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Editorial

In August last year (ALJ Vol 57 No. 3), in our special issue on community and workplace information literacy guest edited by Helen Partridge, we published a paper by a new author, Katrina Macdonald, from the University of Ballarat. Katrina's paper 'ESL Library Skills: an information literacy program for adults with low levels of English literacy' has just been selected from more than 350 articles on library instruction and information literacy by the American Library Association's Library Instruction Round Table as one of the top 20 instructional articles of 2008. Details can be found at: http://www3.baylor.edu/LIRT/lirtnews/2009/jun09.pdf

Congratulations Katrina. ALJ is delighted to have played a part in the recognition of your work.

Information literacy, digital literacy, pre-school and adult literacy were prominent topics at the ALIA Public Libraries Summit held at the National Library this month. No wonder. ABS numbers are alarming: approximately 46% of Australians aged 15-74 scored below the 'minimum required for individuals to meet the complex demands of everyday life and work in the emerging knowledge-based economy' (ABS 4228.0 – Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, 2006). The Summit was a promising attempt to encourage the Rudd government to move beyond the rhetoric of social inclusion and actually contribute to relief efforts for public libraries having to do more with less as people, local and state governments, all find themselves dealing with the effects of untrammelled financial adventurism. Public libraries in Australia and the US have been reporting increased use of services for accessing government information, finding and responding to employment opportunities, attending programs, and borrowing items which might previously have been purchased. Next issue we'll bring you a report on the Summit, and carry some of the major presentations.

This issue has something for everyone. We begin with a history of library technician course recognition by Gill Hallam and Paul Genoni which ends with a tough question: 'would [LIS education] be better served if the funds spent on course recognition were reallocated in order to support the community of library technician educators through enhanced forms of professional development and networking.' There are challenges for knowledge management educators as well. Our second paper by Afsaneh Hazeri and Bill Martin reports on recent research into staff and student perceptions of knowledge management, and argues for ‘promoting a comprehensive understanding of the KM concept’ plus changes in course packaging and marketing. Next up, Christine Yates, Helen Partridge and Christine Bruce report findings from preliminary research in the new field of health information literacy. They describe how ageing Australians (all of us) are ‘using information to maintain health.’

We also have papers from the coal face, where the consumer meets the provider. Neil Hinsch and Kate Dunn explain how the UNSW Library has, very successfully, turned itself inside out, adopting techniques from sales and marketing to anticipate information needs and demonstrate tangible value. Then Lara Cain Gray writes eloquently about what it means for an Australian librarian to be a subject specialist and cultural ambassador in one of the world’s greatest libraries. Our sixth paper presents an intensely personal viewpoint from Fiona Blackburn. She emphasises the significance of Indigenous collections for non-Indigenous people and argues passionately for a much broader understanding of cross-cultural issues. As I said, something for everyone.

Finally, if you’re interested in joining the small and select group of referees who provide comments to authors on papers submitted for publication in ALJ, I’d be delighted to hear from you on: ian.mccallum@alianet.alia.org.au. Peer review fuels our credibility – and identifies new contributors like Katrina.

Ian McCallum
Editor
July 2009

Library technician course recognition: meeting the challenge of a distributed national education program

Gillian Hallam and Paul Genoni

This paper looks at the challenges presented for the Australian Library and Information Association by its role as the professional association responsible for ensuring the quality of Australian library technician graduates. There is a particular focus on the issue of course recognition, where the Association's role is complicated by the need to work alongside the national quality assurance processes that have been established by the relevant technical education authorities. The paper describes the history of course recognition in Australia; examines the relationship between course recognition and other quality measures; and describes the process the Association has undertaken recently to ensure appropriate professional scrutiny in a changing environment of accountability.

Manuscript received May 2008. Based on a paper written for the IFLA Education and Training Section conference held in Quebec in August 2008.
This is a refereed paper.

Introduction

In their study of standards of LIS education across the world, Dalton and Levinson (2000) identified three models that aim to establish and maintain the standards for LIS education: governmental monitoring; formalised LIS accreditation/approval processes; and individual course/departmental standards. The processes in place in the United Kingdom, through the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), in the United States through the American Library Association (ALA), and in Australia, through the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), are examples of the second model of formalised LIS accreditation/recognition processes, although each is distinctive (Hallam, Partridge & McAllister, 2004).

In Australia, ALIA acts as the standards body for the library and information profession, which includes responsibility for the recognition of LIS courses leading to a library and information studies qualification. The recognised courses can be offered by universities or by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), with the latter consisting principally of colleges of Technical and Further Education (TAFE). The course recognition process is directly linked to membership of ALIA, with the categories of Associate membership, which requires members to hold an ALIA-recognised LIS qualification at undergraduate or graduate levels; and Library Technician membership, with members holding an ALIA-recognised library technician qualification.

While formal education programs for librarians in Australia were introduced in 1944, when a qualifying examination became established for entry into the profession, the first course for paraprofessional staff was commenced only in 1970. This library technician course was developed in response to the changing dynamics of the workforce and a shortage of professional librarians, with a curriculum that focused on vocational, practical skills as opposed to the more theoretical body-of-knowledge covered in librarianship courses. Under the education standards process, ALIA stands in an unusual situation, recognising not only the professional courses offered by universities, but also eighteen courses that lead to library technician qualifications.

This paper discusses the challenges facing ALIA in recognising courses that constitute part of a national training package, but are delivered at the local level by individual RTOs. It is a circumstance which results in multiple forms and levels of accountability and quality assurance, with different processes put in place by the national body responsible for educational quality (AQTF); the state-based education authorities; the individual RTOs operating both within and outside the TAFE framework; and ALIA as the professional association representing the relevant industry.

The recognition of library technician courses has been before ALIA as a significant issue since 2006. At a time when a number of the RTOs were reaching the end of their existing period of recognition, the Association, through its Education Reference Group (later the Education and Workplace Learning Standing Committee), began working to revise the course recognition process in order to optimise its effectiveness and efficiency. As far as possible, this needed to be achieved in a way that took account of the multiple forms of accountability required of the RTOs while also ensuring the needs and interests of the Association and the technician educators were being met.

Historical review of formal recognition of library technician courses

In order to understand the current context for ALIA's recognition of library technician qualifications it is necessary to briefly review past developments.

Discussions regarding the need for formal library technician training took place throughout the 1960s, and the first course for technicians was established at Box Hill Girls' Technical College (Victoria) in 1970. Victoria was the focus of early development and within several years courses had also been established at Prahran and Footscray Technical Colleges, before spreading to other states in the mid 1970s. These early Victorian courses were managed by the Library Courses (Vocational) Standing Committee reporting to the State Council for Technical Education (Pivec, 1975), and courses in other states were developed and managed by similar authorities.

There was soon concern, however, that the separate development of courses within each state would result in inconsistencies in terms of their curriculum and quality. As Edward Flowers noted, by the mid 1970s:

> Concern was being felt at the undesirable divergences which had developed between library technician courses established in different states, divergences which made it difficult to secure reciprocal acceptance of library technician qualifications between the states, so impeding library technician mobility, and the achievement of satisfactory Australia-wide salary scales and working conditions. (Flowers, 1979, p.371)

Pressure began to build for the then Library Association of Australia (LAA) to take a role in overseeing these courses, largely with a view to ensuring a degree of standardisation between states. In a 1975 overview of the early developments in technicians' education Catherine Pivec expressed a hope that the LAA would '…produce for the first time guidelines for standards for courses etc, leading to possible accreditation of courses Australia-wide, so that parity of qualifications interstate will be achieved' (Pivec, 1975, p.53).

It was with a view to achieving some standardisation between courses that the Library Courses (Vocational) Standing Committee convened a national workshop in Melbourne in 1976. An outcome of this meeting was the preparation of the *Guidelines for the Education of Library Technicians* (Library Courses, 1976), a first attempt at ensuring a basic degree of consistency between the various courses. It was also suggested at this meeting that '…recognition of courses could be undertaken by the Library Association of Australia, using procedures similar to those already adopted for professional courses' (Ramsay, 1978, p.137).

These calls for a recognition process were heard within the LAA, with Neil Radford, then Chair of the Board of Education, noting that:

> There appears to be an urgent need to establish standards for courses for library technicians. These courses have tended to develop along somewhat different lines from state to state and both technicians and their employers have expressed concern about the quality of some courses. (Radford, 1978, p.105)

The Association, however, while apparently concerned about ensuring a consistent standard of technician graduates, was largely unconcerned about the standardisation of the curriculum. As a member of the Board of Education, Ian Miller, reported at the time:

> [The Association] believed that the exit abilities of students should be the appropriate measure of the quality of the course content. In other words, the LAA and more particularly the Board of Education would expect to find a variety of different paths being chosen to reach the same exit level standards. (Miller, 1979, p.10)

Subsequently the Association's Board of Education developed criteria for the recognition of technicians' courses based on recommendations from the 1976 workshop, and in 1977 the Association formalised a *Statement on the Recognition of Library Technician Courses*. In keeping with Miller's claims about a plurality of educational pathways, the statement was primarily concerned with the 'tasks' for which technician graduates should be prepared by their education rather than attempting to ensure they experienced a standardised curriculum.

The institutions offering courses for library technicians were subsequently invited to seek recognition of their courses, with Radford noting that 'the goal is to persuade employers to appoint as library technicians only those who have completed a course recognised by the Association' (Radford, 1978, p.105). Formal recognition by the LAA commenced in 1978, and in the same year the Association established a category of membership for library technicians.

It is relevant that the discussions that preceded the introduction of the technicians' courses took place at the same time the profession was grappling with the issue of professional education and leading moves to have courses established within universities or colleges of advanced education. A focus of these negotiations was the issue of the appropriate level for a first professional qualification—that is, should the basic level of entry be a three year Bachelors program or a graduate qualification of one year. It has been argued (Carroll, 2007) that the technicians' qualification was devised with the expectation that professional education would be at the graduate level, and that a therefore highly professionalised workforce would require a pool of technical assistants. As events transpired dual pathways (undergraduate and graduate) were developed for entry at the professional level, with technicians' courses nevertheless being established to provide a third pathway into library work.

As a result the emphasis of much of the early literature regarding library technicians in Australia was on establishing the exact nature of their workplace roles (Ramsay, 1978). There was a particular concern with separating the technician's role from that of entry-level librarians, and in negotiating matters related to career paths for technicians, including the options that should be provided if they later wished to complete a professional qualification (Radford, 1978; Young, 1979; Hyland, 1990; Ladd, 1992).

Following the introduction of the course recognition process there was very little, if any, investigation of the role or success of course recognition in ensuring the consistency or standard of technicians' courses. Debate continued to focus on the role of the technician in the workplace and how this might relate to their education (Smeaton, 1985; Hyland, 1990). When Jean Whyte provided a 'short history' of Australian course recognition in 1985 she wrote very little about the recognition of the technician courses. She did suggest, however, that the LAA had become involved in recognising these courses more in the interests of maintaining the boundaries between professionals and technicians rather than because they were concerned about the state of technicians' education *per se*.

> Why did the Library Association of Australia decide to try to control the education of library technicians? Because this was seen as part of a duty to improve libraries or because we wanted to preserve what is *not* technicians' work? (Whyte, 1985, p.23)

Irrespective of the reason for recognition of technicians' courses, by the late 1970s a pattern for the management and recognition of these courses had been established, and it would remain largely unchanged for the next two decades. That is, state education authorities were responsible for the overall regulation of colleges providing training; curriculum was developed independently by each college; and recognition was granted by the LAA (after 1990 the Australian Library and Information Association). The recognition process during this period was managed by the Association's Board of Education, and based on the description of tasks included in the *Statement on the Recognition of Library Technician Courses* (later the *Statement on the Recognition of First Award Courses: Technician Level).* The recognition process included a visit to training colleges by a representative team chosen by the Board of Education. These visits were undertaken in order to view first hand the conditions under which courses were provided, and allowed the visitors to discuss the courses with relevant teaching staff and educational managers.

A visit was undertaken every seven years for each recognised course, and in the interim colleges were required to submit an annual report advising the Association of any relevant changes to the management of courses, resources, curriculum, and staffing.

Given the requirement for the Association to recognise both professional and technician courses, the cost associated with recognition was a substantial impost on the LAA and ALIA. In 1979 it was estimated to be 9% of the Association's budget (Bower, 1979). There was an early appreciation that there was a potential duplication of cost and effort when recognition was given for those courses which were also tightly regulated at the state level, as was the case with the technical colleges and the colleges of advanced education. As Neil Radford noted in a paper given to a 1980 conference on Australian library education:

> …the Board's course recognition work is very costly. Certainly the general Council and the general treasurer are becoming increasingly uneasy about the proportion of the Association's scarce resources which are channelled to this work . . . It is frequently argued that because [some courses] are already closely controlled by the state higher education authorities, which conduct their own assessments for accreditation, there is little point in the LAA duplicating this work and conducting its own assessment. I would argue that while it may be the higher education authority's responsibility to ensure the academic quality of courses conducted under its auspices, it is still the professional association's obligation to satisfy itself that entrants to the profession receive an adequate preparation. (Radford, 1980, p.45)

This duplication of effort between state (and national) education authorities and the professional association is one which continues to vex the recognition process for library technicians' courses in Australia to this day.

Recent developments impacting on the recognition of technician courses

Significant changes were made in the area of education for library technicians and library assistants in 1999, with the development of a new national training package, the Museums and Library/Information Services Training Package (IBSA, 2004). The agency responsible for the formulation of the Package, with considerable industry consultation, was CREATE (Cultural Research Education and Training Enterprises Australia). In 2004, advice on training for the cultural sector was transferred to Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA) as the relevant industry skills council. Version 2 of the Training Package was released in 2007 (NTIS, 2008) following the review and evaluation of the initial package.

As the peak industry body, ALIA again had significant input into the design and development of this revised package (ALIA, 2008).

The Training Package describes the knowledge and skills or competencies required by library and information workers up to and including library technician level, if they are to perform effectively in their workplace. It groups the competencies at the various levels into national qualifications (Certificate, Diploma, etc) that align to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF, 2007). The package currently comprises three specific components: the Competency Standards, which establish units of competency reflecting workplace outcomes; the Assessment Guidelines, which describe the industry requirements for assessment; and the Qualifications Framework, which details how the units of competency are packaged into nationally recognised qualifications (IBSA, 2004). A further review of the Museums and Library/Information Services Training Package is anticipated in the near future.

A second important development was the introduction in 2000 of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). The AQTF provides a set of standards which seeks to achieve nationally consistent, high-quality training and assessment services for the clients of Australia's vocational education and training system. As will be described, ALIA has subsequently been working with library technician educators to collaboratively develop meaningful and relevant course recognition criteria for library technician courses that will not only encompass the quality assurance processes required by the AQTF, but also build a community of practice that will add strength and engagement to paraprofessional education in the Australian library sector.

At about the same time as the introduction of the Training Package and the implementation of the AQTF, ALIA was undergoing a major organisational restructure. The implementation of the Association's new structure meant that the Board of Education, which had been responsible for course recognition, ceased to exist in 2000. The responsibilities of the Board of Education were transferred to the Board of Directors, and a new committee appointed by the Board, the Education Reference Group, was given the task of reviewing the Association's education policies to ensure their relevance to changing educational contexts. Revised education policies were endorsed by the Board of Directors in 2005 and 2006. These included: *Library and Information Sector: Core Knowledge, Skills and Attributes* (ALIA, 2005a); *Courses in Library and Information Management* (ALIA, 2005b); and *ALIA's Role in Education of Library and Information Professionals* (ALIA, 2005c). These various policies stated the Association's philosophies and values with regard to Australian library education, including an ongoing commitment to course recognition.

Course recognition, for both professional and technician level courses therefore remains a core activity for the Association. The specifics of the course recognition process are available on the ALIA website (ALIA, 2008). The key criteria for recognition of courses encompass:

- course design
- curriculum content
- assessment
- staffing
- resourcing
- quality assurance mechanisms
- infrastructure.

A site visit by a panel comprised of educators, employers and ALIA representatives remains an integral part of course recognition activities.

Following the period of restructure the Board of Directors felt that there was no immediate need to subject the new library technician programs to the course recognition process. The curriculum content of the training package was seen to be appropriately aligned with current industry needs as a result of the input into its development—and redevelopment—provided by ALIA and its representatives. In mid 2006, however, members of the ALIA Education Reference Group expressed their interest in exploring the opportunities for a revised approach to paraprofessional course recognition. This was felt to be necessary in order to determine the relevance of existing criteria for course recognition, and to build on the common dimensions of the national training package by considering the potential value of peer review as an evaluation process in line with the premise that, 'stakeholders and clients are the best judges of an organisation's quality and performance' (AQTF, 2008a, p.6). First and foremost, however, ALIA needed to be confident that course recognition was still valid and appropriate for vocational LIS courses in the 21st century.

In Melbourne in July 2006 the Association hosted a meeting of library technician educators from all states of Australia to discuss the potential for peer review of courses. Peer review was believed to offer participants the chance to discuss and share good practice and to develop a community of practice for technician educators. The forum was facilitated by a Working Party comprising two members of the Education Reference Group (Gill Hallam and Paul Genoni) and, ex-officio, the ALIA Education Manager (Marie Murphy). The discussions at the forum proceeded on the basis that while the course design and curriculum content were effectively determined by the National Training Package, a peer review process could potentially allow educators to consider how the different courses were resourced and delivered and to explore the range of learning activities and assessment approaches. In this way educators could potentially share best practice and learn from each other. Each representative at the forum gave a short overview of the key characteristics of their institution's program, highlighting aspects of the course which were distinctive, innovative or particularly valuable to students. There was a strong focus on the importance of the design and delivery of learning activities and assessment, rather than on the course content. Feedback from the participants indicated that the forum was very valuable to them in their role as educators and that the initiative by ALIA to bring them together to discuss matters of common interest was a significant one for the Association.

This initial meeting was followed by a second forum held in Melbourne in October 2007, when the technician educators were asked to consider a basis for assessing excellence in learning and teaching, to establish a framework for assessment of courses, and to further the peer review process. As the main activity of the day, the educators worked in groups to determine the value of an example taken from the higher education sector, the Teaching Capabilities Framework (QUT, 2004). Each group was asked to work through one of four principles of teaching excellence in order to determine its application for vocational education, and the relevance of the content and terminology to the sector. The four principles were:

- engaging learners
- designing for learning
- assessing for learning
- managing for learning.

Ironically, as the ALIA team sought to work closely with library technician educators to determine how to support and encourage quality teaching, the vocational education sector itself was raising the stakes in terms of issues of quality. As noted, library technician courses are delivered by RTOs. RTOs are generally—but not limited to—Colleges of Technical and Further Education (TAFE). In 2007, the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) released a revision of the Australian Quality Training Framework, AQTF 2007, as a national set of standards to assure

’nationally consistent, high quality training and assessment services for clients of Australia’s vocational education and training system’ (AQTF, 2007, p.1). The AQTF comprises three components:

- Essential Standards for Registration
- Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies
- Excellence Criteria.

AQTF documentation states that the beneficiaries of AQTF 2007 will include both individual learners and, more broadly, industry stakeholders, as well as the RTOs themselves and the state-based registering bodies. It is claimed that under the AQTF learners will ‘have equitable access to quality training and assessment services tailored to their needs and the learning outcomes they seek’. At the same time industry, which would include ALIA and employers, will ‘have confidence that RTOs are delivering training and assessment services that achieve the skill requirements of nationally recognized qualifications developed by industry’ (AQTF, 2007, p.2). Statements such as these again raised questions regarding the relevance of, and need for, course recognition processes for professional associations such as ALIA.

Further advice was received in early 2008 indicating that additional quality assurance processes were to be introduced in the vocational education arena. These National Quality Indicators would have the goal of measuring the quality of:

- learner engagement
- employer satisfaction
- competency completion.

All RTOs will be required to implement three quality indicator processes each year: a Learner Questionnaire; an Employer Questionnaire; and a Competency Questionnaire. In addition, a voluntary process is currently being trialled by 15 RTOs which seeks to encourage and recognise high performance. The proposed Excellence Criteria seek evidence of strategic approaches to quality and continuous improvement in a number of areas, including learning and assessment, client focus and engagement with industry and communities (AQTF, 2008b).

These various developments in the delivery and monitoring of vocational education inevitably imposed a degree of uncertainty on the ALIA course recognition process. The curriculum content is ostensibly determined by the competency standards of the National Training Package, while the quality assurance processes currently being developed within the AQTF 2007 framework seek to monitor the issues of staffing, resourcing, infrastructure and quality assurance mechanisms. Theoretically, the Quality Indicators aim to scrutinise the relevance and quality of the training being delivered, while the Excellence Criteria support high quality practice and continuous improvement. It will be interesting to see how the process develops in the near future in order to determine the extent to which the AQTF processes measure the performance of the RTO as an entity, or the quality of the learning and teaching in individual programs delivered by the RTOs. At this time, ALIA seeks to work closely with library technician educators to better understand the processes and activities that are mandatory for them as part of the AQTF 2007 framework. ALIA seeks to ensure that its course recognition processes not only avoid duplication of effort, but also legitimately meet the fundamental goal 'to foster excellence in the provision of education for the Australian library and information services sector and to ensure that all students undertaking a course experience a quality program, with an appropriate curriculum delivered effectively and supported by the required resources' (ALIA, 2008).

