Librarians have the power to make the merger of information and communications technology work for people in ways that are humane and enriching.

– Frances Jacobson Harris
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Current President Vanessa Little and past Presidents Margaret Allen and Craig Anderson cut ALIA's 75th Birthday cake during the Biennial 2012 Conference closing.
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I’m working on an interface directly to the human mind
So I can capture concepts that have not yet even been defined;
In fact, in finding information, most utilitarian,
I am the very model of computerized librarian.

– Diane M. O’Keefe and Janet T. O’Keefe (to the tune of Gilbert and Sullivan’s The Major-General’s Song)
Welcome to the technology issue of INCITE. While it was a term apparently first used in the 1950’s, the term ‘frenemy’ is now part of popular culture and potentially one that our profession can use for the many and various technologies that we and our users access.

Digital technologies are at the core of many services that our libraries offer and yet these very tools are currently being used as the potential reasons for the reduction or closure of our services. I was recently interviewed on Sydney radio by ’Dicko’, previously of Australian Idol fame. He started his questions to me – as I am sure you are all asked – “with the internet why will we need librarians and libraries?”

“Because not all information is good information in the online world,” I replied. “Because library clients of all kinds need training and support to find exactly what they need or want from the masses of data out there in cyber space.”

LIS professionals offer much more value-added services to their clients than simply providing access to the great mass of data and information accessible by the web, but for some reason this is not well understood outside of our profession. The old image of the librarian as the gatekeeper of books and information remains alive in the community and, importantly, in the minds of decision makers. In our advocacy role, both the ALIA Board and all of you as members, have a significant and urgent communication and education task to undertake. It will take the contribution of all ALIA members to make others aware of the information access and literacy roles that we play, whether you are in a law, government, special, school, academic, or public library.

This current situation links strongly to the work that the Board wishes to continue in defining the LIS professional of the future. I am sure that the role will hold the same values and objectives as in the past however the methods of delivering an informed, lifelong learning community or workforce may be different. Innovation and knowledge are essential to growth and those who connect others to quality information and ideas to create innovation and knowledge are library and information professionals.

I hope that you have caught up with the news that Sue McKerracher has been appointed as the new Executive Director of ALIA. Sue has worked with ALIA on a number of activities, most particularly the National Year of Reading. She has a marketing and communications background, has operated her own business and has worked extensively with libraries in both Australia and the UK. Sue has many contacts in government and the private sector in Australia and we welcome her to the ALIA team.

The senior team in ALIA National Office is now complete. Our new Director Professional Services, Janice Taylor (formerly Janice Biggin) commences in late July and Sue in mid-August, so be prepared to hear of all of the great achievements of the ALIA National Office.

Finally, I would like to pass on the most sincere thanks to Rob Miller from all of the ALIA Board and ALIA members. Rob has been patiently leading ALIA while we recruited to the Executive Director position and has he has done so with remarkable success. I am sure that Rob is looking forward to handing over to Sue, but the Board acknowledges that he has done a remarkable job for quite some time.

Vanessa Little
ALIA President
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At the risk of incurring the considerable wrath of the Editor (ED: Considerable indeed!), I decided to delay this Directline to be able to include some sense of Biennial 2012.

The program indicated that technology would be high on the agenda and we weren’t disappointed: technology to the left of us and technology to the right of us – so much so that an old Lone Ranger joke got recycled.

Technology and its impact on the profession and society were hot topics in the keynotes, the papers and workshops, and discussions around cups of coffee and glasses of wine.

There seemed to be an obvious split among delegates between the threat that technology poses and the opportunities that it will deliver. The fact that this is a hot issue was evidenced by the fact that I did not have a conversation with a delegate or exhibitor/sponsor who was ambivalent on the issue.

The changes reach deep into the profession. They impact the core skills and knowledge and study units that new entrants to the profession must learn.

They reach across boundaries that previously existed between information and IT professionals. Mitchell Whitelaw developed an argument for ‘generous interfaces’ that offer the user the experience of telling us what our collections have to offer rather than having the user needing to know what they seek. The development of these interfaces blurs boundaries between information managers and graphical user interface designers.

They impact the architecture of libraries and their function: technology displaces the need for so much physical content, but offers the opportunity to provide better learning, collaboration, and community spaces.

