



The Australian Library Journal

Volume 53 N°2 May 2004

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The Australian Library Journal

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The Australian Library Journal
is published quarterly by the Australian
Library and Information Association Ltd
ACN 090 953 236
PO Box 6335 Kingston 2604 AUSTRALIA
phone +61 2 6215 8222 fax +61 2 6282 2249
alj@alia.org.au <http://alia.org.au/alj/>

ISSN 0004-9670

Set in Berkeley 9.5/12, design by Ivan Trundle,
film, imagesetting, proofs and printing by
Canprint Communications Pty Ltd

The Australian Library Journal is indexed in *Library
Literature*, *Australian Public Affairs Information
Service*, *Guidelines*, and indexed and abstracted
by the Australian Clearing House for Library
and Information Science for *Australian
Education Index and Library and Information
Science Abstracts*

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Microfiche edition available by annual subscription
from Microsystems Pty Ltd
PO Box 188 North Sydney 2000 AUSTRALIA

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On celebration

WHILE PREPARING COPY FOR THIS ISSUE, I CAME ACROSS THE FOLLOWING amongst the book reviews:

In an age when students taking first degrees in library and information studies readily accept the fallacious assertion from some writers (who should know better) that pre-internet librarians were merely book keepers, there is even more need for our profession to record its own history. Although library history has (like the history of other professional services) largely disappeared from current curricula, and information history has hardly begun to be explored, we do have a responsibility to society at large to record and publish information about ourselves. It is strange that members of a profession which is emphasising its informational role seem reluctant to seek out information on their own professional origins and development. [Edward Reid-Smith, reviewing *Dictionary of American library biography*. Second supplement. Ed. by Donald G Davis, Jr Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2003. 250p US\$60.00 hard ISBN 1563088681]

I had not long finished working on copy for the February issue which was a festschrift celebrating the work and ideas of Margaret Trask, a shaper of the profession who died in November 2002. It was a very substantial issue, and larger than our normal 40 000 words. A number of contributors had chosen to write on a wide range of topics, reflecting the breadth of Margaret's interests. This came about through the initiative of a small handful of friends and admirers. I had not long before written a commissioned obituary [limited to 850 [!] words] for a national newspaper commemorating another giant who had recently left us. That had been preceded by a personal memoir for another colleague, close friend, mentor and deeply missed. Even earlier I had attempted to find someone to write about another quiet achiever who less publicly, but no less valuably had made her contribution to the profession. I failed in this, and as far as I know she passed largely unnoticed.

I have been saying for some time that obituaries pose a distinct problem for *ALJ*, and therefore for the Association, but the circumstances retailed above suggest that there is no pattern, policy or procedure in place to properly mark the passing of even outstanding colleagues, and by and large it is left to surviving friends or admirers to write the thousand or so words which may appear in *inCite*. This is admirable and often moving, but it is almost entirely a matter of chance, and in many cases, in a very short space of time, the uncommemorated individual's life, presence, personality, contribution, fade and disappear. Their papers, if they had retained any, vanish, are dispersed or simply discarded: only in a few cases does a collecting institution like the National Library of Australia secure them.

Does this matter? And if it does, what possible solutions exist? Opinions will differ as to whether or not it matters, and since we have not for a long time seen the word 'history' in the curricula of our discipline wherever it is taught, only a minority of us may be moved. But the logical corollary then is that none of *our* achievements, or the individuals who contributed to them, are worth celebrating or remembering, and if they are worthless after death, then how can we assert a value while they are alive? And if what we do is therefore valueless even in our own eyes, where does that nihilism lead? If we do not record the past, how can we celebrate it? How understand

What is needed is a change in the way we choose to live and to regard those who have gone before us...

it? How perceive where we presently stand? Readers will have their own views, and are welcome to express them: but let me, since I have the floor for the moment, assert that it *does* matter, and without memory, and through memory, example, we will condemn ourselves to be broken on the wheel of perpetual reiteration. The end of history is the end of progress, or any notion of it. I do not assert that 'we need a policy on this', policy of itself, imposed from outside the collective consciousness or will, is doomed to failure while those that promulgate it live, and oblivion thereafter. What is needed is a change in the way *we* choose to live and to regard those who have gone before us: we cannot cling to adolescent attitudes which assert that what has happened before we came on the scene has no meaning for us, and no relevance, as many candidates for office imply in their electoral programs and promises. Life, in any other context than that of a television screen, is more than a succession of sound bites, like it or not. So, if, like me, you think the past, and the contributions of the individuals comprising it are worth recording, look around you, mark those people who you think are *giving* to their profession and not just marking time or taking from it, and start planning *now* how you might ensure that that contribution does not pass unmarked, into oblivion. And one day soon, it's just possible that someone will look at *your* contribution, and start planning...

I referred earlier to our previous issue, the festschrift for Margaret Trask: since its publication I have had several queries about *ALJ*'s policy regarding festschrift issues. At the time I committed the Journal to the sponsors of the Trask festschrift, there was no policy as such, but in view of the interest since its publication it is evident that some guidelines are needed. Here is a draft set for consideration:

The *ALJ* is an appropriate vehicle for the celebration of any individual's contribution to the aims and objectives of ALIA by way of an obituary, individual articles or a whole issue by way of a festschrift.

Contributions to a festschrift should not be exclusively biographical or in the form of a memoir, but should also address the areas of the discipline in which the individual contribution was made.

The whole or part of any issue of *ALJ* may be allocated for this purpose, subject to the editor's discretion and pressures on space.

Any copy submitted for publication by way of a festschrift should meet the normal editorial standards of the Journal.

Contributors to a festschrift are not required to be members of ALIA.

The identification of potential contributors and the securing of copy for submission to the editor is a matter for the individual or group sponsoring the festschrift.

The editor will nominate the particular issue in which festschrift contributions are to appear.

In this issue 'The end of history: censorship and libraries' by Australian IFLA president-elect Alex Byrne offers a moving review of the role of libraries in a free and informed society and their vulnerability to censorship in its many guises and camouflage. Laurel Anne Clyde, working from the University of Iceland brings us up to speed on research on school librarianship 1991–2000 in Australia. Virginia Dickson, formerly a hospital-trained RN and more recently a librarian relates the evolution of

an information literacy unit in the University of Notre Dame, a topic which Valerie Perrett also addresses from the ANU perspective. Debby Wegener and her library web team colleagues May Goh-Ong Ai Moi and Mae Lim Mei Li offer a frank perspective on how they rejigged their digital library portal in quick time as soon as it was learned that many students were unable to use it to their best advantage. And the usual score or so of book reviews.

Just to hand is a letter from Maurice Saxby which dovetails well with some of the issues touched on in the editorial above. It appears in the letters pages along with an optimistic report of the opening of the new library at Alexandria by Marilyn Segal and Myron Webber. Not many new libraries in the Middle East, I'm afraid.

ALJ and AARL on the web

Ivan Trundle recently wrote to the editors of both ALJ and *Academic and Research Libraries* regarding ALIA's policy of including the text of both journals on ALIANet. Ivan's letter is reproduced below for your information and comment.

Dear John and Peter

I've had a query or two (or three) over the past few months over the policy of including full-text materials of ALJ and AARL online.

In particular, there has been reference made to a decline in journal subscriptions based on the full-text being immediately available online. I can't verify these figures on that basis, and I doubt that anyone else could, either: the reasons for a decline in subscriptions cannot be easily determined without more than anecdotal evidence .

The principle behind having the full-text available online and immediately after production was that it was a service to members of the Association and the wider sector, and until we were able to restrict access to full-text to subscribers only (and delay access to others for a period), then it was to be a 'free-for-all'. (note: this is not 'policy', though is something that could be referred to the ALIA Board's Publishing and Editorial Reference Group).

The cost of print production is offset by subscriptions (or, put another way, the subscription revenue pays for the print production), and whilst there is a cost involved in placing material on the web, these costs are borne by the publishing department of ALIA National Office, and are not attributed to the journal in question. I also accept that there are costs involved in production outside of the printing process, and the Association should seek to recover those costs through the subscription process. However, the long and the short of it is that web-based publishing comes with significant cost-savings: I'm sure that you are both aware of the significant costs of putting real ink to paper and the subsequent distribution.

This places me in more than a slight dilemma. We simply don't have the resources yet to restrict online access to subscribers only, and then to the wider public at a later date, primarily because all of ALJ and AARL sit outside of the members-only area of the website. Moving parts in (and then out) would prove to be a significant hurdle to overcome, especially since there are enough subscribers who are NOT members of ALIA (so where does one place the full-text, then?). The logistics of providing direct full-text access to

subscribers is, however, on the wish-list of future site developments, but it won't happen in the next 12 months, at least. There is a lot to build prior to this. And a lot of work to be done on our membership database linkages that can enact any subscriber verification — one proposed solution is to restrict access to members-only (non-member subscribers miss out, but non-subscribers who are members would have full access), and that full-text be made available to the wider public only after a pre-determined time. This option is equally difficult to implement, but is also on the possible wish-list.

As an interim message, and in a bid to assuage critics, I propose that ALJ and AARL full-text [online] be restricted to <n> months after publication date, where <n> is either 6 or 12 (or whatever you see fit, in a range of zero to 24). Abstracts and other material (editorials etc) would remain free to all, from date of publication. We have a working production model ready to go, and can readily modify the number of months 'delay' at the drop of a hat, independently for either journal.

Your thoughts on the matter would be appreciated. I'm not fussed either way (I can see valid arguments for free access and restricted access), but the implementation of restrictions proposed above would certainly ease the concerns of the Board.

Ivan Trundle, manager, communications and publishing

An invitation to contribute

The *Australian Library Journal* is ALIA's journal of record. As such it reflects a cross-section of issues critical to the profession at any given time. Published continuously for over fifty years it now represents the most substantial and significant archive of thinking in the established and evolving professions which over time have comprised the membership of ALIA. Ground-breaking discussion, controversial papers, the narrative of professional practice and the evolution of the Association itself are all reflected in its pages. The catalogue of authors whose work has appeared in it is an honour roll. Many whose first tentative reflections appeared there have gone on to become notable contributors to the literature which is the foundation of all mature professions.

The Journal is open to contributions from students, interested lay people, practitioners, researchers, educators, whether in Australia or overseas. Its pages are not restricted to work by members of the Association. Publication in the Journal's refereed pages is an asset in any cv or job application.

In its fifty-second year, the *Australian Library Journal* invites contributions from the wide range of interests in the field. Previously unpublished writers and established authors are welcome to discuss possible contributions with the editor, John Levett, PO Box 74 Middleton Tasmania 7163, phone or fax 03 6292 1699, e-mail jlevett@southcom.com.au.

The end of history: censorship and libraries

Alex Byrne

Libraries have vital roles in protecting heritage, offering individuals and societies opportunities to improve the quality of their lives, and contributing to civil society. They play an important role in the free exchange of ideas within societies and across time and space. Libraries can be damaged through war, looting and neglect. But more pervasive is the great variety of methods of information control by censorship which are given many justifications including decency, community well-being, privacy and national security. However, such views are contingent, not absolute as changing attitudes to pornography illustrate. Librarians face personal dilemmas which contend with professional responsibilities to meet the needs of users and to promote the widest possible access to information. Any librarians who might wish to uphold principles of unrestricted access to information must either accept the boundaries or struggle against them.

Manuscript received September 2003

Lost, destroyed, stolen...

- Marble figurines from Tell es-Sawwan (6000 BCE)
- Akkadian statue base (2000 BCE)
- Copper head of a ruler from Nineveh (2300 BCE)
- Assyrian stone statue (8000 BCE)
- Model chariot from Mesopotamia (1900–1600 BCE)
- Decorated alabaster vase from Warka (3000 BCE)
- Gold jewellery from Ur (2600–2400 BCE)
- Statue of Dud, prime minister of Lagash (2600–2300 BCE)
- Stone tools, sculptures and carving (100 000 BCE)
- 80 000 cuneiform tablets, one with observations of the planet Venus (700 BCE ... (Fray 2003)

But libraries are more than treasure houses. They play an important role in defining and supporting the identity and culture of peoples.

The oldest extant pieces of writing in the world: the *Gilgamesh Epic*, the earliest work of literature in the world; the oldest versions of the *Code of Hammurabi*, the earliest law code in the world (Bilderback 2003)

Letters between the court of Sharif Hussein of Mecca and the Ottoman rulers of Baghdad ... the Ottoman records of the Caliphate including:

- requests to the Sublime Porte in Istanbul or to the Court of Sharif of Mecca;
- lists of the cost of bullets, military horses and artillery for Ottoman armies in Baghdad and Arabia;
- the opening of the first telephone exchange in the Hejaz;
- the theft of clothes from a camel train by Ali bin Kassem, who attacked his interrogators 'with a knife and tried to stab them but was restrained and later bought off';
- a 19th-century letter of recommendation for a merchant, Yahyia Messoudi, 'a man of the highest morals, of good conduct and who works with the government';

Handwritten accounts of the 1980–88 Iran-Iraq war, with personal photographs and military diaries, ... microfiche copies of Arabic newspapers ... (Fisk 2003)

The modern day sacking of Baghdad.

For Iraq, 2003 was 'Year Zero', with the destruction of the antiquities in the Museum of Archaeology and the burning of the National Archives and then the Koranic library, the cultural identity of Iraq was erased. Why? Who set these fires? For what insane purpose is this heritage being destroyed? (Fisk 2003). This was Arab history, the history of Islam, but also the history of Mesopotamia, the history of trade, the history of colonialism, the history of the world.

Is this the end of history?

Fukuyama, in his provocative work, *The end of history and the last man*, proposed that the spread of the liberal democratic model was irreversible. He argued that history is being driven in a coherent direction by rational desire and a recognition that is taking states to a post-historical position in which liberal democracy is the final form of government. If that process should continue, then 'the apparent differences between peoples' "languages of good and evil" will appear to be an artifact of their particular state of historical development' (Fukuyama 1992).

Whatever the merits of his argument, the destruction of heritage in Baghdad has been a clear example of wrong. In the name of creating freedom, records of our shared history have been destroyed. This is not the occasion on which to discuss either the political arguments for or against the invasion of Iraq. However, the consequences for cultural heritage and the nation's capacity to rebuild its economy and society have been most serious. Libraries and museums throughout the country have been despoiled to feed the international trade in stolen antiquities, provide personal benefit and express anger. The invading troops have stood by — in contravention of the fourth *Geneva Convention* (Red Cross 1949) and the *Hague convention for the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict* (United Nations 1954). They and their governments have ignored the warnings given before the invasion by international scholars and those concerned with cultural heritage such as the International Committee of the Blue Shield, which IFLA currently leads (Blue Shield 2003).

The distress caused by this loss is heightened because it was absolutely avoidable. The artefacts and documents had survived generations of thieves and wars, including

the 1991 Gulf War. They were well documented. The need for their protection had been stated publicly. Leaders of governments had acknowledged that they should be protected. They had survived the missile attacks and the shooting during the taking of Baghdad. The locations of the museums and libraries in which they were held were known. Yet they were not protected.

Of course, it is not the first time that heritage and intellectual resources have been destroyed. The destruction of libraries in Laos, Cambodia (Sturges and Rosenberg 1999) and Kosova/Kosovo (Frederiksen and Bakken 2000) symbolically destroyed national cultures. In Kosova it started with the harassment of library staff. In Cambodia, it was an element of 'Year Zero' marking the beginning of the age of creation of a new social order through the total transformation of society (Glover 2001 pp303–305). In the new nation of Timor Loro'sae (East Timor), the limited libraries provided by the Portuguese and Indonesian administrations were destroyed in the outrage of September 1999 (Blood 2001). It was not the first time in Baghdad itself: 'Genghis Khan's grandson burnt the city in the 13th century and, so it was said, the Tigris river ran black with the ink of books' (Fisk 2003). In Alexandria, the great Library was destroyed. And, across the world, successive invaders and colonial powers have made off with cultural and other riches.

Many of these destructive events were motivated by greed or national pride. Others were attempts at cultural cleansing, attempts to expunge culture, language or history. Whatever the purpose, they take from all of us. As the treasures of Baghdad remind us, documentary heritage is the shared history of humanity's discoveries, ideas and dreams.

The roles of libraries

That heritage has been kept in the great libraries and archives of the world which have traditionally been considered primarily to be storehouses of knowledge. They kept records, knowledge, works of imagination to enable the work of state and religion and for the scholar. Many works were preserved even when considered unacceptable by church, state or library authorities. Sometimes, as at the monastery of Bobbio during the Dark Ages, the fight against heresy demanded the collection of Aryan manuscripts in order to 'know the enemy' (Lerner 1999 p41). Even the libraries of oppressors have preserved works which they would suppress. For example, the KGB kept the manuscripts of those they destroyed — thereby creating an archive of once unacceptable literary works which was preserved for the time of *glasnost* when the doors of their literary vaults opened (Shentalinsky 1997).

Many have preserved knowledge which would be valued later. The Biblioteca Capitolare in Verona for example preserved the secular Younger Pliny's *Letters* and the poems of Tibullus and Catullus as well as early religious works from the sixth century on C Hobson 1970 p17 seq). The libraries of the Islamic world preserved and transferred classical knowledge and added their own until they were taken up by the European scholars of the twelfth century (Gates 1968 p26).

Great libraries grew from archives of records and collections of literature (Casson 2001). Their growth was driven by acquisitiveness. Some, including the immense clay tablet collections at Nineveh and Hattushash — some of which were lost last month in Baghdad — and the Museion of Alexandria, aimed at universality. Their administrators attempted to collect without limit, infamously building the Museion

by using force to obtain all manuscripts carried by seafarers as well as carrying off riches from tributary states (Kesting 1985). Less hostile methods included soliciting copies from other libraries, borrowing manuscripts to copy in scriptoria or visiting other libraries to make copies, traditions which were continued by monastic libraries until printing made them redundant.

Some collections have increased through the carrying off of library treasures in time of war. The Bibliothèque Nationale, for example, gained significantly from the zeal of Napoleon's commissioners who had been designated to remove cultural trophies from the conquered territories (Hobson 1970, p78). Such collection building methods were criticised by Panizzi. He 'derided the Russians for building their library at St Petersburg from the Polish libraries they had carried off, and the French for withholding still books taken from Italy and elsewhere by the armies of Napoleon. Better far to be without a national library, than to increase it by such means' (Miller 1988, p119). Books were also collected from conquered territories during the Nazi occupation of Europe (Petropoulos 2000) and on many other occasions. Less dramatic, but none the less inimical to the preservation of national heritage is theft and illegal trade in antiquities and cultural property which continues despite the *Convention on the means of prohibiting and preventing the illicit import, export and transfer of ownership of cultural property* (UNESCO 1970); (Meyer 1974).

Initiatives to repatriate 'spoils of war' have extended to attempts to identify the original owners or their heirs so that restitution may be made¹. Museums have led such initiatives but libraries are beginning to engage with the issues. The work of Russian and German national libraries has been especially notable and has, to a degree, been conducted under the auspices of IFLA (Lehmann 1996).

But libraries are more than treasure houses. They play an important role in defining and supporting the identity and culture of peoples. Said (1984, p169) noted that the foundation of national institutions like libraries and universities is essential to creating a sense of nationhood among exiled peoples such as Jews and Palestinians. Together with such projects as constructing a national history or reviving an ancient language, the institutions offer a concrete realisation of national identity. Offering a graphic illustration, a banner over the entrance to the national museum of Afghanistan proclaimed within days of the expulsion of the Taliban regime from Kabul: 'A nation stays alive when its culture stays alive' (Steen 2001).

Libraries also respond to societal changes by providing assistance to individuals to better themselves. The public library, as the 'people's university', supports both formal and self-education through access to the world of knowledge and is in principle free of charges and open to all. Its potential is exemplified through such projects as the Biblored Capital Network of Public Libraries in Bogotá, Colombia, which its founder proposed 'to promote a different vision, a different lifestyle in Bogotá ... measuring citizens' success through ... the development of their potential by providing them opportunities to improve the quality of their lives...'. (Caballero 2003, p1). He described the libraries as 'urban temples' which would 'symbolize the importance that the city wanted to place on education and intellectual development, which also allow citizens to appreciate life more' (*ibid* p3)². It provides access to information wherever it might be held. This function offers a powerful argument for investment in libraries as contributors to national development. In China, for example, public

libraries have been coupled to ‘...self-adjustment in China’s socialist market economy ... economic construction and ... serving economic development’ (Liu 1996).

Another vision characterises public libraries as ‘open forums that cannot restrict access, that play a key role in the free exchange of ideas ... and that must not become engaged in viewpoint discrimination...’ (Latham 2001). This understanding of the public library’s purpose goes further than the passive provision of access by extending into the promotion of access and the protection of the rights of users to receive ideas. The library is considered to exemplify democratic values in being ‘open to all’ and designed to accommodate a plurality of ideas and views. It can play an important role in promoting civil society, as was noted by Hisham Kassem, publisher of the *Cairo Times*, during a BBC radio discussion after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks. He emphasised the importance of the civilising influence of libraries when he commented about unemployed young men from southern Egypt:

... when these boys began to feel a sense of injustice there were no public libraries for them to read Voltaire or ... Hassein or ... or whoever. There was just a sheikh in the mosque talking about injustice. They joined the first voice of dissent they heard (Kassem 2001).

Censorship and its manifestations

Thus the damage to libraries, such as that done to the university library in Basra has even wider effects than the destruction of heritage. The looting and breakage not only damages the record of humanity’s discoveries, ideas and dreams but hampers our potential to learn and imagine. Other forms of information control are less dramatic than the looting we have recently seen but none the less serious in their consequences. They are manifested through the various forms of censorship and information control with which we are depressingly familiar.

Some centre on attitudes to sexuality and include prohibitions on obscenity and indecency, pornography and, latterly, that which might be considered to encourage paedophilia (Jones 2001a pp li-lx). Other concerns about decency can seek to prevent bad language, sexism and sexual harassment. At a societal level, the intention can be to ensure the suppression or advancement of specific ethnicities and languages, to prevent hate speech and racial vilification, or to protect religion by punishing blasphemy. Some may wish to manufacture consent for a regime or rewrite history, perhaps to favour a particular interpretation or to hide an unpalatable past. At a personal level, justifications can include the protection of private property, maintenance of privacy or avoidance of defamation. Special provisions usually apply to protect national security and in times of war or the threat of war.

This list does not present an exhaustive list of the purposes of censorship, but nonetheless indicates their broad extent. Many of the purposes and the similarly numerous methods of censorship date from early times. Speech, art and literature were all censored in ancient Rome (Corrigan 2001) and the free exercise of all continues to be challenged by applying a multitude of techniques (Jones 2001a). Many directly affect libraries and information services (Anderson 1974). Methods include funding restriction, filtering and blocking of the internet, community pressure to exclude materials from collections and, at the extreme, book burning.

Libraries are also affected by measures which limit the availability of materials for acquisition. Of course publication of a work may be prevented absolutely. At the

extreme, and frequently for political reasons, publication may be suppressed by actions taken against creators and others along the production and distribution chain. Actions extend from intimidation leading to self-censorship to the much grimmer psychiatric abuse, imprisonment, exile and murder. Impediments such as market censorship, prior restraint on publication, and broadcasting bans prevent acquisition. Other measures can ensure that materials can only be obtained in modified forms and include bowdlerization or other reshaping by editors or translators. Commercial practices can restrict the audience for some materials through license provisions or demanding technology requirements. Even some library practices can restrict availability, especially the selection or deselection of materials for ideological reasons but including also misuse of restricted collections and misleading cataloguing and classification.

The central question when considering the nature of censorship lies in identifying the types of conduct which the law or the polity may seek to suppress (Griffith 1996 p3). The conservative approach to censorship emphasises the real or alleged harm to society which will result from moral disintegration including damage to the general social and cultural environment. The accepted approach in liberal democracies seeks a balance between the least possible inhibition of freedom of expression while restricting that which is considered to be beyond community standards and, especially, that which flouts the primary human rights. Other countries adopt more liberal or more restrictive policies and practices, whether legal or extra-legal. Libraries must operate within these constraints. Any librarians who might wish to uphold principles of unrestricted access to information must either accept the boundaries or struggle against them.