Subsequent to the October 2007 workshop the four groups of technician educators were asked to continue the development of the assessments relevant to their specific dimension of teaching excellence (i.e. Engaging learners, Designing for learning, Assessing for learning, Managing for learning). A series of teleconferences was held in April 2008 with the groups to assess progress and to further encourage engagement with the principles of quality teaching. Unfortunately the pace of the educators' everyday lives had seen some slippage in terms of the development of the documents.

The teleconferences also revealed another development that had not been made apparent at either of the face-to-face forums—a further indication of the rapid progress of the quality assurance processes under AQTF 2007. Teleconference participants indicated that in the months subsequent to the October 2007 meeting they had been asked by their institutions to complete a considerable amount of documentation to prepare their courses for an official audit as part of the AQTF 2007 process. However, while ALIA has stressed the need to avoid irrelevant duplication in the preparation of evidence about the quality of library technician courses offered, very little of the information provided as part of the AQTF process was proactively provided to the Working Party to help illuminate the potential relationship (including overlap) between AQTF 2007 and course recognition.

The third annual meeting of the technician educators was held in Sydney in October 2008. There was a degree of urgency at this meeting brought on by the lack of progress in the previous twelve months and the imminent end to the extended period of recognition that had been enjoyed by the various RTOs.

The Working Group needed to use the meeting to finalise the procedure for recognition, including both the annual reporting requirements and the details of the site visits.

There had been some optimism prior to the meeting that the AQTF reporting requirements could reduce the amount of data collection and reporting required by ALIA. This, unfortunately, proved to be misplaced due to several reasons:

- The AQTF depended upon an irregular reporting cycle, with RTOs being selected for auditing on an occasional and random basis.
- The 'level' at which auditing occurred was in many cases at a broader point in the RTO's academic hierarchy than required by ALIA. That is, it might occur at a level that subsumed the teaching unit responsible for delivering the technicians' course, and therefore did not provide the necessary detail about the courses being recognised.
- There was an element of confidentiality involved in the AQTF process, as the result of which associated documentation could not be shared with ALIA.

The lack of progress in the previous twelve months, and in particular the lack of contact between the RTOs, had also cast some doubt over the viability of peer review as a component of course recognition. The Working Party therefore took a more proactive position at this meeting, providing the attendees with both a draft of the course recognition documentation in the form of a questionnaire to be completed prior to site visits, and a framework and schedule for a series of visits to be undertaken to most RTOs in early 2009.

This proved to be a very productive meeting, focusing in particular on negotiating the detail of the course recognition questionnaire. This document had to take account of the needs of the Association as expressed in the course recognition process; the ability of the RTOs to provide the required information; and the ongoing concern to avoid unnecessary duplication with other accountability processes. A revised draft of the questionnaire was distributed subsequently and used as the basis for further discussion and negotiation using both a wiki created for the purpose by ALIA and a further teleconference in November 2008.

The finalised versions of the questionnaire were to be completed and returned by RTOs prior to the proposed site visits. These visits commenced in February 2009 and continued until May. The participants are a member of the Working Party (Gill Hallam); the Association's Education Manager (Dianne Walton-Sonda); and a local library technician. RTOs that are successful in meeting the requirements of the course recognition process will have their courses approved for seven years subject to satisfactory annual reporting.

Conclusion

Through the course recognition process, ALIA seeks to 'work collaboratively with educators and training providers, employers and practitioners to promote the development and continuous improvement of courses in library and information management' (ALIA, 2005c). The Association is keenly aware that it has important roles to play as the facilitator of communication between educators, and in steering and guiding the interaction through regular forums and meetings. Participants attending the library technician educator forums report that they benefit greatly from the opportunities to discuss matters of common interest with their peers, and that these occasions are highly valued as professional development activities. The Working Party also senses, however, a degree of passivity on the part of the educators, in that under the pressure of workloads there is not always the opportunity or incentive to take responsibility for moving the process forward. Despite examples of meaningful collaboration between institutions in specific geographic areas, the Working Party is concerned whether there will be sufficient engagement and momentum to effectively establish the peer review process as it had been envisaged.

The concept of ALIA course recognition seems to be regarded negatively by some educators, with the Association seen to be wielding the 'top down' stick, rather than attempting to provide an avenue for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning that will benefit the LIS professions. These educators tend to focus on the site visit as a scrutinising inspection with the visiting panel seemingly hoping to find reasons to 'fail' the institution as a course provider. The Association, through the Working Group, would rather that educators used the visit as an opportunity to highlight the value of their courses to the LIS sector; to showcase innovation and excellence in teaching and learning; and to utilise the leverage that can result when visiting 'experts' meet with key institutional players.

The Working Party is unsure whether the current unfavourable attitude of some educators towards site visits might result from anecdotes about past visits (although none have actually taken place in the past decade), or whether the culture of the institutions themselves might mitigate against a welcoming approach to independent, external scrutiny. As indicated, the RTOs offer courses in a highly regulated and assessed environment, and a certain amount of 'assessment fatigue' is not unexpected. Indeed it is one of the disappointments of the revamp of the course recognition process that it has not been able to significantly reduce the RTO's duplication of effort in this regard.

A further challenge for the Working Party has been to engage as many technician educators as possible in the review of course recognition and the potential for peer review, while at the same time knowing that some consistency of representation at the various meetings and teleconferences would be beneficial. It was the case, however, that only a small core group of educators was able to attend all three ALIA forums, and RTOs were sometimes represented at teleconferences by educators who had not attended the forums. Continuity and consistency of communication has therefore been an issue for the Working Party.

This article has highlighted some of the recent and ongoing challenges facing ALIA in what may be described as the quicksand of vocational course recognition. While the accreditation of professional courses offered by universities can be seen as the implementation of a long established and widely practised process to ensure quality outcomes, the picture is somewhat distorted in the area of paraprofessional education. Whereas once the professional association was the foremost advocate and defender of high educational standards, the need for rigour and quality in vocational education has now been independently addressed by the relevant national and state educational authorities.

At present ALIA maintains its role in course recognition with a reformed process that is being ‘tested’. The question remains, however, as to whether the concept of paraprofessional course recognition has become anachronistic. It is open to the Association to decide that LIS education would be better served if the funds spent on course recognition were reallocated in order to support the community of library technician educators through enhanced forms of professional development and networking.

As Neil Radford noted in 1980, ALIA course recognition is an expensive undertaking which involves duplication with other authorities. And although Radford concluded that recognition was nonetheless necessary the intervening decades have seen ever more advanced accountability required of the vocational training sector, to the point where the opposite conclusion could be drawn. The Association will be in a better position to assess this matter following a review of the current round of course recognition.

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Responding to the challenges of KM education in the LIS sector: some academic and professional perspectives

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As a newly emerging field of study, KM education is faced with significant challenges which continue to evolve. Informed by wider organisational perspectives, this paper presents the findings of recent research into this field. The first part of the research was in the form of an online survey canvassing the views of the wider LIS community on the responsibility of LIS schools for KM education; the second consisted of a collection of in-depth interviews with LIS academics who were engaged in education for KM. It is clear that the main challenges associated with KM education in the LIS discipline concern people's perceptions of KM and the place of KM in LIS education. Changes need to be made, both to these perceptions and to the ways in which LIS schools market and package their KM offerings.

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Introduction

Because of the broad, multi-dimensional nature of knowledge management (KM) and its relative youth, library and information science (LIS) schools face significant challenges with regard to KM education. As a field of research and practice, knowledge management remains something of a work-in-progress. The research reported here was informed by that wider managerial and organisational perspective embodied in the so-called Second Generation School of Knowledge Management, an holistic approach combining the traditional supply-side perspective (capture, codification and re-use) with the demand side (creation and innovation) (Firestone and McElroy 2003; IFLA 2008). It also takes into account perspectives emerging directly from the LIS professions, notably the IFLA KM Section's definition of knowledge management as:

> …a process of creating, storing, sharing, applying and re-using organisational knowledge to enable an organisation to achieve its goals and objectives (IFLA 2008).

In an educational context, the professional literature has identified the major challenges in terms of the breadth of the KM concept, the multiplicity of its required competencies, and the identification and implementation of elements of KM into LIS curricula (Koenig 1999; Milne 1999; Hawamdeh et al. 2004).

Increasingly, much of the emphasis within the literature has been on the interdisciplinary nature of KM and the issues of integrating different disciplines within programs, including resource implications, and the difficulty of finding staff who are both willing and able to teach KM (Hawamdeh 2005; Sutton 2007). While at the moment there is evidence of disparate approaches to KM in different departments, with provider perspectives a major determinant of curriculum content (Chaudhry and Higgins 2001; Hawamdeh et al. 2004; Saito 2007), there are also signs (Loon and Hawamdeh 2002) that an interdisciplinary and integrative approach to KM education is likely to prove more fruitful. Achievement of such a goal will require the integration of different conceptual approaches, together with an acceptance that determining the appropriate level of involvement from associated disciplines, creating consensus among them and catering for such integration will be challenging issues for KM education (Loon and Hawamdeh 2002).

While the need for LIS schools to respond to the challenges of knowledge management education has been demonstrated (Hazeri et al. 2009), this response is unlikely to occur in the absence of some guiding principles and findings from research. The challenges discussed in the literature are substantially based on the subjective interpretations of observers, rather than on in-depth investigation in a wider, 'real world' context. This paper presents research into the perceptions of two groups of people regarding the major issues in KM education for LIS. The first group, selected to take part in the online survey due to their special interest in KM and/or LIS education, is made up of members of the global LIS community; the second group, invited to give their responses via interview, consists of LIS heads of schools and their senior staff.

Methodology

An integrated design (embodying survey and follow-up interviews) was chosen to enable the researchers to touch on the different dimensions and qualities of the phenomena under investigation, and to add rigour, complexity and richness to the research through the creation of complementary data (Hunter and Brewer 2003; McMurray et al. 2004).

Within the professional literature, the lack of a clear understanding of the concept and of the importance of tacit knowledge as opposed to explicit knowledge has been regarded as a significant reason for the current confusion between information and knowledge in the LIS sector (Jashapara 2005). Hence, by providing a definition of 'knowledge', including both tacit and explicit forms, an attempt was made at the beginning of the survey to conceptualise different forms of knowledge and to help the promotion of an understanding of what the researchers mean by KM. The web survey was designed to obtain access to participants from a wide cross-section of the LIS profession around the world. In order to gain the perceptions of people who were knowledgeable regarding KM or KM education, the researchers used purposive sampling, employing national and international mailing lists related to the topic. This method of data collection has been identified in the literature of online surveys as the most likely tool to obtain insights from targeted individuals in a range of LIS-related studies (Zhang 1999). According to Patton (Patton 1990) 'The logic and power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth'. For the present survey, potential communities of respondents were identified by navigating the internet, and consulting the web sites of major LIS societies. To increase research reliability, research pioneers recommend using pre-tests, pilot studies and replication (Neuman 2000). In this case, a random sample of leading LIS scholars from Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States was employed as the basis for pre-testing and their feedback was incorporated into the final draft of the questionnaire. For the actual survey, a formal email was first sent to the list owners seeking their permission to release the link to the questionnaire through their list. Then, in April 2006, an email including the link to a web-based questionnaire was sent to those pre-identified mailing lists, including:

- IFLA KMDG-L: The IFLA Knowledge Management Section mailing list
- ASIS & T SIGKM-L: The American Society for Information Science & Technology Special Interest Group on Knowledge Management discussion list
- CILIP LIS-EDU: The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals Education Librarians group discussion list, and
- JESSE: A listserv discussion group on LIS education issues moderated by Dr Gretchen Whitney of the University of Tennessee School of Information Sciences.

The survey results were used to guide the design and implementation of the subsequent in-depth interviews. The in-depth interview is the most common data collection instrument employed in qualitative research and exploratory studies, where the researcher seeks to obtain a deep understanding of the topic (Minichiello et al. 1995; Denzin and Lincoln 2000; King 2004). Interviewees were located by searching the websites of LIS schools with accredited programs from ALA, ALIA and CILIP. The researchers then conducted semi-structured, telephone interviews with 18 heads and senior staff of LIS schools located mainly in English-speaking countries during September and October 2006.

For data analysis and interpretation, it is recommended that researchers combine results rather than reporting them in separate sets (McMurray et al. 2004). Hence, the triangulation of data sets as discussed by Flick (2004) was employed for this stage of the research in order to assess the data emerging in separate sets in relation to each other.

Demographics of the research participants

Determining the frame population or the size of the sample is not always possible in web-administered surveys (Zhang 1999; Umbach 2004). Presenting a case study of web-based surveys in LIS and other related areas Zhang (1999) identified several studies that reported the number of responses instead of response rates, as the surveys were conducted on multiple related mailing lists and featured overlap among subscribers. The current research takes a similar approach and makes no attempt to compute the response rate. The total number of responses received for the questionnaire was 106, an amount which is considered to be sufficient for the purpose of this research (Hazeri et al. 2009).

As indicated above, the second phase of the research involved the completion of 18 in-depth interviews (each lasting between 45 and 60 minutes) with academics from LIS schools that offer courses or programs in KM. The number of interviews was deemed to be sufficient for the purpose in that, as the exercise neared a conclusion, no new themes were observed to be emerging from the data. A detailed analysis of the survey and interview demographics is provided below.

Country of residence

The majority of respondents to the survey were from the USA (35.8%), and Australia (34.0%) and likewise for the interviews, with eight and six interviewees respectively hailing from those countries. Other participants in both phases of the research were drawn mainly from the UK, Kuwait and Canada. This homogeneity occurred because of the sampling method and the selection criteria for participants, and it served to enhance the compatibility of the findings between the survey and the interviews.

Table 1: Country of residence of the research participants

Country	Interviewees	Survey respondents		
	Frequency	Frequency	Per cent	Cumulative per cent
USA	8	38	35.8	35.8
Australia	6	36	34.0	69.8
UK	1	8	7.5	77.3
Kuwait	1	5	4.7	82.0
Canada	1	4	3.8	85.8
Others	1	15	14.2	100.0
Total	18	106	100.0	

Gender/Age

In broad alignment with the gender structure of the LIS profession, most of the responses to the questionnaire are from females (75.5%). However, the presence of an even number of male and female participants in the interviews helped bring a little more equilibrium to the proceedings.

As shown in Table 2, the majority of the survey participants (93.4%) were aged from 25 to 65 years old. Within this age range, however, most of the responses (33%) came from people aged 46 to 55. No attempt was made to determine the age of interviewees.

Table 2: Age groups of survey respondents

Age group	Frequency	Per cent	Cumulative per cent
Under 25	2	1.9	1.9
25-35	21	19.8	21.7
36-45	22	20.8	42.5
46-55	35	33.0	75.5
56-65	21	19.8	95.3
Over 65	5	4.7	100.0
Total	106	100.0	

Occupation

Responses to a survey question about job titles were categorised into four broad groups: academics, students, librarians and knowledge professionals. The first group included educators, deans of LIS schools and coordinators of KM/LIS programs. Students mainly consisted of graduate and research students. Librarians included library professionals and practitioners. For the last group, based on Angela Abell and Nigel Oxbrow's diagram of 'Roles in knowledge-enabled organisations' (2005), three sub-categories of knowledge professionals emerged: knowledge-conscious leaders, knowledge facilitators, and knowledge specialists. The responses from the first two (academic) groups of participants were reinforced by input from the last two (practitioner) groups.

Table 3: Occupation of survey respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Per cent	Cumulative per cent
Academics	31	29.2	29.2
Students	14	13.2	42.5
Librarians	38	35.8	78.3
Knowledge Professionals	21	19.8	98.1
Others	2	1.9	100.0
Total	106	100.0	

Regarding the specific occupations of interviewees, as indicated in Table 4, two-thirds held the position of Assistant/Associate Professor or higher.

Table 4: Position of interviewees

Position	Frequency	Per cent	Cumulative per cent
Head of school	3	16.6	16.6
Director of program	4	22.2	38.8
Professor	1	5.5	44.4
Assistant/ Associate professor	4	22.2	66.6
Senior lecturer	5	27.7	94.4
Lecturer	1	5.5	100.0
Total	18	100.0	

Findings

While the professional literature has mainly highlighted the challenges associated with the interdisciplinary nature of the field, its wide spectrum of KM constituents and the multiplicity of its educational requirements, other issues have emerged from the findings of this research. To help LIS schools in the development of appropriate strategies, the issue of LIS responsibilities in relation to KM was also examined from the point of view of both survey participants and interviewees. What follows is a report of the themes that emerged as the challenges of KM education in the LIS sector, followed by recommendations from research participants to resolve them. These are reported here in direct quotes from research participants. Additional support has been provided by the literature.

Perceptions of KM and KM education

The interview data clearly reflected the influence of individual perceptions of KM and a lack of consensus as to what it was, leading to opposition to, and unevenness in, implementation of the concept. Hence:

> If you are saying you want to include KM, I think the obstacles will be people like me and Tom Wilson who say: 'What is this? Show me the essence of this field.' And if we are going to include something so that we get better public relations for our school well, that's fine—but let's know what we are doing it for, and not introduce something that is a hollow shell, which is what I see most of the time.

And again:

> I know of academics in other institutions who regard KM as simply a relabelling of IM. So there is a bit of a challenge there, and a lot of staff do not accept KM as anything particularly unique.

This lack of a standard definition for KM and the fear of losing out in any subsequent changes also helps to explain opposition to its introduction. Hence:

> The lack of definition of, and general understanding about, KM, is a big problem, I think. The IT people think it's a system … while in the business context, very often it is just a question of management.

Indeed, as has been pointed out in the literature, 'There is a fear as well as a mystique surrounding the phenomenon of KM, and the use and meaning associated with the phrase—a kind of boundless ambiguity or contradiction' (Sutton 2007b).

In the interview data, however, there was recognition that opposition to KM education might largely be a problem at the initial stage but less so after establishment of the course.

> I was not here when the course was put in to effect. When I came in I heard a lot of slighting comments from other faculties such as this (KM) is a fad, you know. But over time such attitudes became less noticeable.

The data also clearly illustrated the need for LIS people to understand the multi-disciplinary character of KM and for LIS schools to take an integrative approach to its education. Hence:

> I would think that a bit of a shift in perspective is definitely needed in the LIS community. I actually found a lot of literature on KM in libraries ... but I really did not see much of discussions or perspectives that look at it from a holistic or integrative perspective. They were all looking at it from their own perspective.

And again:

> We should offer it with an open mind ... some LIS professionals think we are the only people to be involved in this and other LIS professionals, including Tom Wilson, think it's a joke ... And then there are others, of course, who are half-way, like Klobas. And so I think that we have a responsibility at this time, and a very strong responsibility, to teach it with an open mind.

Accordingly, interviewees recommended that LIS schools cover all the different components of KM. This was echoed in responses to the survey which included calls for training in leadership and management, including project management, and in technology and marketing. Such recommendations, along with calls for LIS schools to cooperate with other relevant parties in the design and implementation of KM programs, feature prominently in the literature (Chaudhry and Higgins 2004; Saito 2007).

Attracting students to KM

The attraction of students to the KM discipline was perceived by interviewees as a major challenge, not least because of a failure to articulate and explain the subject and link it to changes in the wider society. Hence, where one interviewee lamented the absence of demand for a KM certificate at his school, another suggested that if internal demand was not adequate, then LIS schools might offer their programs externally.

Interviewees were also of the opinion that to increase the potential attractiveness of the subject, it was necessary to demonstrate that it offered access to skills other than those found in traditional library work and that developments along the information–knowledge continuum could have major significance for organisations. Furthermore, once KM programs were actually up and running, student response might well be more positive. Two interviewees reported that where students at first had not been attracted to the KM course, because they did not know what it was, once they went through the course and learned to think about its issues and principles they began to realise its importance.

This change in student perceptions of KM following exposure to a course was documented in Bontis et al.'s (2006) survey of 43 alumni of a KM course at the DeGroote School of Business, McMaster University, Canada. Although this kind of interest is still not manifest within the LIS literature, the growing interest in KM among the LIS community is considered in this research (Hazeri 2008) and by some other researchers such as Southon and Todd (2001) as justification of the need for KM education in this sector.

Marketing

The data contained numerous references to the importance of marketing and its relative absence when it came to KM courses. Typical was the interviewee who argued that because LIS schools had failed to market their programs and to make connections with business and within academia, they had not been able to link their students to future employers. The need for LIS schools to pay more attention to marketing their graduates also surfaced in the survey, with a number of respondents of the opinion that employers still did not appreciate the value they could obtain from LIS graduates. To some extent, the failure to communicate such attributes to employers was blamed on a lack of leadership and communication skills among LIS academics, something which could also have resulted in their being unable to take leadership roles in the development of KM programs. This lack of professional assertiveness also emerged with references to departmental turf issues, and to internal competition for resources, with people at times exaggerating the extent of their expertise in order to grasp the opportunity presented by KM. In this context, two interviewees called for LIS people to make sure that they did not miss such opportunities to market their abilities in KM. This advice also applied to LIS students who, it was felt, would have to be particularly assertive when competing for jobs with those from other backgrounds, particularly information technology.