As always these days Google featured in many conversations. Is it friend or is it foe? That argument seems to be irrelevant today because it is here. We all know that it offers a blinding array of often useless information and that not everything on the internet is true. But it has ubiquity and credibility among users. Maybe as many as 80% of people today use it as the entry point to find information, so we need to find a means of embracing it better.

If as one comment I heard recently is true, that Google does not index 80% of the content that can be found via the internet, there is still plenty for the profession to deal with to deliver valuable service to our users.

Perhaps the final word should belong to the self-confessed eternally optimistic State Librarian of NSW, Dr. Alex Byrne. In the final keynote address of the conference he reminded us of many great things the profession does, but significantly he has the view that “finding information is at the core of our society.”

LIS professionals have been the trusted custodians and deliverers of this information for centuries and embracing technology and what it offers will be key to our retention of that role.

Rob Miller
ALIA Acting Executive Director
rob.miller@alia.org.au

DIRECTLINE

Appointments: ALIA welcomes Sue McKerracher into the Executive Director role and Janice Taylor as Director: Professional Services. Please go to page 6 for more information.

Congratulations! ALIA congratulates and commends those who have shown deep commitment to their professional development and successfully completed their first year with the PD Scheme. These professionals are now able to use the post-nominals CP (certified practitioner). For more information, please visit www.alia.org.au/education/pd

Call for proposals: both ALIA Information Online 2013 and New Librarians’ Symposium 6 are seeking proposal submissions. Information can be found on their websites: www.information-online.com.au/proposals.html and newlibrarianssymposium.com/call-for-proposals respectively.
NT Recognition for a project with historic scope

The 2012 ALIA NT Recognition Award has been won by The Northern Territory Library’s 19 February 1942 Roll of Honour team. NTL marked the 70th anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin in February with the launch of an online Roll of Honour, recording and remembering those killed on 19 February 1942.

The team produced an accurate list of names providing biographical details, photographs, and personal stories for each person killed. See: www.ntlexhibit.nt.gov.au/exhibits/show/bod

Rather than just list names, the team gave each person a ‘human face’ with photos, letters, stories, and personal details. They located family members across Australia and the United States to provide information.

A project team was established in early 2011 to begin researching the biographies and designing the website for the Roll of Honour. The project team included librarians with reference skills and family history knowledge, and staff members with graphic arts, web design, and editorial qualifications and experience.

The team hoped to locate family members to provide information for the online exhibition so began searching across Australia and the United States. Our contact with family members proved to be one of the most rewarding parts of the project and our aim to commemorate those killed through an expanded Roll of Honour was greatly appreciated by the families.

Examples of our successful collaborations:
- Reginald Veall: www.ntlexhibit.nt.gov.au/exhibits/show/bod/veall

Acknowledgements to families have been included.

FA Sharr medal awarded to Molly Tebo

Each year ALIAWest bestows the FA Sharr medal to a graduate in their first year of employment who exhibits potential and is highly likely to have a positive impact on their preferred stream of the LIS profession.

The medal itself is named after Francis Aubie Sharr in recognition of his contribution to libraries, librarianship in Western Australia, and to the profession, during his tenure as the State Librarian from 1953 – 1976.

Nominees need to address selection criteria which includes demonstrating the ability to discuss issues relevant to the profession, excellence in conceptual and analytical skills, and the value of ALIA through involvement in professional activities. In addition, nominees sit a panel interview in which they do a presentation outlining an issue of relevance to the industry.

The recipient of the 2011 FA Sharr is Molly Tebo. During 2011 Molly was employed as a Graduate Librarian at the State Library of Western Australia, where she rotated through numerous teams. Each new placement required Molly to quickly acquire a solid working knowledge of the activities of the team and undertake project work of relevance to them.

Molly has since won the role of eLearning Librarian at the State Library of Western Australia. Molly is extremely passionate when it comes to electronic services which was evident when she repeated her presentation to those at the awards night. Molly's presentation focused on the types of online services libraries are currently using, and how these could be better employed to assist patrons with serendipitous browsing and discovery.
In addition to the information obtained from families, the project team used a wide variety of sources for their research, both print and electronic. Collections held by the Northern Territory Library and by national and NT Archives, museums, and other organisations were accessed. Local history groups and archivists also provided valuable information. The sources used have been listed in an extensive bibliography on the website.

Other features of the Roll of Honour include:
- Access to the biographies through a list of ships and units
- A collation of all the 1942 media coverage of the bombing of Darwin with links to digitised news material
- The options to contact the library with further information about a person and to contribute stories and photos.