Moral regulation

Finding a balance to suit a society presents a continuing tension between those who would be more open and liberal and those who would favour orthodoxy. Dramatically illustrated in contemporary Iran by the seesaw between the democratic modernisation promoted by the elected President Khomeini (who was formerly a librarian) and the reaction of the religious establishment, such tensions are nonetheless common in all societies. All groups in society may express their views of what is proper and demand adherence to those views, demonstrating calls to order (Bourdieu 1998 [1994] pp54–56) which are so self-evident to those who express them that they may be perplexed when others fail to acknowledge their legitimacy.

Censorship, in the broad sense adopted in this paper, can be either assimilative or coercive. It is assimilative when it is perceived to have legitimacy because of its imposition by recognised authority, by authority which is accepted to be legitimate and disinterested. It is coercive when it is employed as a means of enforcing the moral or ideological beliefs of an element of society which is not recognised to hold legitimate authority, at least in relation to imposing those beliefs.

Authority can only be obtained by presenting, at least in appearance, an image of legitimacy and disinterest, and disinterested loyalty to the public good (Bourdieu 1998 [1994] p59). The state generally attempts to regulate all forms of publication including printing, theatrical performances, public preaching and caricature because publication has the potential to undermine the legitimacy of an act by the state or the state itself (*ibid*, p63). This was of particular concern to Communist and other

dictatorial regimes. The widespread circulation of *samizdat* and the like demonstrated that many living under those regimes did not accept their legitimacy.

The professional narrative of non-judgemental, disinterested provision of access to information, which offers such a prized self-image to librarians, is a prime example of this process. General community acceptance of that self-image confers a legitimacy on their professional choices to make available or not make available. This legitimacy operates to validate their decisions thereby endorsing that which they identify as worthy of being made available and, simultaneously marginalising that which they proscribe. When that legitimacy is not accepted, assimilative processes cannot operate and librarians may be forced to consider coercive measures. Decisions to remove Enid Blyton books from library shelves in many countries, including Australia and Sweden (Stenberg 1996), in the 1960s and 1970s offer prime examples of such coercive professional behaviour. The librarians making those decisions denied the popularity of the books among children in Blyton's target reading ages, somewhat sanctimoniously removing the books because of a perception that they were educationally unsound.

The problem of pornography

Of the many types of human expression which can pose problems, pornography or obscenity is often the first to come to mind and, often, the easiest to find a reason to suppress. It is perhaps the first to come to mind because sexuality is a universal experience and attracts many taboos. It may be the easiest to suppress because for many its expression has little overt utility and might even be threatening. For some, it can only be justified through the right to free expression. Considered through this prism, there appears to be little *need* for users to access pornography (outside research into pornography or its effects, of course) and arguments about the right of users to explore their own sexuality or the diversity of human experience appear to lack substance in contrast to the fears of perversion or exploitation, especially of children.

But there is little agreement on what constitutes pornography or obscenity even within a culture, let alone between cultures. Literary history demonstrates that acceptability is a moveable feast. For example, a good collection of English literature today would almost certainly include DH Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*³ but it, like *Ulysses*, was considered obscene and banned in many countries (Grant 1992). The banning and subsequent release of both demonstrated that conceptions of the pornographic are contingent. Indeed, Judge Woolsey found that *Ulysses* was a work of high literary merit (Vanderham 1998).

Changing community concerns and expectations pose special problems for the librarian who would seek to select according to 'community standards'. Some have reacted with timidity as did Swansea Libraries on the release of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* — they purchased a copy but made it available by request only (Lucas 2001). This timid response is in the long established library tradition of the closed cabinet of restricted materials, accessible through cryptic catalogue entries such as 'Sex — see librarian' (Byrne 1999). Others have developed extensive collections which document changing tastes and moral views including the infamous *Enfer* of the Bibliothèque Nationale (Quignard 2001).

The contention is made that the widespread display and consumption of pornography contributes to a cultural and social environment which is damaging to women (Griffith, *op cit*). Itzin (1992 p413) has proposed that the incitement to racial hatred legislation could be a model for the regulation of pornography, rendering it unlawful to publish or distribute material which is likely to stir up sexual hatred. However, other feminists object to this proposition, suggesting that it casts women as victims with the result that measures to protect women are implemented rather than those which liberate women (Dwyer 1995 p183). In its recent General Comment 28^t, the United Nations Human Rights Committee has indicated an obligation on states to control pornography where it depicts adults, suggesting that the Committee considers pornography to be a form of free expression, analogous to hate speech, which must be controlled but not totally banned. It argues that 'the publication and dissemination of obscene and pornographic material which portrays women and girls as objects of violence or degrading or inhuman treatment is likely to promote these kinds of treatment of women and girls' (Joseph, Schultz et al 2000 p639). It previously recognised that child pornography has become a common form of abuse of children worldwide and urged Belgium, for example, to take effective measures to curtail its possession and distribution (*ibid* p484). This represents an expression in international jurisprudence of the harm principle, justifying restrictions on the right to know by reference to other rights, especially in this case the rights of children.

Pornography and obscenity are particularly difficult for librarians (Isaacson 2000) perhaps because the profession is largely feminised in many countries. The personal concerns expressed by many librarians echo the contending views of feminist writers. As professionals committed to communitarian ideals, they abhor exploitation and degradation, especially of children. But their commitment to access to information includes the commitment to enable client access to information which they may personally find abhorrent. Some refuse to purchase and make available materials which have been or might be challenged, citing 'community standards' or legality (sometimes on doubtful grounds). Some object to providing internet access to pornographic sites in public libraries, as in the recent case in which the Canadian Union of Public Employees called the Ottawa Public Library a 'porn palace' and a 'poisoned work environment' (Gray 2003); ('Keep the porn away from kids — editorial' 2003). Many seek a middle way such as the Swansea solution of making works thought questionable available only on demand. Others tough it out, expressing their strong commitment to freedom of access to information and consequently deciding to buy and make available solely on grounds of relevance or literary quality (Jones 2001b).

Community standards and the library

Prima facie it would appear that the concept of 'community standards' should sit well with library policy and practice. It is consistent with the notion of service to a community such as the residents served by a public library, the students and staff of a university or school, or the members of a research institute. The primary service is making available information materials, whether by purchase, electronic licence or other means. To that end, libraries and their staff members select materials to purchase or make available and develop selection policies to guide their decisions. Those policies reflect the interests of each library's community of users and respond

to their needs within whatever budgetary, policy and legislative constraints the library may operate.

However, it can be but a short step from selecting that which is relevant to rejecting that which might be considered objectionable by the community or indeed the librarian himself or herself. It is easy to say 'my clients don't need that' or 'we can't afford it' when considering materials about which the selector feels uncomfortable or fears a community backlash. It is easy to avoid controversy by restricting purchases to the tastes of the majority using the justification of applying the always limited resources available to deliver the broadest benefit. But this strategy risks marginalising minority preferences whether they be for particular genres, languages or formats. The old blind lady with an interest in philosophy might, for example, find it very difficult to obtain spoken word versions of the writings of the great philosophers because all public libraries consider them to be of minority interest. Members of an ethnic minority might be unable to read in their own language. More challengingly for the librarian, the fetishist and neo-Nazi may demand and be refused materials supporting their interests. Each may claim that their interests have been ignored and they are subject to oppression by the majority.

Deciding what to purchase can pose major ethical dilemmas for both libraries and librarians. Since resources are always limited, selections must be made. The aim is to find a basis for making decisions which eschews bias. It challenges each library to develop a clear selection policy which is based firmly on the needs of the library's clients and not subject to extraneous considerations such as political acceptability. For librarians, it can lead to self questioning of the reasons for making particular selection decisions especially when the materials are personally objectionable or perhaps expected to be controversial.

Professional associations have tried to guide and assist both institutions and individual librarians by preparing ethical statements which frequently make such demands as

The librarian

- shall endeavour to provide best possible user access to information and literature without censoring (*sic*) legal material
- shall on the most objective basis possible provide information which is as complete as possible and matches user needs... (Riksbibliotekstjenesten 2002) translated by (Vaagan 2002)

and

In his/her professional activity a Russian LIBRARIAN (*sic*):

- builds his/her relations with users on the basis of respect for a person and his information needs;
- considers free access to information as a person's inherent right; ...
- resists access restriction to library materials and does not allow unauthorized withdrawing and groundless refusal (censorship) of requested documents;... (Russian Library Association 1999) quoted in (Melentieva 2002).

Although far from universal, these commitments to meeting the user's needs, objectivity and resisting censorship are widely shared by librarians and their asso-

ciations. Their philosophical foundation is expressed in documents such as the *CLA statement on intellectual freedom* which includes the assertions that

Libraries have a basic responsibility for the development and maintenance of intellectual freedom ... [and] to guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity, including those which some elements of society may consider to be unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, libraries shall acquire and make available the widest variety of materials. (Canadian Library Association 1985 [1974])

This was echoed later by the *IFLA Statement on libraries and intellectual freedom* (IFLA 1999) which was subsequently transformed into the *Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom* (IFLA 2002).

Despite these aspirations, the weight of community expectations bears heavily on public and school libraries. The commitment to meeting the needs of the clientele can be expressed as a wish not to offend the general views of the communities which librarians serve. Thus, librarians may exclude some material from their libraries for fear that it might offend the general community or a section of it and in doing so, might deprive another segment of the community from material which it desires to access or from which it might benefit. The work of the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom has demonstrated the frequency of demands for censorship imposed by pressure groups and highlighted the importance of a principled stand in response to such pressures (ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom 2002).

A recent example can be seen in the calls in many countries for the banning or restriction of JK Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. Calls for removal of the books from school libraries have been based on their explicit references to magic — which has been called anti-Christian and offensive to Christians. Montgomery (2002) reports a library employee's objection to ordering them on the grounds that they promote 'witchery'. Writing about the books, Christian publications have warned against the dangers of making 'light of sorcery, charms and spells ... [which] invoke evil — and the origin of all evil is demonic' (Horvat 2002). Alongside all these objections, the books have been immensely popular, firstly in the English reading world and then in translation. Parents and teachers have reported that non-readers have become so engrossed that they have read them avidly and to the end. This sets perceived dangers against the goal of encouraging reading — a primary goal for librarians specialising in services for children and young adults. To remove or censor them would violate the professional commitment both to access to information and to meeting clients' needs. The case illustrates the contradictions between responding to calls for censorship in the name of community standards on the one hand and simultaneously providing literature desired by members of the community and also addressing broader community goals such as the extension of literacy.

Librarians' educative role demands not only that they should provide the materials required by their clients but also that they should contribute to the development of a degree of critical media consciousness by their clients. These serious purposes demand that effective libraries must make available useful — that is, 'good' — materials, whatever they may be. However, the utilitarian commitment to non-judgementally meeting users' needs should mean providing what the user demands even if it should be unacceptable to the librarian or the general community. It requires the expansion of professional techniques such as classification to handle previously proscribed materials (Dilevko and Gottlieb 2002). Further, the deeply felt and generally expected

professional responsibility to maintain documentary heritage should be inclusive of all expression, including the obscene, if the record of human consciousness is to be preserved. The imperatives to make available that which is useful (as defined by individual clients and the broader communities served by each library) and to preserve the record imply that librarians will be forced into challenging acceptability.

This responsibility forces librarians to deal with information and knowledge which they dislike or distrust. There are many things of which we dare not speak. Wilde famously wrote of 'the love which dare not speak its name' but the challenges extend beyond sexual matters. For example, in his recent book, *On the natural history of destruction*, Sebald writes of horrors which we dare not express, even to ourselves, through the experience of the German people post World War II (Sebald 2003). Günter Grass has similarly challenged his fellow Germans in his latest book, *Crabwalk*, in which he explores the effects of history and memory on the present (Grass 2003).

Censorship forces us to consider the reasons for which someone may wish to suppress information. We need to ask: Why? What is their interest in suppression? Who will gain from that suppression?

Censorship and intellectual freedom

Censorship with respect to political content is particularly prevalent in times of war or international tension. As an American writer noted quite early in the Cold War: 'Since mid-1950 the drive to remove books on Communism from library shelves, to label them as untouchable, or to restrict their use has become more vocal and more insistent' (Bixler 1954). But he was against restriction and quotes approvingly President Eisenhower's adjuration to the students of Dartmouth College on 14 June 1953: 'Don't join the book burners ... Don't be afraid to go in your library and read every book as long as any document does not offend your own ideas of decency. That should be the only censorship.'

Considered broadly, intellectual repression is an inevitable result of censorship whether it be imposed by others or through self censorship adopted for fear of the consequences of expressing one's thoughts or the perhaps even more pernicious danger of political correctness (Lessing 2001). Either way, it stultifies the imagination and imprisons the human spirit. Its consequences are long lasting. The many years of dictatorship in Chile, for example, left a legacy of self-censorship of which many Chileans are barely aware. It prevents them from openly discussing many topics and even from comprehending their self-imposed barriers. Budnik (2002) noted that this inhibition prevented librarians from pursuing their professional commitment to unrestricted access to information.

Applying the covert methods adopted in the Soviet bloc, intellectual repression can be resisted by resort to an underground literature (*samizdat*), exile literature (*tamizdat*), overseas broadcasts (*radizdat*), and tapes (*magnizdat*)⁵. Libraries within such repressive societies generally ignore subversive media unless they collect it for research purposes and then keep it in very secure circumstances with use permitted only under very stringent conditions (Genevieve 1999). However widely it may circulate within the society, it is not considered as part of the recognised cultural heritage (at least until the regime changes). The reasons are various: librarians may approve the restriction of dangerous ideas or the selective promotion of particular views — or they may be cajoled or intimidated into supporting the censor. In seeking

accommodation with the oppressive regime, the librarian may become 'a real heroine of moderation' — Kundera's telling label for Ivana the Terrible, the headmistress in Škvorecký's *Miracle in Bohemia* who picks out the least bad quotations from Marx (Kundera 1984 p 18).

In Soviet Russia and under other totalitarian regimes, librarians could offer passive resistance by collecting unacceptable materials even if they could not be made available. They could hope for a better day and build for that future. However, it appears that such work was limited to state-sanctioned collections of banned materials such as that in the Lenin Library. As Budnik noted, the effects of living and practicing within a repressive system run deep.

South Africa

South Africa is a case in point. Its long history of intellectual repression, censorship and secrecy coupled political censorship in support of an authoritarian regime with concern about pornography (Merrett 1994). Before the Second World War, black writing was ignored and unconventional white writing suppressed. From 1937, there were repeated calls for and initiatives to impose political censorship to prevent criticism of fascism and to suppress communist and anti-war views. Starting with the *Suppression of Communism Act of 1950*⁶, the state constructed a structure of censorship and self-censorship which lasted for four decades.

Imported books and periodicals were strictly controlled under the *Customs Act* on sometimes arbitrary grounds. Although university libraries could obtain permits to import banned books for research purposes, only two permits had been issued by May 1955 — and the titles were kept confidential. However, there was relative freedom for materials published in South Africa which enabled the publication of a rich anti-apartheid literature.

The recommendations of the Commission of Enquiry in Regard to Undesirable Publications in 1957 included a single system for both imported and domestic publications; a Publications Board to categorise materials; registration of all newspapers, periodicals, publishers and booksellers; and banning of communist literature. In a sop to research it recommended that libraries could hold banned literature for research purposes. Nevertheless, the South African Library Association (SALA), among others, strongly opposed the subsequent 1960 Bill because of its effect on freedom of expression. The provisions regarding the press were dropped in favour of a Press Code. The legislation was reintroduced and passed in 1962 avowedly to control indecency, blasphemy and communist opinions.

After the shootings at Sharpeville in 1961 and subsequent marches, a state of emergency was introduced under which writers were imprisoned or deported and publications banned. Detention, house arrest, banning and listing, political trials and banishment were used over the following years to intimidate, harass and silence critics of the regime. Black writing and any critical of apartheid or presenting unacceptable race relations was suppressed. Banned persons, organisations declared unlawful, anything deemed to have security implications and anything which could cause embarrassment to the government could not even be mentioned.

New censorship legislation in 1974 removed the right of appeal and enabled administrative banning. It was in Gordimer's chilling phrase, 'an octopus of thought-

surveillance' (Gordimer 1976). In the late 1970s, the Botha government made the system more sophisticated, giving the censors greater powers but introducing some positive amendments including a general exemption for university and other large libraries. Alternative publishing ventures challenged the system. Under the 1986–1990 state of emergency, suppression of ideas and control of communication were central. Widespread censorship 'was very much more radical and effective than that which operated before 1986... [it] sought to control information only from within South Africa, depended almost entirely on state employees to enforce it, and encouraged self-censorship' (Merrett, *op cit* p 137).

From the time of President de Klerk's speech on 2 February 1990, this whole unwieldy apparatus began to be dismantled as publications, organisations and individuals were un-banned. However, although some provisions were removed, the *Internal Security Act* remained in force and continued to be used. Classified documents and archives were destroyed, presumably to protect those who might have been held responsible for the crimes of apartheid. Merrett (*Ibid* p 194) suggests that 'This seemed to sum up the censorship of the glasnost years, which allowed a greater degree of freedom of opinion and expression while placing a high premium upon covering up unedifying details of the past'. South Africa subsequently provided a brave example of a nation attempting to deal with its dark history when, from 1996, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission worked to uncover those 'unedifying details' while promoting reconciliation especially with those who acknowledged their crimes.

Merrett considers that in some South African university libraries there was over-zealous application of the censorship laws and a tendency to anticipate their application. There was a climate 'of apparent liberalism overlaid by an anxious legalism and subservience to distant authority' and few challenged their legitimisation of 'a system of thought control' (*Ibid* pp 198–199). Merrett charges the profession of librarianship with 'collaboration and connivance with the authorities' in zealously upholding the Act (*Ibid* pp 211–213). The entire professional ethos was undermined: the more liberal members 'appealed for administrative tidiness in the censorship system', the 'totalitarian aided and abetted the state by searching for escaped banned material on the open shelves, interpreting the law literally, and surrounding the process with an air of bureaucratic solemnity' (*Ibid* p 212). Their professional association, the South African Institute for Library and Information Science (SAILIS) failed to oppose the racist and repressive policies of the government, concentrating on 'professional' issues. Merrett suggests that the *Publications Act* could have been rendered unworkable if librarians had chosen not to comply with its provisions and consequences.

Merrett may well be correct but the demands resulting from the adoption of his views would have placed (with the benefit of hindsight) on South African librarians are weighty. As members of a racially divided society, they could be expected to reflect the views of the various segments of that society with some supporting the government's policies, some accepting them as necessary if unpleasant, and some rejecting them. Even those who felt that the policies were wrong would have found it difficult to challenge them. A stronger response to the *Publications Act* and other repressive measures would have conflicted with their commitment to service to the community and their sense of obedience to authority, with key aspects of their

professional habitus. It could also have placed their lives and livelihoods at risk and might have led to imprisonment, brutality or exile.

Other forms of information control

This paper has focussed on the consequences of war, which are all too fresh in our minds, and the implications of censorship, usually inflicted by governments. But there are other forms of information control which have no less serious effects.

They include the insidious commodification of information which turns knowledge into something which can be appreciated only through its price in the market place. Notable for its effects on the cost structures and operation of scholarly communication over the last thirty years, commodification has made it impossible for researchers outside the richest nations to access the wealth of scholarly literature. Despite recent initiatives such as PubMed and BioMed, access to important information for health, education and national development is outside the reach of most university libraries in too many parts of the world. Concern to extend their economic hegemony has led the owners of commodified information to argue for the extension of intellectual property protection under the guise of fair trading arrangements promoted by the World Trade Organisation and World Intellectual Property Organisation.

Indigenous knowledge is exploited under similar provisions. Intellectual property regulations protect the exploiter, not the original owner of the knowledge. We need to recover the original balance between the interests of the creator and those of the wider community, of humanity. But we also need to find way of addressing indigenous and other non-Western concepts of knowledge.

In addition, we need to address the needs of the vulnerable. They include those on the wrong side of the digital divide who suffer major information inequality — inequitable access to information. The disabled experience particular disadvantage because modern communications media can make it even more difficult for them to access information and to be able to participate fully in society.

These are all form of information restriction. Although some might be considered 'collateral damage' because they are by-products of processes which have other goals, all have the effect of disempowering peoples. Perhaps that is the reason why they are so difficult to change: because, in disempowering many, they promote the advantage of a few.

Conclusion

This paper has taken a broad approach to its topic, 'censorship and libraries'. It has considered the motivations and effects of censorship but also the dire results of war and disadvantage on library collections and on access to information. It has touched briefly on other forms of information control. It has considered some of the results of those practices.

The heritage of humanity is not just the property of one people, one nation, one religion — or a few millionaires. It belongs to us all. From librarians, it demands a commitment to preserve, celebrate, and make available riches of scholarship and knowledge. It requires us to deal even with that which makes us uncomfortable and which some believe should be suppressed. In Gunter Grass's words:

It never ends. Never will it end.
(Grass 2003)

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Endnotes

- ¹ See for example the Washington Principles which were devised to guide initiatives to recover and restore Nazi confiscated art (Commission for Looted Art in Europe 1998).
- ² Biblored was awarded the 2002 Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Access to Learning Award of US\$1 million for its 'accomplishments in making information technology accessible without charge to the public, particularly underserved communities' (*ibid*, preface).

- ³ Despite its exclusion from *The western canon* (Bloom 1994).
- ⁴ 'Equality of Rights between Men and Women', handed down 29 March 2000.
- ⁵ Terms derived from official Soviet terminology such as *gosizdat* ... material put out by the state publishing house (Skilling 1989, pp3–17).
- ⁶ Contemporaneous to the House Un-American Activities (McCarthy) Committee in the USA.

Ever thought of becoming a referee for ALJ?

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John Levett

Collaboration plus!

The development of an information literacy and communication program

Virginia Dickson

This paper is a discussion of the processes involved in the evolution of an information literacy and communication unit (CO115 Health Communications) for College of Health students at the University of Notre Dame Australia, a collaboration between academic staff and the liaison librarian.

Manuscript received August 2003

THROUGH FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS, A VALUABLE METHOD OF DEVELOPING client-focused initiatives, the most immediate needs of the faculty staff and students were identified and the collaborative effort between the College of Health (COH) academic staff and the liaison librarian began. Four key areas were identified: information sources/information seeking behaviour, information literacy, collection development, and future trends and recommendations for long- and short-term projects were confirmed. A recent article in *Australian Academic and Research Libraries* [AARL] (Ivey 2003) discusses working partnerships between librarians and academics in information literacy, but it did not identify 'information about the roles of partners and the collaborative process of planning, delivering and evaluating learning programs'. This paper endeavours to demonstrate the need for library and academic staff to develop a trusting, sharing relationship through the use of client-centred methods such as focus group interviews.

The University of Notre Dame Australia is a private university whose mission is 'The advancement of learning, knowledge and the professions, and the provision of university education, within a context of Catholic faith and values'. In 2000, it launched its fifth College, the College of Health, and at the end of 2001 advertisements for 'liaison librarians' for the College of Business and COH were developed. The COH consisted of the following:

- School of Nursing

The process confirmed that each client group seeks information from different sources...

- School of Health and Physical Education
- School of Counselling and Behavioural Science.

At the time of conducting the interviews the COH was planning to introduce a School of Physiotherapy and a School of Medicine. The School of Physiotherapy commenced semester 1, 2003, and the School of Medicine is projected to commence teaching semester 1, 2005. A large component of the liaison librarian's job description includes the development of information literacy programs for their college. At the outset the needs of client groups and the ways in which the library staff and resources could meet these needs had to be identified. This process included such issues as:

- how did these groups seek information;
- how did the library currently meet their needs:
- new directions within each area; and
- client-focussed initiatives.

It was clear that the most effective means would be focus group interviews with members of each school. This process also allowed for productive contact between academic staff and the interviewer (the liaison librarian). Newton-Smith and White (1995), found that 'collaborative projects with academic staff support information literacy training, raise the profile of librarians, and foster acceptance of librarians as an integral part of the academic environment'. This was confirmed.

Method

Focus groups are a form of qualitative research used to collect information not usually identifiable through quantitative processes. Questions need to be 'based on a review of the literature and consultation with content experts' (Kingry, Tiedje & Friedman, 1990 p124). To a new employee within the organisation with little library experience [me!], the focus group method appeared to be the most appropriate research design. Byers and Wilcox (1991) have identified this design as appropriate when little prior knowledge exists. Interviews were conducted in meeting rooms and recorded; each required on average one hour. Results would be anonymous and confidential and individuals were free to withdraw at any point: A set of the questions which were used as a guide in the interview are included as an appendix: four key areas for intervention were identified.