There was also a view reflected in the interviews that, although often competent to do so, LIS professionals were reluctant to apply their knowledge and skills in the business world, and as a result, they were invisible to that community. Hence:

> A lot of people in our field probably do not know the specific information needs of sales people, accounts people, and so on. But we have the techniques required for analysing such things. And I think that's probably why the commerce people would not understand that we actually have useful expertise.

The need to promote the visibility of KM programs in LIS schools was emphasised by interviewees:

> Well, it [KM] doesn't seem right there at the heart of library work, I mean it is in many ways and especially in specialised libraries, very often the librarian will get involved in the KM program, if they have one. Although often they are not as visible as they should be.
>
> Librarians, although sometimes engaged in KM projects, often lack a real vision for such involvement. They most often work under constraints and do not have the freedom to engage fully.

In the literature, a lack of visibility of LIS professionals has been considered a major obstacle to employers appreciating their potential contribution to KM (Ferguson et al. 2007).

Curriculum change

Grounded in the interview data, there were also references to the challenges of load intensity for the LIS curriculum. Interviewees, while referring to the problem of overload in LIS programs, also mentioned the formulation of new strategies such as those of the WISE consortium (Web-based Information Science Education), and noted the potential of these programs for allowing resource-sharing among LIS schools, which could help them with the overload problem. They pointed to potential problems of curriculum change as a barrier:

> What I think the problem would be is that in any curriculum, there is always a demand that you put more and more into the program and nobody seems to suggest anything that can come out of the other end. That's why I think the real problem occurs … to change the curriculum, and if you are going to put more in, you have to take something out of the other end.

This problem of curriculum change in the context of load intensity and the growing body of professional knowledge has also featured in the literature (Morgan and Bawden 2006). However, the major response emerging from this research has been on curriculum-wide change rather than on adding KM as an additional subject (Hazeri 2008).

Human resources implications

Among interviewees, staffing was the primary resource implication of KM programs. In referring to the recruitment of qualified staff as the biggest issue for his school, one interviewee observed that there were plenty of faculty members who played some role in KM, but that they needed someone to integrate its various elements and to give it a corporate perspective. He also pointed to the ever-changing nature of the area as another factor which made finding qualified staff a serious issue.

Other interviewees commented on the need for staff with relevant practical experience, especially in business, stressing that although KM might be different from what they had previously studied it was still very much relevant. Hence:

> It is about getting deans and directors to recognise that KM is part and parcel of what we are doing. It is not something outside the curriculum. It's basically the next step in the curriculum.

Nonetheless, interviewees doubted whether LIS schools could solve the problem of a shortage of required teaching staff by recruiting people from business schools. Instead, LIS schools were seen as the proper place for KM education, and it was recommended that these schools seek collaboration from business departments in this regard.

The need for promotion of the true nature of KM was emphasised by interviewees. Hence:

> I think there is a danger that if we are not careful about educating young professionals coming into the field about the importance of knowledge management and its value, there could be a danger of knowledge management being perceived as just another commodity, like technology.

The need for LIS schools to train their educators before introducing KM programs was recognised by 77.9% of the survey respondents (see Table 5, p.263). According to one interviewee, however, this was a matter of change management, with schools faced with the choice of either trying to change the people they had, or bringing in new staff and faculty from other schools to fill the gaps. For other interviewees, the main concern lay in finding faculty members who were interested in KM or were willing to learn about it. One approach could be to tap into resources that were already available on campus, using people who were knowledgeable in KM rather than simply grounded in LIS.

The importance of finding staff with relevant skills and interest has also emerged, while Southon and his colleagues (2002) have argued that 'The commercial focus of the educational institute means that initiatives will be more sensitive to market opportunities than to the current skills and interests of current operational staff'. The need for LIS schools to pay attention to the skill sets of academic staff, therefore, has been confirmed by 89.4% of the survey participants (see Table 5).

On the other hand, some interviewees were less concerned about these issues, with one participant pointing out that some LIS faculty members were extremely proficient and another maintaining that her school currently had no problems in regard to teaching staff. Indeed, the shortage of human resources was considered by interviewees as nothing unusual in the case of any unit, such as KM, which was new to the LIS program.

Other resources

Interviewees also had concerns related to non-human resources, including inadequate access to KM systems and problems regarding the implementation of KM software.

Concerns also extended to more traditional resources, with one interviewee pointing to student complaints about the cost of books. In the literature, moreover, Bontis et al. (2006) have noted that despite the existence of a considerable volume of KM publications, insufficient resources for the purchase of textbooks, cases, test banks, etc. remains a challenging issue in KM education.

Further suggestions

The research data contained a considerable volume of additional comment from the survey and interview participants on the need for LIS schools to rethink their mission and strategies with respect to knowledge management. This is summarised here in the sequence of the original questions:

LIS schools need to rethink their mission and strategies with respect to knowledge management

This question attracted a high level of agreement (71.9%) among respondents. This need for change, of course, is not confined to KM. However, over the last few decades, library science and its education have experienced sudden, discontinuous changes, with infusions/invasions from other cognate fields; as a result, LIS schools need to renew their missions and strategies in order to maintain a fresh and holistic perspective on where the profession is heading (Wilson 2002; Myburgh 2003). Hence, as demonstrated in the view of one interviewee:

> Schools need to just determine how they are going to reconceptualise how they educate people and to what end ... the I-school has done this by focusing on information and by focusing more on how we ensure that our graduates contribute to their community—whether that is a research and teaching community within the university, a learning community in a school, or a pocket-based community in a corporation.

In responding to the challenges of knowledge management, LIS schools must pay attention to the skill sets of students

Almost 89% of respondents agreed that there was a need for LIS schools to pay sufficient attention to the skill sets of students with regard to KM practice. Included in additional comments were suggestions that LIS schools map LIS and KM competencies, and that they take account of student needs in responding to change. Hence:

> There are always what we call 'hidden issues', and sometimes what we have to do in library schools is try and read the road map in front of us and try and forecast, to the best of our ability, what students need to know. That is not what they have to know, it's what they need to know.

And again in relation to workplace preparation:

> I think we just have to be able to develop the knowledge, skills and abilities in our students but also help them to be able to articulate these, and then make it work in an organisation.

This includes the need for LIS schools to prepare students for KM work in non-traditional settings:

> We need to prepare our people who are going into ... libraries that are in industry, in research development firms, in non-governmental organisations or newspaper, health care, you know they are doing KM.

To design a program based on student needs, one interviewee recommended that LIS schools establish an external advisory board for the purpose of talking to a whole range of stakeholders, including students and their potential employers, about the sorts of skills they wanted graduates of their programs to have.

Returning to the literature, Hawamdeh (2003) asserted the need for regular updating of student knowledge, skills and competencies, while in a specifically knowledge management context Reardon (1998) stated that 'The LIS Schools need to develop education and training that will meet the new professional demands of knowledge management and demonstrate the relevance of courses and understanding of the competences which must be developed in knowledge management students'.

Table 5: Percentages of agreement/disagreement with statements about the responsibilities of LIS schools with regard to knowledge management

Statement	strongly disagree	disagree	don't know	agree	strongly agree	Overall (mean)
LIS schools need to rethink their mission and strategies in respect of KM	-	8.7	19.4	50.5	21.4	Agree
In responding to the challenges of KM, LIS schools must pay attention to the skill sets of students	-	6.7	4.8	37.5	51.0	Agree
In responding to the challenges of KM, LIS schools must pay attention to the skill sets of academic staff	-	1.9	8.7	62.5	26.9	Agree
LIS schools need to train their educators before they embrace KM programs	-	4.8	17.3	39.4	38.5	Agree

Note: The following scoring has been designed for the purpose of marking the overall perceptions of respondents in this section:
1 to 1.44= Strongly disagree; 1.45 to 2.44= Disagree; 2.45 to 3.44= Do not know; 3.45 to 4.44= Agree; 4.45 to 5= Strongly agree

Finally, interviewees recommended that LIS schools should try to learn from others, and in particular from those who were successfully running KM programs:

> I think they find it difficult, because many of them haven't experienced KM in the world. So I say to them, look at some best practices among LIS schools that are doing KM you know, it would be great to share experiences.

Conclusion

This paper has identified a range of challenges facing LIS schools seeking to introduce the knowledge dimension to their courses or to extend it. Some of these difficulties have to do with the relative youth and interdisciplinary nature of education for KM, whether in general or in an LIS environment. In addition to such general issues as the need for consensus on the location of KM education, or on the major elements of its curriculum, there are also challenges that are context-driven. Others have to do with continuing perceptions of KM, notably among those professionals who would view KM as simply another name for information management or, worse, as a 'dead end' on the road to educational and professional development. The intention of this paper was to provide a research-based foundation for LIS schools seeking to respond to these challenges.

While at the outset the aim of the survey was to collect data from the entire international LIS community, responses ultimately came mainly from a group of English-speaking countries. This also proved to be the case with the data that emerged from the in-depth interviews. Consequently, the results can be generalised only in the context of those English-speaking countries. It can be argued, of course, that this lends general validity to the results in that, for example, universities in these countries have long played a leading role in information science education, and since then have been pathfinders for development of the profession (Lasic-Lazic et al. 2003). However, since the concerns of these countries could be quite different from what is going on in other parts of the world, and especially in less-developed countries, it would be useful if additional research focusing on what is going on in other non-English speaking countries was available.

The LIS literature highlights a range of concerns related to the conduct of KM educational programs, including the issues of curriculum development and resource fulfilment. Based on the findings of this research, people emerge as the main issue of concern for KM education in the LIS sector. As there is still debate among the profession-at-large as to the real nature of knowledge management, it was hardly surprising that interviewees had much to say about the need for LIS schools to promote KM, and to explain its importance to education and practice within the LIS professions. According to many of the interviewees, LIS schools seemed to look at KM through their own specific lens rather than from any wider and holistic perspective, or indeed, they viewed it as something imposed by the demands of fashion and essentially non-relevant. Hence, a partial or incomplete understanding of KM among the LIS community, and a lack of appreciation of the value of KM education among LIS students and educators, are key issues facing KM education.

These problems of perception among both staff and students can be addressed not only by initiating KM programs, and promoting a comprehensive understanding of the KM concept, but also by marketing these programs. Accordingly, the creation of a positive cultural background for KM education at LIS schools, and the promotion of higher LIS visibility from the outside world, should be a high priority. Equally important are the resource implications of introducing KM educational programs, particularly with regard to recruiting proficient staff both willing and able to help expand the programs beyond the more traditional realms.

Finally, concerning those other challenges to the introduction of education for knowledge management mentioned above, the data had relatively little to say. The questions in both the survey and follow-up interviews had made ample provision for participants to express their disagreement with the general concept and/or its inclusion in LIS curricula. Apart from some gentle semantics around the theme of information versus knowledge management, no serious objections to either the concept itself or its inclusion in LIS curricula eventuated. Clearly this could be explained by the fact that the research population was comprised either of academics teaching and researching in the field of KM or practising professionals with an interest in the area. However, where the existence of views opposed to the inclusion of KM in LIS curricula was acknowledged quite naturally, and in context, these views were very much in the minority, something that is reflected in the wider LIS literature. As far as general responses to the inclusion or otherwise of a KM dimension to the LIS curriculum are concerned, this will, in all likelihood, depend very much upon course accreditation imperatives and local conditions, not the least of which will be those regarding staffing and other resources.

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Learning wellness: how ageing Australians experience health information literacy

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Given identified synergies between information use and health status greater understanding is needed about how people use information to learn about their health. This paper presents the findings of preliminary research into health information literacy. Analysis of data from semi-structured interviews revealed six different ways ageing Australians experience using information to learn about their health. Health information literacy is new terrain for information literacy research endeavours and one which warrants further attention by the profession to foster and promote within the community.

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Introduction

Health information literacy is an emergent topic of discussion within the library and information profession. The phrase 'health information literacy' was first introduced into professional discourse in 2003 by the Medical Library Association (www.mlanet.org) Task Force on Health Information Literacy who provided this working definition:

> … the set of abilities needed to: recognise a health information need; identify likely information sources and use them to retrieve relevant information; assess the quality of the information and its applicability to a specific situation; and analyse, understand and use the information to make good health decisions (MLA, 2003, para 5).

Several factors underline the importance and relevance of health information literacy for individuals, and the need to promote and develop this within the broader community. These include acknowledged interplay between health and information use, and rising demand for community access to health information emerging from changing interrelationships between professionals and consumers in the health care industry. Furthermore, the collective health status of our community has significant implications for current and future demand on health care systems, and health information literacy is an important tool that can assist individuals maintain good health and wellbeing.

The modern world reflects an economy underpinned by knowledge, and it is information that enables individuals and communities to develop new knowledge to resolve issues on personal, professional and social levels. It has also been acknowledged that individual health behaviour is significantly influenced by knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, and synergies between these attributes can determine present and future health status (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2008). If knowledge has the power to influence and shape individuals' health status it is important that we understand how people use information to learn about their health; that is, we need to understand how people experience health information literacy.

This paper discusses the findings of preliminary research which explored how health information literacy is experienced in one aspect of community life. It reveals and provides early insights into:

- variation in how ageing Australians are using information to learn about and maintain their health, and
- variation in what people constitute as information that is used for maintaining health.

The first objective was to examine the whole experience of health information literacy. Exploring variation in what constitutes information within that experience was identified as a secondary objective in order to avoid presupposing what people define as 'information'.

The preliminary findings offer further scope to existing research in the areas of health information seeking and health information behaviour by investigating information use in a more holistic and collective sense. This has provided initial insights into how people experience their health information world outside of situations or contexts where information is actively sought.

Health information literacy: new terrain for the information profession

Health information literacy has received minimal attention within the library and information profession to date, and there are few examples of published literature which explicitly identify health information literacy as the focus for discussion, or explore the concept and its importance in a community context (Burnham & Petersen, 2005; Candy, 2005; Cullen, 2005; Grant, 2002). Literature relating to health information literacy is largely confined to discussion within American and Canadian contexts with few examples evident from an Australian perspective, although the NHS Education for Scotland's 2008 publication *Better Informed for Better Health* suggests interest in this topic is beginning to evolve.

The paucity of health information literacy literature is partly explained by its relatively recent definition and inclusion in the information literacy landscape, although professional discussion about information literacy itself has only unfolded within the last two decades. During this time information literacy research has predominantly focused on academic and education contexts (Bruce, 2000, 2008; Harding, 2008; Lloyd & Williamson, 2008). While research has more recently expanded to include its application in workplace environments (Cliftlands, 2005; Kirton & Barham, 2005; Lloyd, 2005; Oman, 2001), research within community settings is still largely an emerging field of study (Lloyd & Williamson, 2008; Partridge, Bruce & Tilley, 2008). Despite limited published literature relevant to information literacy in community contexts there is consensus on the importance and need for research in this area.

Although several factors affirm the importance and relevance of health information literacy in the community, a further impetus to champion the agenda is the growing body of work investigating health information seeking. Health information seeking is broadly concerned with examining the ways in which individuals go about acquiring information for health purposes and as a research focus it has received attention in the literature since the mid 1990s. Specifically, health information seeking relates to how and why people acquire health information, the channels they use to locate health information, preferred media for receiving health information and how found information is utilised (Lambert & Loiselle, 2007; Warner & Procaccino, 2004). The focus of research and resulting literature in this field is largely directed towards an examination of health information seeking behaviours based on attributes such as age, gender and health status (for example Hardt & Hollis-Sawyer, 2007; Kim, Lustria, Burke & Kwon, 2007; McCaughan & McKenna, 2007; Porter & Edirippulige, 2007; Wathen & Harris, 2006; Warner & Procaccino, 2004; Wicks, 2004).

While existing research on health information seeking provides insight into why people seek information, including the types of sources referred to and how the retrieved information is used, it does not address how people use information to learn about wellness. Health information seeking research typically adopts a quantitative approach to data collection and produces findings of a statistical rather than experiential nature. In addition, such research reveals several issues which affirm the need for health information literacy in the community, namely the ability of health information seekers to evaluate and use found information effectively, and to deal with information overload.

The primary aim of information literacy research in community settings is to investigate how people experience and interact with information for the purpose of learning about their health. Essentially, information literacy is a 'relational' phenomenon, in which people use information effectively for a purpose (Bruce, 1997a, 2008); in the case of health information literacy, to learn about their health. This focus is further explored in Bruce (2008) and Partridge, Bruce and Tilley (2008), with the latter proposing 'It is the focus on "learning" that distinguishes IL research generally from other related fields of enquiry such as information seeking and use research and information behaviour' (p.119). Little is currently known about the experience of health information literacy within individual or community contexts, and no published research exists which explores how people are using information to learn wellness. For this reason the experience of health information literacy in the community represents an important knowledge gap that needs to be filled. This paper starts to meet this need by reporting on research which explored variations in the way people experience using information to maintain health.

Research approach

The research method selected was phenomenography, a qualitative approach which seeks to explore differences and variations in the way people think or experience particular phenomena (Limberg, 2000; Bruce, 1999). It is underpinned by the notion that individuals collectively experience and understand phenomena in a number of qualitatively different but interrelated ways (Bruce, 1997b; Marton, 1986). Interview is the most common method through which this type of research is conducted and identification of interviewees is typically (and deliberately) non-random as selection is influenced by the specific phenomena being explored (Limberg, 2000). Questions used in phenomenographic interviews are typically open-ended to allow participants to articulate their own understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Bowden, 2000). In this project, the specific phenomenon was the experience of health information literacy amongst ageing Australians, and the selection of interview participants was restricted to persons aged over 55.

Data collection

Data collection took the form of semi-structured interviews in which participants were asked a set of questions which directed them towards their actual experiences of the phenomena in question. The selection of questions was influenced by an initial pilot study involving two interviews. Interview questions were revised after analysis and reflection on responses. Certain questions were considered too abstract, and a more concrete approach was developed to focus participants on the phenomena under investigation.

Questions included in the final data-gathering tool included:

- Can you describe a time when you used information to stay healthy?
- Describe your experience of using information to learn how to stay healthy.
- What kinds of information have you used in learning how to stay healthy?
- Can you tell me about using information to help other people to stay healthy?

Follow-up questions were also employed to probe or elicit further information from participants about responses they had provided. These comprised questions such as ‘Can you tell me more about that?’, ‘Can you explain that in a different way?’, and ‘Is there anything else you would like to say about this?’. Interviews ranged from 24 to 47 minutes. All were audio recorded with the permission of each participant. Interviews were then transcribed verbatim into written transcripts for the purposes of analysis.

Participants

Four participants were interviewed. All were female, ranging from 57 to 70 years of age. Although the sample size was small, the number of participants is not dissimilar to other phenomenographic studies which have been undertaken (McMahon & Bruce, 2002). From this sample an analysis of critical variation in people’s experience was considered possible.

Data analysis

The aim of data analysis with phenomenographic studies is to uncover variation in how the phenomenon under investigation is experienced (Bruce, 2000; Limberg, 2005). Analysis was undertaken by reviewing written transcripts to identify the similarities and differences between how participants expressed the experience of health information literacy. The intended outcome of this process is the identification of a number of categories which reflect the various ways the phenomenon is experienced (Edwards, 2007).

Phenomenographic categories may be derived from one or more participants. It is the variation of experience that is of primary importance, rather than how many people show evidence of it.

As a result of this process six categories of description were established illustrating the various ways individuals and the collective group experienced health information literacy. Attention was then given to examining the meaning and focus associated with the various experiences, which respectively form the referential and structural aspects of the phenomenon under investigation. Critical differences in how information is constituted in each category are also described. The categories of description are presented and discussed in the following section.

Ways of experiencing health information literacy

Analysis of the data gathered through interviews has revealed six different categories which depict various ways ageing Australians experience using information to maintain health. It should be emphasised that these findings are preliminary and indicative in nature, and changes to the categories presented may occur as further research is conducted.

The six categories uncovered as part of this research are as follows:

Category 1. Health information literacy is experienced as striving for wellness

Category 2. Health information literacy is experienced as reaffirming wellness

Category 3. Health information literacy is experienced as knowing myself

Category 4. Health information literacy is experienced as protecting myself

Category 5. Health information literacy is experienced as screening knowledge

Category 6. Health information literacy is experienced as storing knowledge.

The following sections briefly outline the six categories by providing an explanation of the corresponding meaning, focus and description of how health information literacy is experienced in each instance. Illustrative quotes obtained from interviews are also included to support research findings.

Category 1: Health information literacy is experienced as striving for wellness

Meaning:

In this category people see health information literacy as trying to achieve better health or maintain their current level of health.

Focus:

In this category, the primary focus is on purposeful identification of how to be healthier or to maintain wellness.

Illustrative quotes:

> Int. 2 (p.1): What I did to start with was I actually set myself out a week's timetable and I did, I wrote down everything I ate through the day. And actually did count up the calories for a day, to see approximately where the amount I was eating came from ... I actually counted how many calories I was getting for probably about 2 weeks and started cutting down bits here and there and so forth.