In compiling the Roll of Honour, spelling variations and duplication of names were identified in various sources, including the Darwin cenotaph. The research resolved many of these discrepancies and we now have the most accurate and informative Roll of Honour for those killed during the Bombing of Darwin, 19 February 1942.

The Roll of Honour achieved the aim of ensuring “our database provides an accurate list of names giving biographical details, photographs and personal stories for each each person killed”.

An unexpected outcome has been the favourable feedback from organisations within the Northern Territory (RSLNT, the Defence of Darwin Experience) and from national bodies (the national body of the RSL, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and The Australian War Memorial). These organisations have all placed a link to the Roll Of Honour on their websites. Most important of all, as more relatives of those killed discover our website, we receive encouraging words of support and often further information or photos.


A big thank you to Raeco for once again for providing sponsorship for the Award.

Melbourne New Graduates meet the Geelong Regional Training Initiative Committee

On a cold winter night, a group of twenty-five library and information enthusiasts got together for some drinks and delicious gourmet pizzas that came with their own pizza wheel. Organised by ALIA New Graduates Group and the Geelong Regional Training Initiative Committee, representatives from both groups, current library and information services students, and other library and information employees mingled at the groovy Mr. Hyde bar located in Geelong.

They spent a couple of hours exchanging topics from overseas trips, bad library customer service, library accessories including jewellery, comparisons of the library services, to the latest tremor that shook Victoria recently.

This was the first ever Library Folk event to be taken to regional Victoria by the Victorian ALIA New Graduates. We decided early in the year that it was time we branched out our reach to ensure Geelong LIS students and New Graduates are also represented by and benefit from the New Grads Group. Our group provides a variety of events and believes in providing a voice and a means of professional networking for all Victorian library individuals, not just those located in Melbourne.

Previously the Library Folk in the Pub got together with Charles Sturt University library students in May, and also saw Frank Woodley at the Comedy Festival in April. Coming up the ALIA New Graduates will be having more of their monthly Library Folk in the Pub events, plus key selection criteria and interview skills events where representatives from different information and knowledge management sectors will discuss what they look for in a great job application.

If you are looking to meet new people in the information and knowledge profession but do not how, why not join us? These events are a great opportunity to build your professional networking skills, but also to be yourself in a relaxed environment. Keep up to date on upcoming events in all states through our blog: alianewgrad.blogspot.com.au

Ryan Siriwardene
Victorian ALIA New Graduates Group Committee
ryansiriwardene@gmail.com
Hello from the ALIA Retirees
www.alia.org.au/groups/retirees

I would like to introduce myself, Robin Hempel, as the Convenor for the ALIA Retirees Group for 2012 – 2013. I am the NT’s representative on the Retirees Committee, having taken over from Faye Lawrence, our NSW representative who is currently Secretary/Treasurer. Other committee members are Pat Gallaher (WA), Gill Hallam (QLD), Lorna Prendergast and Moyra McAllister (VIC), and Mylee Joseph (State Library of NSW).

Our aim is to provide a forum for ALIA members retiring from the profession to remain involved with the Association by ensuring their professional interests and aspirations are fostered. Underpinning is the group’s focus in offering the opportunity for retirees to maintain connections with colleagues in their own areas and on wider levels through online communication, interstate visits, and attendance at state and national conferences.

This year our goal is to support the National Year of Reading (NYR) and committee members have been busy promoting and attending events at their local public, school, and state libraries. Regular postings to the Retirees e-list, contributions to the NYR Webpage, and promotion of our Classic Readers Blog are all part of our plan to celebrate libraries and reading in 2012!

ALIA GROUPS

ALIA Groups are formed by our members for our members and focus on a particular aspect of the library and information profession. Groups can be based on a particular issue, interest, or even geographic location and membership can be local or nationwide. The various groups put on PD events, symposiums, conferences, distribute newsletters, and facilitate important discussions. Have a look at our list of groups to see if any interest you and go to www.alia.org.au/groups for more information.