The process confirmed that each *client* group seeks information from different sources. The undergraduate will tend to seek information from the core texts, which is adequate for the first two years. By the third year lecturers are encouraging use of journal articles in either print or electronic format. Staff were concerned that many students are using web resources without an awareness of the need or how to evaluate material gained online. Postgraduate students required research material with a historical perspective and current literature provided from journals in electronic or print format. Recent and Australian originated material was identified as being very important. Academic staff require journal articles in a timely and efficient manner. Receiving tables of contents via e-mail or internal mail would be beneficial. Overall, all focus groups confirmed that:

- core texts were minimal if present at all;
- access to current print journals was limited; and,

- access to the electronic databases was minimal. This was either due to a lack of training on how to use the databases, a lack of awareness of the resources they provide access to, or an inability to obtain full-text articles. Generally, academic staff preferred access to electronic journals due to their potentially cost-effective nature, but there is a need for instruction on how to use these resources.

Some client groups required audio-visual material for teaching and felt a significant investment was required here. This raises the issue of where students might use these items, how many to purchase (one each for library access and for teaching) and the implications of new technologies. At the time of interviewing, the library had no audio-visual capacity. DVDs and CD-ROMs were suggested as a means of increasing access and availability.

Collection development

All focus groups identified a need for material with a historical perspective particularly with the expansion of the university and the future introduction of postgraduate courses. Material that is not as current is also used in teaching situations to indicate how the profession has changed and evolved. On this basis, material that relates to the profession as a profession and to theories of that profession, needed to be retained within the collection in order to support those courses. There is also a need for access to current literature. While students may prefer electronic access, most focus group participants preferred print for their own use. Whether this is from ease of use, familiarity, or confidence, is dealt with in the following sections on future trends and information literacy.

Future trends

Discussion here identified areas whereby the library staff can remain client-focussed and increase the utility of library services. The key issue was staff training and orientation for new staff to library resources; significantly, staff requested specific training on search strategies using the electronic databases and setting up their own e-mail alerts for tables of contents. Alternatively, the circulation of hard copies of tables of contents for relevant journals might be considered. Some respondents perceived a need for key journals in print format, possibly three or four for the main subject areas.

Participants identified the issue of increasing library resources as an important point to meet the needs of the university staff and students. Future marketing trends recommended for the library included:

- labelling collections and specific use areas more clearly;
- retention of spacious aisles and room for growth of the collection; and,
- knowledgeable, identifiable library staff.

Information literacy

A prominent point raised by all groups was the need to train both staff and students how to use the library effectively so that they could be independent, happy, calm users of the library services. The anxiety, stress and time wasted trying to retrieve information without the knowledge of how to do so effectively was raised by all participating groups in varying degrees. Some groups requested that the library participate in educational sessions with students during their first year of studies.

Others have requested training sessions to be held throughout the year for both staff and students. Groups requested either formal or informal sessions with the liaison librarian to be shown how to use electronic resources. If done as a group session it was suggested that the approach be by subject specific groups and offered twice a year. Individual practice sessions were also suggested.

Other areas that would support current courses included the suggestion of providing referencing guides on the internet, and training on *EndNote*.

Recommendations

Following the evaluation of the interviews, the key areas identified as future projects were

- training and information literacy;
- collection development; and,
- library facilities.

Training and information literacy

The library should:

- provide training in the use of electronic resources, particularly databases; training on *EndNote* to be introduced later;
- offer group or individual sessions dealing with the analysis of a research topic, including its reduction into concepts, identifying keywords, developing a search statement, evaluating material retrieved;
- provide sessions dealing with electronic databases;
- provide sessions at the same time as *Proquest* trial for staff;
- participate in staff orientation and induction;
- produce handouts detailing process of ETOCs [electronic tables of contents] and alerts specific for Health.

The library should be involved in training students to:

- use the library effectively;
 - develop search strategies;
 - evaluate web-based material;
 - use web-based referencing and citation effectively;
- and should develop subject specific information guides for each school.

Collection development

The focus groups identified a need for the library to:

- evolve and document a collection development policy;
- select and purchase suitable audio visual materials;
- make provision for viewing audio visual materials;
- improve signage of shelves;
- continue to build the collection with core texts in print and electronic access to journal material; and

- develop quantitative and qualitative methods to deselect or weed items and publish these in a collection development policy.

Library facilities

Management discussions have focussed on the development of audio/visual viewing facilities, improved student access and modifying the Central Library significantly through building works. At the time of writing, the COH Steering Committee plans to hold its first meeting within a week to rationalise the development of the COH library.

Outcomes

Following the interview process project strategies were implemented to meet client needs. The main projects that were activated over the first six months included:

- setting up distribution lists and maintaining regular contact through e-mail alerts of a variety of information sources relevant to each school;
- e-mailing *ETOCs* at least weekly;
- photocopying the table of contents of print journals and forwarding them to the relevant school on a sporadic and limited basis due to the small number of print journals subscribed to at this point, and limited staff resources;
- arranging and promoting trials of electronic databases;
- promoting and providing instruction on using electronic resources to staff;
- providing student training;
- cataloguing and classifying new materials promptly;
- notifying staff of newly processed acquisitions electronically;
- distributing relevant publicity flyers as received;
- purchasing and processing core texts prior to semester;
- developing selection and deselection policies; and
- developing subject guides for each school.

Future strategies

As relationships developed between academic and library staff, opportunities for further collaboration arose. Approximately seven months after my appointment a meeting was held to modify a course required unit titled *CO100 Communications* so that it could be health-oriented and incorporate the concepts of:

- searching, retrieving, analysing and evaluating information sources;
- academic writing and study skills;
- verbal and non-verbal communication; and
- the communication and presenting of information consistent with the needs of the intended audience.

CO115 Health Communications

Following a planning meeting in October 2002, I became responsible for co-ordinating the unit *CO115 Health Communications* for semester 1, 2003 drawing on the precedents in information literacy established by other liaison librarians, including that for the College of Education: *ED1111 Information literacy* and modifying this

so that databases and internet information sources demonstrated or promoted were health specific. Evidence-based practice is introduced when discussing search strategies, through demonstrating PICO. The students also complete a tutorial in their workbooks. Other issues including use of web resources without proper evaluation or referencing were identified and have since been incorporated with support and collaboration from the COH academic staff.

Enrolment comprised 152 students in eight tutorial groups. Two tutors were past students from the university (one with a history of nursing and the other counselling), one liaison librarian (previously a nurse) and one COH academic staff member (health and physical education). Assignment search topics were selected relevant to other core units the students were studying. One-hour lectures were held weekly over thirteen weeks; students were required to attend one one-hour tutorial weekly and were expected to complete one one-hour session of self-learning accessing the student server to complete assigned tasks and accessing websites and developing their computer literacy skills.

At the completion of the semester, a meeting was held between tutors to identify modifications and refinements including the production of a workbook comprising the self-learning activities required on a weekly basis and which they will be required to bring to tutorials. The core text has been changed to *Health care informatics: An interdisciplinary approach* by Shiela Englehardt and Ramona Nelson.

Conclusion

The focus group process appears to have been effective: it has resulted in the identification of client-focused initiatives and projects such as the information guide for each school, which have led to the development of learning resources utilised in *CO115 Health Communications* which has since been further refined and incorporated into a self-learning package. Further modifications include a larger component on evidence-based practice. Focus group interviews enabled relationships to be developed and communication channels to be opened. Other future strategies for collaboration include the development of a Health Library which is planned for 2005; the planning process for which has already commenced with visits to health libraries in Queensland and in Western Australia. Focus groups appear to be an excellent method of marketing resources and developing customer-focused initiatives. The challenge is to maintain momentum through additional resources, staff or material once one has marketed effectively; this requires a continual commitment from upper management.

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Appendix

Focus group questions

Explain purpose of interview

Purpose is to identify the needs of my client group and ways in which the library can meet these needs. Also, to identify the level of awareness of the existing services that the library provides.

Objectives

Identify the user group's information-seeking behaviour and how the library currently meets their needs; identify new directions. Market existing services the library provides by increasing awareness of existing services provided.

Questions

Open with an 'icebreaker' type question — request each participant to name one positive point about the library. Then:

1. How does the group seek information? That is, what source of information do they look to in order of priority? *Why:* Research indicates peer first, specialist second and print as a last resort.
2. Do they feel that the source of information depends upon the type of information they are seeking? For example, for teaching resources are they seeking print, electronic or audio visual resources? For research information — what type of source are they likely to look to for information? (for example, format of source, currency of source, whether peer reviewed). *Why:* Teaching would tend towards aids, research would tend toward journals, academics need access to current information. Full-text electronic or print preferred? Are they aware of how to set up e-mail alerts to relevant journals?
3. Is there a need for a historical perspective of material in their area of study and teaching? How is this required? That is, does the format matter or the time frame in obtaining material? *Why:* This is relevant to the collection development policy, regarding weeding and storage or archiving of material for research purposes.
4. The main library provides access to full-text electronic journals and web-based resources. Which services that the library provides do they feel most comfortable using? What is their opinion of the electronic resources available to them? Do they feel the electronic system is user-friendly, if not could they describe why? What type of databases would they find of most use — full text, abstract, images, years catered for? *Why:* Ease of use has a significant impact on use, therefore identify if any problems exist, and if so, what they are.
5. The main library catalogue can be searched by keyword, call number, author, ISBN, or title. What is their opinion of the online catalogue? Have they experienced any difficulties with the online catalogue and could they describe these difficulties? *Why:* Marketing and increasing awareness of search strategies, and providing an opportunity to identify a need for training.
6. Do they feel that the library adequately meets their needs as a group? What are the services provided that they find the most useful? *Why:* enabling identification of the libraries/collection strengths.

7. Focusing on the students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, how could the library usefully increase their access to services provided? *Why:* To identify marketing opportunities specific to user groups.
 8. In what ways do they perceive that the library could meet the needs of their group better? *Why:* Trying to identify new directions that are customer-focussed. That is, identifying the weaknesses of the existing collection.
 9. Could they describe what the ideal library would be for themselves as a user group? *Why:* Trying to identify market trends.
 10. What are the things most important to you regarding information sources? What are the things most important to you in a library service? *Why:* maintaining client focus.
-

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Graduate information literacy skills: the 2003 ANU skills audit

Valerie Perrett

This article looks at the information literacy (ILS) skills of graduate students and is based on an audit at the ANU in 2003 which included database searching, web searching, information management and word processing skills — vital to all graduate students. Each student who completed the audit received a ‘training needs profile’. Staff also benefited as they had a better understanding of the skills of the students that they were providing training for.

Manuscript received January 2004

The audit

IN 2003 THE GRADUATE INFORMATION LITERACY PROGRAM (GILP) AT THE AUSTRALIAN National University (ANU) introduced an information literacy skills audit which was available online to all students enrolled in PhD and MPhil degrees. It was introduced for three reasons. We wanted to be able to give students advice about training courses they should attend and after completing the audit each student was sent a training needs profile which indicated which GILP courses they were recommended to attend. Staff teaching into the GILP program would have a better understanding of the skill levels of the students, and it would give them a better idea of what courses needed to be run and how often. It was also envisaged that the audit could provide a measure of the effectiveness of the GILP program by pre-testing and post-testing of students and linking this to information literacy training undertaken. By the end of 2003 discussions had taken place to enable this to be effected in the future.

The audit was developed using *Apollo*, an ANU-developed poll software. A link was provided from the GILP homepage and access was restricted to research students: GILP staff feared it would be an unmanageable workload if it was open access, as the poll software required individual responses to the students and secondly, the focus was on the information literacy skills that would be vital to completing a research degree. The skills tested included information searching, information management and advanced word processing skills.

It was no surprise that graduate students do not invariably arrive at ANU as information literate...

Students were not individually scored but sectional scores were given, accompanied by advice regarding training on the following bases:

- A strong recommendation for training was given if the student had answered correctly one third or less of the questions in that section.
- A recommendation for training was given when students answered correctly two thirds of the questions in that section.
- Where GILP courses extended over more than one session, recommendations could be made as to which session the student needed to attend.

During 2003, 132 graduate students completed the survey. Research approval was needed for this research and 107 students gave this permission.¹

Their skills

Information searching skills

Section 2 of the skills audit asked students to self-rate their ability to find information. Fifteen per cent rated their skills as excellent, fifty-three per cent as good, thirty per cent as satisfactory and two per cent as generally poor. Sections 3 and 4 then tested students' actual ability to search for information using online databases and the web. In each section there were six questions. The first question in each was compulsory, asking students if they had any experience with database or web searching. If they responded 'No', they went to the next section. The skills tested were their understanding of Boolean operator searching, the ability to use truncation, their understanding of the web and its pitfalls. As we go through this section some of the actual questions used will be introduced.

Looking first at the combined database searching and web searching skills the graduate students scored an average of seven out of a possible maximum of twelve. The range of skills was from one to twelve with the median score being eight.

Self assessment of information searching skills and actual information skills				
score	Self-assessed as excellent	Self-assessed as good	Self-assessed as satisfactory	Self-assessed as poor
	No further training needed and students knew it 17 students		No further training needed by students may think it was 0 students	
12	1	2		
11	–	1		
10	2	11		
	Further training needed but students may not know it 41 students		Further training needed and students knew it 23 students	
9	2	10	4	–
8	4	6	8	–
7	3	8	1	–
6	2	6	9	1
	Further training needed but students did not know it 15 students		Further training needed and students knew it 11 students	
5	2	5	4	1
4	–	4	1	–
3	–	1	3	–
2	–	3	1	–
1			1	–

Figure 1

Did the students correctly assess their own skills? It can be seen from Figure 1 that fifty-one students correctly assessed their skill level. The other fifty-six overestimated their skills. In the case of information searching, no students underestimated their skills. In terms of how that may have influenced their likelihood of seeking training, we can see from Figure 1 that fifty-six students may not have thought they needed training when they did and fifteen of those were seriously in need of additional training if they were going to be able to search for information effectively. The graduate students scored better at database searching than at web searching, interestingly, however, nine students had never before searched databases, while no student had no previous web searching experience.

Database searching skills

The average score for database searching skills was 3.75 out of a maximum possible score of six. The range of scores was from 0 (nine students) to six (twenty-one students). The median score was five.

Did the graduate students correctly assess their database searching skills?

Self assessment of information searching skills and actual database searching skills				
score	Self-assessed as excellent	Self-assessed as good	Self-assessed as satisfactory	Self-assessed as poor
	No further training needed and students knew it 34 students		No further training needed by students may think it was 9 students	
6	3	14	4	–
5	6	11	5	–
	Further training needed but students may not know it 24 students		Further training needed and students knew it 14 students	
4	3	12	5	–
3	2	7	8	1
	Further training needed but students did not know it 15 students		Further training needed and students knew it 11 students	
2	2	6	6	1
1	–	2	–	–
0	–	5	4	–

Figure 2

Fifty-nine of the 107 students correctly assessed their database searching skills. Nine students underestimated their skills. Thirty-nine students overestimated their skills. Sixty-four students (fifty-nine per cent) were recommended to undertake additional training and twenty-six of these strongly were recommended to do additional training.

What did the students know about database searching?

Nine students (eight per cent) had not previously searched databases. Three of these students had done their undergraduate degree in Australia, five were Asian-educated students and one was educated in North America. Questions 14 and 15 tested students' understanding of Boolean operator searching. Fifty-four students (50.5 per cent) correctly answered question 14 and fifty students (46.7 per cent) correctly answered question 15. 48.6 per cent of graduate students had a firm understanding of Boolean operator searching. Questions 16 and 17 tested students' understanding of wild-card and truncation use. Question 16 tested for skill in using truncation: seventy-one students (66.3 per cent) were able to answer correctly. Question 17 tested

for an understanding of the reason for using the wild-card features: sixty-one students (fifty-seven per cent) of students understood the use of the wild-card symbol.

Question 18 asked students if they could link back to library journal holdings from some databases.² Seventy-one students (sixty-six per cent) were aware of this capability. As this feature is common in Australian university libraries it may be thought that the students who were unaware of this feature would be those who were overseas educated. However, out of the students who had previous experience using databases and did not answer this question correctly, nineteen were educated in Australia and eight were from overseas.

Section 1 of the survey asked students for demographic information to establish if there was any link between particular demographic features and database searching skills.

In Figure 3 we see some variation in skills in relation to faculties.

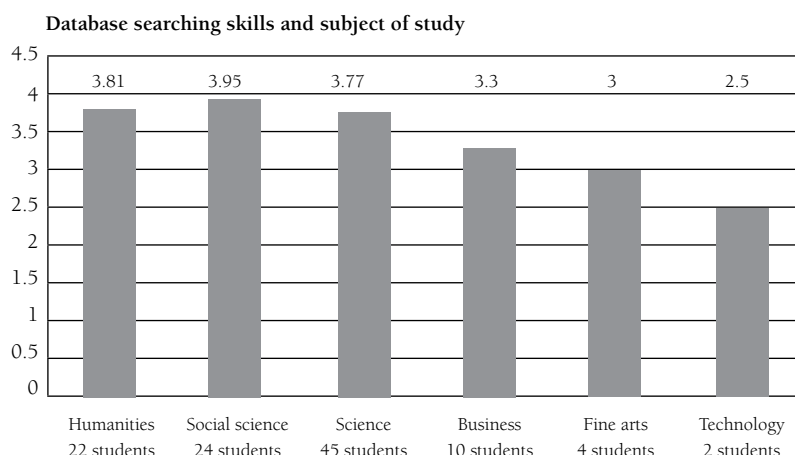


Figure 3

On the age variable, the age group with the lowest set of database searching skills was those between 26 and 34 years of age. The average score for this age group was 2.43. This compares with an average score of 4.04 for the under-25 group and 3.97 for the 35-and-over group. Gender differences in database searching skills were insignificant: female students (sixty-six students) had an average score of 3.78 and male students (forty-one students) had an average score of 3.56.

Students who had done their undergraduate degree outside of Australia had on average very much poorer database searching skills than those educated in Australia. The average score for overseas-educated students was 2.90 (forty-two students). For Australian-educated students the average score was 4.26 (sixty-five students). If the scores for the overseas-educated students are broken down regionally, we can see that students educated in South Asia have the lowest level of skill with an average score of only 1.36. Students educated in the New Zealand and Pacific region had an average score of 4.5, those educated in North and South America an average of 3.6, those educated in Europe and UK an average of 3.5 and those educated in East Asia and the Middle East and Africa an average of 3. The weak database searching skills

of the overseas-educated students point to the need to provide training for these students as soon as possible after arrival in Australia.

On analysis of the database searching skills and evidence of comprehension that knowledge of these skills was of use in planning training, it emerged that students did not really understand Boolean operators and their role in searching. It was surprising one third of the students were not aware how to link from databases to library journal holdings. In training courses this is now stressed. We concluded that no additional database searching training courses needed to be run.

Graduate students and web searching skills

The average score for web searching skills was 3.3 out of a maximum possible score of 6. The range of scores was from 0 (two students both of whom had completed their undergraduate education in Australia) to six (four students, three of whom had completed their undergraduate education in Australia). The median score was 3.

Did the graduate students correctly assess their web searching skills?

Self assessment of information searching skills and actual web searching skills				
score	Self-assessed as excellent	Self-assessed as good	Self-assessed as satisfactory	Self-assessed as poor
	No further training needed and students knew it 16 students		No further training needed by students who may think it was 4 students	
6	1	2	1	–
5	3	10	3	–
	Further training needed but students may not know it 41 students		Further training needed and students knew it 17 students	
4	4	19	5	–
3	4	14	10	2
	Further training needed but students did not know it 16 students		Further training needed and students knew it 13 students	
2	3	11	9	–
1	–	1	3	–
0	1	–	1	–

Figure 4

Fifty-seven out of 107 students overestimated their web searching skills and may have not have been aware of their need for additional training. Only four students underestimated their skills. Eighty-seven students (81.3 per cent) were recommended to do additional training and of that number twenty-nine were strongly recommended to do additional training.

What did the graduate students know about web searching?

Only two students had no previous web searching experience. Question 20 tested students' understanding of the ability of a search engine to search the entire web. Forty-one students (38.31 per cent) understood that a typical search engine would not search the entire web. Question 21 tested students' knowledge of advanced search features, asking how they might restrict a search to websites from a particular country. Seventy-two students (67.3 per cent) correctly answered this question. Twenty-four students thought it would be necessary to look through a set of search results to determine what their country domain was.

Question 22 asked the students how the search engine Google would interpret the following search. The question read:

Using Google you enter the following search:

Tourism Bali Indonesia

Google will look for:

- These words next to each other (a phrase search)
- These words separated by OR (tourism or Bali or Indonesia)
- These words separated by AND (tourism and Bali and Indonesia)
- Will respond that your search strategy is invalid

This was a basic question about web searching: sixty students (fifty-six per cent) of the graduate students selected the correct answer, fourteen thought that Google would interpret this as a phrase search and twenty-seven thought Google would imply an 'OR' between search terms.

Question 23 asked students what the safe search filter can be used for. The responses are worth looking at in more detail. The question read:

A safe search filter will:

- Stop the search from stalling if there are more than 100 000 results
- Help prevent pornographic sites from being retrieved
- Prevent your institution from being able to record the websites you have been viewing
- Limit your search results to *reliable* websites

Thirty-two students (29.9 per cent) of the graduate students knew that the role of the safe search filter was to assist in preventing pornographic websites from being retrieved. While this is disturbing, it is perhaps more alarming that forty-seven students (44.8 per cent) thought that the role of the safe search filter could be used to limit search results to reliable websites!

Question 24 tested students' knowledge of ways in which you could try to limit a search to eliminate unreliable sites. Forty-seven students (44.8 per cent) selected the correct answer. Forty-three students thought that the accuracy of grammar and spelling would not help in trying to limit results to reliable sites.

In Figure 5 we can see that there is some relationship between web searching skills and area of study. Science students slightly outscore Fine Arts and Social Science students.

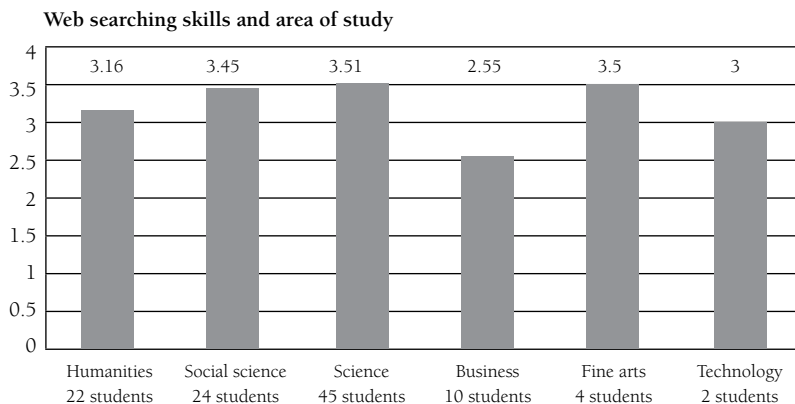


Figure 5

Comparing database and web skills with subject of study it is interesting to see that Humanities students have the biggest difference between database and web searching scores with a difference of 0.65. Science students had the least variation with only a 0.26 difference.

Students 25 years and younger had the highest web searching score with an average score of four. As with database searching skills, it was students between the ages of 26–34 who had the weakest web searching skills with an average of 3.05. The 35-and-over group had an average score of 3.29. Both females and males had an average score of 3.3.

Australian-educated students had a higher average web searching score than overseas-educated students. The average score for the Australian-educated students was 3.55. For overseas-educated students the average score was 2.97. As with database searching scores, New Zealand and Pacific-educated students outscored Australians in web searching skills with an average of 3.75. UK/European students scored an average of 3.5, North and South American-educated students had an average of 3.3, students from East Asia an average of 3.2, those from the Middle East and Africa 2.5 and students from South Asia an average score of 1.81. It is confirmed that there is a real need to provide training for overseas students as soon as they arrive, otherwise they will be disadvantaged in their studies.

Did the web searching results come as a surprise?

Web Searching classes in 2002 were not well attended, and the inference that we drew was that students must be competent web searchers. Attendance following the introduction of the skills audit increased significantly, so it would seem that students too were surprised at the scores and wanted to improve their skills. The content of the web searching course was changed slightly after reviewing the skills audit results. Metasearch engine searching was introduced and more time was spent on explaining such things as Safe Search filters and techniques for evaluating web resources. The emphasis on search techniques remained unchanged.