> Int. 3 (p.1): Well basically at the time I was using information to be able to do things that didn't give me pain or to help with the pain, to avoid having pain or stress on the body, changing the whole way that you did things, your attitude towards doing jobs or normal daily living ... Not so much buying equipment, but information about learning how to utilise things around you in the home to have a better result, less pain.

In this category, the stimulus for engaging with information is triggered by a specific health issue or concern and the individual's view of their health status is focused on staying healthy. Although the individual is experiencing a health issue or concern they do not perceive themselves to be unhealthy, but are using information because of a desire or need to learn in order to improve an existing level of health, or maintain their current level of health.

Information received in this category represents new information; it has not been previously acquired or known. Retrieval of information occurs exclusively with a range of external sources, and data suggests information retrieval occurs with a very rich and diverse array of resources. This includes advice from general practitioners and authoritative health publications as well as more informal information avenues such as conversations with friends or family.

The overall information experience in this category is very active in nature as there is conscious awareness of an information need and a proactive approach is adopted with respect to identifying and retrieving information. There is an identified purpose for found information and once obtained this is used in an immediate or imminent manner.

Category 2: Health information literacy is experienced as reaffirming wellness

Meaning:

In this category people see health information literacy as reconfirming 'healthy' and its importance for personal wellness.

Focus:

In this category, the primary focus is on reminding or validating the importance of wellness.

Illustrative quotes:

> Int.1 (p.5): I sort of looked at it [the information] and went 'Well I basically do that', and that would be that. I don't think I've registered this information, because I know it. I've just glanced through it and said 'Yes, yes, yes' ... I think that when I looked at it I thought 'Well, yes, I'm doing pretty well'.

> Int.4 (p.1): I used that chart to put up on my refrigerator to remind myself about trimming meat, trimming excess fat off meat, and limiting some of the foods that I ate ... I put it there as a reminder to look at how unhealthy our appetite, or our food or the food that we consume has become.

In this category, the stimulus for engaging with information is derived from external factors. This occurs as a passive process where information is received or encountered instead of pursued. Information does not represent a new source of learning; it is information which is already known, but used to confirm existing knowledge or behaviours which are considered to be 'healthy', and to remind and reinforce why maintaining good health is important. For this reason the individual's view of their health status is focused on staying healthy.

Pictorial resources (rather than textual) are particularly influential and data suggests that visual imagery which represents being unhealthy, or in a state of 'unwellness', is especially strong for communicating information about why being healthy is important. Encounters with this type of imagery serve as reminders of the consequences of living an unhealthy lifestyle, and the associated impact this can have on personal health.

Illustrative quotes:

> Int.4 (p.5): Recently there's been a kind of a glut of those health shows… and you see that there are people on them who are relatively obese, who are doing an exercise program ... With the kind of diet we are living on these days we can easily be overweight. I'm not too keen on the idea or the way it is presented [the health shows], but it is a message I think, it is information about 'this is what happens'.

> Int.1 (p.3): And I suppose also too I abhor people that are grossly overweight. I see them eating foods and things like this which are so inappropriate ... I just feel they are putting themselves into the grave.

Category 3: Health information literacy is experienced as knowing myself

Meaning:

In this category people see health information literacy as understanding the body through reading and responding to their own bodily cues, and primary focus is on the body.

Illustrative quotes:

> Int.2 (p.4): But I've learnt that I'd try some things but I've had to listen to my body. Because one of the things I can't do is I can't cut out snacks. Because if I cut out those snacks I'm actually physically in trouble. So no matter what information I've found I've realised that I've got to listen to my body.

> Int.1 (p.2): You know things that don't agree with you, so therefore you don't force yourself to have them.

In this category the stimulus for engaging with information is triggered by internal factors and involves having an awareness and understanding of one's own physical self. The way in which information is obtained suggests a process which is introspective and reactive in nature. Furthermore, the body comprises the sole source of information with no apparent consideration or engagement with information sources external to the body on conscious or subconscious levels.

Information obtained from the body constitutes a conscious awareness of physical changes or bodily reactions. This information is then used as a stimulus to recognise that a change in behaviour is needed, that certain behaviours should not be repeated, or that changes should be considered in the future in order to maintain wellness. Learnings gained through past experiences with one's own body are a recognised source of information in this category. These learnings appear to form a personal knowledge bank about how the body has behaved or reacted previously, which often predicts future behaviour for the purpose of maintaining good health.

Illustrative quotes:

> Int. 3 (p.2): If you overdo it, you end up having to rest for a few days to get the aches and pains under control. So your body is then telling you that you've done the wrong thing.

> Int.2 (p.5): Well I would use the example of when I get gastric reflux which can get really quite serious at times. I've got to be really careful of it. I have found that if I eat certain foods at the wrong time of the day and try to sleep after it where I'm lying down flat, I'm going to be in trouble. So I've learnt over time that that is going to be the reaction to it and to behave differently.

Category 4: Health information literacy is experienced as protecting myself

Meaning:

In this category people see health information literacy as protecting and preserving their health.

Focus:

In this category, the primary focus is on self-protection.

Illustrative quotes:

> Int.4 (p.2): I mean I used to be a smoker as well. But now I've given up smoking, I haven't smoked for a number of years, and I stopped smoking long before we got the advertisements on cigarette packets and those kinds of things. Simply because there came to be a time in my life where I thought I want to be able to run around with my grandchildren still. I want to be able to do things, I want to be able to walk up stairs without puffing.

> Int.4 (p.3): So all the information that became available on cardiovascular diseases that are caused through smoking, and seeing pictures of that. We always knew about that, that never stopped me from smoking, but it was about wanting to have a choice of a healthier lifestyle for as long as I possibly could have, without being dependent on the health system, or anybody else to take care of me as I got older, was very important to me. So I used that information to give up smoking finally.

In this category, the stimulus for engaging with information is triggered by internal factors. Interviews suggest that this relates to being aware of engaging in practices or behaviours which are known to be harmful and will impact on future health. The individual's view of their current health status is focused on 'unwellness' and 'being unhealthy' in that there is conscious awareness of engaging in practices or behaviours which will adversely affect future health.

Use of information occurs when known information becomes personally meaningful or relevant in reducing or eliminating risks to maintaining future wellness, and provides individuals with a choice to adopt a healthier lifestyle. This information is implemented in a considered manner with evidence to suggest initial deliberation or rejection of information has occurred. Data also suggests there is conscious acknowledgement that health issues will arise as a result of natural ageing, and engaging in practices known to be harmful can lead to forms of incapacity that could otherwise have been prevented.

Illustrative quote:

> Int.4 (p.3): … it made me think that I don't want to be dependent on the health system, or on my children to have to care for me through the choices I've made myself—not through some incapacity that came out of nowhere, but by making choices to live a healthier lifestyle and to stop doing things to myself that were going to harm me.

Category 5: Health information literacy is experienced as screening knowledge

Meaning:

In this category health information literacy is seen as screening information in order to make health choices.

Focus:

In this category the primary focus is on filtering information.

Illustrative quotes:

> Int.2 (p.3): I think that I've got to the stage over the years of knowing that I needed to look at the source of where I was getting the information from, what the background to that information was ... But I've also learnt over the years to look at these things, throw out what you don't like, or what you don't think is appropriate, take hold of the stuff you do.

> Int.1 (p.1): I sometimes find they give you so much information it's very difficult to disseminate [assimilate] what they are trying to get at. So I just take on board what I want to take on board for my lifestyle.

In this category the stimulus for engaging with information is derived from external factors and reflects situations or instances where information is serendipitously encountered. The individual is consciously aware of the volume and diversity of health information resources available, and how confusion can occur when large amounts of information are available and when conflicting information is received. Interviews suggest that these factors exist as drivers for needing to sort health information and for this reason the individual's focus is directed towards filtering information as a tool to either retain or reject information.

Information use resembles a process of filtration whereby information retrieved from external sources is screened against internal sources such as personal beliefs and values, existing health knowledge and established or desired lifestyles. Implementation of information occurs as a considered process with information being retained or rejected as a result of analysis and evaluation.

Illustrative quote:

> Int.4 (p.6): Part of my belief system is that I don't eat pork or things like that. And that's part of my faith and in my belief system. So for me to choose to eat pork just because there's research out there that says that it's the best thing since sliced bread – that would go against my values and belief system, so I wouldn't do it.

Category 6: Health information literacy is experienced as storing knowledge.

Meaning:

In this category health information literacy is seen as accumulating information on wellness.

Focus:

In this category the primary focus is on stored knowledge.

Illustrative quote:

> Int.4 (p.2): I keep a filing cabinet at home and when I get stuff like that [health information] I put it in a file. So there's a file in my cabinet that's about health and fitness. And I refer to that, I go back to it, if there's something on my mind. I don't always put it into practice but I know it's there and I can refer to it and look at it.

In this category the stimulus for engaging with information is derived from external factors. The way in which information is gained suggests a process which is passive in nature—information is encountered rather than pursued. Interviews suggest that information implementation resembles a postponed or delayed process where information is stored for the purpose of future rather than immediate use.

Analysis of interview data suggests that age may play a part in storing physical information. There may be an awareness of implications arising from the natural process of ageing where a gradual loss of long-term memory is likely to occur. In this instance, storage of information presents as a conscious process, where the identified purpose of the information is a future resource or reference when assistance is needed to remember 'what is healthy'.

Storage of non-physical information resources refers to the subconscious accumulation of knowledge. This is information that has been stored or 'taken in' over time either consciously or unconsciously. It is seen as information encountered as part of the journey through life and can be accessed when or if the need arises.

Discussion and future directions

This research provides initial insight into how health information literacy is experienced within a community context through exploring how ageing Australians experience using information to learn about their health. Our study has identified six different categories of how health information literacy can be experienced, ranging from purposeful identification of information to stored knowledge. These categories articulate the way participants experience health information literacy using their language.

Health information seeking and health information behaviour research

The findings add further dimension to previous efforts undertaken in the areas of health information seeking and health information behaviour by examining information use in a broader context and in a more holistic and collective sense. Research has revealed how individuals experience their health information world, including situations or instances which fall outside an active or proactive information seeking experience.

Information literacy research

Our research also relates to existing thinking where information literacy is viewed as 'experiencing different ways of using information to learn' (Bruce, 2008, p.5) The preliminary findings presented also inform and contribute to the development of a community information literacy research agenda.

We have also gained some insights into what people regard as being information used for maintaining health. Focus on 'bodily information' is of particular interest as it reflects similar findings by Lloyd, in her exploration of information literacy amongst fire-fighters. Notably, research findings relating to the use of the body as an information source and visual imagery representing 'unwellness' are sources not previously identified through findings from health information behaviour research.

Health communication and education

The findings presented are of significance to health communication and health education, as they begin to establish greater understanding about how people engage with information environments for health purposes. These findings can also assist with the development of health programs and promotions that have been informed by evidence-based practice.

For the library and information profession these findings may assist with the development and implementation of health information literacy endeavours in community environments. Adopting a more holistic perspective on health information literacy also presents an opportunity for the profession to demonstrate its importance and relevance in today's world by working to enhance this skill within individuals and the wider community.

Future research

At present the research outcomes outlined are preliminary in nature. Further data is needed to uncover the true extent of variation that exists with this phenomenon and there may be additional categories of experience yet to be determined. To date there has been no attempt to define relationships or interrelationships between the categories or to determine whether the categories identified constitute a hierarchy of experience (Bruce, 2000; Edwards 2007).

Future research will focus on increasing the sample size until a saturation point is achieved. In addition, the inclusion of males into the research sample along with candidates who identify as being 'unwell', such as those suffering from chronic disease or obesity, are also considerations. This will enable examination of whether the phenomenon is experienced differently between people of different gender or health status, provide additional insight into awareness structures which underpin each category, and may reveal other categories not yet identified.

Conclusion

Health information literacy is an emerging topic within the library and information profession and provides immense scope for further research. The paucity of research exploring information literacy in community and everyday contexts has been acknowledged and the issue of health information literacy clearly falls within this paradigm.

A range of factors supports the promotion of health information literacy within the community. These entail holistic changes which have occurred in health care systems, the growing trend of personal health information seeking and in a broader context, the acknowledged importance and relevance of information literacy as an essential skill for empowerment and survival in our modern information-rich world.

Prior to this study, there was little evidence of research into health information literacy. This research has begun to reveal how health information literacy is experienced within a community context and more specifically how ageing Australians are using information to maintain health.

Health information literacy represents new terrain for information literacy research and given the importance of health to individuals and the wider community, it is an issue which undeniably warrants further attention and exploration. There is a unique opportunity for the library and information profession to demonstrate its continued value and importance by helping to promote and enhance health information literacy within our communities, and to play a significant role in helping to shape and create a more health information-literate nation.

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UNSW Library's Outreach Librarian Service: what they need before they want it!

Neil Hinsch and Kate Dunn

At the end of 2006 the UNSW Library restructured its five special libraries into a new division called the Information Services Department. It was a radical restructure and provides a new model through which the Library delivers services in both the physical and online environments in a flexible and proactive manner. A pivotal role within this new structure is the Outreach Service delivered by a team which has primary responsibility for developing strong relationships with Faculties and Research Centres. Each faculty has been assigned a contact librarian who is available to provide information, organise service delivery, give presentations, listen to concerns and work through issues in relation to library services and content. By arranging one-on-one consultations or calls with the academy, attending School meetings and other special faculty meetings and giving presentations to groups of academics, close relationships are fostered between the Library and the academy so that the Library can better align its services and content to the UNSW research and teaching cycles. Benefits of the Outreach Service are outlined here.

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Background

Tertiary education in Australia has been undergoing fundamental change since the early 1990s with the release of the Dawkins Report on Higher Education and the subsequent restructuring of the tertiary education sector. Australia saw the disappearance of separately established Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs) and their merger with existing universities and the upgrade of some stand-alone CAEs to university status.

Federal government funding, although increasing in real terms, has continued to decline over this period as a percentage of the total revenue sources of universities. It now hovers around 40% with 60% coming from private sources, including student fees. This corporatisation of higher education has compelled universities to adopt a more entrepreneurial approach to revenue raising with intense marketing campaigns for students both nationally and internationally, and created a drive to secure revenue from new sources.

Universities must now compete with each other for limited government funding, as well as for funding available from the private sector. Students, both local and international, are a commodity with which to increase funding and research kudos. So too are the academic staff whose teaching and research skills are in heavy demand by universities. The Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) Initiative (www.arc.gov.au/era/) has added to the competition amongst universities for prized researchers whose research projects can bring in valuable research dollars which sustain and enhance the research profile of the university.

Universities are moving toward an outcomes-based environment where attracting top students and academics raises the profile of the institution and produces the high quality outputs so necessary for attracting funding. The more collegial and cooperative aspects of inter-university relationships are being replaced by a more competitive environment.

Information technology has altered the delivery of services in academia. More online delivery and less face-to-face learning is now common at university. The academy can communicate instantly with peers in other institutions; exchange research findings; publish in open access repositories and open access journals; and teleconference overseas. Libraries are increasingly faced with stiff competition from 'disruptive technologies' such as Google, wikis, blogs, MySpace and Facebook; they are no longer the first port of call for researchers and students seeking information.

The economic rationalism that has characterised these times has also affected the University Library at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), with a static budget from 2004 to 2006, then an 8.3% cut to its budget in 2007 followed by a slight increase in 2008. The perception of the Library as the 'heart of the institution' which was common 20 years ago is sadly no longer the case. University management commonly perceives the Library as a physical space, largely supporting teaching and the undergraduate community. Moreover the Library's strategic goals are sometimes seen as not relevant to the institution with little 'visible' impact resulting from its service delivery. Hence the University executive team could understandably come to regard the library as just one of many competing cost centres.

UNSW: new directions

Professor Hilmer was appointed as Vice Chancellor in late 2005 and entered with a new and clearly articulated vision for UNSW. This vision revolves around emphasising the distinctiveness of UNSW, developing existing strengths in the technical and professional disciplines, and building research performance to improve the national and international profile of UNSW, to attract top researchers and, of course, the concomitant funding to support their research endeavours.

As the University refocuses on its traditional research strengths, resources are being shifted to high priority areas such as cancer research, photovoltaics, water conservation and targeted areas in medicine and science. Support for 'research active' members of the academy is to be generated by the diversion of funding away from services and facilities provided by general staff.

UNSW is focusing on improving the performance of its managers so that it can more readily attain its strategic goals within tight budgets. This goal has impacted the Library, with all managers and team leaders required to attend courses in management literacy. Moreover, a Balanced Scorecard methodology has been introduced in the Library with service delivery clearly outlined together with accountabilities and performance measures to achieve strategic objectives. Each member of staff is required to contribute to their respective team plans and to prepare an individual career development plan with defined actions and targets, all supporting the overriding objectives of the Library, which in turn are aligned to the University's strategic objectives.

In terms of total Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Grant Funding, UNSW is currently in 5th place amongst the Group of Eight universities[1]. The strategic objective of the university is to increase its placing to one of the top three universities, i.e. joining ANU and Sydney. Library senior management also envisions a future where the Library will be regarded as one of the top three services provided to the University.

Previous library structure

The previous model consisted of five semi-autonomous libraries: Arts & Social Sciences; Physical Sciences; Biomedicine; Law and the College of Fine Arts (COFA), together with a number of units such as the User Services

[1] Adelaide, Australian National University, Melbourne, Monash, Queensland, Sydney, UNSW, Western Australia

Department (Circulation and Shelving), Online Services Department (Homepage, Web interfaces, and Electronic Reserve). The model was designed prior to the advent of technology, when the library operated as a physical space; for its time it was innovative and highly responsive to user needs.

UNSW Library was an hierarchical organisation where each library had its own manager, deputy and varying levels and numbers of support staff. It was a model that could be characterised as hierarchy-driven amongst the disparate units as opposed to a team-based approach that is now more favoured in contemporary organisational theory and best practice.

Over time the plethora of special libraries and discrete units resulted in discontinuity of service delivery, owing to the semi-autonomous nature of the bodies concerned. One library, for example, was strong on online delivery of information literacy programs whilst another emphasised face-to-face contact and yet another lagged in both areas.

Overall the Library was largely conceived of as a physical space and considerable staff time was consumed in servicing five reference and four circulation desks. Both then and now Library stakeholders have largely moved into the world of cyberspace, diminishing the importance of the physical library. Google, wikis, ipods, and chat rooms are the spaces our customers are increasingly occupying in order to fulfil their information needs.

UNSW Library's response

In an effort to provide a more flexible, responsive and efficient library service the Library created a radical new model that is changing the way information services are planned, delivered and measured. Critical to this end it is redefining its primary role, core business and perceived relationships with the UNSW community. It is a structure through which the Library delivers services in both the physical and online environments in a flexible and proactive manner, so that if strategic university priorities change, it can pivot, reposition and respond.

The five libraries and specialised units were collapsed into three service points: the Main Library; the Freehills Law Library on the lower campus and the COFA Library in Paddington. This rearrangement releases staff in the Academic Services Unit (ASU), Service Innovation Unit (SIU) and Service Development Unit (SDU) to concentrate on services and support for the academic and research communities.

The new structure provides:

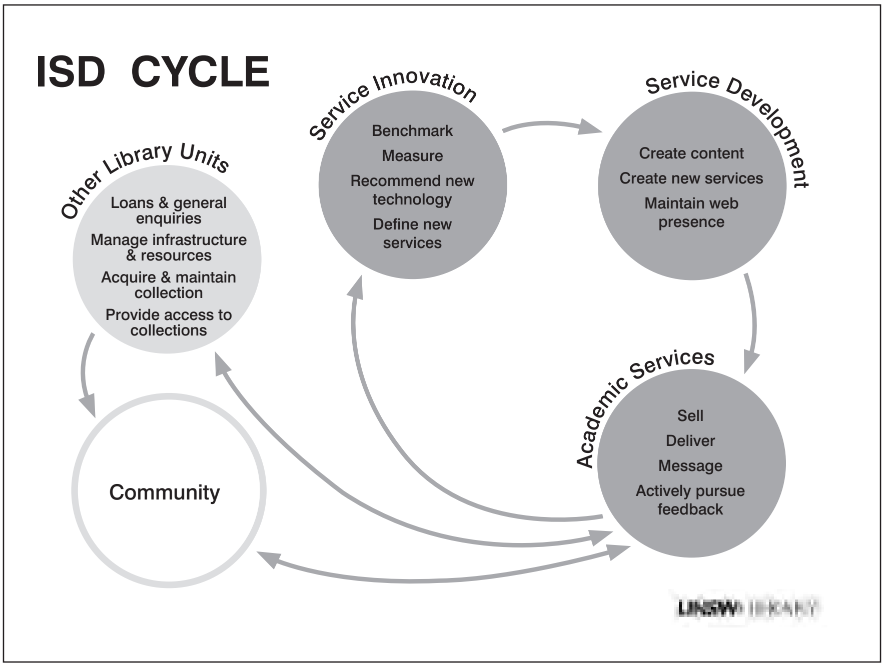
- increased efficiency and better utilisation of resources
- reduction in duplication of effort
- increased sharing of resources
- ability to create standard levels of service, to service the different disciplines within a consistent and shared UNSW Library
- a better organised front-of-house model, releasing staff currently in special libraries to concentrate on academic outreach and support.

