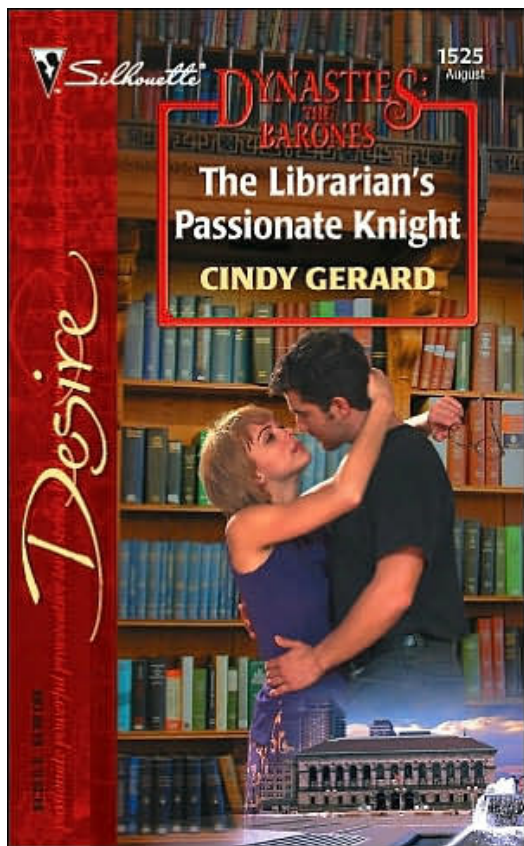
This is not to say that applying for research grants/scholarships is easy as it does take a lot of thought and work. For the Dunn & Wilson Scholarship I had to fill in the [following form](http://alia.org.au/awards/nomination.forms/dunn.wilson.html) - <http://alia.org.au/awards/nomination.forms/dunn.wilson.html> .

From this form the hardest part to fill in for me was the budget side of things. Just how much do you charge yourself to do research? I approached previous Dunn & Wilson scholarship holders to ask how they approached their application and got heaps of great ideas. The next

challenging part of the application was finding contacts to approach about secondment programs in other organisations. This is where the ALIA e-lists came in handy as I put a call out for anyone that had been on a secondment or worked in an organisation that offered secondments. From the replies a list of possible contacts was established.

Now it's your turn. Do you have an idea or passion you'd like to research or bring forward in the LIS profession? Then seek out and apply for a research grant. In ALIA's new statement on ALIA's role in education of library and information professions it stated that LIS graduates must be equipped with an understanding of the importance of research activity within the profession to encourage the expansion and diversification of its knowledge base. Jennifer Nicholson backed this up in her recent *Directline* article (*inCite* September 2005), by saying 'directors are keen to foster a culture in our sector of applying for research awards and the benefits of taking up awards will be promoted at every opportunity. A workshop on applying for research awards is to be scoped to supplement the tools currently available on ALIANet <http://alia.org.au/awards/> .

Now that the 'easy' part has been done and I was successful, the 'hard' part - i.e. the research - begins. Stay tuned for details of how the research is going by visiting my Dunn & Wilson Scholarship blog - <http://dunnandwilson.blogspot.com/>



neXt 2005

ALIA National Library and Information Technicians Conference
Darling Harbour
6-9 September 2005

Conference papers from the neXt 2005 Conference are now available for downloading! The Conference papers have been placed in the ALIA e-papers repository and can be easily accessed by going to: <http://e-prints.alia.org.au> Click on Browse by Year and choose 2005: all the papers so far uploaded will then display.

neXt 2005
National Library & Information Technicians Conference

Note: Not all papers have yet been received, and more papers will be progressively uploaded as the papers are acquired.

technique
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THE ALIA NATIONAL LIBRARY TECHNICIANS GROUP IS IMPLEMENTING A NEW INITIATIVE IN JANUARY 2006.

This new initiative is a mentoring program for our regional and remote members. Through the use of technology, mainly e-mail, it is hoped that members will be able to assist other members in dealing with issues, whether it be professional, skills based, career planning, study help or just another person to communicate with.