Graduate students and information management skills

Section 5 tested students' skill in using one of two information management software programs, EndNote or BibTeX: ANU has a site licence for EndNote and BibTeX is available to ANU students who are using LaTeX as their word processing software. In testing skill in using information management software, it was implicit that competent use of such software was a prerequisite for research students.

In the self-assessment section of the audit students were asked to assess their ability to manage information sources, keeping references and storing data. This was considerably broader than the skills tested in Section 5. However only 73 of the 107 students who completed the audit, were confident of their ability to manage information either electronically or otherwise.

Self assessment of information management skills and actual information				
score	Self-assessed as excellent	Self-assessed as good	Self-assessed as satisfactory	Self-assessed as poor
	No further training needed and students knew it 8 students		No further training needed by students may think it was 15 students	
6	–	3	4	–
5	1	4	8	3
	Further training needed but students may not know it 16 students		Further training needed and students knew it 14 students	
4	1	8	3	5
3	2	5	5	1
	Further training needed but students did not know it 14 students		Further training needed and students knew it 40 students	
2	1	1	1	–
1	–	–	1	–
0	1	11	24	14

Figure 6

Only 23 students were exempt from a recommendation to do EndNote or BibTeX training: not surprisingly the research students came to ANU with poorly developed or no EndNote or BibTeX skills and EndNote training courses are in heavy demand, being fully booked weeks ahead. The average score for information management skills was 2.2. Fifty students (46.7 per cent) scored zero, that is they had no previous experience in using information management software. Only seven students (6.5 per cent) scored full marks. Of the students who had previous experience it became clear that while many had some understanding of the software, many did not know how to use its capabilities to interact with databases and have information imported into EndNote libraries.

Questions 26 to 28 tested skills in using EndNote to create bibliographic references, using styles and the interaction between EndNote and Microsoft Word. Of the fifty-two students who had previous experience with EndNote, eighty-nine per cent of students answered these questions correctly.

Questions 29 and 30 tested skills in being able to use EndNote to search databases and their ability to export references from databases into EndNote libraries. Students who had previously used EndNote did less well here, only thirty-seven per cent of students correctly answered these questions. As a consequence, many students were recommended to attend the EndNote Module B course only, which focused on importing database references into EndNote libraries.

Questions 31 to 35 were selected by the five students with previous BibTeX experience.

In Figure 7 (next page) we see that there is a wide variation in information management skills depending on area of study.

Information management skills varied with age. Students aged 25 and under had an average score of 3.4, those between 26 and 34 had an average score of only 1.64 and those 35 and over had an average score of 2.32. There was a marked difference between the average scores for females and males. Females had an average score of 2.43 while the average male score was 1.83. Australian-educated students had a slightly higher average than overseas-educated students with an average score of

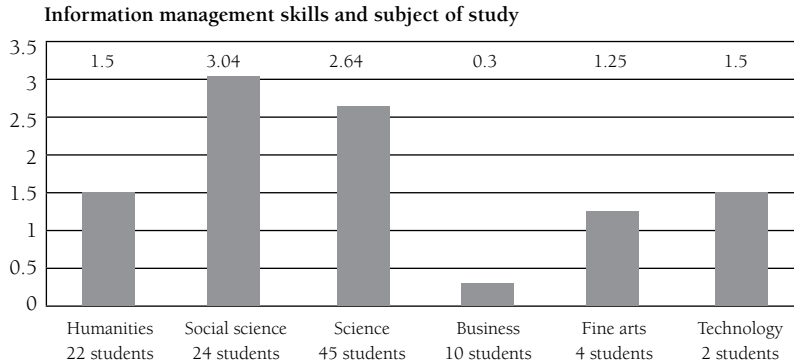


Figure 7

2.21. The average score for overseas-educated students was 2.1. Of the overseas-educated students those educated in North and South America had the lowest score with an average of 0.5. Overseas students from both New Zealand/Pacific and Europe had average scores above the Australian-educated students with scores of 3.75 and 2.78 respectively.

Graduate students and word processing skills

Section 6 tested students’ ability to use word processing packages to the extent needed to produce a thesis of around 100 000 words. As the ANU provides access to Microsoft Word and LaTeX, these were the packages that skills were tested on. Students had an opportunity to indicate skills in using other packages, but none did. All but one of the 107 students had previous word processing experience but few had sufficient skill to produce a long document such as a thesis efficiently.

Were the students able to assess their word processing skills?

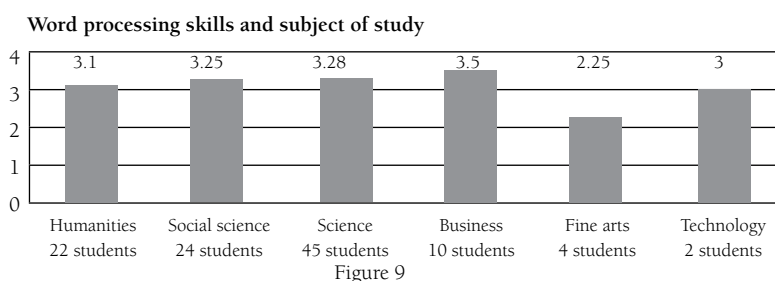
Self assessed skills and actual word processing skills				
score	Self-assessed as excellent	Self-assessed as good	Self-assessed as satisfactory	Self-assessed as poor
	No further training needed and students knew it 11 students		No further training needed by students may think it was 6 students	
6	2	–	–	–
5	3	6	6	–
	Further training needed but students may not know it 35 students		Further training needed and students knew it 21 students	
4	5	14	11	1
3	6	10	7	2
	Further training needed but students did not know it 20 students		Further training needed and students knew it 14 students	
2	3	14	8	1
1	–	2	3	2
0	–	1	–	–

Figure 8

We can see that the majority could not assess their skills accurately in that fifty-six and six underestimated. Only seventeen students were not given a recommendation to attend one or more Word training session. Questions 38 and 39 tested students’ knowledge of basic word formatting and related to skills taught in the ‘Producing theses in Word module A’ course. Seventy-three per cent of students were able to

answer correctly question 38 and sixty per cent answered question 39 correctly. Question 40 asked about custom heading styles and at this point forty-eight per cent of students could answer correctly. Skill with templates, a skill that is very important if the students are to produce a consistently formatted long document, especially if it is the result of merging a number of separate documents was tested in question 41. Eighteen per cent of students were able to select the right answer to this question. Question 42 was concerned with producing a table of contents. All students are required to produce one for their thesis: seventeen per cent knew that a table of contents could be generated from the styles and table entry fields. Questions 43 to 47 tested the skills of students who were going to produce their thesis using LaTeX, a software package favoured by physical science students because of its superior ability to handle symbols. The average score of the seven students who answered the LaTeX questions was 3.86.

In Figure 9 we can see that there was some variation in word processing skills depending on the subject of study, with business students having the best scores.



The word processing skills of Australian- and overseas-educated students were very similar. Australian-educated students had an average score of 3.20 while their overseas colleagues' average was slightly higher with 3.26. In both groups the median score was 4. Within the overseas-educated group, the students from the New Zealand and Pacific region had an average score of 4.25 and students educated in North and South America also had an average score significantly above the average with 3.66. Students from East Asia scored the least well with an average of 2.6. In this case South Asia-educated students scored closer to the average with 3.09. Age had very little impact on the word processing scores of the graduate students. The average score for the 25-and-under group was 3.27, for the 26–34 age group 3.2, and for the 35-and-over group 3.28. There was also very little difference in average scores for females and males. The average female score was 3.24 and the average male score 3.19.

Overall, the word processing results did not come as a surprise to us but many students must have been dismayed by their scores and the training recommendations they were given. We were now able to recommend a particular training module and while this was good for the students, it did create some problems for GILP staff, who found that demand for this module was excessive since the practice hereto had been to offer modules as a series, thus distributing demand. Inevitably we also had students attending who did not have the same skill base as those who had attended earlier modules. Obviously the Audit could not test skill in everything that was taught in a session and this was showing up! We decided that we would continue to offer

the specific module recommendations and were considering extending the number of questions in this part of the audit. However, the audit had been designed to be completed in ten to fifteen minutes, and on average, they were taking all of fifteen minutes to complete it already.

The literature review question was included as one of four questions in Section 7 of the audit: it attempted to test students' understanding of the nature of a literature review. It was pleasing to see that 79.43 per cent of the graduate students were able to correctly answer this question.

Skills audit and GILP feedback and the identification of additional training requirements

Section 8 of the skills audit gave the students the opportunity to inform us of training they thought they needed that we were not currently receiving: it was felt that it gave us an ideal opportunity to get this information which would help in future course developments. The three most popular choices made were Photoshop (five students), GIS Mapping (four students) and Illustrator (three students). In all, thirty-two responses were received. The second question in Section 8 gave the students the opportunity to provide feedback on the audit, which was positive overall. Five students said that the survey was useful and/or a good survey. Comments included 'Having a survey was a great idea' 'Good survey' and some told us what they found valuable about it and (perhaps the most interesting) 'the survey revealed the true extent of my ignorance'. This linked back to one of our main objectives in developing the audit, as we believed that the students did not know what they did not know. Six students commented that there needed to be more 'don't know' options. As most questions were not compulsory, this came as a surprise: what we considered doing was to make the message about mandatory questions stand out more and pointing out that unless a question is marked with an asterisk it does not have to be answered. Most students did simply leave blank those questions they could not answer, and this is what was wanted since we were looking to provide a guideline to their training needs.

It was no surprise that graduate students do not invariably arrive at ANU as information literate, and the skills audit is one step in the process of ensuring that they acquire these skills early in their graduate career by providing some understanding of their skills and providing more focussed advice on the training that was available to them.

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Endnotes

- ¹ The ANU Human Research Ethics Committee gave approval on 17 October 2003.
- ² Most ANU databases provide this capability.

The Australian Library Journal: advice to referees

Published here for the information of potential contributors and referees

Refereeing is a delicate business: we operate on a double-blind system [although it is not always possible to eliminate every hint of an author's identity without rewriting the contribution] so that neither party, author or referee, is normally aware of the others' identity. I say 'normally', because in some cases, and if referees are willing, a productive dialogue which has some of the aspects of mentoring, can be opened thereby. The referee's function is to advise the editor on the article's publishability: the approach should be constructive and aimed at enabling both the author and the editor to arrive at something which is publishable. One of the editor's principal objectives is to encourage and see into print fresh or novice contributors to the literature. It follows that articles sent out for review will inevitably reflect varying degrees of 'ripeness' and competence. It should also be noted that the text which referees will receive is 'raw' in the sense that it has not in any way been edited or prepared for print. *Nor is it the referee's function to do this.* The critical issue is the *content* of the article, in the broadest sense of that word: does it make a reasonable contribution to the literature and to the ongoing debates about the profession? Is the content accessible to the average reader? How, without rewriting the article, might it be improved?

The Journal comes out quarterly, which seems to suggest that about twelve weeks is the *maximum* time which should be taken in the review process: in practice, many referees turn material round in a fortnight, and in the editor's experience as a referee, this results in a certain freshness of approach. An article which is allowed to hang about on one's desktop for too long, or which is read too many times may inevitably induce, through no fault of its own, a certain staleness into the referee's report. Like Roquefort cheese, the referee's report needs to be fresh, tangy and unpasteurised.

John Levett, Editor, ALJ

Web usability testing in a polytechnic library

*Debby R Wegener,
May Goh-Ong Ai Moi,
and Mae Lim Mei Li*

The Temasek Polytechnic Library in Singapore launched its new digital library portal in December 2002. Circumstances precluded usability testing prior to this so it was with some concern that the library web team monitored its use. A few months later it became clear the users were having problems, so a new website was designed. This article deals with the library web team's approach to web usability testing and their belief that such testing is definitely worth every effort.

Manuscript received September 2003

Introduction

WEB USABILITY TESTING. THE EXPERTS SAY WE SHOULD CONDUCT IT REGULARLY. They say we do not need a working website as a paper prototype will work just as well, and they tell us we need only a handful of test subjects and a questionnaire to get useful results. Some experts even give us a choice as to the type of testing, for example, focus groups, surveys, and heuristic evaluation. These experts come from all walks of life, from the library world to the information technology domain, and they all agree on one thing. Web usability testing is absolutely vital to the success of your website. And we agree with them wholeheartedly.

We, the Temasek Polytechnic Library's web team, have recently redesigned our digital library portal (<http://spark.tp.edu.sg>) in conjunction with our first round of usability testing. When our new portal was being developed last year, we felt we knew what the patrons wanted (and needed) so we did not worry too much about the fact that we could not conduct usability tests. We made a concerted effort to put ourselves in our students' shoes and, after getting some valuable feedback from the non-library members of the portal team; we came up with a design.

It soon became obvious after its launch, however, that our patrons were having problems using the portal. We were receiving questions though our online feedback

It was becoming clear that the patrons needed to be involved in the development of 'their' website, but the question was how to do this...

system that made us realise that a number of our patrons could not even find the link for the library catalogue. If they could not find a simple catalogue link, what else were they not able to find? It was becoming clear that the patrons needed to be involved in the development of 'their' website, but the question was how to do this.

In the literature

A select review of the literature pointed to usability testing as the latest way of getting a website up to scratch. Part of a larger process called usability engineering that involves making products easy to use (Battleson, Booth and Weintrop, 2001) this testing process is generally understood to involve users performing a number of tasks on a prototype site. In fact, this is not all there is, as the testing itself can be divided into different methods or techniques.

Hom (Guenther, 2003) and Pace (2003) both refer to a toolbox of various testing methods such as inspections, interviews and questionnaires. Regardless of the method used, the best practice would be to involve the users from the beginning. They are the people who will be using the website so their point of view is essential.

While the heart of usability testing involves ensuring patrons are able to use the website to do what they need to do, it is also important to note that this process is:

- very, very important to the success of a website;
- quick and easy to perform;
- not a one-off task.

The value of usability testing to the success of a library website cannot be over-emphasised. Members of a web/design team can get so involved in the creation of the website that they can find themselves unable to see the wood for the trees (Gore and Hirsh, 2003). It is frighteningly easy to lose sight of the perspective of your patrons. Simply setting some tasks and watching how your patrons approach these tasks on the website can provide some startling insights into the way they work.

Fortunately, getting to know how your patrons work does not necessarily require a lot of time or money. Jakob Nielsen (1998), a well-known usability engineering expert, states that with a bit of experience you would need only five users and two days. Nielsen does maintain, however, that at least fifteen users are needed to uncover all of a design's usability problems (Battleson, Booth and Weintrop, 2001). He also suggests the employment of only five users in order to distribute the budget across a number of small tests instead of using all one's money on only one test.

Making use of a number of smaller tests ties in with the idea that web usability testing should be an iterative process. As the world wide web is constantly growing and developing, a website that never changes will soon lose its appeal, so regular updates are always positive. Running regular usability tests to constantly poll patron opinion is a good way to ensure that these changes are in line with the patrons' needs. Of course, the bonus here is that the more you test, the easier the process will become.

Our methodology

Our first step was to redesign our digital library portal. Using a high content design template provided by Eccher (2002) we adapted it to include information about our library and our services. We wanted to give pride of place to our research gateway,

a single access point to many of our resources, but we did not want this gateway to 'overshadow' all our other resources and services.

We found Johnson (2003) to be particularly helpful with his outline of the mistakes that people make with web design. He presents a very clear picture by showing what not to do. There are many rules and guidelines that can be followed when designing websites, but we found the most important to:

- avoid library jargon at all costs: it is more incomprehensible to your patron than you may realise.
- do not treat your website like a print resource. Patrons will not scroll down through reams of information. They scan web pages, so keep them short and sweet and avoid large chunks of text.
- make sure your design looks good in most screen resolutions.

Once we had the new design prototype, the next step was to decide how best to involve our patrons. Our research suggested the most efficient way would be to observe them performing a number of set tasks on the new site. We already had a fair idea from our online feedback system of the problems our patrons were experiencing with the use of the new portal. We used their feedback as a basis for a list of task and interview questionnaires. (Our intention was that, while we watched, the patrons would work through the tasks, and then answer a number of interview questions. We tested the task and interview questionnaires on two very helpful library staff members, made a few adjustments based on their feedback, and were ready to begin the actual testing.)

We decided to engage fifteen students and fifteen academic and administrative staff as we felt this would give us a good cross-section of our users. We also included fifteen library staff on the basis that because they work constantly with the patrons, they should be able to provide us with some valuable insights. We were extremely fortunate with our selected respondents, as we had no problems persuading them to participate in our testing. Apart from a new and improved portal, all we offered as an incentive was candy, and only a handful of people said they were too busy to spend time with us. We selected our respondents randomly from those students and staff already in the library, as this was the quickest and easiest way for us. We did not expect our results to be too greatly skewed by this as we were, at this stage, mainly interested in those who use the library anyway. We managed to get full-time and part-time students in their first, second and third years of study. We also found staff from all the academic departments of the polytechnic.

We conducted the tests using a laptop with the prototype website on CD-ROM. We also made the existing website available so that, by toggling between the old and new versions, respondents were reminded of what they had been using. We were fortunate in that most of the testing could take place during the term break, so there were not many patrons around for us to disturb.

Looking at the results

The testing was spread out over fifteen days, so as not to get in the way of our other duties, and the average time spent by each respondent was only fifteen minutes. Even though the shortest time taken was a mere five minutes, the results were all extremely useful. In some cases, the results were even surprising. Our biggest surprise came

with our choice of labels. Although we are often told not to use jargon, librarians still have the tendency to do this, and we were no exception. We had chosen the name 'InfoWise', in the belief that our patrons would easily identify the label as belonging to our quarterly library newsletter. During the testing, however, we found this label meant very little to some respondents. This meant that a very useful system for disseminating valuable library information was going to waste.

Another very useful system to publish the latest library announcements had been designed for us during our digital library portal project. We had named this system 'e-Bulletin' and confidently assumed that everyone would realise its purpose. We soon discovered during the testing that this system was being passed over. The respondents either did not know what it was, or thought it was a bulletin board on which to post messages. Even some of our library staff were having problems in this area. Yet another example involving library jargon was 'Ask a librarian'. Many library websites include this link as a place for patrons to contact the library staff to ask questions, complain, or provide feedback. Some respondents indicated familiarity with such a link, for example, using it for the answer to the question of when the library closed during the vacation. As it turned out, however, many of our patrons considered this a place to ask research questions only, so we were missing out on very valuable patron feedback.

An even more obscure example of patrons not knowing what we were talking about involved OPAC. Before the launch of our portal, we had links to 'Web OPAC' on our site to distinguish it from the Windows version of our library catalogue. Our new portal was implemented with a new library system and only one version of OPAC, so we changed the link to read OPAC (instead of Web OPAC). As many of our patrons refer to OPAC as 'oh-pee-ay-cee' instead of 'oh-pack', removing the 'Web' from 'Web OPAC' proved too confusing for them. Other findings revealed that more than half of our student respondents had either never, or hardly ever, used our portal despite being regular library users. One of the reasons given for this was that navigation was too difficult. The students had to be taught how to use the site, and many did not have the time or the patience to seek this kind of help.

We also found it extremely interesting to watch how the respondents navigated the prototype website. Some concentrated on the information on the sides of the screen only. They would move the cursor rapidly from one side of the screen to the other, seemingly not to be able see the images and text in the middle. One respondent even suggested we move all the important information to the sides. Conversely, other respondents seemed unaware of the information on the sides and concentrated instead on the middle of the screen. Two more respondents moved off the first screen with their first click and never returned. Although we were actually testing navigation of the front page, we allowed these respondents to continue as a matter of interest.

While some of the comments received were beyond the scope of the project, for example, translating the site into Chinese, most of the comments revealed exactly where improvements were needed. On the prototype site our font turned out to be too small for some to read easily, our links were too similar in colour to the text, and it was difficult in some instances to see where one link ended and the new one began. In the interests of fitting everything on one page and making all the colours match, we had overlooked these points and actually made the page more difficult to use.

What pleased us the most was that approximately ninety-five per cent of the respondents were excited about the new design and layout. Some of the respondents were extremely appreciative, and went as far as thanking us for the effort we put into the new design. Some even asked us when the new design would be ready, as they could hardly wait to use it.

Our conclusions

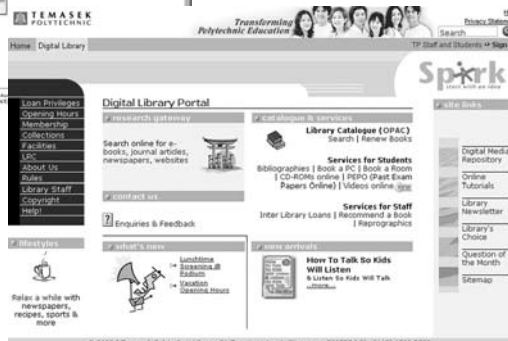
Moving from the prototype design to the finished product did not involve nearly as much work as we had expected. Listening carefully to the feedback and complaints of our patrons helped us a lot in this regard, by giving us a good idea of their needs and expectations. Listening to the experts on web design from outside of the library profession was also helpful. And, of course, web usability testing helped us tie it all together.

We found this type of testing to be the quickest way of getting patron opinion on our website, as one round of testing highlighted points that may have taken us months to discover. And it did not cost us much in terms of time and money either. To put it very simply, if you need to know how people do things — watch them. If you need to know what they think — ask them. Web usability testing lets you do both, with a minimum of fuss.

Before the testing



After the testing



Test questions:

1. Where do you go to renew your books online?
2. How do you find out how many books you may borrow?
3. If you want to find the latest in library news and announcements, where do you go?
4. Can you book a study room using the portal?
5. Where would you go to send an e-mail to complain about how noisy the library is?
6. How would you find out if the library had the book called *Pioneers of Singapore*?
7. What time does the library close during the vacation period?
8. Can you easily find the information you need? (on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being 'very difficult' and 5 being 'very easy')
9. How would you rate the overall design in terms of font, colour and layout? (on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being 'Yuks! very poor' and 5 being 'excellent')

Interview questions:

1. Do you actually use the current library portal? If 'yes', how often, and if 'no' why not?
2. What would you like to see in the Lifestyles section?
3. Is there anything you really like about this website?
4. Do you like the way this site is organised (in terms of headings, categories etc)?

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Research in school librarianship 1991–2000: Australia in an international setting

Laurel A Clyde

One aspect of a wider ongoing longitudinal study of 'Research and researchers in school librarianship' is discussed here. Research articles and conference papers published in English over the ten-year period 1991 to 2000 in the field of school librarianship were analysed to identify the country of the research, the type of publication in which the research was reported, the research methods used, and the aspects of school librarianship that were investigated. Changes and trends in the research at the international level through the decade are described, and compared to the research related to school librarianship in Australia. The methodology draws on studies that looked at aspects of research in the broader field of library and information science generally, in an international context.

Manuscript received October 2003

This is a refereed article

Introduction

PHILIP CALVERT (1990, p20) HAS SAID THAT '...RESEARCH AND ITS OUTWARD manifestation as scholarly literature is a vital ingredient of a healthy profession'. It could also be said that publication of research reports in professional and research journals and proceedings is important if research findings are to be incorporated into professional practice. There are a number of trends and developments that have resulted in an increasing focus on research and research publishing in the field of school librarianship (see, for example, Haycock, 2003; Oberg, 2002),

It is clear that the amount of published research related to school librarianship in Australia is much larger than one might expect based on Australia's population...

two of which will be mentioned here. First, at a time when funding for school libraries has declined in places like California (Bell, 2002) and Canada (CBC News, 2002), the question of whether or not school libraries 'make a difference' becomes very important, and research may provide the necessary evidence. A second trend is an emphasis on evidence-based practice (Todd, 2002). Evidence can be collected through, among other things, an action research approach in the school and from the professional and research literature.

The first report of an international longitudinal study of 'Research and researchers in school librarianship' from 1991 onwards (Clyde, 2002), has revealed a relatively high level of Australian involvement (relative to total population) in research publishing in this field today. This article will provide an overview of the international research project as a whole; briefly discuss the evidence of international trends in research publishing in school librarianship (which have been reported in more detail elsewhere; see Clyde, 2001; Clyde, 2002); and look specifically at research related to Australia. The article will conclude with some discussion of trends (positive and negative) in the light of the findings of the research study, of analyses of the data related to Australia, and of other information that is available.