Information Services Department (ISD) is responsible for the development and delivery of services that allow users to reach their academic goals. ISD has moved to an integrated model of teams focused on a service cycle, with the following functions:

1. SIU keeps abreast of international best practice and developments in technology to ensure that the Library's services are efficient and appropriate. The Unit is responsible for the definition of services, and the development and management of measures so that the Library is able to determine what services are being used and what outcomes are being achieved through their use. In addition, the Unit receives feedback from the community and makes recommendations to modify, upgrade or cease services as required. This feedback comes from a variety of areas but primarily through the Outreach Team and Faculty Committee feedback. The managers of SIU and ASU as well as the Director of ISD sit on various faculty-based committees at a wide range of levels.
2. SDU modifies and creates content to support the range of services provided by the library and is responsible for the process, structure and documentation around each service. This unit develops online services, carries out system testing as required and manages the Library's online presence.
3. ASU informs the academic community of the services available from the library. Feedback is generated from Outreach conversations or as a response to a service being delivered. Feedback is also picked up by SIU for consideration. Each faculty together with the Research Centres and the University's Units (the Learning Centre, Graduate Research School and Learning & Teaching Unit) has been assigned Outreach Librarians who are available to provide information, organise service delivery, give presentations, listen to concerns and work through issues that may exist within a faculty in relation to the Library.

This cycle is represented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The Information Services Department cycle



Enter the Outreach Librarian

The primary role of the Outreach Librarian is that of relationship manager. The Outreach Team is responsible for building ongoing relationships with the academic and research community, including the Higher Degree Research students. How is this done? On a daily basis members of the Outreach Team arrange for individual consultations (outreach calls) with academics; they give group presentations relating to new content or services, and attend school and/or special faculty meetings. There is an individual performance target of 12 calls per week and all visits and conversations are documented within 72 hours of the visit. Reports are read and discussed by the team with their managers and used as a basis for strategy making. Ongoing two way communication is at the heart of the relationship between the librarians and the academy.

A toolkit has been created for and by team members and contains content to be used for specific purposes. Elements in the kit are designed to provide diverse practical techniques for delivering 'value propositions' (features and benefits statements around specific services) to stakeholders. Promotional copy, explanations of services, call guidelines, conversations and even scripts for 'cold calls' or difficult situations (for example where a service has been withdrawn) are some of the tools within the kit that facilitate and enhance communication.

Issues and concerns raised by the academy during calls or at school meetings are recorded and followed up by the Outreach Librarian. Some issues require escalation to other units or departments to provide solutions within a designated timeframe. The Outreach Librarian's personalised service means that he/she is the primary contact for the academic or researcher requiring solutions for information concerns.

Understanding and acknowledging the academic's content requirements is another aspect of the role. Suggestions for new content are relayed to the Collection Development Team which has overall responsibility for collection development. Each Outreach Librarian has an Academic Services counterpart with whom they work closely to build a collection that will meet the learning and teaching and research needs of the academy.

The Outreach Team seeks to identify opportunities for the delivery of new services and relays these suggestions back to SIU for consideration. Team members themselves can also propose new services based on their understanding of the needs of the faculty.

Selling or promotion of the Library is a major part of this role and the Outreach Librarians have all undertaken beginners and advanced professional 'selling impact' courses to enhance their communication skills and to heighten their awareness of creating strategic opportunities to promote library services.

Promotional copy is developed by the Service Development Unit, and messages are delivered in a style that directly relates the benefits of the service to the user. We do not 'describe' our services nor do we provide details around internal processes. Our promotional literature is designed to heighten awareness of the services the Library can deliver that will assist the academy to meet their specific needs.

Being able to articulate a concise overview of the 'state of the faculty' at all times is also incumbent upon the Outreach Librarian since it is important to keep management informed of key issues in the academy so the Library can align its services and content to current teaching and research requirements. Developing such a close awareness of requirements also contributes to the outreach penetration rate by giving the librarian first hand knowledge of their 'cultural' and/or client market and hence assists with developing effective strategies to promote the Library's value.

A voyage of discovery

Most faculties are using the physical library less and less. Scholars are increasingly accessing the Library's electronic content from their desktops. Library activity statistics for 2006 to 2008 reflect the downward trend.

Table 1. Library statistics 2006–2008

Access Counts			
	2006	2007	2008
Loans	979,629	761,675	702,820
Gate statistics	2,402,383	2,174,814	1,955,973
Simple reference	n/a	73,078	105,621
Advanced reference	n/a	4,552	4,191
Web visits	1,761,125	1,713,360	1,867,444
Webpages visited	13,100,265	11,554,607	13,054,058

Academics frequently fail to recognise that the content they are accessing is provided by the Library, because they are accessing it directly from a web portal such as Google Scholar or PubMed rather than from the Library website.

Outreach Librarians have also discerned that many academics have a low awareness of library services and content. Such low awareness applies not only to new services developed by the Library such as RSS feeds for new book titles, but also to longstanding services such as research consultations, online information skills tutorials, online discipline-specific subject guides, purchase request forms for new content, and off-campus user services where students and staff based in hospitals or research centres may have library content directly delivered to them.

It appears that the academy's 'value perception' of the Library's services has diminished in recent years. It is now the role of the Outreach Librarian to facilitate the repositioning of the Library from what is regarded as a 'good idea' to a critical service centre.

The reception and perception of the Outreach Team has varied amongst the faculties and schools due to their different cultures, content usage, publication patterns, and different teaching and research needs. By developing good communication with their respective faculties Outreach Librarians ensure that the Library's services are aligned to their specific research needs, and services are marketed to each faculty in language tailored to their 'research culture'.

Impact

Outreach penetration into the faculties and research centres has reached almost 100% with 2,835 individual visits (calls) made to academics from January 2007 to April 2009 and 349 faculty meetings attended and 323 presentations delivered. It is a significant feat never before realised at UNSW.

Overall feedback in Outreach call reports indicates a positive acceptance of the service by the academy.

Achievements

'Action requests' received by Outreach from January 2007 to April 2009 total 10,056 and the number of requests fulfilled totals 9,520. An action request is defined as any request from an academic for further information about a service, a request for help in accessing content, and suggestions for new services. Outreach Librarians are becoming a significant point of reference within the faculties.

New services have been introduced as a result of this new dialogue. An Academic Service Point has been established at the enquiries desk where academics who visit the physical library with a query or concern are referred to an Outreach Librarian who seeks to provide a solution within 15 minutes of his/her arrival.

Another new service is a Library mentoring program for Higher Degree Research (HDR) students, which has been introduced to build connections between researchers and the content they require to complete their dissertations on time. The service was introduced in an effort to increase on-time completions and retention rates amongst this cohort since Government funding for HDRs is dependent on both timely completion and high retention rates. The service also aims to increase student satisfaction and lessen the feelings of isolation experienced by higher degree researchers who do not have regular contact with the university community in the same way as coursework students. Outreach Librarians contact new HDR students to establish a relationship, arrange individual calls, present at student inductions or research seminars and keep them regularly informed of services and new content. From September 2007 to April 2009, 2,002 new HDRs have been personally contacted by Outreach Librarians, 205 individual calls made and 997 action requests taken.

ERA has generated an avalanche of requests relating to publishing and measuring individual research impact. The Service Innovation Unit formed a Bibliometrics Working Group which developed a new service to fulfil this need. The Research Impact Measurement Service includes a research support webpage in the form of a Research Impact Subject Guide; delivers H-Indices[2], Research Impact Statements, Publication Activity Reports, Research Trends Reports, Journal Impact Statements and Grant Application Statements to faculty, schools and individuals.

Outreach has been heavily involved in promoting the benefits of these new services to the research community via calls and presentations at school meetings, bringing back suggestions from the academy that have directly contributed to the creation of new research support services, and generally aligning the Library's services to the strategic research objectives of the University.

The Faculty of Medicine is a good example of successful outreach. Medical staff and HDRs who have had contact with their Outreach Librarian appreciate having someone who is closely connected to the faculty and understands and supports their teaching and research needs.

The Faculty increasingly approaches the Medical Outreach Librarian for advice on how to get the most out of new services such as the Library's open access repository called UNSWorks. Unfamiliar content such as the Embase Pharmacology Database was promoted to the Pharmacology Department, and staff are now promoting it to their students and incorporating it into an information-seeking tutorial that is run within the department. Many off-campus staff and students who were unfamiliar with the service are now actively engaged with it.

Gaining feedback and finding solutions to problems is an important part of the role of an Outreach Librarian. Poor quality imaging in a number of medical electronic journals was escalated to the publisher for re-imaging. RSS feeds for new books inform medical staff and students of new additions to the collection. Feedback from the medical academy that the Clinical Sciences RSS feed was too broad has resulted in new RSS feeds for specific areas such as psychiatry and paediatrics. Library responsiveness demonstrates to faculty that their feedback is appreciated and that the Library is willing to tailor its services to their specific needs.

Over 200 H-Indices have been calculated to date for medical staff and the requests are rising dramatically for this product, while numerous Publication Activity Reports have been compiled for particular schools and research centres.

The Outreach service has also raised the level of contact with Clinical School staff. The Medical Outreach Librarian now attends Clinical School Executive meetings, and this has raised library awareness of issues affecting our remote users who are either disconnected or feel personally isolated from Library services.

2 Citation-based indicators of authors' impacts in their disciplines.

The future

Threats to establishing effective and long-term relationships with the academy can come from academic turnover, changes in heads of school where one head may be more sympathetic to the service whilst another is less receptive, academics turning to their social networking spaces to share research-based information rather than to Library content, and the ever present competition with Web 2.0 technologies.

Nevertheless, the past two and half years have seen rapid growth in Outreach services with the academy reporting long-term benefits for learning, teaching and research outcomes.

As the Outreach service continues to evolve, more in-depth partnerships with faculty are developing. Academics are coming to view their Outreach Librarian as the first point of contact when they need library support. Outreach now has a regular presence not only at School meetings, but at Faculty Board, Education and Research Committees. Outreach Librarians are listed on faculty websites and included at times in important internal school correspondence. While Outreach Librarians develop their selling, persuasion and negotiating skills it is anticipated that further opportunities will be created to enhance the uptake of Library content and services and to provide even greater feedback for the development of new services or the modification of existing ones. As the academy becomes more informed of library services and more engaged with the 'value' provided by the library, it is anticipated that they will better inform the undergraduate community and will be better supported in their research endeavours.

Conclusion

To be able to introduce new services such as an outreach service a library must have a flexible organisational model in place which focuses on a service cycle that supports the academic and research communities.

Outreach is NOT a liaison service. Instead it is a full-time selling and relationship-building service, systematically delivered by a team dedicated to promoting library services and content to defined user cohorts, namely the academic/researcher and HDR communities. To gain greater engagement with library services and content the Outreach Team must know the 'situation', i.e. each academic's teaching and research profile, ascertain their content needs to support teaching and research outcomes, intimately know their individual issues or concerns around library services and provide solutions to better align services to support their needs. Only by systematically building relationships on a one-on-one basis and delivering the features and benefits of services during calls can the library's operational goals be achieved. It takes considerable time and skill to move through the four stages of selling value: Meet and greet; Establish credibility; Seek opportunities; and Provide solutions.

The outstanding success of the Outreach Service has led to better awareness and greater engagement with library services, the acquisition of new content and the development of new services such as the Research Impact Measurement Service to support research outcomes. Undergraduate students are not overlooked in this relationship building cycle with the academy and HDR students; rather a better informed academy will themselves deliver library content at the right time and in the right place to support the learning outcomes of this student cohort.

Further reading

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The subject librarian as a cultural ambassador: an Australian librarian in London

Lara Cain Gray

In Information Studies literature there is debate about the future of the 'subject librarian' as the increasing sophistication of electronic search devices leaves readers progressively more capable of seeking and interpreting information independently. As a case study, however, this essay will look at one such library professional, the curator for the Australian collection at the British Library, and question the impact of the absence of that role on public interaction with the Library's Australian material. It will be shown that the role of the subject librarian will necessarily be reinterpreted in future, but that subject specialists still play an important role as 'ambassadors' for the collections they represent.

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Introduction

The subject specialist, in the context of librarianship, has traditionally been responsible for some or all tasks associated with the selection, exploitation and conservation of a specific subsection of a library collection: covering a geographical area, for example, or a particular discipline. The routine, practical elements of this role might appear in the job description, but what sometimes goes unwritten is the tremendous power and significance of the subject librarian in terms of being a gatekeeper of information. In particular, in the case of a geographical/language specialist, this librarian will also act as a translator and ambassador for his/her area of specialisation.

With this in mind, the subject librarian might seem an indispensable component of any larger library team. However in Information Studies literature there is much debate: does a librarian need to have a strong subject background to provide a quality service? Or is the 'disintermediation' of information (Rodwell 2001), whereby users help themselves to information via search engines and databases, resulting in potentially less need for subject expertise? The skills required of information professionals may be moving towards an emphasis on training, information literacy and business management, but what does this mean for the cultural gatekeeper component of their roles?

This essay will examine the literature about subject librarians in two parts: first looking at the question of practicality in terms of the changing needs of library users, and then looking at the role of libraries in representation of culture. As a focus, the role of the curator for Australian material at the British Library ('curator' being the preferred job title for subject specialists at that institution) will be examined, using the author's personal experience, to explore the potentially ambassadorial role of being a subject librarian for Australian library holdings in an international environment. This essay will conclude that the ways in which Australian collections outside of Australia are selected, marketed and managed may impact on international understandings of Australian literature and culture: a dedicated 'Australianist' in this circumstance will affect the ways in which the library presents Australia to users. Whether or not these kinds of subject librarians continue to exist in library teams, it is important to consider within the debate this under-examined dimension of their role.

History and theory

Subject librarians have probably always existed in the sense that specialist collectors have always operated as mediators between texts and those with an interest in them. As a named species, however, the subject librarian gained widespread credibility as an essential link in the library team chain as libraries underwent major review, expansion and formalisation in the 1960s and '70s (Bluck 1996, p.94). Bloomfield (1988) reports a period of growth in North American universities from the 1950s, when university libraries became inadequate in meeting the needs of an increased population of teachers and students and a wider range of subjects studied. Libraries were faced with a choice between spending a lot of money to collect comprehensively, hoping to meet these new user demands through the sheer volume of acquired resources, or hiring specialists to monitor and respond to these growth patterns. A parallel increase in the volume of available publications created difficulties for other kinds of libraries: national libraries, for example, grew more selective about their intake of material other than that acquired by legal deposit.

The subject librarian was born out of this need to collect selectively, going hand in hand with the notion of strategic collection development, as opposed to the view of a library as a 'passive storehouse of knowledge acquiring materials by a gradual process of uncontrolled accretion' (Bloomfield 1988, p.99). The developments in North America produced a ripple effect and subject librarians were soon widely employed to deal with selection and enquiry work, and progressively took on management, public relations and information skills teaching for specific user groups (Bluck 1996). Somehow, though, by the late 1970s, information theorists were already beginning to question the future of this endangered breed (Dickinson, 1978, refers to subject librarians as 'dinosaurs'), as information began to be transmitted and stored in new ways.

The amount of information produced is increasing, the pace of technological change shows no sign of slowing, and user expectations are now higher than ever. In some cases, user expectations have risen in accordance with changed perceptions of who now funds library services; fee-paying students or the tax-paying public may perceive a right to demand greater accountability from library services. An added pressure comes from users' desire to access the latest technology, on and off-site, 24 hours a day. Libraries as an industry face a time of major change, as reflected in annual reports and mission statements from many libraries in recent years. Indeed, the British Library's annual report for 2004–05 was titled *Redefining the Library* (2005).

In spite of this notion of sweeping change, there is still a core set of activities fundamental to collection management and service provision. Creth (1988, p.109) lists these integral activities as: selection; weeding; preservation; faculty and academic (or user) liaison; reference and user education; budget responsibility; and the preparation of collection development policies. The subject librarian takes on some, or all, of these tasks in relation to a specific section of the collection and related user group, and customarily has had an academic or professional background in the subject area.

There are different challenges faced by different library types within this debate, affecting the ways in which they might deploy a subject librarian. To some extent, a national library has 'no discrete or identified public' (Bloomfield 1988, p.101), whereas an academic library can draw some boundaries around discipline-based user groups. However, as a general rule, the subject librarian will be called upon as an 'expert' in the resources of a given field, working with the library's mission statement to make appropriate selections and the best use of collection material.

The subject librarian in the 'new library'

The debate about the future importance of subject librarians is multifaceted. Some theorists argue that the increasingly global accessibility of information will mean that librarians generally may soon be 'fit only for a museum' (Batt 1997, p.212). However, Batt (1997) suggests that libraries will always retain a 'sign post' function, in that users still, and for sometime will, need to ask directions as they navigate information pathways. In this environment, in-depth subject knowledge is arguably less important than proficiency in search and retrieval skills. Jones et al (1999) discuss the findings of a project about skill needs in the 'new library' making clear comparisons between the roles elicited from their surveys of working librarians. They divide tasks into 'traditional roles' and 'enhanced or new roles'. A revealing example is 'Encourage and enable customer use of lending services' versus 'Encourage and enable customer use of self-service systems' (1999, p.19). In the new library the 'subject librarian' too might be replaced by a 'liaison librarian'—suggesting that they are skilled contact points for enabling information retrieval, but not necessarily subject 'experts'.

Another argument against the continued inclusion of subject specialists in library teams applies to those libraries where the subject specialist takes sole charge of selection for the subject area (as was the case at the British Library during the period of observation). The debate centres on the democratisation of the selection process: that is, removing the notion that only an elite set of specialists can be involved in selection. A team approach to selection allows for staff with some subject knowledge, who may be using that knowledge for reference queries or cataloguing, and might make useful observations about demand and usage patterns, to have input to selection decisions. The traditional subject librarian model sees the whole responsibility being given to an individual expert who may not necessarily have daily contact with users (Creth 1988).

Further to this is the concern that subject librarians have difficulties in terms of career progression. If they are charged primarily with selection and reference work, they may not be able to improve or demonstrate their administrative or technical skills. In many cases, subject librarians work as a self-contained 'department' (for example, there is one principal curator for Australian monographs at the British Library) and as such may not be in a position to take on management responsibilities. More functional posts within a library may lead logically from one level to another, but there may be only a few subject-related posts (Bluck 1996). In cases where subject librarians are promoted to a management level, they may have to relinquish their subject focus, and in so doing diminish their expertise in the area.

Thompson and Carr (1987) discuss the different ways in which a library might be structured, from the hierarchical ‘tree’ of a function-oriented approach, to the ‘necklace’-like notion of a circle of subject experts. Contemporary libraries work with variations of both approaches, and the impact of the organisational structure on subject librarians similarly varies. McAbee and Graham (2005) conducted a major study of the differences between expectations (of staff and management), perceptions and realities of the duties of a subject librarian. Examining a medium-sized academic library environment, they show that librarians are expected to perform multiple duties, meaning that subject librarians increasingly take on responsibilities related to public liaison (such as reference desk duties), or instruction about the use of the library and electronic resource reviews, in addition to their roles as ‘experts’ in a given field. In this study, these changes in expectations of the responsibilities of the subject librarian had been met with disgruntlement by those who had worked in the field for some time. Looking back at Bluck’s discussion of career progression, however, such changed responsibilities probably offer subject librarians better long term prospects if they wish to stay within the information industry. It is also clear to see a major shift in library discourse from that of the library as a repository to a contemporary user-focused environment, which inevitably brings changes in job requirements.

McAbee and Graham (2005, p.20) also reference Dickinson’s ‘dinosaurs’ metaphor, saying that subject librarians are ‘always marked for extinction but have found ways to evolve and survive’. They support Rodwell (2001), who says that the subject specialist’s role needs to evolve into that of a ‘subject expert’. Though these terms are used interchangeably in other places, what Rodwell is suggesting is a move away from the notion (in Dickinson’s time) that subject specialists should focus on knowledge of the ‘subject’, and a move towards their embracing a more holistic knowledge of the relevant client community. In this sense, to avoid extinction, the subject librarian needs to be open to additional responsibilities that are more ‘hands on’ than those of the traditional specialist. They are at once the ‘sanctioned intermediaries’ (Davila, 1996, p.117) between institutional and professional networks and the user, and must be team players within the multiple responsibilities of the library.

Along with duties and expectations, and issues of career progression, redefining the role of the subject librarian may also involve discussion of their passage into the library. This varies between libraries, and indeed between cultures. Thompson and Carr (1987), referencing Humphreys (1967), discuss definitions of a subject librarian in the UK context. They explain that the subject librarian will most likely have a degree in the subject, or will acquire one whilst in post.

He/she will be expected to operate as an academic expert within a library context. The administrative/functional dimensions of librarianship are secondary to the qualifications required in the subject area. This may not be true of all UK libraries, but it is the model under which many British Library subject experts joined the Library.