However, before we can commence the mentoring program, we need to establish a skills register. A skills register will enable the mentoring program co-ordinator, Tania Barry, to match the requirements of the 'mentees' to an appropriately skilled mentor.

In order to start things happening before the program commences, would you be able to [advise Tania](#) (please remove the '.nospam' from address) whether you would like to join the program as a mentor or 'mentee' (or both!). If you are participating as a mentor, we need a list of the skills you think you are able to contribute to the program. Alternatively, if you would like to be a 'mentee', then we need to know the areas you would like to be mentored in.

Although this is a National LT Group initiative, the program is open to all ALIA members.

Kevin Dudeney group convenor



Follows & Leeds

LIBRARY BOOK RECOVERY AGENCY

COMING ATTRACTIONS!
**IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF TECHNIQUE...
ANOTHER EXCITING ADVENTURE IN
THE EPIC LIVES OF OUR TWO
HEROIC BOOK DETECTIVES –
FOLLOWS AND LEEDS,
AGENTS OF LIBRA.**

Due to holidays and work commitments those of you who are hanging out for a further instalment in the exciting life of Follows and Leeds, agents of LiBRA will need to wait just a little bit longer. However, rest assured, dear readers, that there will be another pulsating episode in their thrilling lives in the next issue of TechNique!

Rob Thomson.



This is from the Librarian Avenger http://librarianavengers.org/?page_id=3

Many of you may have seen this before, and whilst it does say Librarian, I think Library Technician is interchangeable:

WHY YOU SHOULD FALL TO YOUR KNEES AND WORSHIP A LIBRARIAN (OR LIBRARY TECHNICIAN!)

We've all got our little preconceived notions about who librarians are and what they do. Many people think of librarians as diminutive civil servants, scuttling about "Sssh-ing" people and stamping things.

Well, think again buster.

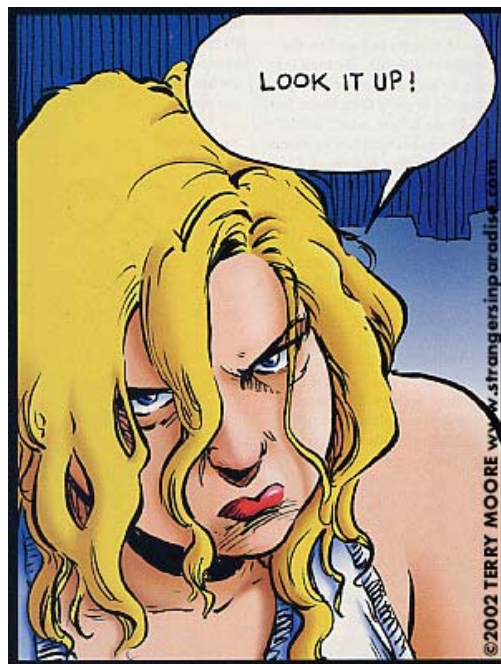
Librarians have degrees. They go to graduate school for Information Science and become masters of data systems and human/computer interaction. Librarians can catalog anything from an onion to a dog's ear. They could catalog you.

Librarians wield unfathomable power. With a flip of the wrist they can hide your dissertation behind piles of old Field and Stream magazines. They can find data for your term paper that you never knew existed. They may even point you toward new and appropriate subject headings.

People become librarians because they know too much. Their knowledge extends beyond mere categories. They cannot be confined to disciplines. Librarians are all-knowing and all-seeing. They bring order to chaos. They bring wisdom and culture to the masses. They preserve every aspect of human knowledge.

Librarians rule.

And they will kick the crap out of anyone who says otherwise.



Remember, TechNique is always after more articles so get in early and get published! If you have an article on your library, your Magnificent Seven websites, what your LT Group has been up to, or innovations being undertaken at your library – or anything else you can think of! – put it in Word format and get it to [The Editor](#) for the next issue of TechNique. As stated in the editorial: The primary aim of TechNique is to “share information about what is happening that affects library technicians and associated fields, to introduce and read about people in and beyond the industry and to give you an opportunity to share your stories”, however it is impossible for us to do this alone. We rely on your contributions to keep going.

Tania and Rob!