The research project

The 'Research and researchers in school librarianship' project commenced in 1995/1996 with a retrospective search to locate published reports of research in the field of school librarianship over a period of five years, 1991–1995, for an International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) publication, *Sustaining the vision: a collection of articles and papers on research in school librarianship, in honor of Jean E Lowrie* (Clyde, 1996). Published research articles and conference papers were the basis of the work, rather than research theses or unpublished reports. In part, this reflects the reality that the main indexing and abstracting services in library and information science and education provide better coverage of published articles and papers, and these published documents are easier to obtain than theses or reports. It also reflects a belief that the publication of findings is an important part of any research project.

A definition of a 'research article or paper' was established through another project carried out by a research team in Iceland (Pálsdóttir, *et al* 1997). Based on this work, seven criteria were developed; all of these had to be met before a publication could be considered to be a research article or paper. Research quality was not taken into account, mostly because of the lack of widely-accepted guidelines for research evaluation in our field. (However, research quality in school librarianship later became the focus of a related project; see Clyde, 2003). The boundaries of the research field of 'school librarianship' were established for the 1995/1996 IASL project (Clyde, 1996). The aim was to include all relevant articles and papers that were published in English, regardless of the country of publication.

Research articles and conference papers in the field of school librarianship, published in English, were identified through a number of strategies. Online searches were undertaken of *ERIC*, *LISA*, *Library Literature*, *Social Science Citation Index*, *British Education Index* and other international and national online databases, though the services through which these databases are accessed has changed over the years. Internet searches using public search engines also proved useful. Whenever a potentially relevant article was found in an issue of a journal, all issues of the journal back

to 1991 were scanned. Once established as a source of relevant articles, the new issues of a journal continued to be scanned annually; indeed this process continues to the present. Published conference proceedings were treated in the same way. Published bibliographies (for example, Coleman, 2000; Satija, 1994), and bibliographies or reference lists at the end of relevant articles and papers, have also provided leads to likely articles and papers. Again, if a potentially relevant article was identified in one issue of a journal, then all issues of the journal from 1991 were scanned. Information recorded about each article or conference paper included bibliographic citation, country in or about which the research was undertaken, research method/s used, and the topic of the research. Additional notes were made where necessary, for example to indicate whether the research had been reported previously in another form, or the relationship of the report to a particular project, or any other relevant factors.

The bibliographic database that was created for the 1995–1996 IASL project has since been maintained and updated as the basis for the larger and ongoing ‘Research and researchers in school librarianship’ project. The strategies that were used to build the database to 1996 continue to be employed. A major analysis of the publications 1991–2000 (see Clyde, 2002) provided insights into research trends in this field through the last decade of the twentieth century. It is this analysis of research publications in the field of school librarianship from 1991 to the end of 2000 that forms the basis of the work described in this article.

The aims established for this particular section of the ‘Research and researchers in school librarianship’ project were:

1. To identify the places where research in school librarianship (in the form of research articles and conference papers) is reported.
2. To identify any changes over the decade in the type of publication in which the results of research in the field of school librarianship are reported.
3. To identify trends in the quantity of research reported in research articles and published conference papers in the field of school librarianship.
4. To identify the countries in which research is being undertaken and published or about which research is being undertaken and published, in the field of school librarianship.
5. To identify the research methodologies that are being used by researchers in the field of school librarianship and to investigate any changes over time.
6. To identify the topics that are being studied by researchers in the field of school librarianship and to investigate any changes over time.

Some will be covered in more detail than others. In addition, this article looks at aspects of the Australian contribution to research in school librarianship internationally. These Australian analyses were suggested both by the results of the international analyses, and by comments from researchers at the 2001 IASL conference in Auckland, New Zealand, where the initial results of the international study were presented.

A theoretical and methodological basis for the international longitudinal analysis of published research in the field of school librarianship was provided by the Finnish researchers Järvelin and Vakkari (1990; 1993). Through two studies, they have established widely-accepted (Yontar & Yalvaç, 2000, p41) techniques for studying

research output in library and information science (in the form of journal articles), in such a way that the research output can be compared over time and across national boundaries. Järvelin and Vakkari used their own methodology to study international research in library and information science generally, through articles in thirty-seven core journals (Järvelin & Vakkari, 1990). They subsequently updated this work through a longitudinal comparative study (Järvelin & Vakkari, 1993). Researchers who have used their methodology as the basis for national studies include Cano and Rey (1993) in Spain; Pálsdóttir *et al.* (1994; 1997) and Guðbrandsdóttir *et al.* (2001) in Iceland; Rochester (1995) in Australia; Layzell Ward (1997) in the United Kingdom; and Yontar (1995) in Turkey. Rochester and Vakkari (1998) compared these and other country studies that used the Järvelin and Vakkari methodology, to investigate national differences and trends. The ‘Research and researchers in school librarianship’ project was the first to use the Järvelin and Vakkari methodology in a specific area of library and information science, namely school librarianship.

Reporting research in school librarianship 1991–2000

Under this heading, the findings related to the first four aims of the longitudinal study of research in the field of school librarianship will be covered together: trends related to the quantity of published research in school librarianship; the countries about which research is undertaken; the places where research in the field of school librarianship (in the form of research articles and papers) is reported; and any changes over time. Throughout, the Australian contribution will be discussed in relation to all of these aims.

Quantity of research publishing

A total of 484 research articles and papers (published in English) were found for the decade (see Table 1). Of those, 389 were research articles and 95 were research-based conference papers. The quantity of research articles and papers being published increased through the decade: 170 were published in the first five-year period 1991 to 1995 and 314 in the period from 1996 to 2000 (an increase of more than 100 per cent on the first five years). It should be noted that the project investigated research publishing; this may or may not reflect the amount of research undertaken. In fact, there are indications that more opportunities for research publishing emerged through the decade — for example, research forums with published proceedings, and regular research columns in professional journals. This trend will be referred to again below.

Table 1: Research articles and papers in school librarianship, 1991–2000

	1991–1995	1996–2000	Total numbers: 1991–2000
Research articles	154	235	389
Research papers	16	79	95
Totals	170	314	484

Table 2 : Australian and international research publishing in school librarianship 1991–2000*

	Australia	Rest of the world	Total numbers: 1991–2000
Research articles	75 (19.28%)	314 (80.72%)	389 (100%)
Research papers	25 (26.3%)	70 (73.68%)	95 (100%)
Totals	100 (20.66%)	384 (79.34%)	484 (100%)

* In this table, the Australian totals include 27 research articles and papers with an international focus but by authors of Australian studies and with an Australian component (however small).

Table 2 shows the contribution of Australia. It includes articles and papers that report on research related to Australia (eighty-three in total) plus twenty-seven articles and papers by the authors in the Australian group, that report on international research projects (almost always with reference to Australia). The international projects fit into two categories: those that investigated particular phenomenon in more than one country; and those that investigate an international phenomenon (such as the internet). As can be seen, Australian work accounts for around one fifth (20.66 per cent) of all research articles and papers published in English through the decade. This contribution includes a contribution to twenty-seven (or 69.2 per cent) of the total of thirty-nine research articles and papers with an international focus (see Table 3). If the research with an international focus is omitted from Australia’s total, then the contribution is eighty-three articles and papers, or 17.1 per cent of the total for the decade.

Geographical characteristics of the research

Table 3 gives an indication of the countries about which most research has been published. The ‘country of origin’ was recorded in this way for the ‘Research and researchers in school librarianship’ project because of the unsatisfactory nature of other possible classifications. For example, Hawkins (2001) in his study of electronic journals classified articles by ‘country of origin’ of the author (from the address or affiliation given on the article, or failing that, using other strategies to find this information). However, apart from the difficulty of establishing the affiliations of large numbers of authors, this was considered an unsatisfactory approach for the present longitudinal study because authors’ affiliations change; some authors write while temporarily affiliated with an institution in another country; and some work in more than one country. There were also problems associated with using classifications such as country of citizenship, country of birth, or IASLs ‘country of residence’ classification (defined as the main country in which a member currently works). The Järvelin and Vakkari classifications were little help for this aspect of the project. It was decided (after a number of trials) to use the country about which the article or paper was written as the basis of the classification, since this could be readily established from the text of the article or paper, and it would at least give an indication of those places about which the research record was richest.

Table 3: Research articles and papers 1991–2000, by country studied

Country	Total number, 1991–2000
USA	201 (41.5%)
Australia	83 (17.1%)
Canada	42 (8.7%)
International	39 (8.1%)
United Kingdom	30 (6.2%)
South Africa	17 (3.5%)
Israel	12 (2.5%)
New Zealand	9 (1.9%)
Nigeria	9 (1.9%)
Sweden	6 (1.2%)
Iceland	5
Iran	4
Botswana	3
Fiji	3
Ghana	2
Jamaica	2
Malaysia	2
Denmark	1
Finland	1
France	1
Hong Kong	1
Japan	1
Kenya	1
Korea	1
Latvia	1
Lithuania	1
Namibia	1
The Netherlands	1
Norway	1
Papua New Guinea	1
Sierra Leone	1
Taiwan	1
Totals	484 (100%)

Note: Percentages have been given only for the ten countries that were the focus of the most research. After these ten countries, the numbers of articles or papers are very small and percentages become almost meaningless.

The only country about which more was published than Australia was the United States of America, with more than fourteen times Australia's population. Other countries which might have been expected to make a large contribution include the United Kingdom, Canada, India, South Africa, and Nigeria, all of which have a tradition of research publishing in English and a number of library schools that offer research degrees — and all of which have a larger population than Australia. While Table 3 shows that Canada, the United Kingdom and South Africa follow Australia, the total number of research articles and papers related to Canada was forty-two (just under

half that of Australia), and the other countries scored lower. Although the United Kingdom, South Africa and Nigeria were in the ‘top ten’ (see Table 3), no research articles or papers were found related to school librarianship in India, despite the number of Indian library and information science journals (such as the *Herald of Library Science*) that were scanned for the decade. While it may seem surprising that only 6.2 per cent of the research articles and papers came from the United Kingdom, an explanation may lie in the way in which British research in library and information science has largely been funded: organisations such as the British Library’s Research and Development Department and later Re:source have expected research reports in the form of monographs rather than research articles and papers (Clyde, 2002, p61). There is, however, evidence (from the entries in the database after 2000) that this situation is changing.

Publications where the research is reported

The two types of research publication that were the basis of the ‘Research and researchers in school librarianship’ project, research articles and research-based conference papers, are indicated in Tables 1 and 2 above, and will be discussed further here. Not only did research publishing in the field of school librarianship increase through the decade 1991 to 2000, but publishing of both research articles and research papers also increased. The Australian contribution was significant in both areas.

The research articles were published in fifty-five different journals through the decade. However, nineteen of those journals published only one research article related to school librarianship in the ten-year period, while a further eight journals published only two relevant articles. This means that a considerable number of the research articles in school librarianship are scattered across a relatively large number of journals, some of which are not very well known outside the country or region where they are published and some of which are hard to find except in major research collections. It can therefore be difficult for people to get an overview of the published research in school librarianship at the international level.

Table 4: The ‘Top Fifteen’ journals in which research articles in school librarianship were published (international) n=389

Journal	Number of articles 1991–2000	% of articles 1991–2000	Listed in ISI 2002?*
1. <i>School Library Media Quarterly / School Library Media Research</i>	79	20.3%	no
2. <i>School Libraries Worldwide</i> **	49	12.6%	no
3. <i>Scan</i>	20	5.1%	no
4. <i>Access</i>	18	4.6%	no
5. <i>School Library Journal</i>	18	4.6%	no
6. <i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science JASIS</i> ***	15	3.8%	yes
7. <i>Emergency Librarian / Teacher Librarian</i> ****	14	3.6%	no
8. <i>Journal of Youth Services in Libraries</i>	14	3.6%	no

9. <i>Education Libraries Journal</i>	13	3.3%	no
10. <i>Library and Information Science Research LISR</i>	12	3.1%	yes
11. <i>Knowledge Quest</i>	10	2.6%	no
12. <i>Orana</i>	9	2.3%	no
13. <i>South African Journal of Library and Information Science</i>	9	2.3%	no
14. <i>Library Trends</i>	7	1.8%	yes
15. <i>School Libraries in Canada</i>	7	1.8%	no

* Institute of Scientific Information (ISI) Master Journal List, <http://www.isinet.com/> (April 2002).

** Commenced publication in 1996

*** Since 2001, the *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, JASIST.

**** Name of journal changed from *Emergency Librarian* to *Teacher Librarian* in 1998.

On the other hand, as Table 4 shows, just two journals have been the major focus for research publishing in school librarianship through the decade: IASI's *School Libraries Worldwide* (established in 1996); and the American Association of School Librarians' journal *School Library Media Research* (formerly *School Library Media Quarterly*). Together, these two journals published 32.9 per cent of all the research articles through the decade. However, neither journal is currently listed in the ISI (Institute for Scientific Information) Master Journal List, a list widely used by universities (despite problems that have been identified with it; see, for example, Moed, 2002) as an indicator of the significance or importance of a journal. Anecdotal evidence (collected at the 2003 IASL conference) suggests that this may discourage some authors from offering research articles to these journals, and thus contribute to the 'scatter' of the research literature of school librarianship.

In terms of published research articles related to Australia, the same pattern of dominance by two journals emerges. Almost half (48.4 per cent) of the research articles were published in *Access* and *Scan*. However, in contrast to the international setting as a whole, neither of these two journals is predominantly a research journal, though both publish some research articles aimed at the practitioners. Ross Todd edits a regular 'Research column' for *Scan*, while James Henri edits the regular 'Research window' for *Access*. The only other country where professional journals in the field of school librarianship provide for regular ongoing research publishing in this way is the United States, where, for example, *Knowledge Quest* publishes research articles (usually less than two full pages each) aimed at practitioners. It is probable that without the regular research columns in *Access* and *Scan* (with their experienced editors) Australian researchers in the field of school librarianship would have fewer opportunities for publishing their work and there would be less editorial activity aimed at encouraging research publication in this field in Australia.

Six of the fifteen journals in which the research with an Australian focus was published, were or are Australian (*Access*, *Scan*, *Orana*, *Australian Library Review*, *Australasian Public Libraries and Information Services*, and *Australian Library Journal*). These six journals together published 45 of the 64 articles (70.3 per cent). While this has a positive effect of making the results of Australian research available to practitioners in Australia, it means that the results of Australian research are much less well-known overseas. In addition, these journals are not necessarily the first place where researchers (Australian or international) would go when carrying out

a research review. Only three of the fifteen journals were on the ISI Master Journal List at the time of writing (see Table 5) and these three together published only five of the 64 articles (7.8 per cent).

Table 5: Journals in which research articles related to Australia were published n=64

Journal	Number of articles 1991–2000	per centage of articles 1991–2000	Listed in ISI?*
1. <i>Access</i>	18	28.1%	no
2. <i>Scan</i>	13	20.3%	no
3. <i>Orana</i>	7	10.9%	no
4. <i>School Library Media Quarterly / School Library Media Research</i>	5	7.8%	no
5. <i>School Libraries Worldwide</i>	3	4.7%	no
6. <i>Australian Library Review</i>	3	4.7%	no
7. <i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science JASIS **</i>	2	3.1%	yes
8. <i>Emergency Librarian / Teacher Librarian ***</i>	2	3.1%	no
9. <i>Library and Information Science Research LISR</i>	2	3.1%	yes
10. <i>Education for Information</i>	2	3.1%	no
11. <i>Australasian Public Libraries and Information Services</i>	2	3.1%	no
12. <i>Australian Library Journal</i>	2	3.1%	no
13. <i>The School Librarian</i>	1	1.6%	no
14. <i>The Electronic Library</i>	1	1.6%	yes
15. <i>Microcomputers for Information Management</i>	1	1.6%	no

* Institute of Scientific Information (ISI) Master Journal List, <http://www.isinet.com/> (April 2002).

** Since 2001, the *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, JASIST*.

*** Name of journal changed from *Emergency Librarian* to *Teacher Librarian* in 1998.

Trends that were evident in the publication of research articles are also apparent in the research-based conference papers. First of all, the total number of papers published internationally increased through the decade, from seventeen for the first lustrum 1991–1995, to seventy-nine in the years 1996–2000. To a large extent, this increase can be accounted for by the establishment of the international research forums held in conjunction with each annual conference of IASL since 1997. If the sixty-five papers presented at the IASL research forums to 2000 are removed from the total number of papers for 1996 to 2000, then the remaining number of fourteen papers is actually a little lower than the seventeen published from 1991 to 1995. Across the decade, the remaining research papers were found in the published proceedings of four annual conferences (see Table 6). Two of the four sets of published proceedings are Australian — those of the Australian School Library Association (ASLA) and those of the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA). Given this, it is not surprising to find that nineteen of the ninety-six research papers published through the decade (19.8 per cent) related to Australia, a proportion very close to that for research articles (19.28 per cent). As was the case with the articles, it is probable

that Australian professional publishing has something to do with this. Whereas the proceedings of the major Australian conferences are published in book form, this has not been the case with, for instance, the conferences of AASL, the Association for Teacher Librarianship in Canada (ATLC), or the School Library Association (SLA) in the United Kingdom.

Table 6: Published conference papers in English in the field of school librarianship 1991–2000

Conference	Number (%) of papers related to Australia	Number (%) of papers for rest of the world	Total number (%) of papers
1. International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) Conferences	10 (52.6%)	63 (81.8%)	73 (76.04%)
2. International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Schools Section	3 (15.8%)	9 (11.7%)	12 (12.5%)
3. Australian School Library Association (ASLA)	3 (15.8%)	3 (3.9%)	6 (6.2%)
4. Online Information Conferences, London	–	2 (6.2%)	2 (2.08%)
5. Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA)	3 (15.8%)	–	3 (3.12%)
Totals	19 (100%)	77 (100%)	96 (100%)

The researchers

Studying the researchers has always been one of the aims of the ongoing longitudinal study, but it is only now (as this article is being written) that work is beginning on this aspect of the project. While still in the very early stages, this work does shed some light on research in school librarianship in Australia. Consequently, some data related to the Australian researchers will be discussed briefly here, though it is not possible to make international comparisons at this stage.

Table 7: Authors of articles/papers related to Australia, 1991–2000
— number of articles/papers per author*

Authors	Number of authors	% of authors
Authors with one published article/paper	40	65.5%
Authors with two published articles/papers	12	19.67%
Authors with three published articles/papers	–	–
Authors with four published articles/papers	2	3.27%
Authors with five published articles/papers	1	1.64%
Authors with more than five published articles/papers	6	9.84%
Total	61	100%

* includes articles/papers on which the person was co-author

Table 7 shows that some sixty-five per cent of the articles and papers related to Australia were written by an author who published just one research article through the decade — while the mean number of articles/papers produced by each author (alone or as co-author) was 2.23, the mode was one. Many of these authors of just one research article/paper were publishing a report of a project that was part of a degree program at an Australian university, and given the nature of the journals that

usually published these reports (the professional journals *Access* and *Scan*), the articles were likely to be aimed at school library practitioners.

At the other end of the scale, the six authors who published more than five research articles or papers through the decade in the field of school librarianship, between them made fifty-three contributions to published articles/papers. The most prolific author contributed to eighteen articles/papers as first, second or third author. This means that while most research articles or papers are published by people who will publish only one research article or paper over an extended period, the number of core researchers (who have made substantial contributions to the Australian research literature over the decade) is very small. Interestingly, it is the people who make the largest contribution to the Australian research literature who are also the most likely to be involved in international projects, so their influence is greater than the Australian figures alone might suggest. Further details will be provided in a forthcoming article based on this aspect of the ‘Research and researchers in school librarianship’ project.

Table 8: Authors of articles/papers related to Australia 1991–2000
— number of authors per article/paper

Articles/papers	Number of articles/papers	% of articles/papers
Articles/papers with one author	65	65%
Articles/papers with two authors	27	27%
Articles/papers with three authors	7	7%
Articles/papers with four authors	1	1%
Total	100	100%

Table 8 shows that most of the one hundred published articles or papers related to school librarianship through the decade had just one author (sixty-eight per cent). No article or paper had more than four authors (and only one had four authors). Given that multiple authorships have been used as an indication of the availability of large-scale research grants in a particular field (Pálsdóttir *et al* 1997), these figures suggest that research in the field of school librarianship in Australia is largely carried out by individuals or very small groups, with access to a small funding base. A scan of the database for this project confirms that large-scale national research in the field of school librarianship is very rare.

Research methods used in school librarianship

The fifth aim that guided the longitudinal study of research in school librarianship from 1991 to 2000 was ‘to identify the research methodologies that are being used by researchers in the field of school librarianship and to investigate any changes over time’. In order to do this, the classification of research strategies developed by Järvelin and Vakkari (1990) was used. This provides the basis for Table 9, which shows the *primary* methodologies used for research in school librarianship over the decade (some projects used a number of methods; they are classified by the primary or main method used) and compares methodologies used in research related to Australian school librarianship with the research in the international setting. Järvelin and Vakkari also provide a classification for data collection methods; although this was used to analyse the research in school librarianship, lack of space precludes reporting on this aspect here.

Throughout the decade, the research method most commonly used as the main method for projects was the survey (39.1 per cent of the articles and papers, though it declined in popularity from 45.9 per cent in 1991–1995 to 35.3 per cent in 1996–2000) (Clyde, 2002, p62). There is nothing inherently wrong with survey research; indeed it is sometimes the best method for dealing with a particular research problem. On the other hand, over-reliance on one research approach is unhealthy for the profession for two main reasons: one methodology cannot be used to explore all aspects of any research problem; and some problems may never be addressed simply because the survey method could not be used to address them. As the use of the survey method declined, the use of qualitative methods increased. In 1991 only five per cent of the published research was based on qualitative methods; by 1995 this had increased to 33.3 per cent and it remained high through the rest of the decade (Clyde, 2002, p62). Under the broad heading of ‘qualitative methods’ were, for example, data collection methods such as focus groups, observation, unstructured interviews, and analysis of the written work of school students. Other research methods used through the decade included case studies and action research, experimental research, content analysis, and literature reviews, though none was nearly as popular as surveys and qualitative methods. On the other hand, several methods in the Järvelin and Vakkari classification were not used at all (as the primary method in a research report) through the ten years.

Table 9: Research methods used in school librarianship research 1991–2000 (Classification of Järvelin and Vakkari)

Research strategy	Number (%) of Australian articles/papers	Number (%) of articles/papers about the rest of the world	Total number (%) of articles/papers
Empirical research strategy	73 (87.9%)	325 (81.04%)	398 (82.3%)
- Historical method	–	13(3.2%)	13 (2.7%)
- Survey method	32 (38.5%)	157 (39.2%)	189 (39.1%)
- Qualitative method	14 (16.9%)	81 (20.2%)	95 (19.6%)
- Evaluation method	–	2 (0.5%)	2 (0.4%)
- Case / action research	15 (18.1%)	29 (7.2%)	44 (9.1%)
- Content or protocol analysis	5 (6.02%)	22 (5.5%)	27 (5.6%)
- Citation analysis	–	–	–
- Other bibliometric method	–	–	–
- Secondary analysis	–	–	–
- Experiment	7 (8.4%)	21 (5.2%)	28 (5.8%)
- Other empirical method	–	–	–
Conceptual research strategy	–	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)
- Verbal argumentation, criticism	–	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)
- Concept analysis	–	–	–
Mathematical or logical method	–	–	–
System / software analysis / design	–	7 (1.7%)	7(1.4%)
Literature review	3 (3.6%)	19 (4.7%)	22 (4.5%)
Discussion paper	–	–	–
Bibliographic method	–	–	–
Other method	4 (4.8%)	37 (9.2%)	41 (8.5%)
Not applicable, no method	3 (3.6%)	11 (2.7%)	14 (2.9%)
Totals	83 (100%)	401 (100%)	484 (100%)

Note: Järvelin and Vakkari’s research strategies classification as presented in Rochester & Vakkari, 1998.

Table 9 shows that the methods used in the published research related to Australia, generally reflect those used internationally. For example, we see that the survey method was used as the primary method in 38.5 per cent of the research related to Australia and 39.1 per cent of the research internationally; qualitative methods feature as the primary method in 16.9 per cent of the published research related to Australia and 19.6 per cent of the published research internationally. The methodology where the greatest difference is apparent is ‘case/action research’, used as the primary method in 18.1 per cent of the published research related to Australia but in only 9.1 per cent internationally. No other difference was statistically significant.