In Australia, however, the vast majority of library positions advertised require eligibility for ALIA membership. To be a member of ALIA, the employee must have some qualifications in library/information/archive studies. So, in this environment, a subject specialist is most likely to enter the library with a subject-based undergraduate degree and a postgraduate library qualification, or a library qualification with significant subject-based industry experience.

In the UK, membership of the equivalent organisation (CILIP) is considerably more flexible, and is not an obligatory component of library employment. Many libraries, including major national and academic libraries, do not offer organisational memberships, leaving it up to individual employees to decide whether they wish to participate in CILIP activities. To be a curator at the British Library, it is not essential to have any library qualifications nor join CILIP (though many of course do). Hence, in this environment, a subject librarian may be more likely to view him/herself as an academic who works in a library, entering with a postgraduate qualification in their subject of choice. This, in turn, may impact on the responsibilities they are willing and/or able to take on within the team.

The librarian as ambassador

Amongst this multifarious praise and dissent, the literature rarely mentions the significance of subject librarians in what might be called their 'cultural ambassador' role. Used here as a variant of the common term 'gatekeeper', the subject librarian as ambassador can open doors and lead users towards wise choices in the relevant subject area. The subject librarian also has a unique potential for exploiting 'hidden collections' (Jones 2002); those items that may not have made it onto the web OPAC, or which require research or conservation activities before they can be made publicly available. This is of relevance in a very large library such as the British Library where some items are still found only on card catalogues or may not have been catalogued at all (for example, manuscript collections may take some time to be itemised).

In terms of representation of a culturally-based collection, a librarian who has considerable experience of the region in question brings a wealth of opportunities to translate and contextualise culturally-specific material, which may be more valuable than the reader downloading the same information. There may also be a significant personal dimension to the 'ambassadorial' work of the subject specialist. Wakimoto (2002, p.434), who describes herself as an 'ethnic librarian', expresses this as the 'privilege of straddling two cultures'. For someone in an expatriate situation, carrying out close work with the collections of their culture of origin can introduce them to new dimensions of their own heritage as well as making connections with others who are keen to learn about their culture (Wakimoto 2002, p.434). This can present opportunities for personal exploration of one's identity and beliefs (and complementary professional satisfaction).

Like all libraries, the British Library's decisions about how best to manage the collections and allocate staffing have changed over the years and evolve still. There has been a distinct Australian curator in some form at the library since the early 1970s. Since that time, the Library has mostly maintained a language and/or region focus in terms of its specialists: that is, a curator for Thai, a curator for Canada, a curator for Arabic, and so on. These curators work principally on matters of selection and responses to public enquiries about their subject areas. At the time of writing the Australian curator's key activities were:

- selection of monographs and electronic resources from Australia
- participation in internal and external research projects relating to the collection
- response to reader enquiries by email, letter and in person as required
- maintenance of current awareness of Australian issues and developments in publishing
- networking and promoting the collection in the community.

The subject specialists in this large, national library, servicing an international user base, thus play a significant role as cultural gatekeepers: they mediate and facilitate access to the world's knowledge of a particular cultural space.

Case study: the British Library

I was privileged to hold the position of Australia and New Zealand Curator at the British Library from 2004 to 2007 (for the purpose of this essay, the Australian dimension of the role is given priority). This represented a serendipitous career move: a hastily-planned personal sabbatical in Europe resulted in the marvellous professional opportunity to experience one of the world's great libraries from the 'inside'. Personal matters forced my return to Australia, but distance makes it possible to reflect on the unique opportunity for 'straddling two cultures' that this particular subject librarian role offered.

The British Library boasts holdings of about 150 million items, in most known languages, and grows by about 3 million items per year. In amongst this vast collection, the Library holds the largest international collection of material published in and about Australia. As the national library of Britain, one of the key strengths of the collection for Australianists is the many British publications about Australia: from colonial records, explorers' journals and naturalists' observations, through to newspapers targeted at expatriates and travellers, canonical Australian novels that were first published in Britain, and myriad sources for genealogical research. More surprising, for some visitors, is the fact that the Library actively maintains a contemporary collection including the latest academic research, literature, biographies and histories published in Australia. Monograph selection for this collection is primarily the domain of the Australian curator: appropriate and representative selection being an important first component of the role's ambassadorial activity. The curator makes selections across many discipline areas, whilst liaising with staff responsible for serials, electronic and technical selections to ensure Australian publications are well-represented across the library.

As early as 1988, Bloomfield (101, p.2) noted that 'it is important to be able to change staff organization to match changing conditions or the changed demands of a different collection development strategy'. He recognised, in his discussion of the British Library, that the institution was increasingly faced with requests for specialists in law, art history and so on, and it was not always possible to accommodate these requests when curators were working on a language/geographical area basis. The Library is continuing to review this situation and has launched a major staff initiative questioning what it means to be a curator in the 21st Century. However, at the time of writing the British Library continued to use many specialist curators to select works from around the world according to language and/or region, and some of the advantages of this approach are discussed later.

The somewhat unusual description of British Library specialists as 'curators' may suggest that the skills required for the role are different from those of other subject librarians: the term is more usually associated with art galleries or museums. Although the British Library's curators do prepare exhibitions, it is not their primary role in the way an art curator might see their work. In fact, the curators at the British Library represent the sort of ‘pure’ subject specialist to which many theorists now object, in that many are academics, rather than trained librarians, and they are not always required to carry out reference desk shifts, administrative duties or cataloguing.

Curators have been described as ‘institutionally recognized experts of the artworld establishment’ who ‘establish the meaning and status of contemporary art through its acquisition, exhibition and interpretation’ (Davila 1996, p.117). When applied to the library environment, establishing meaning and status has the dual connotation of confirming or ratifying meaning, which is part of the process of selection (figuring out the worth of an item before purchase) and creating or strengthening meaning, which attributes a significant power to library curators in terms of potential international perceptions of a specific collection.

Can you see what I see?

There is a range of practical examples demonstrating the ways in which specialist subject knowledge can be useful in a large library. Whilst many of the British Library’s experienced staff are able to respond to reader needs across a range of subject areas, expert subject knowledge has distinct advantages, which impact on the efficacy of collection development and management and on the reputation of the collection. The following examples from my personal experience illustrate this point.

A sense of ownership and context

Notions of ‘ownership’ are frequently debated at the British Library: it has the responsibility for custodianship of the national literature, faces issues around repatriation of materials given its long collecting history, and, like all libraries, it must make decisions about database subscription licences and who ‘owns’ electronic materials. However, in my dealings with the public, I found the daily anecdotal discussions with the Library’s wide-ranging user groups around a ‘sense of ownership’ of Australian materials to be revealing in terms of cultural identity. Many visiting Australians, for example, found it hard to believe that Captain James Cook’s seafaring journals did not form part of the Australian curator’s responsibilities (being managed, understandably, by expert manuscript curators from the British collection areas). In a nod to the ongoing Australian tug-of-war between pride in international success and resentment of tall poppies (particularly Imperial ones), I observed visitors’ pleasure that the British Library held rare copies of the first books ever published in Australia but relief that copies were also held by some Australian libraries. The enquiries by

Australian researchers and researchers about Australia (from anywhere in the world) provided insight into perceptions of Australianness and the Australian relationship with Britain.

My own sense of pride in this important collection of Australian publications made me keen to raise reader awareness about the issues and contexts within which their enquiries were located. From those less familiar with Australian studies, I received abundant requests for 'an Aboriginal dictionary' or for the 'most accurate' history of Australia. Queries such as these require sensitivity and understanding of context and current debate in Australian studies; without guidance on these matters a reader might stray towards extremely outdated material.

For those with stronger subject knowledge, the British Library could be a treasure chest, providing one of the UK's few access points to electronic resources such as AustLit and Informit, for example, guidance in the use of which helps international researchers access the latest Australian research and also make the most of the Library's vast serial collections. Offering direction on access to these newer resources impacts on researchers' impressions of the state of Australian research—the plethora of titles made available through online indexing demonstrating that Australian publishing is thriving and multifaceted.

Importantly too, the Library attracted some of the world's experts in all matters Australian who had much to teach me. Visitors to the Library regularly recommended texts for selection, and made suggestions about ways in which the catalogues and websites relating to Australian studies might be improved.

Cataloguing, the OPAC and web presence

Reader suggestions and my own growing familiarity with the British Library catalogues alerted me to a number of catalogue errors that may have been prevented by subject knowledge, such as the inappropriate use of 'Aboriginal/aboriginal', for example. Publishing histories, such as pseudonyms, also presented problems for cataloguers as I came across several cases where an author who had written under various names was not cross-referenced on the catalogue. In these situations, my knowledge of Australian studies allowed me to direct users towards all the relevant information, and to suggest enhancements to catalogue entries where possible. It goes without saying that British Library cataloguers have expert knowledge of cataloguing rules—and the continuing development of imported catalogue records will also affect future entries—but the Library's OPAC is the product of many decades of conversion from card catalogues and variations in preferred systems, and a subject specialist's critical eye can be valuable in spotting oddities in catalogue entries.

In terms of web presence, the curator also maintains ready-reference tools such as an online list of useful website links. Such guides are another form of gatekeeping whereby the curator has a responsibility for fair cultural representation in the sites they choose to promote. Reader feedback, research and networking in the Australian Studies community alerted me to important new web resources that could help British Library readers. Awareness of issues of cultural importance is also the domain of the curator —such as notifying Indigenous readers/visitors about representations of the dead: now a common convention in Australian online collections, but not a feature of the British Library's picture library (Images Online).

Collection 'gaps' and research trends

Subject knowledge also offers unique insight into selection. Whilst it is certainly possible to select based on reading catalogues, reviews or reading lists, a selector who has specific subject knowledge will also be aware of items that may not appear in commercial catalogues or booklists. Small press and rare book items, out of print texts that were not selected upon their original publication but may have contemporary relevance, and items which may appear out of scope, but which in fact have cultural/historical significance, are some examples. As an example of the latter case, the British Library's mandate to collect only material of scholarly research interest from Australia may result in works about popular television programs or sports not being acquired for the collection. A subject specialist, however, can determine which of these types of publications is likely to be of longer term research interest, and which is more ephemeral in nature.

Advocacy

A librarian with a special interest in the collection for which he/she is responsible will be concerned with its welfare; he or she will fight for budget allocation, for example, or seek out opportunities to showcase the collection through projects and exhibitions. In 2005–06, the Library coordinated a project about non-British literatures in English ('postcolonial' literatures). As the Australian curator, I was able to ensure that Australian literature was fairly represented in that project and not overwhelmed by literature from North America or India, for example, which may have been more widely read in the United Kingdom. Projects such as this, which cross cultural barriers, are likely to continue to be launched as many libraries are actively interested in collaboration (see, for example, Bishoff 2004). Collaboration can be particularly useful for funding bids: in an international space it may be easier to fund a showcase of Commonwealth or 'postcolonial' literature than an exclusively Australian collection, for example. For this reason, the issue of advocacy is likely to be increasingly relevant to the 'subject librarianship' debate.

Until 2003 the Australian collections were part of the Library's 'Overseas English Section'. Since then, they have been managed from within the Asia Pacific and Africa department. In many other British libraries, Australian material comes under the headings of 'Commonwealth' or 'Oceanic' studies (such as The Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African studies or the Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas at the British Museum), which bring with them their own sets of connotations. In this way, the naming of a collection can be culturally relevant: evocative, politically sensitive or misleading. In fairness, there is no neat way to 'carve up' the globe into administrative departments, but the practical necessity to do so means Australian subject specialists may need to work to ensure that the Australian collections are well-represented and promoted so as not to be overshadowed by these broad-reaching collection divisions.

In 2006 I was instrumental in the establishment of the UK-based Australian and New Zealand Library and Archives Group (ANZLAG), a network that reaches out to information professionals working with Australian and New Zealand collections across the UK and Europe. The growth of this network revealed the many curators, librarians and archivists for whom Australian and New Zealand materials formed part of their portfolios, however these were usually within a broader departmental title, such as Commonwealth Studies. For this reason, there are many subject-focused professionals working in the UK whose responsibilities might stretch from Caribbean official publications to African literature and thus, understandably, advocacy of the Australian collections cannot always be the top priority. ANZLAG continues to offer an email discussion network and an annual workshop organised by the Menzies Centre for Australian Studies (Kings College London) and the Institute of Commonwealth Studies library—two leading promoters of Australian studies in the UK.

Conclusion

Bloomfield (1988, p.104) states that Baatz, in 1978, was already observing a change in library culture from collection building to the provision of service, and the future of the subject librarian appears to hang on the interpretation of best practice in service provision. It is clear that, at this stage, good service provision still requires the input of information intermediaries. The exact dimensions of the roles of those intermediaries, however, are still open to debate.

A survey of available literature on the topic of subject librarians has shown rational arguments for both the pros and the cons of building a library team around subject specialists. Importantly, if subject specialists are to continue to hold prominent positions in library teams, their skills will need to evolve to incorporate sophisticated IT knowledge, search and retrieval skills, and business management proficiency. Although it seems there is still a role for the subject specialist, it will be a 'hands on' role, where their knowledge may need to be communicated through a variety of team roles (such as working on reference desks, or teaching search skills to new users).

The specific case study of the curator for Australian material at the British Library has shown the distinct advantages of having a dedicated subject specialist to manage a subset of a large library collection. Most apparently, there are advantages to the practicalities of collection management, such as efficient selection and cataloguing. The broader implications of these practical matters, however, include an effect on the British Library user's impression of Australian publishing, and Australian culture itself, positioning the subject librarian in this circumstance in the accountable role of 'cultural ambassador'. This perspective on the curator's role can equally be applied to subject librarians in many different subject areas and types of libraries: they are gatekeepers not just to 'information' but to users' points of contact, first impressions and lasting understandings of subject areas, and this deeper level of understanding of context and interpretation of material may not be replicated effectively by electronic search tools alone.

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Learning on the job: collection management, and aspects of cross-cultural provision

Fiona Blackburn

What does a newcomer to the library industry bring, at nearly fifty? What does she find? Reflecting on her experience and a recent study tour, the author describes the barely-skilled-although-nominally-qualified challenge; and discusses current cross-cultural provision. She muses on the interplay between a new librarian's fresh eyes, experience and strong commitments; racism; possible sources of prejudice; organisational focus; and place, in shaping provision. That public libraries have a strategic and comprehensive approach to cross-cultural provision is a particular concern. Where Indigenous knowledge collections have unrestricted access, effort should be put into building non-Indigenous engagement with the riches in these collections. This will serve to strengthen the library's position in the community and, in expanding non-Indigenous patrons' knowledge of their community, build cross-cultural understanding.

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The first year and what went before

'I look like a librarian so I may as well be one.' I cracked that joke frequently when studying. You know the image: female, bespectacled, grey hair worn up, tattoos concealed from the public gaze. I was no longer interested in health, community development, fundraising, publishing or the state public service; in fact I intensely disliked a couple of those options, which incorporated the most miserable years of my working life. I enrolled in a Graduate Diploma of Information Management, making a swift decision on pretty bad advice.

Three years after qualifying, two years after abandoning the job search for awhile, I moved thousands of miles to Alice Springs, to the centre of Australia and of a desert, to work in the public library as the Special Collections Librarian.

To that point I had spent very little time in libraries, beyond the requirements of school, tertiary study and bursts of recreational reading. Working in a library became an aspiration while I studied, after realising that the course would not teach me what I wanted to learn[1] and quixotically deciding to persevere.

Fortunately the job suits me. I am delighted to be working in the community again while learning the many aspects of library work at which the qualification hinted but in no way equipped me for. There is room in the job (just) for me to contribute experience and ideas gleaned from nearly thirty years' employment in other industries. The desert is subtle and beautiful, heart-liftingly so, although the weather and the social climate can be harsh. At nearly fifty, I am enthusiastic about my job, something missing from my employment for years.

Alice Springs Public Library (ASPL) serves a huge area, from Barrow Creek to Coober Pedy and out to the borders, actually spilling into Western Australia a little through its Country Borrower program. Much is made of the iconic size of Northern Territory pastoral stations but ASPL's 550,000 square kilometre service region puts them in the shade, when there is shade.

When I began work in 2007, ASPL had two Special Collections: the Alice Springs Collection and the Akaltye Antheme Collection. The Alice Springs Collection is a 'record of change', documenting the economic development, geography, history and cultures of Central Australia. This is no small aim but the Collection's origin as the Central Australian reference branch of the then Northern Territory Library and Information Service[2] and my predecessors' effectiveness mean that researchers from all over Australia use it.

The Akaltye Antheme Collection was established in 2002 as part of an initiative to enhance Indigenous people's experience of the library. Indigenous people have always used ASPL: surveys in 2002 and 2003 found that Indigenous people were up to 30% of the library's clientele, depending on factors like the time of year and the number of tourists in town. So this Collection was not intended to boost numbers. The intention is to provide material of interest to, by and about Indigenous library users; and to showcase local Indigenous culture to non-Indigenous patrons and visitors. 'Akaltye Antheme' is Arrernte for 'Giving Knowledge'; the name was contributed by the region's traditional owners. The knowledge being given is for Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike.

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1 I had submitted the required application to the faculty outlining my reasons for wanting to do the course and had been accepted. One evening, after the period for reimbursement of fees on withdrawal had expired, I asked the lecturer if the course would meet my requirements; he blinked, took a breath, and said, 'No'.

2 Now simply Northern Territory Library.

ASPL does hold culturally sensitive materials, which are potentially troublesome for some Indigenous people. They were identified in collaboration with traditional owners and are held in a locked Sensitive Items Cabinet, available on request to anyone but out of the way of people for whom seeing them unintentionally would be culturally inappropriate or distressing.

My primary focus during 2007–2008 was learning how to manage the Akaltye Antheme Collection, including how the Indigenous Services Officer and I would work together. Reading project evaluation reports, browsing the shelves and watching how the items were used, learning the particular end-processing methods for this Collection, thorough-going discussions with the Indigenous Services Officer, reading the ATSILIRN Protocols all gave me the history of the Collection, organisational aspirations for it and its day-to-day operation. Discussion with the Senior Librarian who instigated its establishment and with the first project officer was also informative.

With regard to the Alice Springs Collection, I performed the first duty of anyone with a budget, i.e. I spent it. Through selecting resources I learned about the Collection, including areas that might be strengthened. End-processing them meant I began to learn the basics of essential library systems the graduate diploma had skimmed. Providing customer service alerted me to the challenges of preserving resources—challenges bigger than they might have been had I had any experience or training.

I spent a lot of time playing to my strengths: I networked; raised the profile of the Special Collections and thus the Library itself; and contributed the ideas and experience acquired in different industries.

After the mid-year budget review, I was asked to purchase for a Local Languages Collection. This Collection was the then Indigenous Services Officer's idea. In our Dreaming08 paper (Blackburn and Neale 2008), she describes her commitment to her people and how this Collection fits into her plans for making the library a welcoming worthwhile place for them to come. Fortunately I had come to town with a contact who had introduced me to exactly the people and organisations I needed for this task. Soon I had purchased everything I could find and entered another near-vertical learning curve: establishing a new collection.

Overall I did not do too badly but the stress was considerable. When I was talking recently about how I've flown by the seat of my pants through the requirements of special collection management, someone said somewhat impatiently, 'But surely you did a special collections elective in your course'. Well actually no, I didn't —from memory no such elective was offered. My scepticism about 'transferable skills' is now pretty embedded. Library systems are specific, complex, and quite beautiful when you understand them; to use them optimally, and to enjoy using them, requires specialised training. The design of the Special Collections position, with other senior positions at ASPL, requires technical proficiency. A humanities degree, varied work experience and a postgraduate qualification giving an overview at best (and worst), don't cut it.

I wrote in my first performance appraisal that, now having a sense of the work cycle in a library, I intended to become more systematic and to focus on learning the management of the Alice Springs Collection better. The 2008 ALIA conference (Dreaming '08), the paper the Indigenous Services Officer and I co-presented there, and writing a submission for funding for a bigger library blew those aspirations out of the water. I got back on course with a study tour in December 2008, which also, by not providing answers to questions about cross-cultural provision, provided the stimulus for this article.

The study tour: its purpose and some of the outcomes

After Dreaming '08, where I listened to discussions of significance, and met key people, I presented a proposal to Alice Springs Town Council to fund my attendance at the New Librarians' Symposium, and to visit institutions in Melbourne and regional Victoria. The primary purpose of the visits was to learn better management of the Alice Springs Collection. I also wanted to investigate other libraries' provision of cross-cultural services, particularly regarding non-Indigenous engagement with Indigenous knowledge collections.

The Storage Preservation and Conservation Manager at the State Library of Victoria (SLV) organised a tour there. I visited the digitising, preservation, and conservation sections, the Public Libraries Division and Collections Services. I also visited the Koori History Unit at the Public Records Office of Victoria (PROV); the Prahran Mechanics Institute Library; and the Shepparton branch of the Goulburn Valley Regional Library (GVRL).

At the same time the Australian Newspaper Digitising Project (ANDP) manager found the wherewithal for me to visit the National Library of Australia (NLA). The purpose of this leg of the trip was to share information about our respective newspaper digitising projects, and support ASPL staff in our project; and share information and network more broadly between the two institutions. I spent several days with ANDP staff but met with NLA's Manuscripts, Preservation, Pictures and copyright staff as well. I also visited the National Archives of Australia (NAA), the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Library, and ALIA.

I returned to Alice Springs able to identify the methods my predecessors used to preserve items in the Alice Springs Collection, better able to advise the operational team about end-processing and mending, with tips about preservation products, and aware of online training options. The confidence my 'guides' engendered through simply sharing their time, demonstrating their expertise and discussing issues with a reassuring pragmatism and collegiality justifies their generosity, and the cost of the trip. Their consistent approach was that they had knowledge to share but also that what I brought was interesting and a source of potential learning for them. Visiting both SLV and NLA consolidated what I learned.

However the cross-cultural provision question, about engaging non-Indigenous patrons with Indigenous knowledge collections, wasn't really answered.

Why am I interested in this aspect of cross-cultural provision?

Focusing on this aspect may appear mystifying and perhaps counter-intuitive when enhancing Indigenous people's access to collections is such a priority; and when Indigenous people are so concerned about some of the material in libraries and archives being available at all. However it has relevance to my 'practice' and how public libraries function in their communities; it has particular relevance to the context in which ASPL works.

Cross-cultural provision includes the provision of materials and access to them, by one cultural group for another; often, maybe generally, the provider is from the dominant culture. It includes engaging patrons with materials not of their culture and which belong to another group in a community; it includes programs to draw patrons into all or any collections. It includes all the political and organisational decisions and activities that bring those resources and programs to the public; staff training and engagement is an element of this aspect.

My work involves cross-cultural provision using Indigenous knowledge collections. That is, in this instance, the provision by members of the dominant culture of materials from a colonised culture, members of which suffer disadvantage and prejudice; for both groups. I assume that provision by the privileged of materials from and for minority, less powerful, often disadvantaged groups would be an element in most cross-cultural provision.

Encouraging Indigenous people to use the Akaltye Antheme and Local Languages Collections is not ASPL's current challenge. Indigenous people visit these frequently—some use only these collections. We do have to think of ways of developing information literacy and technical skills among some of our Indigenous patrons. We also need to devise ways to encourage non-Indigenous people to venture into these collections and discover the riches there.

Why? ASPL's Indigenous knowledge collections reside in the public domain. Broad engagement means justifying expenditure on these Collections is easier and the continuation of the collections is better ensured. Cross-cultural understanding requires non-Indigenous awareness of Indigenous culture and life.

My 'practice'; or more of what went before the first year

My 'practice' developed accidentally, as it does for most people. Accidents included birth into the dominant culture and a household headed by children of the 1930's depression, who were Methodists. The legacy was a nearly complete ignorance of Indigenous people, their culture and their experience; a sense of poverty that probably had more to do with my mother's anxieties and activities than any real impoverishment; and feeling peripheral at school as we followed my father's career around two states and as my parents' religion shaped our lives.

When I was twenty, I read two books: *Bury my heart at Wounded Knee,* and *Living black / blacks talk to Kevin Gilbert*. They began my waking up to Indigenous people's place in history; thirty years later, I can say these books were the watershed in the slow process of becoming the adult I am. They head the list of my seven all-time favourite books.[3]

After crashing out of nursing training, I went to university, had a baby and moved into a shared household with leftie, feminist politics. For the next fourteen years, there were, among other activities, NAIDOC marches, Sorry Day ceremonies, reconciliation activities, and visits to the Tent Embassy in Canberra and to Camp Sovereignty in Melbourne's Domain during the 2006 Commonwealth Games. We discussed 'whiteness'—about what it means to be white when being white is the norm.

I drifted through employment in the industries mentioned already. The principles of access, equity and empowerment emboldening the community development sector in Victoria during the 1980s, made a permanent impression, even though most of the time I was merely aping more dynamic iconoclastic workers already in the field.

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3 The other five, mentioned at the Editor's suggestion, are *Memoirs of a revolutionary*, by Victor Serge; *My life*, Leon Trotsky's autobiography; *Inshallah*, by Oriana Fallaci; *Underworld*, by Don DeLillo; and Alan Lomax's *The Land where the blues began*.

Finally, there was personal care attendant work in a supported accommodation service for Kooris. There I saw the stark health effects of life for many Indigenous people—very high incidence of diabetes, alcohol-related brain damage, staggering male morbidity—and the strength and resilience of culture, its centrality in a people's existence. I also realised the power of being white: the residents were far more biddable when I asked them to do something than when my mostly Sri Lankan co-workers did.

The accidents outlined already—the marginalisations and dislocations of my childhood; Methodism; social justice; the politics of those leftie households —and the experience of white power in an ordinary working environment, crystallised my perceptions of Indigenous experience. Without the political activity I doubt I would have seen the picture so clearly, but the insight the work brought was visceral.

The most recent 'accident' is getting a job that includes Indigenous knowledge collections. The spurious relevance of my Bachelor of Arts with Honours in history was what gave me the confidence to apply for the Special Collections position, rather than a commitment to justice for Indigenous people. Accidents notwithstanding, the challenges of working in a public library in a place like Alice Springs resonate with who I am and the commitments I bring.

The context for Alice Springs Public Library's work

One of the things I have noticed here—'here' being Alice Springs and the library industry both—is the use of euphemisms: 'Indigenous issues' is current code for old fashioned terms like 'racism' and 'prejudice'; 'Indigenous provision' is a term that could mean 'provision of library services for Indigenous people' or 'provision of materials with Indigenous content'. There might be an underlying assumption that these materials are primarily for Indigenous people; which, if so, should raise the question, 'Why?'

Organisational decisions to facilitate access to collections for Indigenous people—to assist them to pick their way through the archives and collections recording so much of their heritage and find their way home; to regain some autonomy—are easily argued (now). I wonder, when these decisions coincide with, for example, the consequences of prejudice being labelled 'Indigenous issues' and when Indigenous people are 'other' (when being white is the norm), whether 'Indigenous provision' becomes something white librarians do for Indigenous people, without really thinking about the relevance to their own experience, the position they, the white librarians, occupy in the world.

I have had opportunity here to think about why affirmative initiatives arouse incomprehension, resentment, anger among people in the dominant culture; to consider one possible source of racism. Articulating something I have observed is difficult and is possibly inaccurate. Identifying the provenance of prejudice could enhance efforts to engage with it. Trying to change people's minds because they are 'wrong' simply ensures a defensive response. Refusing to connive at racism myself is nevertheless necessary: it is simply not just for Indigenous people to be the butt of racism but somehow responsible for changing those attitudes; and I have to be able to state my beliefs if I have a place. There are strategic reasons also: racism is common; it is present in the decision-making environment; and it is an obstacle to cross-cultural understanding. Not addressing it can potentially undermine support for the Library in a significant proportion of the community; and could hinder the success of programs and the fulfilment of the Library's mission.

Some people I have met here, who are salt of the earth and good people to their own, firmly believe that there is no Indigenous culture; that all Indigenous people are master scammers; that special attention to the requirements and situation of Indigenous people is simply wrong. These perceptions are integral to some people's belief systems; it is as simple and intractable as that.

In listening, I have often thought that their virulence, amounting in my view to hatred, actually doesn't have much to do with Indigenous people and may relate more to a probably historically well-founded fear of destitution. The sight of some people getting something for apparently nothing arouses fear—of there not being enough for themselves—and indignation, particularly if the recipients had less than themselves or appear feckless. There may also be echoes of disappointment —decades of hard work have brought little comparative return, recognition or reward—and alienation: when or how are they going to get such support? Assuming that racism is based on ignorance or misunderstanding of Indigenous culture, current circumstances or history and therefore attempting to explain or describe these may well not make much headway. Locating attempts to shift such attitudes in explanations of the other group may not shift the basis of such fears or resentments—or reasoned opinions.

During a tour for newly elected Councillors last year, I spoke enthusiastically about a database donated to the library by the Central Land Council (CLC). It records thirty years of organisational activity; Indigenous people use it to find photos of family and browse their recent history. One Councillor asked if material in the database was in languages other than English and if so how were non-Indigenous people to find their history in it. He seemed to have no awareness that he was standing in a collection predominantly in English and that documentation of his history, his interests, his place was embedded and accessible in most of the items all around him. He was very concerned that any material about Central Australia not in English excluded local non-Indigenous people.

Promoting the library and its Indigenous knowledge collections as an opportunity for all patrons may seem a feeble response but it is an attempt to engage where I surmise a source of the issue is. It avoids explaining Indigenous people to non-Indigenous people; that strategy posits Indigenous people as alien and avoids the possibility of discerning our comparatively privileged place in the world.

There is also the strategy of assuming people are coming from a different place than at first seems the case: the Councillor may have wanted the CLC database to be in English because he shares history with the local Indigenous people but doesn't speak the lingo.

Other libraries' provision

Responses to my question about cross-cultural provision were informed by two things: a focus in the institutional setting on provision of access to Indigenous people; and the way I asked the question. At SLV and NLA I asked simply about access to Indigenous collections. The Acting Manager of Collections Services, SLV and the Curator of Pictures at NLA both assumed I was talking about Indigenous people's access to existing collections and potentially sensitive materials in them; and I was so absorbed in the obverse that the need to be specific didn't occur to me.

SLV and NLA

SLV had recently employed a Koori woman on a part-time fraction, whose job included promoting the collections to the Koori community and managing access. The time fraction was a beginning, rather than optimal. The employment of an Indigenous woman was interesting to me; the sensitive items held in Central Australia, both at ASPL and at the Strehlow Research Centre[4], relate to

[4] The Strehlow Research Centre is the repository for the artefacts gathered by TGH Strehlow during his work with Aboriginal people in Central Australia. Many are sacred and sensitive. www.nt.gov.au/nreta/museums/strehlow/collection.html [accessed 23/03/09]

men's business and Indigenous women do not handle them.[5] Indigenous men wanting to use the sensitive books in the Alice Springs Collection speak to me or another, non-Indigenous staff member. (Responsibility for compliance with cultural prescriptions and proscriptions resides with individuals; library staff do not confirm the propriety of access). If an Indigenous woman were the ASPL Special Collections Librarian she would manage access to the Sensitive Items Cabinet at arm's length.

The Curator of Pictures at NLA outlined the cultural training Pitjantjatjara men had provided to selected male employees at NLA, to enable appropriate and sensitive management of images. This approach raised questions for me: have the trained staff become de facto cultural gatekeepers to the collections? Can only men fill those positions? Who will provide this training when staff change? I was intrigued by the NLA apparently undertaking to incorporate Indigenous mores into its workplace.

AIATSIS

The AIATSIS library encourages non-Indigenous use through group visits, online exhibitions and presentations at conferences. AIATSIS staff suggested useful promotional activities for a public library such as exhibitions from the collections on key dates, for example NAIDOC Week; Indigenous story telling sessions; and promotion of the library and its collections by community members.

ASPL does a version of most of these; and the Indigenous Services Officer presents the Indigenous knowledge collections during library tours. We do not at this stage have community ambassadors. Our challenge is finding the pitch that will at a fundamental level engage reluctant or non-users among non-Indigenous people. In promoting itself and its collections or programs, a public library will be most successful if its promotion has two facets: a response to its community, where that community or key elements of it are 'at'; and a presentation of its strengths. The first is the difficult part, requiring knowledge of its community and awareness of the prevailing attitudes and concerns within it; and strategies that address those effectively, if necessary.

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5 Access for Arrernte men isn't necessarily straightforward: they may be able to look at some objects but not others or read about some specific knowledge only, but the objects may be placed side by side in the Strehlow repository; or the knowledge may be published in a book containing other, forbidden material.

Goulburn Valley Regional Library and the Koori Resource and Information Centre

I visited the Shepparton branch of the Goulburn Valley Regional Library (GVRL) to learn more about the Koori Library Pathways Project, which was discussed at Dreaming '08 (Woodhouse, Firebrace and Crumpen 2008) and which has been the subject of a formal evaluation (Aboriginal Community Strategic Planning and Policy Unit 2007). The similarities between it and Akaltye Antheme—in aim and their location in public libraries—suggested potentially useful dialogue. GVRL staff and Koori Resource and Information Centre (KRIC) staff were generous with their time and shared documents relating to the establishment and evaluation of the project.

I found similarities and differences in both the approach and outcomes: Akaltye Antheme grew within ASPL, from the Senior Librarian observing the way Indigenous people used the library; KRIC approached GVRL 'to explore ways in which its historical knowledge and information could be shared with the wider community'.[6] GVRL and KRIC signed a Memorandum of Understanding outlining each party's responsibility and the nature and duration of the project; the ASPL initiative relied on outreach and project workers' informal connections with the Indigenous community. ASPL has established discrete Collections; GVRL has provided very effective support for KRIC's indexing project, so that it has become a resource for local Stolen Generations people. Both libraries run targeted programs, particularly for children. GVRL has become a reference point for Indigenous people seeking information. ASPL's Indigenous knowledge collections mean that an Indigenous woman has said, 'I like the library, it's my home'.[7]

There are also differences between the two initiatives reflecting local circumstance: the GVRL employee is young, where Sylvia Neale, the then ASPL Indigenous Services Officer is an older woman, with standing in her community. The complexities of the Alice Springs situation—many language groups using the town as a resource centre[8]; service organisations working with some or all of those groups[9]; a large number of NGOs, controlled by

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6 http://koorilibrary.8ways.net/

7 Quoted with permission.

8 Arrernte is the language of the traditional owners of the Alice Springs area; Warlpiri, Pitjantjatjara, Luritja, Alyawarr, Anmatjerr and Katyetye are among the local languages also spoken in the town.

9 For example, Tangentyere Council, which provides a range of services to the Housing Associations that run the town camps and to camp residents, http://www.tangentyere.org.au/; Central Land Council, http://www.clc.org.au/ ; Lhere Aretepe, the traditional owners of Alice Springs' organisation, www.lhereartepe.org.au

different language groups—mean younger people have not been able to perform the ASPL position as successfully as Sylvia has. I commented on this to the Acting Manager of the Koori Records Unit at PROV; he remarked that Koori people simply want a conduit or an identifiable person, who should be Indigenous, who can show them where to go in an organisation.[10]

When I explained to GVRL staff that I was on the hunt for tips about how to engage non-Indigenous people with our Indigenous knowledge collections, especially as those tips might relate to ways of addressing feelings of exclusion, they seemed puzzled that a white person might feel excluded by this type of collection.

Visiting these institutions—GVRL, KRIC, SLV, NLA, NAA and PROV—highlighted a number of things: the different material different organisations hold; different approaches to establishing and managing collections; different institutional roles; and varying interactions between Indigenous people and those institutions. PROV records document Kooris' interaction with government departments. The SLV Collection Services Acting Manager seemed to consider that the collection was not likely to be gender sensitive in the way that some of the material in ASPL's collection and the Strehlow Research Centre Collection is. Missionaries and anthropologists shaped the collections of Indigenous materials from and in Central Australia; sensitivities abound. SLV and NLA, as key cultural institutions, have a mandate to develop collections that document and preserve the country's heritage. Public libraries have a mission to provide free equitable access for all and to develop collections that reflect their communities.

Indigenous people interact with each of these institutions differently; and interactions have changed over time. *Footprints; the Journey of Lucy and Percy Pepper* (Flagg 2008) documents the decades-long correspondence between Victorian government officials and Lucy and Percy, who were trying to work and keep their family together. Now, Kooris 'just want a way in'. The Strehlow Research Centre has been considered a site of appropriation and theft; now it functions as a de-facto keeping place and a buttress for cultural continuation; it may become a repository for repatriated items (all without the collection changing). ASPL users include a large proportion of Indigenous people but few are formal members.

Interestingly, there was no mention of key documents, such as the ATSILIRN Protocols (ATSILIRN 2005), the *National Policy Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander library services and collections* (NSLA 2007) or

10 Conversation with Simon Flagg, 4th December 2008.

the *Bringing Them Home* report (1997) during these conversations. I didn't investigate this as my focus was different from that of these documents but it seems possible to infer their presence in the shape provision has taken: the Akaltye Antheme Collection and the Sensitive Items Cabinet at ASPL were established in collaboration with traditional owners; KRIC and GVRL signed a Memorandum of Understanding; SLV has established a dedicated position; NLA incorporated cultural training in collection management. *Bringing Them Home* has clearly been a stimulus to PROV and NAA initiatives. These documents may be so embedded in thinking about provision for Indigenous people that there was no perceived need for direct reference to them.

Provision of services for Indigenous people, one aspect of cross-cultural provision, seems to have as many iterations as it does venues. Nakata et al (2008) describe similarly various and variously determined approaches in the digitising programs of the State Libraries of Queensland and New South Wales; and Library and Knowledge Centres in the Northern Territory.

Conclusion

Currently cross-cultural provision seems focused on one facet of the activity, namely, provision for Indigenous people. The forms it takes are as various as the places where it is found and are shaped by the local situation, including the mission or legislative reference of the institution undertaking it. Facilitating access for Indigenous people and addressing their concerns about some of the material held in collections is necessary.

Where Indigenous knowledge collections have unrestricted access, effort should also be put into building cross-cultural understanding and non-Indigenous engagement with these riches. If non-Indigenous people become familiar with Indigenous knowledge collections, they have the opportunity to learn more about their community and their own place in it; some of the attitudes I have described may soften or change.

I continue to feel pressed for ways to persuade non-Indigenous people that ASPL's Indigenous knowledge collections are important for them as well as for Indigenous people. Greater non-Indigenous engagement with Akaltye Antheme and the Local Language Collections would build comprehensive community support for ASPL; our Indigenous knowledge collections would be a source of pride in all sectors of our community; and promotion of cross-cultural understanding would be more effective. I commented recently to one man, 'Indigenous culture is part of your community—why wouldn't you want to know about it?' He agreed, but then he was already interested and asking about it. Maybe a positive approach to building non-Indigenous engagement can include a tactical assumption of goodwill in others.

Visiting SLV and NLA has built my capacity to manage an historical Special Collection, and experiencing the collaborative nature of the industry where I work was satisfying and reassuring. I appreciate everyone's input in pursuit of my questions about cross-cultural provision but they are probably too big for resolution in one workplace, one study trip or in one article. It may be that methods of cross-cultural provision facilitating non-Indigenous engagement with Indigenous knowledge will be as varied and place-specific as provision for Indigenous people currently is.

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Book reviews

Research foundations

***A primary school information skills toolkit.* By Geoff Dubber. SLA Guidelines Extra. Wanborough, Swindon: School Library Association, 2008. 80 pp. £12.00 soft cover ISBN 9781903446447**

This title speaks to teachers and teacher librarians of Stage 1 and 2 (in NSW, Years 1–2 and 3–4). Based on the 'Information Skills Program', 'Information Literacy' modules or the 'Big 6', it works through the student research methodology of planning (defining), locating, selecting (appraising), organising, communicating (presenting) and evaluating.

Using this scaffold the book proceeds to define each particular stage of research, offering a range of teaching strategies which focus on each perspective with photocopiable templates to be used as student worksheets. The strategies are briefly discussed and set out as bullet points with plenty of space on each page for reader notes, expansion and the brainstorming of ideas, building upon these stimulus foundations. Each chapter has lists of student activities, with games such as Dewey Bingo, sorting races, simple 10 minute treasure hunts and library directional aids like bookmarks to assist student navigation through the resource field. There is a particularly useful reminder that discernment, even for young children, involves both acceptance and rejection of material ('Trash and Treasure' activities) using some guidelines such as the age of information, relevance to the research question and appropriateness of vocabulary.

This is essentially a useful manual with a few shortcomings. While each chapter does make some reference to electronic information and IT skills, there is little integration, and the approach is overwhelmingly book-based. Having said this, there are some electronic skills suggested in the book which seem too advanced for this stage (Stage 1 and 2): they could be taught, but the time taken could be used more productively in establishing a solid base of good research habits, and these more advanced skills could be developed at a later stage. The kinds of skills suggested, but which seem unnecessary for this stage, include citations, an understanding of copyright (though plagiarism should be understood from the beginning of research), footnoting, interviewing techniques (though this would probably depend on how sophisticated and planned the teacher would expect the interviews to be). As with most guidance, it is probably a matter of degree.

A further criticism is that, despite the spacious layout, the bullet points and the master sheets of activities, the book still has a rather old-fashioned feel about it from the days of the 'library lessons'. Contemporary teacher librarians are encouraged as far as possible to plan skill development collaboratively with classroom teachers and to cooperatively work on the skills within the relevant curriculum topic. Naturally a book such as this cannot present activity sheets to suit every teacher librarian's topic-in-hand, and so many of the sheets which are offered for reproduction will not suit the topic or the approach.

However, this book still has virtues. It quite distinctly sets out the stages of the information skills process (or other similar research methodologies) and offers ideas, games, skills and stimulus activities to support each part of the process. The commitment to this methodology for research even in the very junior years is essential for good research practice in later years. It is recommended for teachers and teacher librarians for Stages 1 and 2 who are seeking to establish good research scaffolds right from the beginning.