Research topics in school librarianship

The sixth aim that guided the longitudinal study of research in school librarianship from 1991 to 2000 was to ‘identify the topics that are being studied by researchers in the field of school librarianship and to investigate any changes over time’. In order to do this, the classification of research topics developed by Järvelin and Vakkari (1990) was used. This provides the basis for Table 10, which shows the broad topics that were the focus for research in school librarianship through the decade, and compares the topics studied in the research related to Australian school librarianship with research in the international setting.

The research topics classification developed by Järvelin and Vakkari is based on an hierarchical structure of categories and sub-categories that cover the broad field of library and information science. Järvelin and Vakkari used the full classification in their own studies (1990; 1993), as have others, including Cano and Rey (1993), who used it, with adaptations for the local setting, in their Spanish study. However, some researchers have used only the main topics of the Järvelin and Vakkari classification, either because of the small number of research publications being analysed (for example, Pálsdóttir *et al.*, 1997) or for brevity in reporting (for example, Yontar & Yalvaç, 2000). Although the research articles and papers in school librarianship internationally were analysed initially for the ‘Research and researchers in school librarianship’ project using the full classification, the results are reported here using the main topics, for the sake of brevity and because of the comparatively small number (83) of articles and papers in the Australian group.

It is clear from Table 10 that Järvelin and Vakkari’s research topics classification is not a particularly ‘good fit’ for the published research in school librarianship in the period under study. Six topics were added to the classification to accommodate important areas of research in school librarianship internationally, while nine per cent of all research articles and papers are classified under ‘Other aspects of LIS’. It is tempting to say that school libraries are significantly different from other kinds of libraries; however, it may be just that the research priorities in school librarianship are different.

In their international study of research in library and information science in general, Järvelin and Vakkari (1990) found that the most popular areas of research were information storage and retrieval (29.2 per cent) and library and information service activities (27.2 per cent). In the international longitudinal study of ‘Research and researchers in school librarianship’ (Clyde, 2002), the most popular area of research was information skills and information literacy (23.6 per cent over the decade). This was one of the topics added to the classification in the school librarianship study.

Järvelin and Vakkari include ‘user education’ in their broad category of ‘library and information service activities’, and while some of the school librarianship research could be classified there, the information skills/literacy research that is being undertaken in the field of school librarianship goes well beyond library (and information) user education. It also goes beyond the ‘information seeking behaviour’ that is part of the broad ‘information seeking’ category. Internationally, the emphasis on information skills and information literacy research within school librarianship, increased through the decade too from fifteen per cent of the total in 1991 to 24.1 per cent in 2000 and reaching a high of 27.9 per cent in 1998 (Clyde, 2002, p66).

Table 10: Research topics in school librarianship 1991–2000.
(Classification of Järvelin and Vakkari)

Research topic	Number (%) of Australian articles/papers	Number (%) of articles/papers about the rest of the world	Total number (%) of articles/papers
The profession	4 (4.8%)	45 (11.2%)	49 (10.1%)
Library history	–	45(1.2%)	5 (1%)
Publishing	–	–	–
Education in LIS	1 (1.2%)	21 (5.2%)	22(4.5%)
Methodology	–	–	–
Analysis of LIS	2 (2.4%)	2 (0.5%)	4 (0.8%)
Library & information service activities	11 (13.2%)	35 (8.7%)	46 (9.5%)
Information storage and retrieval	–	6 (1.5%)	6 (1.2%)
Information seeking	8 (9.6%)	34 (8.5%)	42 (8.6%)
Scientific & professional communication	1 (1.2%)	–	1 (0.2%)
Other Aspects of LIS	5 (6%)	39 (9.7%)	44 (9%)
Other Studies	–	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)
Added: National survey	–	17 (4.2%)	17 (3.5%)
Added: Information skills/literacy	27 (32.5%)	87 (21.7%)	114 (23.6%)
Added: Principal support	3 (3.6%)	14 (3.5%)	17 (3.5%)
Added: Information technology	12 (14.5%)	40 (9.9%)	52 (10.7%)
Added: Censorship	2 (2.4%)	12 (2.9%)	14 (2.9%)
Added: Reading & reading promotion	7 (8.4%)	43 (10.7%)	50 (10.3%)
Totals	83 (100%)	401 (100%)	484 (100%)

Table 10 shows some similarities in the topics investigated in research related to school librarianship in Australia and the international picture. There is the same emphasis on research dealing with information skills and information literacy; in fact, this is even more marked in relation to Australia, where 32.5 per cent of the published research through the decade focused on this topic. There is also evidence of proportionally more Australian than international research on ‘library and information service activities’, the category that includes user education and library orientation. Proportionally more Australian research than international was devoted to information technology in school libraries, though the difference is nowhere near as great as the difference that emerged for information skills/literacy studies. On

the other hand, there were two topics about which there were comparatively fewer Australian studies. Only 4.8 per cent of Australian published research looked at 'the profession' as against 10.1 per cent when all published research is taken into consideration. Many of the articles or papers classified here dealt with 'the role of the teacher librarian', something that does not seem to have preoccupied those doing research in Australia to the same extent that it has in some other countries. Finally, one of the added categories, 'National surveys', had no representative from Australia though overall 3.5 per cent of published articles and papers were classified here. The category of 'National surveys' was created to cover national surveys of school libraries, usually undertaken for planning purposes, that stand out from other studies because of their wide-ranging approach and their methodology. In the decade 1991 to 2000, such studies were undertaken in a number of developing countries in particular, to establish a base line against which progress might be measured.

Discussion and conclusions

The classifications developed by Järvelin and Vakkari (1990) proved useful as a tool for analysing research trends and research methodologies employed in school librarianship over time and across national boundaries in the 'Research and researchers in school librarianship' project as a whole. The classifications were less helpful for the analysis of research topics, though they did serve to highlight the different topics that concern researchers in school librarianship as against research in library and information science as a whole. The application of these widely-accepted classifications to research in school librarianship provided a means for considering research in school librarianship in a wider context. The classifications (including the amended topics classification) also proved useful as a basis for comparing published research related to school librarianship in Australia with that in the rest of the world.

The international longitudinal study of research in school librarianship (Clyde, 2002) shows that the amount of published research (in the form of journal articles and conference papers) increased by more than one hundred percent over the decade 1991 to 2000, an increase that was reflected in the research related to Australian school librarianship. However, it would be wrong to conclude that this represents a proportional increase in the amount of research actually carried out through the period. A parallel analysis (in progress as this article is being written) of the authors of the published research suggests that there are now both more authors publishing the results of school librarianship research and the more prolific of those authors are publishing more. Again, though, it would be wrong to conclude that this represents a proportional increase in the amount of research being undertaken by each author. What we are seeing here is evidence of an increase in research publishing; further analyses would be needed to confirm that these results represent more research actually being undertaken. There were certainly more opportunities for publishing the results of research in the field of school librarianship in 2000 than in 1991, in Australia and internationally. The decade saw the founding of IASIS's research journal *School Libraries Worldwide* in 1996; the establishment in 1997 of the international research forums as a part of IASIS's annual conferences; the re-branding of AASIS's *School Library Media Quarterly* as an electronic journal called *School Library Media Research*; and the creation of regular research columns in professional journals such as *Scan* and *Knowledge Quest*. The publishing opportunities for school librarianship research

increased still further in Australia in 2003, with the establishment, by the School Library Association of Victoria (SLAV), of a new journal called *Synergy*. Among other things, *Synergy* will 'contain both local and overseas reports on current research in the field of school librarianship' (La Marca, 2003, p2).

It is clear that the amount of published research related to school librarianship in Australia is much larger than one might expect based on Australia's population. For example, Australia, with a total population of less than 20 million in 2003, in comparison with more than 290 million in the United States, is nevertheless the subject of eighty-three research articles and papers through the decade, as against 201 for the United States — in other words, the Australian coverage is approximately 41 per cent of that of the United States for a population of around seven per cent of that of the United States. Canada, with a population of more than 32 million in 2003, ranks below Australia in terms of school librarianship research reporting, as does the United Kingdom (with almost double the population of Canada). This supports Alan Bundy's (2003, p6) assertion that '...in the provision of school libraries and recognition of the pedagogical and resource role of teacher librarians Australia punches above its weight.' This is despite what Bundy describes as 'manifest needs and short-sighted policy, funding and staffing constraints of recent years' that have affected school libraries in Australia.

The analyses of published research articles and papers related to school librarianship in Australia indicate that the research methodologies employed closely reflect international trends. As in overseas countries, there has been a trend towards the use of qualitative methodologies that provide an in-depth picture of the phenomena under study, though as elsewhere, empirical methods, including surveys and experimental research, remain popular. In terms of research topics, the Australian scene differs a little from the worldwide setting in that research related to school librarianship in Australia is more often focused on information literacy and information skills, and is generally characterised by a focus on the users of school libraries, though a wide range of topics has been addressed through the decade.

Impressive though Australia's contribution is, in comparison with other and larger countries, the analyses reported above (under the heading 'The researchers' and elsewhere) suggest that there are nevertheless problems. First, the majority of the research articles and papers related to school librarianship in Australia are written by people who wrote (or co-authored) only one article or paper through the decade. While carrying out a single research project to publication may give the people involved a good idea of the research process, and help them to evaluate the results of other research, it does not create a strong base of researchers who address topics in school librarianship on an ongoing basis. Secondly, a very small group of researchers formed the core of 'active researchers' through the decade. Only six published more than five research articles or papers related to school librarianship in Australia from 1991 to 2000. Of those six, three have now left Australia for university positions in other countries, and of the remaining three, at least two are known to have been approached by institutions overseas. Thirdly, while much of the research related to Australia is published in Australian professional journals to which Australian practitioners have access, comparatively little appears in international journals or conference proceedings and very little in journals that are on the ISI Master Journal

List. While the latter is not necessarily a guarantee of quality (Clyde, 2003), the ISI listing does mean that the journals listed are generally respected and widely circulated internationally. Australian research would have a greater impact at the international level if published in these journals.

This article has reported on one aspect of the wider longitudinal study of 'Research and researchers in school librarianship', and compared the findings of the international research with the findings related to research in school librarianship in one country, Australia. It has provided a view of trends in research in the field of school librarianship through a decade, with a focus on where the research is published, the topics that are researched, and the methods used by researchers, both internationally and related to Australia. The use of hitherto unpublished data about the researchers sheds further light on the Australian research scene. The next stage of the project is to investigate the characteristics of the researchers themselves, their perceptions of the factors that either promote or inhibit the conduct of research in school librarianship, and their ideas about research quality. Meanwhile a related small-scale project on research quality will continue in parallel with the other work, and draw on the database established for the 'Research and researchers in school librarianship' project (Clyde, 2003). This database will be maintained and developed as the basis for a fifteen-year longitudinal study in 2005/2006 and perhaps other studies.

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A book in search of readers?

Andersen, Elaine; Gosling, Mary and Mortimer, Mary *Learn basic library skills*. Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield/DocMatrix, 2002. 232p US\$34.95 soft ISBN 0810844982

THIS VOLUME, WRITTEN BY AUSTRALIAN LIBRARIANS, DESCRIBES THE SKILLS NEEDED by anyone beginning work in a library or other information agency, whether at a professional or para-professional level. The book is designed for use by the individual or in a formal course of study. Each chapter deals with a section of basic library work and the knowledge and skills needed to perform it well, using the premise that '...the more one understands the tasks and procedures and the reasons for doing them, the more competently one will be able to carry them out'. Where standard rules apply, such as filing rules, they are included in the text. Obviously, procedures vary from library to library, and the authors have outlined common approaches. There are exercises and quizzes for improving skills, with answers provided.

Chapters include Basic library skills, with a glossary of library terms; Bibliographic records; Circulation systems; Collection maintenance; Other bibliographic tools and the Catalog (note: The North American edition was reviewed). The exercises for each section are comprehensive, and, by working through them, anyone unfamiliar with library procedures and cataloguing work will gain an insight into the skills required to assist in a library or other information agency. As well as the explanations provided in each chapter for the language pertinent to that subject, a comprehensive glossary is provided at the back of the book.

Overall, this is a comprehensive addition to the Library Basic Series and one that could prove useful for staff starting in a library or information agency environment.

Sally C Anderson, NSW Agriculture

...could prove useful...

That critical nexus

Anderson, Charles R *Puzzles and essays from 'The exchange': tricky reference questions*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Information Press, 2003. 215p US\$14.95 soft ISBN 0789017628

'THE EXCHANGE' WAS A COLUMN WHICH RAN IN THE JOURNAL *RQ* (later *RUSQ*), the journal of the Reference and User Services Division of the American Library Association. It acted as a clearing house, the idea being that the collected brain power of America's reference librarians might be able to answer tricky enquiries that could not be answered locally. Charles Anderson edited the column from 1984 to 1999. This book gives all the 345 questions tackled by 'The exchange', which in itself is hugely interesting; more than that, it also gives Anderson's thoughts on the job of reference librarian, which he sees as 'one of the most challenging and yet rewarding occupations possible'. It is challenging because there is a limit to the number of questions a person can be bombarded with — and Anderson suggests that the maximum

...reference work has been changed dramatically by new technology; there are now many more ways of getting a wrong answer...

duration on a reference desk should be fifty per cent of a working day — yet rewarding, particularly when good work practices result in a happy enquirer.

Of course, reference work has been changed dramatically by new technology; there are now many more ways of getting a wrong answer. But the basic task remains the same: to be what Anderson calls ‘the nexus between questions and answers’. Reference work, he says, is an existential art. Sometimes an answer will be found by methodical searching, but at other times serendipity, luck, call it what you will, plays its part. There are basic commandments which must not be neglected, such as making sure you know what the question is. It may be, too, that the librarian’s role is moving towards teaching users to find their own answers by providing tips for better web searching. I do not accept Anderson’s fear that too many librarians cling to old ways of doing things. Younger librarians are incredibly responsive to new search techniques, and are open to initiatives such as 24/7 reference services (not discussed here). What may be on the way out, though, which is regrettable, is the sort of book-immersed librarian who could tell you the origin of the Tooth Fairy, or the song ‘Kum Ba Yah’, or the phrase ‘the luck of the Irish’ (three of the unanswered questions here), with a personally-devised stack of dog-eared catalogue cards.

Being involved with ‘The exchange’ has suggested to the author that there may be unanswered questions, but they need not be unanswered for all time. There is a section at the end of the book which lists all 182 enquiries which the collective brain of America’s reference librarians has been unable to answer — without moving from my terminal I found answers to four of them, which Anderson has confirmed are probably correct. Others seem equally possible to answer. Why not have a go yourself? Try these: where did crepe paper originate? From which poem does this line come: ‘Grandpa has a wooden leg/ He uses tacks for garters’? And who said ‘Life is a chemical phenomenon’?

John MacRitchie, Manly Library

Challenging an urban myth

Barclay, Donald A *Teaching and marketing electronic information literacy programs. How-To-Do-It Manuals for Librarians*, 125. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2003. 250p +CD-ROM US\$59.95 soft ISBN 1555704700 (available from DA Information Services)

...many computer
‘experts’ lack basic
information literacy
abilities...

DURING THE LAST DECADE COMPUTERS HAVE GAINED SUCH PROMINENCE IN EDUCATION circles that the increasing tendency to equate ‘computer skills’ with ‘information literacy’ has been widely accepted. However, trained library personnel are well aware that many computer ‘experts’ lack basic information literacy abilities, because they do not understand how information works and cannot formulate effective search strategies.

In *Teaching and marketing electronic information literacy programs*, Donald Barclay has met the challenge posed by this erroneous urban myth and has produced a comprehensive, practical, hands-on guide for the successful teaching and promotion of pivotal information literacy skills. The key strategies include the critical thinking skills

essential to understanding why all the information in the world is not 'just a click away'. Barclay examines specific examples of 'myth-information' about the world wide web currently circulating and gaining credibility, simply by virtue of constant repetition. He examines ways of teaching the economics and ethics of electronic information, the essentials of electronic searching and information retrieval and the basics of logically evaluating information. The section on 'reviewing reviews' explains how independent assessments are a valuable tool in evaluating the credibility of information sources.

On 'becoming a master electronic information literacy instructor', Barclay teaches the reader first how to succeed at the 'one-shot' fifty minute class, with high energy, attention grabbing, active learning techniques. He goes on to outline the syllabus for an extended course, including tips for designing and equipping an effective electronic classroom, and further goes on to explain how the course can be adapted for distance education by adding tele-teaching activities and web-based tutorials. The accompanying CD-ROM contains twelve ready-to-go, customisable, PowerPoint presentations developed by the author for teaching electronic information literacy. They include Boolean searching, economics and ethics of information and how to cope with information roadblocks.

The book concludes with advice on the marketing of the program to students, teachers and administrators, with the object of creating an articulated, campus-wide, cross-curriculum information literacy program, with the library as the key player. This is surely the ideal to which every librarian working in an educational institution would aspire, and now, with Barclay's help, the path towards the ideal is more clearly delineated. Extensively indexed, this book also contains an annotated list of more than seventy-five useful resources and websites for the teaching of information literacy. It is a highly recommended addition to the library of any institution involved with information literacy instruction for students.

Helen Dunford, TAFE Tasmania

Archival soundings

Belton, Benjamin K *Orinoco flow: culture, narrative, and the political economy of information*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2003. 224p US\$35.00 soft ISBN 0810848317 (available from James Bennett Pty Ltd)

THIS IS A SCHOLARLY EXPLORATION OF IDEAS RELATING TO THE ROLE OF INFORMATION in the depiction of space, encompassing feminist and economic theory. The end result is a vivid demonstration of the inextricable interweaving of information with its societal context.

The author uses analysis of a particular geographic region, the Orinoco, as the setting to develop the idea of an archive, '...a chronologically layered set of notions about the world, each succeeding layer becoming dominant for a time, not superseding those beneath it but rather adding another layer of world interpretation to the archives as a whole'. The book identifies and discusses those sets of notions about

The role of the archive in the creative process is brought to life...

the Orinoco, beginning with the earliest descriptions and allusions to paradise, continuing to the search for El Dorado, the ultimate in economic opportunity, and the scientific wonderland of Alexander von Humboldt. This chronology continues into the present day, with a narrative from the author as traveller in the region.

The relationships that become apparent between fiction, the generation of ideas and knowledge discovery are fascinating and illuminating. The demonstration of connections between three purposes of information (accountability, knowledge and entertainment) in the creation of new knowledge is vividly portrayed. The role of the archive in the creative process is brought to life — the author describes, for example, the different approach of Defoe and Behn, two near contemporary writers of fiction. Defoe treats the archive as a ‘single body that can be raided for support, and ... all sources within it are contemporaneous and equal’, whereas Behn is said to have ‘...little interest in history other than natural history...; her politics are of the moment rather than an accumulated mass of archival entries’.

The final chapter considers globalisation, and Belton describes the archive as a place of struggle for cultural redefinition. He states that an archive allows many contradictory views of a place (topos) to exist at one time, and claims that the information strategy of global economics is in fact to increase that complexity, ultimately to market differing images of a place in accordance with regional goals.

This is a difficult but rewarding work. It addresses issues and ideas that are fundamental to the understanding of the role of information in society and brings these to life in the brilliantly coloured Orinoco landscape. On the back cover of the book the publisher has indicated subject categories — library and information science, and travel, an unexpected but effective combination.

Gillian Oliver, The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand

Tour de force

Brown, Michelle P *The Lindisfarne gospels: society, spirituality and the scribe*. **British Library studies in medieval culture**. London: British Library, 2003. 479p £19.95 soft ISBN 0712348077

...asking what it might
actually have meant
to make this book...

MICHELLE BROWN, A CURATOR AT THE BRITISH LIBRARY, CALLS THIS WORK a general introduction to the great Christian manuscript that was written and illuminated on the bleak offshore islet of Lindisfarne in the early 8th century. Her book sets the Gospels within its socio-historical context, during one of the world's formative periods of transition — from the Graeco-Roman period to that of the early Middle Ages. It also examines the art of the Gospels, with its letterforms borrowed from Roman, Greek and Runic; and its decorative elements derived from Coptic Egypt, Byzantium, Iron Age Celtic culture and Pictish carvings. An acknowledged expert in the study of the Gospels and Anglo-Saxon manuscripts in general, Brown has also recently issued a briefer introduction to the Gospels entitled *Painted*

labyrinth, which forms the companion volume to the British Library exhibition of the same name as well as the commentary volume to accompany the new facsimile published by Faksimile Verlag of Lucerne.

The Lindisfarne Gospels is one of the world's great works of art, and its maker one of the greatest artists of the period, receptive to new influences and prepared to experiment with new techniques. Brown's study explores the maker's spiritual motivation and the needs of the society in which he worked. By reappraising some of the underlying physical and theological considerations which shaped the production of the Lindisfarne Gospels the author shows it is possible to reconsider its historical context, cultural affiliations, dating and intent. By asking what it might actually have meant to make this book, she considers some of the complex and influential ways in which the Insular world, and Bede's Northumbria in particular, moulded Western perceptions of the book and of how it might serve as an instrument and channel of faith.

Technical features of manufacture, iconographical, palaeographical and textual arguments are put forward in favour of a link with the Durham and Echternach Gospels, but it is proposed that Lindisfarne is the latest of the three to have been made and that the most appropriate date for its production lies within the second decade of the 8th century. The nature of a connection with the Wearmouth/Jarrow scriptorium is discussed, as is the contextual evidence for production at Lindisfarne itself.

The design process underlying the ornament of the Lindisfarne Gospels is discussed in great detail. The discovery of some sixty previously unknown preliminary drawings, in addition to those formerly known from the back of the carpet-pages, reveals the innovative way in which the artist worked. These trial design drawings were made using a metal or 'lead-point' pen and as such are unique, with no other known examples before 1000 AD. The use of this medium seems to have occurred to the artist-scribe whilst ruling the text with a hard-point containing lead or silver trace elements. Almost every decorative element was drawn first on the other side of the leaf, implying that the designs were worked out on the reverse and traced through with the aid of prickings and backlighting. Once the detailing was established in principle, it was replicated elsewhere in the design without the detailed back drawing, and the penwork executed freehand with remarkable confidence and skill. Brown also argues that the designs show important signs of being devised *in situ*, rather than copied directly from exemplars, for they sometimes diverge from what was actually painted.

Although it stands on its own, this volume forms a valuable accompaniment to the museum-quality facsimile now available. It concludes with a bibliography and two appendices, the first describing scientific analyses of the manuscript and the second (on an enclosed CD) providing an index of contents which is most useful for owners of the new facsimile. This handsome volume cannot be recommended too highly for anyone interested in manuscripts or Anglo-Saxon intellectual life.

Neil Boness, University of Sydney

Astonishing

Brown, Michelle P. *Painted labyrinth: the world of the Lindisfarne gospels*. London: British Library, 2003. 48p £5.95 soft ISBN0712348115

...one of the great landmarks of human cultural achievement...

THE LINDISFARNE GOSPELS, PRODUCED MORE THAN 1300 YEARS AGO AT THE MONASTERY OF Lindisfarne on the Northumbrian coast, remains one of the great landmarks of human cultural achievement and one of the world's greatest works of art in book form. The single volume manuscript consists of 500 pages of beautiful calligraphy and decorative symbols. Bishop Eadfrith, leader of the monastery on Lindisfarne from 698 to 721, is credited as being the creator of the work. He was, on the evidence of the manuscript, one of the greatest artists of the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic worlds. An Anglo-Saxon translation of the Latin text was added two centuries later and is the earliest known English translation of the gospels.

Dr Michelle Brown, curator of illuminated manuscripts for the British Library, has researched the origins and craftsmanship of the work. Her findings have been recently promoted at an exhibition called *Painted Labyrinth – the world of the Lindisfarne Gospels* with which this book is associated. In the small, but lavishly illustrated, volume Dr Brown looks at the background and history of the work in a series of short sections, each examining an aspect of the Anglo-Saxon world, the heritage of the people who lived and ruled at this time, and how and why this great book was created.

Clearly written, the explanations are couched in terms for the general reader rather than the scholarly expert. The questions of where and when the Lindisfarne Gospels were made are addressed, as are the artistic styles and techniques, methods of manuscript production, and the technical innovations introduced by its maker. Brown points out the inventiveness of Eadfrith and how he came up with solutions to problems he encountered, such as the process used to generate the decorations. Brown explains that Eadfrith created test sheets using his own costly vellum to draw out his designs in reverse. Then he placed another piece over the top and carefully copied the markings. He rubbed the vellum in order to transfer the 'pencil' drawings onto the back of the sheet to be painted, reversing the initial design. This technique was not to be used again until the 15th century.