Heather Fisher
New England Girls' School

Documenting the digital tide: measuring Reg Carr's contribution

***Digital convergence – libraries of the future*. Ed. by Rae Earnshaw and John Vince. London: Springer Verlag, 2008. 415 pp. 128.35 hard cover ISBN 9781846289026**

Though it does not say so on the title page, this is a festschrift in honour of Reg Carr, one of the pre-eminent British librarians of the last 20 years and, until his retirement in December 2006, Director of University Library Services and Bodley's Librarian in the University of Oxford. As well as coining the phrase 'hybrid library', Carr played a major part in national initiatives to shape the emerging digital information environment through his role in organisations like JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) and his involvement in international programs like the Digital Preservation Commission. He recently summed up his reflections on this period in a book of his own: *The academic research library in a decade of change* (Oxford: Chandos, 2007).

The contributors to this volume of tributes to Carr's influence read like a roll-call of senior British librarians, accompanied by a smattering of senior academics with an interest in digital technologies or academic libraries. There are several personal memoirs, notably from well-known figures like Fred Ratcliffe and Frederick Friend, as well as Richard Ovenden's account of special collections librarianship. Most of the contributions, however, are intended as serious analytical pieces on topics which range from digital services and convergence in libraries to preservation (printed and digital), library history, and library governance. They include accounts of specific projects (Ronald Milne on the Bodleian and Google) and organisations (Lynne Brindley on the British Library and Peter Fox on CURL), as well as studies of the historical context of digital services (Mike Wells on JANET and Sir Brian Follett on the Research Information Network). Several senior British university librarians—among them Derek Law, Bill Simpson and David Baker—provide opinion pieces on the place of libraries in the academic world today. The most systematic of these is Norbert Lossau's look at ways of reorganising services and resources for a digital environment. Other contributions worth noting are the summaries of digital curation, digital preservation, Open Access, and national Web archiving by experts in these fields (Rusbridge, Deegan and Tanner, Pinfield, and Tuck respectively).

This is a substantial collection, with a total of 29 articles covering a very wide range of topics. It suffers from the seemingly inevitable fate of festschriften: the quality, approach and value of the individual contributions vary greatly. The individual pieces, despite the editors' best intentions, do not add up to a comprehensive examination of the issues of the last decade in academic libraries. Nevertheless, several of the contributions will go down as authoritative accounts of significant events in a period of great change, and others are well worth reading as the views of major players in the British library world. The strongly British focus—with only two exceptions—is a slight disappointment; Reg Carr's contribution to US organisations like the Research Libraries Group would certainly have justified a more international approach.

Toby Burrows
University of Western Australia

Detail, glorious detail

***Documentation: a history and critique of attribution, commentary, glosses, marginalia, notes, bibliographies, works-cited lists, and citation indexing and analysis*. By Robert Hauptman. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2008. 240 pp. US$35.00 soft cover ISBN 9780786433339**

Robert Hauptman offers a wide-ranging survey of the history and current uses of the various forms and systems of citation. His introductory chapter identifies six distinct purposes—'acknowledgement', 'attribution', 'tracing', validation', 'protection' and 'commentary'—although he notes that other models distinguish up to 15 purposes. After an historical overview, Hauptman critiques the major systems used by different disciplines before concluding with a discussion of errors and misconduct, and of the dangerous limitations of the data derived from citation indexing and analysis.

Hauptman is editor of the *Journal of Information Ethics*, and he makes some telling points. His chapter on citation indexing and analysis demonstrates the very serious flaws in the purely quantitative methods that dominate current practice, and it should be required reading for everyone—from faculty administrators through to library collection managers—whose decision-making is informed by bibliometric tools. (His final endnote reveals a personal tragedy that, for him, makes these issues all too real.)

The danger of writing about minutiae, of course, is that you will be judged minutely. Hauptman is not perfect. In citing Edgar Allan Poe's essay on marginalia, Hauptman unwittingly demonstrates that a technically flawless citation can be next to useless: Hauptman cites a Complete Works, but does not give the title of Poe's essay. I found it, not in the edition cited by Hauptman, but by Googling key words in the passage quoted by Hauptman: does this validate Hauptman's citation, or render it redundant?

Some of Hauptman's arguments lack coherence. He insists that endnotes are 'more difficult both physically and psychologically to consult' than footnotes, and denounces them as 'a disservice to the reader'—despite which, his own book has endnotes. His conclusion, though, shifts the emphasis to the reader's motivation: 'if a reader is led to an annotation of some kind … he or she will follow up … if it appears that there is something of importance to be gleaned'.

Hauptman is hostile to the use of footnotes, marginalia, hypertext and other such apparatus in creative writing: 'These gimmicks are distracting and probably unnecessary.' He denies that 'form elicits meaning' and insists that a text will always 'yield the same information' regardless of the medium in which it is read—but then, rather confusedly, he concedes that 'what the reader takes away may vary'. Form is not the sole arbiter of meaning, but it does have powerful effects on readers' expectations and responses—and, in the right hands, the 'gimmicks' that Hauptman deplores can create effects that are both funny and profound.

Interpreting citations, and forming judgements about them, is central to the information profession. Hauptman has many wise things to say, but more 'popular' books—Anthony Grafton, *The footnote: a curious history* (1997), or Chuck Zerby, *The devil's details* (2002)—are more likely to persuade you that such details really do matter.

Ian Morrison
State Library of Tasmania

Update to Australian text on knowledge organisation

Organising knowledge in a global society: principles and practice in libraries and information centres. **Rev. ed. By Philip Hider with Ross Harvey. Topics in Australasian Library and Information Studies, No. 29. Wagga Wagga: Centre for Information Studies, Charles Sturt University, 2008. 371 pp. A$92.40 soft cover ISBN 9781876938673**

The impact of Web 2.0 is significant in the library sphere, regardless of whether one considers it a trend, a fad or a natural evolution. Cataloguing is not immune to social contribution and participation by people outside the information professions. Most often the augmentation is seen in social tagging, where the interactive role of the user in information retrieval is at the fore.

Organising knowledge in a global society covers such trends. Hider and Harvey also explain prospective Web metadata standards like the Resource Description and Access (RDA) standard. Nonetheless, the essential focus of the book lies with the basics of knowledge organisation: cataloguing, classification, indexing and abstracting. The book is concerned with the underlying principles of knowledge organisation, rather than serving as a manual that explains how to apply standards.

An overview of concepts and definitions is given, followed by clear, detailed outlines of bibliographic description, subject access, bibliographic data exchange and management, and finally current issues in the organisation of this knowledge. The authors aim to present both an overview of field practice and a conceptual framework for knowledge organisation, and this aim is definitely achieved.

One of the strongest aspects of the book is its Australian focus. Australian case studies and references to Libraries Australia are used whenever applicable. The emphasis is on Australian practice, which makes this a very useful document given that much of cataloguing and LIS principles are US-centric, because most LIS principles originated in the US.

This reviewer found the small outside page margins distracting, as if the authors tried to get as many words on the page as possible. However, this is a small quibble. The glossary, bibliography and index are comprehensive, and the explanations throughout are very easy to understand.

This work is recommended for LIS students in particular, but library professionals will find the book an excellent read, especially the concluding chapter, 'The changing role of bibliographic organisation'. Hider notes in his preface that he believes the 'fundamental concepts of information and knowledge organisation' have not 'drastically changed in the past five years' since the first edition of this book was published. He and Harvey present an admirable case.

Doreen Sullivan
RMIT University Library

Timely, highly recommended work on health literacy

***The Medical Library Association guide to health literacy.* Ed. by Marge Kars, Lynda M. Baker and Feleta L. Wilson. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2008. 250 pp. A$125.00 soft cover ISBN 9781856046258 (available from In*books*)**

This timely publication is likely to be of interest to a broad range of librarians, educators and health care professionals. The editors argue that to function in the health care environment, people need the ability to identify, evaluate and use information to make informed decisions, as well as basic reading and numeracy skills. Furthermore, communicative competence throughout all health care events is important for medical staff as well as people who are ill, their families and friends. Chapters explore theory, research literature and programmes for various populations with special needs; each includes a section on the role of librarians and advice on how best to work in this complex environment.

Part 1, Health Literacy: Understanding the Issues, consists of three chapters: a lucid introduction to the concept and its importance, a review of the literature focusing mainly on printed texts, and an interesting chapter entitled 'Social practices in talk as components of health literacy'. Subheadings for each chapter are included in the table of contents, marking a logical path through the theoretical and academic sections. The comprehensive lists of references would be a good starting point for higher degree work in information studies, community health and consumer health issues.

Part 2, Health Literacy Issues in Special Populations: The Influence of Culture, Ethnicity, Special Needs, and Age on Health, contains six chapters. Chapter 4 focuses on cultural competence and appropriate professional development for librarians, while the next chapter discusses the impact of low literacy on sick people and their families. Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 address in turn the special needs of people with low literacy, people with disabilities, senior citizens and teenagers. These chapters outline programmes for designated groups and offer advice for librarians based on what was learned when the programmes were implemented.

Part 3, Health Literacy Issues in Public and Hospital Libraries, is a valuable practical guide for librarians involved in reference interviews, collection development and collaboration with other consumer health information agencies. Case studies are included, some from the point of view of nurses as well as librarians. Any librarian tentative about responding to requests for health information will find the sensible, thoughtful advice from Karyn Prechtel in Chapter 10 relevant and reassuring.

Health literacy is a rapidly developing field as the self-management of diseases such as diabetes is so important for all concerned. This work is open-ended and future-oriented, looking at ways to initiate and become involved in health literacy programmes. Establishing and maintaining collaborations is emphasised, an essential way of removing some of the pressure from medical staff in busy clinics and hospitals.

This substantial text is well-organised and indexed. Examples of data-gathering instruments such as readability tests and questionnaires are included as tables which librarians could adapt for their use. The in-depth approach is supported by comprehensive reference lists and advice for librarians is based on experience. Highly recommended.

Lyn Linning
Brisbane

The latest in US educational technology

***Educational media and technology yearbook 2008*. Ed. by Michael Orey, V. J. McClendon and Robert Maribe Branch. 2008 Edition, Volume 33. Published in cooperation with the Association for Educational Communications and Technology. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2008. 360 pp. A$110.00 hard cover ISBN 9781591586470 (available from Inbooks)**

The quality of all articles in this volume is high, and the diversity of material presented is noteworthy. Part 1 is aimed at media and technology professionals seeking approaches to enhance learning. It consists of papers selected for their excellence by members of high quality programmes linked with the Association of Educational Communications and Technology, and begins with a look at issues and trends in the previous two years. Articles in Part 2 deal with library and information science. Next comes a Leadership Profile featuring a prominent scholar in the field of visual literacy. Part 4 is a 70 page directory of organisations and associations in North America in related areas. Part 5, arranged alphabetically by university, covers graduate programs offered in the United States in instructional technology, educational media and communications, and school library media. Part 6 is a representative list of quality journals in the fields of educational technology and media and includes libraries and media centres. The volume concludes with an index and information on the editors.

In Part 1 Polly and Moore examine the current state of technology integration in pre-service teacher training courses in America, finding that a need for increased hands-on practice and effective modelling of technology use is being addressed through course redesign which is based on standards and faculty professional development. There is an interesting report from Indiana University on the process and outcomes of a revision of their doctoral program which seeks to involve students in research and research communities early in their course and replaces an entrance examination with a dossier. The following article reports on revision of the instructional design and technology program at Virginia Tech which used a human performance technology model which was found to be effective. Other valuable contributions include updated international standards for competencies for instructors, software being developed to predict outcomes of changes to educational systems and empirical literature on effective technology-enhanced constructivist learning approaches.

Part 2 covers library and information science with an introduction and six other articles ranging from public librarians' ambivalence to romance novels, working in detention centres for youth, digitising microforms on-demand, and school media specialists and organisational culture. An article on the Immersive Information Literacy Approach begins in a strongly theoretical vein, moving into a description of VILLAS (Virtual Reality Information Literacy Learning and Assessment Space), a three-dimensional virtual reality learning environment for the middle school. A substantial contribution is 'Predictors for success: experiences of beginning and expert teacher librarians'. It offers a literature review, theories of relevance, a research report and recommendations. The research sample covered eight countries including Australia. The article will be of high interest to teacher librarians, but also offers insight generally on factors involved in successful adjustment to work.

This work is recommended for large libraries collecting in the fields of librarianship and education, as it showcases quality articles on current developments.

Julia Leong
RMIT University

Display inspiration

Great displays for your library step by step. **By Susan P. Phillips. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2008. 248 pp. US$45.00 soft cover ISBN 9780786492008**

Displays are used effectively in all types and sizes of libraries to promote collections and services. A well-presented display with appropriate collection items can enhance use of the promoted service or collection. We can all tell stories about how an effective display never has any stock on it, as it just seems to fly out the door. But how do you come up with fresh ideas for displays, to keep your users interested and continuing to borrow our great content?

Great displays for your library step by step aims to help the reader design and create unique visual statements for library spaces. It does that by providing inspiration and ideas for displays, organised by the themes of authors, pop culture, genres, traditions, patriotism, art and architecture, cultures, people, nature, pastimes and the mind. Each theme has at least three displays. Phillips begins by setting the scene for creative displays. She outlines how to be open to ideas, steps in the creative process, design considerations, advertising as a source for inspiration and how to use displays to market the library.

For each display outlined within the genres Phillips gives a relevant quote, background and suggestions for the display, including suggested titles/series, credit for the display source, details on assembling the display and suggested additions/improvements if time and space permit.

Phillips also provides supporting material in the form of month-by-month display ideas, many of them relating to anniversaries of events which fall in the month, with each idea including suggested titles and authors. She also includes basic construction techniques for the props included in the detailed displays, sources for free fonts and a comprehensive bibliography.

It can be difficult coming up with fresh, appealing ideas for effective displays, month after month, year after year. Libraries have excellent collections and services, but finding ways to promote them effectively can be hard work. This book is an excellent source for that inspiration and for ideas for promotion. It is all the more effective for its detail in the creation of the displays, as it not only shows you how to make them, but in turn inspires ideas for further displays.

I recommend this book to anyone who must create library displays on a regular basis, not only for its display suggestions, but also for its helpful supporting material.

Michelle McLean
Casey Cardinia Library Corporation

Timely, highly recommended work on providing consumer health information

Answering consumer health questions: the Medical Library Association guide for reference librarians. **By Michele Spatz. Medical Library Association Guides Series. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2008. 142 pp. A$110.00 soft cover ISBN 9781856046326 (available from In*books*)**

Michele Spatz is well qualified to advise both general and specialist health resource librarians on answering consumer health questions, having worked in a health resource centre and taught courses on the subject. Many librarians (myself included) have had troubling moments when patrons, visibly upset by recent diagnoses, have asked for information on their illnesses and treatment options. Spatz acknowledges that 'we are called into a deeper relationship' with such patrons and that 'many times we find ourselves perplexed or unprepared'. *Answering consumer health questions* addresses librarians' concerns, advises them what to do in a wide range of typical situations and uses pertinent anecdotes and case studies to illustrate the principles of best practice. Although the agencies and laws cited are North American, the book's substance applies equally well to health care in Australia and New Zealand. Clear and easy to read with summaries and references at the end of each chapter, the text is helpful for general librarians as well as those specialising in health.

Chapter 1 focuses on the people who seek health information, discussing their emotions, concerns and behaviour in the library. Appropriate responses are suggested, sometimes with the best words and expressions to use. Verbal and non-verbal communication is discussed in Chapter 2, including email and telephone guidelines. Chapter 3, on professional ethics, considers moral and religious conflicts, personal opinions, confidentiality and issues relating to minors and mentally-challenged people. The following chapter on legal aspects has useful lists of 'things not to do' and 'things to do' as well as a sample disclaimer statement setting out the differences between professional medical advice and information resource services. Lawsuits against librarians are rare even in North America, but it is wise to be prepared. Ways of best serving patrons with special needs are outlined in Chapter 5, while Chapter 6 exemplifies and discusses five kinds of difficult patrons and how best to respond to them. Helpful policies and how to implement them are included. It is pleasing to find a closing chapter on self-care for the health information provider. Stress is acknowledged, and practices to buffer stress and support staff are discussed.

This book is interesting and inviting to read from start to finish. The pertinent scenarios are indented, printed in italics and marked with a vertical line on either side so they stand out clearly from commentary, factual information and advice. The reference lists are short and pertinent, never so long as to intimidate the reader. Most important, Spatz addresses important issues in a reassuring way. This is recommended for all librarians, students of librarianship and specialists in health information.

Lyn Linning
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Information literacy in US academic libraries

The teaching library: approaches to assessing information literacy instruction. **Ed. by Scott Walter. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Information Press, 2008. 230 pp. US$54.28 hard cover ISBN: 9780789031495 (also published as *Public Services Quarterly* 3, 1/2)**

Why is information literacy so central to the academic library function? How can librarians and other educators advocate effectively for that function, while working closely with many levels of the higher education institution's educational and administrative processes? This volume, with its focus on 'assessment' or 'evaluation' delves into these key issues. Consisting of 10 chapters, including an editorial introduction, it makes a contribution to the emerging evidence-based librarianship agenda, as well as to the strengthening focus on the library's role in learning and educational development.

The book takes a broad approach to the idea of assessment, incorporating the impact of programmes on student learning, programmatic and institutional goals. Each chapter represents the approach of a particular US institution, and is grounded in careful attention to learning and teaching quality processes, reflecting the contemporary higher education environment.

Some of the organisational contexts include the University of Montana, Cornell University, Oregon State University, the University of Southern California, and the University of Central Florida. Features include the description of a 'cycle of assessment' (Chapter 2), a research-based approach to assessing instructional effectiveness (Chapter 3), a multidimensional assessment strategy (Chapter 4) advocating or 'making the case' for information literacy (Chapters 5 and 6) and assessment of an institution-wide program (Chapter 7). These are followed by examples of assessing or evaluating specific instances of instruction.

The collection of papers is clearly designed for the higher education context. It will be valuable to library learning or information literacy coordinators, as well as anyone working with academic skills or literacies in the broader university environment.

Each chapter is well referenced, and the whole volume is supported by an index. Several examples of instruments used in reported projects appear, including pre-tests and feedback tools. There is also interesting and clear descriptive commentary around the integration of information literacy into teaching and learning programs.

Christine Bruce
Queensland University of Technology

Personal portfolio prominence for UK professionals

Building your portfolio: the CILIP guide. **By Margaret Watson. London: Facet Publishing, 2008. 131 pp. £24.95 soft cover ISBN 9781856046121 (available from In*books*)**

In 2005 the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), the UK equivalent of ALIA, introduced its new Framework of Qualifications. There were four elements: Certification (with categories for paraprofessionals and for newer information workers), Chartered Membership (the second level of professional qualification), Fellowship (the highest level, normally awarded to members who have been on the register for at least six years) and Revalidation for Chartered Members and Fellows. Each qualification requires the submission of a portfolio. The aim of this book is to support CILIP members wishing to apply for a professional qualification.

For Chartered Membership (effectively the equivalent of Associate Membership of ALIA), the criteria that must be addressed in the portfolio are: an ability to reflect critically on personal performance and to evaluate service performance; an active commitment to continuing professional development; an ability to analyse personal and professional development and progression with reference to experiential and developmental activities; and finally, a breadth of professional knowledge and understanding of the wider professional context.

Each chapter deals with a specific aspect of the requirements of the portfolio. They include: Assessment criteria, Reflective writing, Curriculum vitae, Professional development plans, Personal statements, Supporting evidence, and The final steps. A bibliography and index are also included. Interspersed throughout each chapter are hints and tips, and many case studies contributed by a wide range of professionals at all stages of their careers.

An interesting emphasis in the CILIP model is the requirement for a personal statement, something that is not yet fashionable in Australia. Building your portfolio is also a useful framework, providing a broader perspective on reflective writing, professional development and identifying training needs, and the job application process for information professionals generally. The chapter on supporting evidence is especially relevant to those writing job applications, since it goes beyond statements about attending training or producing reports, instead requiring the individual to demonstrate that they have become a 'reflective practitioner'. And for anyone planning a stint working in the LIS field in the UK, this will be an invaluable introduction.

Sally Murdoch
Hobart

Guidelines for authors

The Australian Library Journal welcomes contributions documenting developments in research and professional practice as well as more general articles on issues relevant to librarians and libraries.

Most articles are peer reviewed. These include substantial pieces and articles whose authors request review.

Preferred length is 3500–5000 words, and the preferred format for submission is an MS Word (Arial, 12 point, double spaced, left justified) attachment to an email sent to the Editor at:

ian.mccallum@alianet.alia.org.au

Articles should be accompanied by an abstract of up to 150 words, plus brief biographical details of the author(s).

All submissions will be acknowledged, and when accepted will be the subject of a formal shared agreement on copyright with ALIA.

The Commonwealth's *Style manual for authors, editors and printers*, sixth edition 2002 (ISBN 0 7016 3648 3) should be used where choices need to be made.

All references should be carefully checked and reference style should follow the *ALJ's* current practice.

A print quality black and white photograph of the author would also be appreciated.

Contributions are equally welcome from established and beginning authors.

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