Equally important, there is a brief discussion of why the manuscript was produced in the context of the religious situation of the time, the spiritual motivation of the scribe/illuminator and the importance of the cult of St Cuthbert, to whom the manuscript was dedicated, in 8th century Britain. There is a list of suggested further readings, and a complete list of artefacts and manuscripts for the original exhibition. The book forms an excellent introduction to what is one of the most significant of all Western manuscript texts.

Neil Boness, University of Sydney

A head start

Caplan, Priscilla *Metadata fundamentals for all librarians*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2003. 192p US\$59.00 soft ISBN 0838908470

LIBRARIANS WILL IMMEDIATELY REALISE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN CREATING 'METADATA', or data about data, in the form of catalogue records for many years. However, with the advent of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and the Dublin Core initiative in the mid-1990s, the term began to be used exclusively to describe the information necessary to make computer files useful to humans. However, in *Metadata fundamentals for all librarians*, Priscilla Caplan uses the term to include all structured information, whether electronic or not, about information resources of any media type or format. It is 'information that describes content' and may differ depending on community or context. This definition allows Caplan to give a 'big picture' explanation of the concepts and issues applicable to all metadata schemes which leaves the reader with a broad understanding of the creation of metadata formats and syntax as well as the classification and identification of metadata vocabularies.

Issues of interoperability, including central databases and cross system searches, and barriers to communications protocols working within networked environments are examined. Also, metadata associated with web-accessible content, the operation of internet search engines and the possibility of creating search profiles which will run automatically are concisely covered. Part 2 of *Metadata fundamentals* goes on to describe a number of individual metadata schemes, including library cataloguing, ONIX International and Dublin Core. It gives a comprehensive overview of how various metadata schemes differ, what they have in common and how they are designed to serve different purposes. This does not claim to be a complete catalogue of metadata schemes nor will it teach the reader how to catalogue or describe information resources according to any particular metadata scheme. However, those wishing to obtain additional information or instruction are directed to a number of metadata clearing houses online.

This publication is comprehensively indexed, with an extensive and informative glossary. Many of the additional readings for each chapter are available online, and the lists are annotated to ensure that the reader is easily able to obtain information which precisely meets their needs. *Metadata fundamentals* provides a solid foundation for understanding and using metadata effectively. It can be recommended as a reference for everyone who works in a library environment, and particularly for educators and students in library and information science.

Helen Dunford, TAFE Tasmania

...leaves the reader with a broad understanding of the creation of metadata formats and syntax as well as the classification and identification of metadata vocabularies...

Down to earth

Case, Donald O *Looking for information: a survey of research on information seeking, needs and behavior*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press/Elsevier Science, 2002. 350p £62.00 hard ISBN 012150381X

...densely written
yet eminently
understandable...

THIS IS NOT A PROFOUND WORK, BUT RATHER A MASTERFUL SUMMARY OF CURRENT thinking on information behaviour. In it Professor Case (University of Kentucky) presents a wide-ranging overview of the principal ideas, movements and trends in precisely those areas indicated in the subtitle: information seeking, information needs, information behaviour. The book, in Case's words:

...defines concepts relevant to information behavior, identifies models and theories used in information seeking studies, provides examples of methods for studying information seeking, reviews research findings of the past two decades, and suggests some avenues for future improvement in what we know about the topic.

As he indicates, there is a plethora of in-depth studies of various aspects of information behaviour research, but no single work attempting to give us the overview that is presented in this densely written yet eminently understandable handbook. Professor Case largely succeeds in his mission, and his work is a welcome guide through the maze of theories, models and perspectives in this important field.

Case organises his exposition into five main sections:

1. Introduction and examples (two chapters)
2. Concepts relevant to information behaviour (three chapters)
3. Models, paradigms and theories in the study of information behaviour (two chapters)
4. Methods of studying information behaviour (two chapters)
5. Research results and reflections (four chapters)

The work effectively begins with the second chapter, which contains five common information-seeking scenarios that should draw in every reader — Case uses the scenarios to show that information-seeking is a pervasive activity in all walks of life, and that therefore his concerns should be the concerns of everyone to a greater or lesser degree. He then moves in Part 2 to a detailed discussion of the meaning of 'information', devoting most of Chapter 3 to this. I have mixed feelings about this; on the one hand, it may seem to some a matter of over-kill, yet on re-reading the chapter I find that nothing can sensibly be omitted. In fact it is the clearest analysis of the meaning of 'information', and the various pitfalls attached to every definition, that I have ever read. The next chapter then discusses the meaning of information needs, and how information seeking satisfies this need. And, sensibly, the fifth chapter reviews a number of related concepts, such as decision making, browsing, relevance.

Part 3, on models and theories, contains a number of rather nice touches, such as sections titled 'What is a model?' and 'What is a theory?' which give both simple and complex definitions, and also show the relationship between the two. Refreshingly, Case allows the use of 'paradigm' as an important concept between model and theory; '...it is an essential concept for describing research on information behavior. For one

thing, it is not possible to talk about competing theories, or schools of theories, in information seeking research. The field is simply too diverse for that, and formal theory is invoked relatively rarely.' The statement exemplifies Case's down-to-earth, demystifying approach, which is a most welcome antidote to the pretentious blathering of so many researchers in this field. In each of these two chapters Case offers very clear guidelines about the key concepts — for example, in the models chapter, he reviews the most popular information seeking models (Wilson, Krikelas, Johnson, Leckie), and anyone at all confused about them should read this chapter.

Part 4 is a slight letdown, as it opens with Chapter 8 on the research process that is probably just a bit too superficial; if one does not understand the research process at this stage, he should be reading a more detailed explanation. At the same time, however, the definitions of key terms (for example, validity, reliability, induction, deduction) are again very clear and useful. The next chapter stages a strong recovery, offering examples of each type of research design and data-gathering technique commonly used in information seeking research. This shows quite clearly that issues may be approached from a variety of perspectives, and that every method has a number of strengths and weaknesses.

The final part is a kind of extended literature review, with Chapter 10 on the history and development of that literature, followed by two chapters on the most-studied categories of information seekers. Chapter 11 covers research by occupation, including scientists and engineers, social scientists, humanities scholars, health care providers. Chapter 12 approaches the topic by social role and demographic group — voters, consumers, patients, age, race, socio-economic status. Focusing in both chapters on the nature of the literature, Case shows how this literature has developed its characteristic lines of enquiry.

The last chapter is a general summary of the preceding chapters and serves as a useful *vade mecum* for student readers in particular. An appendix of questions for discussion and application, which stamps the work as essentially a postgraduate class text, and a very comprehensive thirty-page list of references conclude the volume, which appears to be indexed to a high standard. Both author and publisher are to be commended for a generally high quality text, marred by very few typos ('casual' for 'causal', for example) that is well presented and thoughtfully organised. I would suggest, however, that a future edition removes the irritating section numbering system which reminds one of those unreadable government reports.

G E Gorman, Victoria University of Wellington

Concise and sought-after

Chowdhury, G G *Introduction to modern information retrieval*. 2nd ed. London: Facet Publishing, 2003. 488p £39.95 soft ISBN 1856044807 (available from James Bennett Pty Ltd)

WITH THIS BOOK CHOWDHURY HAS PRODUCED A VERY COMPREHENSIVE and thorough introduction to modern information retrieval. First published in 1999 and subsequently reprinted in 2001 and 2002, this second edition updates

Well-researched and thorough...

the content and coverage to more adequately reflect current user expectations and the latest developments in information storage and retrieval.

There are twenty-three chapters in all. Each chapter begins with an introduction, is broken down systematically into sections, with references provided at the end. As a handbook it is well organised, with each chapter building in logical succession on the content of the previous chapters, culminating in a chapter on trends, and concluding with an index.

Chowdhury commences the book with basic concepts of information retrieval systems and database technology. Bibliographic formats are next up, followed by cataloguing and metadata, including a useful discussion on MARC 21 format and the implications of using AACR2 in automatic cataloguing, cataloguing internet resources and metadata standards. It then covers subject analysis and representation and looks at both old and new approaches before moving on to automatic indexing and file organisation, vocabulary control, abstracts and abstracting, and searching and retrieval. Chapters 10 through to 12 look at the users of information and cover users of information retrieval, user-centred models of information retrieval and user interfaces. Chapters 13 to 16 cover the evaluation of information retrieval systems, evaluation experiments, then online, CD-ROM and multimedia information retrieval. Chapters 17 to 22 explore issues encountered in an online information environment, examining first hypertext and markup languages, including SGML, HTML, XML and XHTML, then web information retrieval and intelligent information retrieval. The question of natural language processing and retrieval and natural language processing systems is given full coverage before concluding this section by discussing information retrieval in digital libraries. It is fitting that the final chapter covers trends in information retrieval, and it rounds the book off well. Well-researched and thorough, the reference sources Chowdhury lists, and the plentiful examples in tables and figures, will assist readers to keep abreast of issues borne of the rapidly changing online environment in which we operate.

This second edition of Chowdhury's *Introduction to modern information retrieval* will quickly prove as invaluable as the first edition. It will be highly sought after by library and information science students and professionals for the concise style in which it is written and its coverage of modern information retrieval.

Lois Robertson, The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand

Good policy: flawed argument?

Christopher, Connie *Empowering your library: a guide to improving service, productivity and participation*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2003. 88p US\$30.00 (ALA members \$27.00) soft ISBN 0838908586

CHRISTOPHER BEGINS BY DEFINING EMPOWERMENT AS 'ALLOWING INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS to fully realise their potential' and presents a case in favour of pursuing empowerment. An energised, fully committed workforce is needed to meet the many challenges that libraries face. Empowerment is not the management fad of the week but rather a competitive necessity. The advantage comes from gaining the ability to fully use the discretionary effort of every employee. Empowerment is linked with employee competence, and an argument is made for continuous personal growth, professional challenge and commitment to excellence.

The bulk of the book is in Part 2, 'Making it happen'. Chapters cover: empowerment and the learning organization; motivation; communication; creating shared vision and trust; the manager's role; interpersonal and team skills; and emotional intelligence.

Part 3 is a short chapter on library leadership. Although the author recognises that empowerment requires employees to have authority, resources, information and accountability, she gives inadequate attention to developing these ideas. Nevertheless, there is reference to yielding authority to employees to enhance motivation and discussion of the importance of communication. In dealing with the role of the manager, Christopher demonstrates that it is profoundly changed in an empowered organisation. As the work previously done by managers is gradually turned over to self-directed teams, the manager must shift focus from command and control to that of coach, facilitator and troubleshooter. The wide-ranging coverage of the manager's role results in a lack of depth in this chapter. However, the manager's role is also discussed in the chapter dealing with interpersonal and team skills and this is clear, thorough and helpful. I was impressed with the next chapter in which Christopher succinctly and successfully explains the basics of emotional intelligence. She concludes with obstacles to empowerment, including the manager's fear of loss of control and anxiety over employment security.

The book contains a number of practical checklists. These are particularly helpful in a powerful chapter on creating a shared vision. The strength of the book is that it brings together a wider range of factors which contribute to creating an empowered library. The author is well aware of the style of management which fails to deliver. Her book would be a good starting point for managers wishing to reflect on their own style to identify areas where change is needed. If the author's implicit purpose to encourage new commitment to empowerment is realised, the reader may seek additional information through a bibliography which identifies and number of significant authors who provide greater depth of coverage.

Christopher takes a very positive view. A weakness is that she does not grapple significantly with the disempowering impact of lack of financial control or real power over directions, both of which tend to occur in an hierarchical structure. For those already committed to and well informed about empowerment this book is a non-essential purchase. I recommend it to others who are open to change for the better.

Julia Leong, University of New England

Empowerment is not the management fad of the week but rather a competitive necessity...

Coming soon: the virtual librarian

Coffman, Steve *Going live: starting and running a virtual reference service*. With contributions by Michelle Fiander, Kay Henshall and Bernie Sloane. Chicago: American Library Association: 2003. 182p US\$42.00 soft ISBN 0838908500

No modern reference library should be without this book...

IF IT IS HARD TO FIND A REALLY USEFUL BOOK, LET ALONE ANY BOOK, ON VIRTUAL SERVICES in libraries, it is because there are, as yet, few books published on this topic. Virtual reference was an unheard of concept until the late 1990s. Even now, whilst many libraries are moving, or considering moving, towards delivering virtual reference services, delivery of a fully-fledged virtual reference service is not common practice. *Going live* traces the emergence of virtual reference and its impact on reference services.

Chapter 1 reviews the history of virtual reference services and practices. It describes how libraries and reference services had changed little until they were transformed by advent of the internet and an increasingly IT-savvy public. Chapter 2 sets out what needs to be considered in designing the service *before* you start. It covers what kind of software you are going to use, the staffing expertise, coverage and levels needed to handle the volume and time of enquiries and the costs, and explores the relevant problems, pitfalls and issues. Chapter 3 discusses the practicalities of how to actually run the virtual reference service. The content of this chapter owes much to the expertise and experience of two pioneers in the field, Kay Henshall and Michelle Fiander, who have both had extensive involvement in the training and management of the virtual reference service at Library Systems and Services (LSSI) [<http://www.lssi.com>]. Their practical advice and tips on staff selection and training include deciding where staff will work to how to use the reference transcripts to evaluate the reference service provided.

Chapter 4 covers marketing and emphasises the importance of effective marketing to prevent failure of the service. It discusses the fact that patrons expect the library to be open when they need it. A proven range of useful strategies is discussed here that could easily be integrated into any library outreach program. Chapter 5 considers the future for libraries, technologies, and the reference desk. The appendices comprise a software feature checklist, and a sample pre-employment screening test and key — these form a substantial part of the book. This is followed by Bernie Sloane's virtual reference services bibliography, which provides a comprehensive list of reference sources. The book is indexed for ease of use.

Going live will prove invaluable for librarians and library managers seeking an overview of the process and what is involved starting and running a virtual reference service. As its title suggests, Coffman has produced a comprehensive and practical guide on how to start. Drawing on the expertise of pioneers in the field who have developed and delivered successful virtual reference services, *Going live* offers sound advice, based on their experience. No modern reference library should be without this book, and all library studies students should read it.

Lois Robertson, The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand

Erials?

Cole, Jim, and Jones, Wayne, eds *E-serials cataloguing: access to continuing and integrating resources via the catalog and the web*. New York : Haworth Information Press, 2002. 329p soft ISBN 0789017113 (also published as *The Serials Librarian*, 41, 3/4)

THIS COLLECTION OF ARTICLES IS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE FACT THAT THE cataloguing of electronic serials has become a recognised way of life in most libraries; it is divided into several sections including Standards, Education and training, Policies and procedures, National projects and local applications, Books and serials and the future. The collection contains a comprehensive survey of the professional literature on e-serials cataloguing in the 1990s, reviewing the themes surrounding the subject.

The Standards section contains a discussion of the continuing relevance of the ISSN system in the electronic era. The ISSN is also a powerful identification system for electronic publications, as a result of a number of changes that are discussed in this comprehensive section. The Education and training section outlines the integration of cataloguing of electronic resources into the curriculum in information and library science education.

Policies and procedures that have evolved for dealing with electronic resources are often under discussion. These discussions include whether to create a separate catalogue record for every version of a journal an institute has access to or whether to adopt the one record for the print and electronic version. This is an issue that many libraries have grappled with in a bid to make their catalogues comprehensive and useful to their clients. In the second paper in this section Blosser, Hagan and Zhang have prepared a comprehensive annotated bibliography of selective websites that support the cataloguing of electronic serials and continuing resources. In the third paper in this section Boydston and Leysen have outlined the issues faced when academic libraries undertake the cataloguing of internet resources, such as selection of web resources to include and access.

The next section, National products and local applications, discusses various policies and models that have been adopted in a range of libraries throughout the world. The section serves to illustrate the success and pitfalls inherent in the ever-changing world of electronic resources and e-journals. Lastly, Cleyle and McKiernan discuss the state of technology for electronic books and look at how libraries can involve themselves in this revolution and '...in so doing, ensure their place in the e-book future'.

Overall, this is a comprehensive volume addressing issues that face cataloguers in a constantly changing era of electronic resources.

Sally C Anderson, NSW Agriculture

...a comprehensive survey of the professional literature on e-serials cataloguing in the 1990s...

The archivist-philosopher

Cook, Terry, and Dodds, Gordon *Imagining archives: essays and reflections* by Hugh A. Taylor. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2003. 254p price not reported soft ISBN 081084771X (available from James Bennett Pty Ltd)

...great thinker, a skilful writer and talented speaker...

Imagining archives is aptly titled for a collection of writings by Hugh Taylor, a leading archivist. Taylor reads widely, is interested in philosophy and the theory of ideas and social theories. He imagines what archives can be, and applies the ideas he absorbs to his thinking about the social and cultural role and meaning of archives. A thinking man, Taylor challenges and questions archives practice and invites archivists to examine and re-examine their ideas and practice.

The book is divided into two parts. Part 1 comprises two essays, one each by Cook and Dodds, providing biographical details and information about Taylor from his early days as an archivist in England to his subsequent emigration to North America, where he spent the bulk of his career. From his arrival there he was active in the profession; he became an editor of *The Canadian Archivist* (which preceded *Archivaria*), was later involved in establishing the Association of Canadian Archivists, and spent his career advocating education for archivists. Committed to his chosen career, highly accomplished, a great thinker, a skilful writer and talented speaker with a telling and memorable turn of phrase, Taylor is an inspiration to Dodds and Cook, who have known him for many years.

Part 2 comprises a collection of sixteen published and unpublished essays and reflections by Taylor spanning thirty years tracing the development of his ideas and thinking drawn from his reading and experience. Cook and Dodds have selected writings that are most representative of Taylor's thinking. These essays reflect his work in teaching about archives, his views on the necessity of professional education for archivists, his approaches as an ecologist to archival problems, his engagement with the ideas of leading social theorists, and his contribution as an 'archival philosopher' enriching archival science. Presented in chronological order, from 'Archives in Britain and Canada: impressions of an immigrant' to 'Afterword: on reflection and imagination', these essays trace the development of his ideas through his career. His two most frequently cited works, 'Transformation in the archives: technological adjustment or paradigm shift?' and "'My very act and deed": some reflections on the role of textual records in the conduct of affairs', are included and will strike a chord with many archivists. Readers will note how 'The media of record: archives in the wake of McLuhan' marks the influence of Marshall McLuhan on his approaches.

In publishing these essays the significance of Taylor's work is acknowledged and praised. They can be seen as Taylor's legacy to the archival world, and we can expect his philosophy and ideas to continue informing the thinking and practice of present and future archivist scholars and practitioners. This collection is very approachable and of interest to any experienced or emerging archivist interested in the social foundation of archives and archival theory; it is a valuable addition to the growing body of literature on archival science.

Lois Robertson, The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand

Guerilla librarianship

Credaro, Amanda *Biblia's guide to warrior librarianship: humour for librarians who refuse to be classified*. Illus. by Peter Lewis. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2003. 150p US\$25.00 soft ISBN 1591580021 (available from DA Information Services)

EXAMINING THE LIGHTER SIDE OF LIBRARIANSHIP, THIS BOOK PRESENTS A COMBINATION OF great cartoons, and intelligent, witty commentary. Globally known as *Biblia*, the Warrior Librarian, author Amanda Credaro has teamed with cartoonist Peter Lewis and produced a book that expands on her award-winning website, *Warrior Librarian Weekly*, the product of many years of experience in librarianship. Equally applicable to all types of libraries, the book offers humorous advice, typical situations and dilemmas, and helpful examples that will be appreciated by anyone who has ever worked in a library. The book features four major sections: Becoming a librarian; Working in the library; Diversions for librarians; and The ultimate challenge: school librarianship

Extremely funny throughout, highlights include Self-defence for librarians; Rhyming dictionary of librarianship; Suggested research topics for higher degrees in library science; Apply for a library job; Constitutional amendments for library users; and Management models for library administration, to name just a few. An additional section contains a glossary of library terms, abbreviations, professional associations and other resources.

Amanda Credaro is a teacher librarian for the NSW Department of Education based in Sydney. Illustrator, Peter Lewis, is an award-winning cartoonist and artist based near Newcastle, New South Wales. They have teamed up to produce a work that brings a smile to your face when you are feeling like you are the only librarian in the world with problems or even when you are feeling just isolated. This is great Australian humour. Reward yourself and purchase this one for a great laugh — you deserve it and will feel better for it.

DA Cronau, Brisbane

Annual excellence

Annual review of information science and technology. Volume 37, 2003. Ed. by Blaise Cronin. Medford, NJ: Information Today for the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 2002. 588p price not reported hard ISBN 1573871540

THIS LATEST VOLUME OF THE *ANNUAL REVIEW OF INFORMATION SCIENCE AND Technology (ARIST)* continues the tradition of the series in providing excellent and detailed state-of-the-art reviews of research areas central to this discipline. Writers refer to previous *ARIST* contributions, creating a sense of a unified work. The coherence of the whole is further enhanced by references to other chapters within the same volume. The index is impressive and extremely useful, as it indexes citations as well as subjects.

...will be appreciated by anyone who has ever worked in a library...

...representative of the deep and rich body of ongoing research underpinning our profession...

This work is divided into four sections: Language and representation, Dynamics of scholarly communication, Information systems, and Theorizing information and information use. Each section comprises two or more chapters. Most chapters are literature reviews of specific subject areas, with the exception of one on the visualisation of knowledge domains that is partly written in the form of a tutorial to guide readers through this particularly dense topic and also contains original research.

As is to be expected of a work consisting of contributions from multiple authors, style and readability varies, but each chapter appears to be of a uniformly high standard in terms of coverage of its particular subject area. In the Language and representation section contributions cover the relationship between information retrieval and Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, natural language processing and web indexing and retrieval. The scholarly communication section contains two chapters — one reviewing the literature relating to empirical studies about the role of e-journals, and the other the above mentioned visualising knowledge domains. The section on information systems considers two very specialised areas — museum informatics and the retrieval of music information.

The richest area for me was the final section considering the theory underpinning information and its use. Rafael Capurro and Birger Hjørland's analysis of the literature relating to concepts of information is comprehensive and thought provoking — the authors suggest that closer attention to concepts such as signs, texts and knowledge may provide more satisfactory theoretical frameworks for the problems faced by information science than study of information as a concept.

Other chapters in this section consider the relationship between task performance and information searching by end users and a two-dimensional consideration of information equity. The two dimensions or perspectives are vertical and horizontal — the vertical perspective assumes that social and economic factors will primarily influence access and use of information, whereas the horizontal perspective sees significant differences among members of the same social group. The authors (Lievrouw and Farb) point out the implications of this for the education of information professionals, stating that programs must combine '...traditional technical and organisational skills with an almost anthropological or sociological sensitivity to social relationships and change'.

The remaining chapter in this section is by Stephen Marsh and Mark Dibben, and considers a fascinating area — the role played by trust in information science and technology. The authors stress the importance of national culture in influencing trust, and conclude with a vision of an information architecture '...that can not only route information but also judge, rate and classify ... based on social knowledge and norms of trust'.

Contributions to this volume of *ARIST* are representative of the deep and rich body of ongoing research underpinning our profession, and deserve a wider readership than they will probably attain amongst practitioners. Each chapter suggests further areas for study, so this could be a good starting point for would-be researchers.

Gillian Oliver, The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand

Brief lives, obscure motives?

Dictionary of American library biography. Second supplement. Ed. by Donald G Davis, Jr. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2003. 250p US\$60.00 hard ISBN 1563088681 (available from DA Information Services)

IN AN AGE WHEN STUDENTS TAKING FIRST DEGREES IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES readily accept the fallacious assertion from some writers (who should know better) that pre-internet librarians were merely book keepers, there is even more need for our profession to record its own history. Although library history has (like the history of other professional services) largely disappeared from current curricula, and information history has hardly begun to be explored, we do have a responsibility to society at large to record and publish information about ourselves. It is strange that members of a profession which is emphasising its informational role seem reluctant to seek out information on their own professional origins and development. However, archives of documents and oral history have been established, research of varying quality is being undertaken, and there is a small but steady stream of published monographs and journal articles.

Library and information work is essentially an interpersonal service, and historiographers need to concentrate on people rather than on administrative aspects. What have people's library-based information needs been, how have they been satisfied or otherwise, and what have been the effects of those services? What has motivated people to become librarians, and how have they developed professionally and personally? The study of the history of library and information work inevitably involves the people who served, as well as those individuals and communities and sub-groups for whom libraries exist.

Biographical dictionaries form an important secondary resource, bringing together introductory accounts of people's personal and professional lives. The *Dictionary of American library biography* appeared in 1978, and the first supplement in 1990; the present work presents seventy-seven former librarians to us and brings the total of entries to 430 in the three volumes. This is obviously a very small percentage of members of our profession, and there is a case for accounts of colleagues who were important to their own communities and not merely those attaining some national acclaim in their lifetimes. Some, of course, are internationally known — names such as Lester Asheim, Harvie Branscomb, Raynard Coe Swank and Robert Vosper reminded me of times past. Each person in this work existed in a network of colleagues, and these are brought together in an extensive name index. Each entry concludes with biographical listings and obituaries to facilitate further reading.

One problem with potted biographies is how to strike a balance between gossip and boring facts, whilst recognising the value of both. Margaret Edwards was dismissed from her teaching post for insubordination 'because of her outspoken nature' and subsequently joined the staff of Pratt Library, where she became nationally known for her work with young adults. She 'fell in love with teen-agers ... as well as with books', but was being outspoken a professional benefit or burden? Margaret Nicholson and Mildred Batchelder shared an apartment bulging with books and music, and their after-dinner ritual was to watch the McNeil Lehrer public affairs TV program

...both a serious work of reference and a book to dip into...

with any guests. Vincent Duckles was a musicologist who moved into librarianship, built up UC-Berkeley's outstanding music library, and became largely responsible for the development of music librarianship in the US. This is both a serious work of reference and a book to dip into for personal interest and enjoyment.

Edward Reid-Smith, Charles Sturt University

Open here...

Drake, David *Each of us is a book: poems for the library minded*. Jefferson NC: McFarland and Company 2003. 133p US\$25.00 soft ISBN 0786415681

...an amusing,
thoughtful and useful
volume...

THIS COLLECTION OF POEMS FOR THE LIBRARY MINDED APPARENTLY GREW OUT THE POET and librarian David Drake's desire 'to poeticise the things and personages of our library world' and his belief that the 'charm and excitement of libraries' can be overlooked even by those in the profession. The author states in the preface that '...as in candid photographs, the framing of a seemingly mundane activity in a poem often reveals qualities we never notice in the larger context'. The poems range in style and character from the amusing to the thought-provoking. They deal with themes common to all libraries and to all those in the profession. The poems are divided into six sections: Arenas of possibility, Librarians/cybrarians, The reading life, Our patrons, Ourselves, The writing life, and The tools of the trade.

The author also states in his preface that '...I have never pretended that my poems were anything more than little amusements or opportunities for evanescent reflection'. All those in the profession will enjoy dipping into this volume and will recognise many of the themes and the characters depicted therein. It is an amusing, thoughtful and useful volume when seeking words for an occasion such as Library and Information Week, although experience has shown that clients themselves can quite often write some amusing poetry on library themes when pressed!

The last word should go to Drake. The extract below will strike a chord with many librarians, particularly those in school and public libraries:

Our library is quiet, untroubled, serene;
The shelves are in order, exact and pristine;
The tables and chairs are aligned, straight and formal;
But soon we will open and get back to normal

Finally, here is one for all librarians:

Just let me tarry
At the library
Before I must leave it behind.

Sally C Anderson, NSW Agriculture

Skills for life

Kuhlthau, Carol C *Teaching the library research process*. 2nd ed. Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002. 190p US\$24.95 soft ISBN 0810844192 (available from James Bennett Pty Ltd)

HOW DO WE PREPARE CHILDREN TO LIVE FULL, PRODUCTIVE LIVES IN AN INFORMATION society? Research has shown that students in both primary and high schools are commonly confused, uncertain and overwhelmed when confronted with an assignment requiring them to locate information. The development of information-processing skills is an essential pre-requisite, and the process approach described by Carol Kuhlthau has been refined by her during her years as a school library media specialist. It is used in many parts of the world, including Australia, and supports a view of library research as an opportunity for students to experience discovery and personal growth by developing vital skills in addressing real problems in real world contexts.

Teaching the library research process provides a comprehensive sequential program for taking students through the intricacies of gathering information in a library when given a research assignment. It is divided into seven sections, each devoted to one stage in the library research process: initiating a research assignment; selecting a topic; exploring information; formulating a focus; collecting information; preparing to present; assessing the process.

While many traditional manuals are overly prescriptive and concentrate on the mechanics of research, Carol Kuhlthau's process approach guides students towards a more creative and constructive experience by learning about a topic or problem from a variety of information sources. The text incorporates the use of innovative technologies as well as activities and worksheets to guide students in independent learning using library resources. It also prepares students to manage the inevitable 'information overload' inherent in our information-rich environment, which tends to increase rather than decrease uncertainty and confusion. Students are encouraged to develop a focussed perspective which gives them direction for collecting only what is relevant to their central purpose, but encourages curiosity and exploration as well as critical and creative thinking.

This practical resource will be especially useful to assist library media specialists and teachers, particularly teachers of English and social science, in forming a partnership to develop a complete instructional program for introducing students to the process of library research. It is more than just a program to 'teach' students to 'do' a research paper and goes much further than the traditional source-oriented library instruction. While aimed at high school students, this method can be used with students at all levels from primary to college or undergraduate to encourage the active construction of ideas and knowledge from basic information.

Helen Dunford, TAFE Tasmania

...a view of library research as an opportunity for students to experience discovery and personal growth...

For the moral and educational benefit of society

Freeman, Robert S, and Hovde, David M, eds *Libraries to the people: histories of outreach*. Jefferson: McFarland and Company, 2003. 255p US\$39.95 soft ISBN 078641359X

...celebrates ...
public library
outreach services for
isolated individuals
and communities, and
the development of
society as a whole...

THE BULK OF THIS COLLECTION OF HISTORICAL ESSAYS WAS ORIGINALLY PRESENTED at the American Library Association's Library History Round Table (LHRT), held at the 1999 annual conference of the American Library Association in New Orleans. Covering the development of public library outreach services in the last 200 years, from travelling libraries to electronic outreach services, *Libraries to the people* is neither a comprehensive nor systematic historical survey. It comprises fourteen essays, or historical studies, arranged thematically in three sections covering benevolent and commercial organisations, government supported programs and innovative outreach services.

According to the *International encyclopedia of information and library science*, 'Outreach', and the earlier term 'Extension', describe 'library services provided by a library outside its usual location, particularly those intended to attract new users or to appeal to groups in the community who do not make full use of conventional services'. Groups usually targeted are 'housebound, ethnic minorities and people in districts of socio-economic deprivation'. This book describes how libraries took books to people in isolated rural communities, seamen, immigrants, prisoners and African and Native Americans in low socio-economic areas. Many of the travelling libraries were organised by women's groups, and their work was important to the development of state and public libraries. Libraries and educators were frequently influenced by religious and moral ideas held in society at that time, and books were selected for their potential to 'improve' readers. From the public support of education and the activities of the benevolent societies in the mid-1800s, the move toward adult education and lifelong learning that started in the early 1900s, to the use of technology, the essays describe developments and changes to public library services over time and the impact of social, religious, political and economic influences on outreach services provided.

Libraries to the people is a significant work on library history in the USA. It records the work of benevolent societies, professional organisations, government agencies and libraries involved in developing libraries and library services for the moral and educational benefit of society. The writers provide insights into the social context of libraries, and the roles and motivations of the librarians and educators who were the driving force in developing library outreach services. The book celebrates the remarkable efforts and achievements of private individuals or groups who, with their passion for books and the benefits of reading, their commitment, vision and innovative approaches, led the development of public library outreach services for isolated individuals and communities, and the development of society as a whole.

Little has been written on the history of outreach in the United States — or of similar endeavours in Australia and New Zealand. This fact makes *Libraries to the*

people a useful resource for readers interested in the development of libraries and library outreach services in the last 200 years, and library history in general.

Lois Robertson, The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand

Every student should be given one

MLA handbook for writers of research papers. 6th ed. By Joseph Gibaldi. New York: Modern Language Association, 2003. 361p US\$17.00 soft ISBN 0873529863

THIS HANDBOOK IS AIMED AT STUDENTS WHO ARE UNFAMILIAR WITH THE DEMANDS of writing a research paper, and there is no doubt that they will find it invaluable. There are various well-known comprehensive style guides, (*Chicago* or *Wiley*, for example), but to beginners they can seem daunting, as well as being relatively expensive and none too portable, so teachers looking for an alternative will find that the *MLA handbook* is a safe recommendation. It gives the essentials. Anyone over the age of twelve who puts pen to paper, or finger to keyboard, will find that following the advice given here is likely to earn a higher grade from a grateful marker.

The information in the *Handbook* is laid out methodically and clearly. The opening chapter outlines how to begin researching your paper, emphasising the importance of noting sources as you go, and maintaining a bibliography with each draft. The importance of citing sources leads into an excellent short chapter on plagiarism — up-to-date and beautifully written, it ought to be compulsory reading for students. Copy-and-paste has made plagiarism all-but-irresistible in some quarters; Gibaldi gives the proper procedure for acknowledging material taken from websites or electronic encyclopedias, and, as he points out, ‘Getting a lower grade ... is better than experiencing the shame of plagiarism’.

Next, Gibaldi runs through what he calls the mechanics of paper-writing: spelling, grammar, punctuation. It should not be forgotten how technology has insidiously imposed itself. Use spelling checkers cautiously, he advises, (though he does not mention that annoying software which underlines grammatical ‘errors’). What is of most use is the advice on how to prepare lists of works cited in a research paper. Which of us is confident of citing, say, an online book, or a work in an indeterminate medium, or a cartoon? Gibaldi gives the sort of authoritative advice we expect from the MLA, and reminds us that not only is it a necessary courtesy to readers to cite correctly, but also many readers will judge whether a text is worthwhile by the scrupulousness of its references. Updates of the information in the book are available at <http://www.mla.org/>

A superfluous appendix lists selected reference works by field; this is of doubtful value, and, besides, does not include library science.

John MacRitchie, Manly Library

...following the advice given here is likely to earn a higher grade from a grateful marker...

The educators' dilemma writ large

Education for cataloging and the organization of information: pitfalls and the pendulum. Ed. by Janet Swan Hill. New York: Haworth Information Press, 2003. 398p US\$49.95 pap. ISBN 0789020297 (also published as *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 34, 1/2, 3)

...library schools fail to teach traditional cataloging...

THE CONSISTENT THEME THROUGHOUT THIS MONOGRAPH IS THAT LIBRARY SCHOOLS FAIL to teach traditional cataloging, leaving it up to employers to provide on-the-job training (OJT) and continuing education. Echoed among a number of chapters here is the recognition that employers cannot pick up the slack when the person hired to catalog is the sole professional. The dearth of adequate cataloging education — whether theoretical or practical — is a definite cause for concern in our profession. Despite Cataloging in Publication (CIP), there are still many formats of material that lack CIP and require specialised knowledge to provide adequate access to these items. Not only is the next generation of cataloguers not ready to fill our retirees' positions, the reference librarians-to-be lack a thorough understanding of cataloging principles with which they can retrieve information to answer their patrons' questions.

The twenty-four essays range in coverage from the question of why teach cataloging; how, what is, and what should be taught; the role and function of on-the-job training and continuing education; and alternative methods for instructional delivery. Michael Gorman's opinion piece makes the case for cataloging as the central linchpin of library education for *all* librarians. Heidi Hoerman explores why everybody hates cataloging, noting that reference librarians are the role models, teaching faculty are in short supply, and administrators don't appreciate cataloging.

In several essays, their authors found that bibliographic control education is becoming shallower as more topics are crammed into already full syllabi, and traditional cataloging courses are declining in number even though the average number of bibliographic control courses is increasing. With the expansion of courses needed to sustain the information science trend, traditional library science courses have been altered or dropped. The responsibility to teach new cataloguers practical, hands-on applications falls to those currently employed.

If we are to assume that the library schools will not return to producing entry-level librarians who can actually catalog a book, then several of these authors suggest alternatives for learning cataloging, among them online mentoring, online distance learning, web-based modules, electronic discussion lists, and train-the-trainer programs. Specialised knowledge, such as subject cataloging, authority control, and cataloging internet resources relies on a combination of approaches after graduation.

This is one of the best books published by Haworth — an essential purchase for all libraries, and required reading for library school administrators. Each author contributes a well-written, thought-provoking or practical piece that, when combined

with the others, forms a cohesive argument for the need for cataloging education on many levels. These days, it truly will take a village to raise a cataloguer. To paraphrase Pogo, 'We have met the teacher and it is us.'

Susan Hamburger, Pennsylvania State University

Immensely pragmatic

Olson, Hope A. *The power to name: locating the limits of subject representation in libraries*. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002. 261p A\$187.75 hard ISBN 1402007760 (available from DA Information Services)

C RITIQUING THE 'PROBLEMATIC LEGACY' OF SUBJECT REPRESENTATION from a feminist-critical hermeneutic, Hope Olson (University of Alberta) exposes the constructed nature of classification systems and subject headings and argues convincingly that subject naming has forced concepts into a 'procrustean bed' — a pattern that reflects the culture of Melvil Dewey and Charles Cutter. As a result, library catalogues embody an artificial language for a constructed, singular 'public' and follow rationalised patterns that privilege majority populations by claiming universality. These catalogues fail to accommodate diversity by misrepresenting and disenfranchising those outside the mainstream, and thus contribute to bias and marginalisation.

Olson deconstructs the 'universality' of Dewey's DDC and Cutter's *Rules for a dictionary catalog* through her technique of iteration that 'involves taking classic disciplinary text and re-reading or re-articulating it in light of recognised definitions'. Her juxtaposition reveals the forced homogenisation of concepts that results in a 'universal language' permitting repeated recall (*iter*) of named subjects; however, her parallel readings also reveal the Other(s) (*itara*), subjects regarded as unworthy or of lesser importance. Olson points out that even when literary warrant calls for a named concept, LCSH and DDC fail to grant identity, particularly when the concept lies outside the centres of privilege. As a result, library catalogues represent a legacy of marginalisation and misrepresentation, a deprivation of power and significance for Other(s) whose race, gender, and sexual orientation place them outside the mainstream — women, lesbians, and people of colour, for example, who do not fit into Dewey's 'pigeonholes'.

Olson also demonstrates the limits of LCSH as a universal language through the polarities of universality and diversity, subject versus object, and sameness versus difference. She points out that Cutter assumed the epistemological stance of a singular public that excluded those that 'don't fit', and that systems 'have limits that define them and, therefore, a system cannot be all-inclusive'. Olson provides several pertinent examples of LCSH's marginalisation of concepts outside the mainstream, such as 'unpaid work', as well as LCSH's limits in representing clusters of concepts such as race, gender, sexual orientation and occupation. Moreover, she points out that rather than simply 'instituting equality' for women, cataloguers should concern

...library catalogues embody an artificial language for a constructed, singular 'public'...

themselves with 'accommodating diversity' by recognising the essential differences of women (pp173–177).

Although Olson rejects the 'universal language' of library cataloguing as commonly practised, she points out LCSH's and DDC's capacity to accommodate diversity. Rather than overturn their utility in representing concepts, she offers several useful measures for incorporating multiple viewpoints rather than a singular public.

Rather than arguing for a new theory of information organisation, Olson's book calls for changes in current cataloguing practice that will accommodate the diverse publics of postmodern culture. Most readers will strain to follow Olson's close reasoning, and those not versed in feminist theory may question her technique of iteration. Nevertheless, librarians — especially cataloguers and reference librarians — will recognise her subject as one of the most intractable problems in library practice over the past century. Perhaps Olson's most salient point is her optimism for accommodating diversity within the constraints of LCSH and DDC. While readers may initially judge her book to be theoretical, her vision for an improved 'epistemic cartography' makes *The power to name* an immensely pragmatic work. It is strongly recommended for reference librarians and cataloguers, essential for academic libraries that support LIS schools.

Barry W Hamilton, Northeastern Seminary

Informing our choice

Kochtanek, Thomas R, and Matthews, Joseph R *Library information systems: from library automation to distributed information access solutions*. Westport CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2002. 287p US\$47.50 soft ISBN 1591580188

This item was designed to be a standard reference work...

KOCHTANEK AND MATTHEWS HAVE PRODUCED A SOLID WORK ON LIBRARY INFORMATION systems covering a wide range of technologies and management issues arising from their introduction. Several degree programs have already indicated they are using this as a text in information and library science courses. It enables students and those already working in libraries to understand and work with the practicalities of choosing, implementing and running information systems in libraries.

The authors bring strong professional interest and experience to this topic: Kochtanek is involved in work in creating digital libraries and is currently Associate Professor in the School of Information Science and Learning Technologies at the University of Missouri-Columbia, and Matthews is president of his own consulting company in Carlsbad, California and is widely known for his work in library automation and information systems.

The text begins with two chapters outlining the development of library information systems and enabling technologies, providing an understanding of the growth and importance of library information systems in the marketplace. Following this is a second grouping of chapters, looking at a range of technologies, including integrated library systems, open systems, telecommunications, networks and relevant standards. This part provides details of many of the practicalities of working with these systems,

explaining their design, operating requirements, use and considerations that may need to be made. The third part of this text covers management issues, including planning for IT, possible impacts on library services, selecting and managing systems, ensuring compatibility and usability. The last part looks at future considerations, including trends in technology and the development of digital libraries.

Written in an easily accessible style, the chapters in this text are both informative and authoritative. Within each chapter good use is made of section headings, bullet points and a few graphics to facilitate the location of individual elements and to make browsing and dipping into this work easy and effortless. Each chapter ends with a section of full notes and also includes suggested readings and suggested web resources for further information on each topic. The work ends with a comprehensive glossary of terms and a useful index.

This item was designed to be a standard reference work in the area of library information systems, and it has all the hallmarks of being successful in this market. The authors' intention was that this book would 'be beneficial and that the knowledge gained will support even greater design, development, implementation and evaluation of future solutions involving libraries and their end users'. This volume is a good purchase for those working specifically in this area, and a good reference work for those studying information and library science, even if it is not on your current reading list.

Alison Fields, The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand

If you *want* to talk about the books you love, this is for you

Langemack, Chapple *The booktalker's Bible: how to talk about the books you love to any audience.* Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2003. 199p \$US30.00 pap. ISBN 18002255800

HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THE VERB 'BOOKTALK'? AS IN, 'I BOOKTALKED BARBARA KINGSOLVER to a seniors group', or, I kid you not, 'I booktalked two books in half an hour'? Americans do seem to have a need to turn nouns into verbs. That grumble aside, this is a lively introduction to talking about books to an audience, which is something that librarians could and should do more of. There are difficulties, but the rewards are very satisfying, as you may have found. Chapple Langemack has given hundreds of booktalks to all sorts of groups, from children through to seniors in retirement homes. It is often assumed that talking about books is something to be reserved for the children's librarian, but of course adults are just as important a group to address. Adults rarely have the time to devote to finding out what new books have been published, and are very often content to stick to the same narrow

...breathy, folksy, chatty...

group of favourites. Librarians are in a good position to help new voices to be heard, even to form taste. There is a growth in the number of people belonging to reading groups, but there, too, certain authors are favoured at the expense of newcomers or neglected classics. Drawing on her experiences in amateur theatricals, as well as her expertise as a librarian, Langemack offers techniques for talking about books, and provides a list of suggested titles, all of which she has 'booktalked' successfully.

I am not sure that there is especial value in her list of suggestions for librarians outside the US; many of her choices are not widely available, or may have more relevant local equivalents. There are comparatively few classics or literary prize-winners on her list, which she explains by saying 'I felt vindicated somehow, or at least liberated, to know why there were acclaimed books that I just couldn't make myself read. The appeal factors were all wrong for me.' (It's all the authors' fault? *Naughty* authors.)

Langemack's advice on delivering talks is sound, however, and covers all aspects of preparation, delivery and evaluation of a successful talk. She emphasises that it is important to talk only about books which you are genuinely enthusiastic about and familiar with. Disasters occur when you try to wing it. Tailor your talk to your audience, try not to talk from notes, find a 'hook' to encourage your listeners to find out for themselves what happened next. The practicalities of warming up, checking the venue, personal presentation and so on, are all dealt with sensibly. For those who want to do more talking to groups about books (fiction or non-fiction), *The booktalker's Bible* is worth considering for its practical advice. You do have to tolerate Langemack's breathy, folksy, chatty style, though, and you should find your own list of books to talk about.

John MacRitchie, Manly Library

Letters to the editor

Bibliotheca Alexandrina: a library to spur peace and understanding in the Middle East; a note from Marilyn Segall and Myron Webber

We were in Egypt in October 2002 when Bibliotheca Alexandrina was opened, followed the lavish opening ceremony coverage on Nile TV and enjoyed the entertainment as well as televised library tours. This long-awaited event was attended by dignitaries from many countries and it was wonderful to have the opportunity to tour this magnificent library rebuilt very near the site of the ancient library on the shore of the Mediterranean. The spectacular structure of thirteen floors is shaped as a circle sloping towards the sea: the sloping roof allows the library to be illuminated by indirect daylight and one third of it is built below sea level while the other two thirds thrust above the Mediterranean coast. The library complex also includes a conference centre, science museum, planetarium, calligraphy institute and school of information studies. We were impressed to see the library crowded with tourists and users at every work table and computer station on the day we visited. The building has been called the 'fourth pyramid' by Mrs Mubarak, the head of the library's board of trustees and wife of the Egyptian president.

It was built with funds from the Egyptian government, UNESCO and many friends of the library associations in various countries. The operating budget for the library will come from funds from the Egyptian government, donations and library fees. A large deposit was recently received from the United States Agency for International Development. The

library complex comprises the main library, the Taha Hussein Library for blind and visually impaired users, the young children's library, the children's library, multimedia library, microfilm reading room, manuscripts reading room and rare books reading room. Collections are catalogued according to AACR 2 and classified by the DDC System and the system used for data entry is that of the Virginia Tech Library. The book collection is broad but not deep but there are plans to acquire many more documents as their budget permits. Its mission statement defines it as:

a window of Egypt on the world;
a window of the world on Egypt;
a library for the digital age, and
a centre for dialogue and peace.

It is this last objective which is so important now and for the region. Recent and not-so-recent history is full of examples of libraries becoming war booty or being destroyed by war. The great library of ancient Alexandria was destroyed by successive wars. It is a great loss to the world that the library in Bagdad was destroyed by fire during the recent war. The loss of documents and manuscripts is a loss for all of us as well as to scholars. Libraries can be a centre for dialogue, understanding, tolerance and peace studies. The ancient library in Alexandria was a centre for research and scholarship as well as a meeting place for cultures. There have been several recent conferences held or upcoming in the library conference centre which could encourage greater understanding and eventually peace including *The images of the other on the TV screen*, the upcoming

Sixth Meeting on the International Friends workshop on the culture of peace and an exhibit about the library complex at the Arab World Institute conference in Paris on 12 April 2003. A recent gift from the Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs could further intellectual freedom and ultimately peace. Their gift of the Beacon of Freedom of Expression database has more than 55 000 bibliographical references as well as literature on censorship and freedom of expression. We sincerely hope that the wonderful work of Bibliotheca Alexandrina continues and grows through the dissemination of information throughout the region as well as the hosting of conferences which foster dialogue, tolerance and understanding. It is through such initiatives that we may eventually see peace in the middle east.

Marilyn Segall lives in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. She has worked in several special government and corporate libraries. Myron Weber is an Associate

Professor with the Haskayne School of Business of the University of Calgary.

Celebrating Margaret Trask

Thank you so much for the two copies of the issue of the *Australian Library Journal* that celebrates the life of Margaret Trask. While I was most interested and in full agreement with the tributes paid to Margaret herself I was fascinated with the larger picture that emerged. I am sure that in years to come this particular issue of the journal will provide material for research scholars. It is a wonderful documentation of an era in Australian librarianship in particular. Perhaps some later issue could follow a similar pattern, and using a particular luminary record the social, literary and academic climate in which such a person operated. Thank you for including me in the table of contents of such an interesting and useful publication.

Maurice Saxby