- ACTive ALIA
- ALIA Academic and Research Libraries (WA)
- ALIA Acquisitions (Nat.)
- ALIA Agriculture and Environment Interest Group
- ALIA Asia Pacific Special Interest Group
- ALIA Children’s and Youth Services (QLD)
- ALIA Community Information Australia Networkers (SA)
- ALIA ePortfolio
- ALIA Far North Coast regional Group
- ALIA Health Libraries Australia
- ALIA Health (SA)
- ALIA Hunter Group
- ALIA Information Science (SA)
- ALIA Library Technicians (ACT)
- ALIA Library Technicians (VIC)
- ALIA National Library Technicians
- ALIA New Graduates Group
- ALIA NSW Library Technicians
- ALIA OPALs ACT
- ALIA Pathways
- ALIA Queensland
- ALIA Queensland Library Technicians
- ALIA Queensland OPALs
- ALIA Red Centre Group
- ALIA Reference and Information Services (VIC)
- ALIA Retirees
- ALIA Schools
- ALIA South Australian Library Technicians
- ALIA Special Libraries (SA)
- ALIA Special Libraries (VIC)
- ALIA Sustainable Libraries
- ALIA Sydney
- ALIA Tasmania
- ALIA Top End
- ALIA Tropic
- ALIA URLs (ACT)
- ALIA Victoria
- ALIA WA Library Technicians
- ALIA Water
- ALIA West
ALIA Appoints Executive Staff

Sue McKerracher will be joining ALIA as Executive Director on 20 August. You may already have met Sue, currently director of The Library Agency, in connection with the National Year of Reading. Alternatively, you may have attended one of the Every Member an Advocate sessions she carried out for us during 2010, or one of the disaster preparedness workshops which she facilitated in May.

Over the last four years, Sue has travelled around Australia and New Zealand, making contact with library people and gaining insight into the challenges facing public, school, university, TAFE, law, government, health, corporate, and other special libraries.

Before arriving in Melbourne with her Australian husband and two young sons in 2008, Sue enjoyed a varied career in the UK. For 15 years, she ran her own PR agency, and for a further nine was a freelance marketing and communications specialist. She says, “I started out as a journalist and landed a job working for Reed Elsevier on its food titles. I moved into PR and founded my own agency in London, in 1987. Our clients were the catering arms of many well known companies, including Twinings, Heinz, and Unilever. I sold the agency in 1999 (it’s still going strong today) and took on a variety of freelance contracts. I worked for all kinds of organisations, including Ernst & Young and the British Library; but the stand-out contract has to be the one which involved touring Paris, Brussels, and Luxembourg reviewing the cities’ many patisseries. For six days, I was paid to eat cake.”

During this time, Sue worked with the Framework for the Future team at the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, developing and implementing a marketing strategy for English public libraries. It was this experience that led to her involvement with libraries in Australia, and a high spot has, of course, been the National Year of Reading. “This has been the most exciting campaign I have ever worked on, notwithstanding the French bakery project. The Library Agency team and colleagues in libraries all around Australia have been able to generate a tremendous amount of political goodwill, media coverage, and community awareness, and there is more to come.

“Advocacy for all kinds of libraries will be a big part of my new role and in 2013, ALIA will be helping to capitalise on the achievements of all the National Year of Reading founder partners during 2012.”

Janice Taylor has worked in the public and special library sectors since leaving school, with a brief sojourn in the library at the University of New South Wales, Sydney during her course of study in Librarianship.

Janice’s many positions have included managing public libraries for Blue Mountains City Council and Bega Valley Shire Council in NSW. In 2007 she took a secondment to the State Library of NSW as the Coordinator in Collections and Acquisitions before taking up her role managing the operations of ACT Library & Information Service (now Libraries ACT) between 2008 and 2011. In mid-2011 she relocated to the City of Ballarat as Manager Library Services, leading the development and completion of a new five-year Library Strategy for the City.

She has represented the ACT on NSLA Re-imagining Library Services initiative and is on the Executive of Australian Learning Community Network Inc. (ALCN) supporting the development and sustainability of learning community initiatives across Australia. In 2011, Janice was awarded the ACT Commissioner for Public Administration Award in the category of Valuing Emerging Leaders and High Performers.

Janice has extensive experience managing change in the workplace, and is passionate about creating vision and innovation in the development and delivery of relevant and sustainable library services to all communities. To achieve this she believes ongoing professional development of this diverse sector is critical for success, with ALIA a major player in supporting quality PD and training for the membership.

Janice will step in to the role of Director: Professional Services in August.
Twitter for the new grad

I have worked in public libraries for nearly nine years, and have been a qualified librarian and active user of Twitter for nearly four years. I initially signed up to Twitter so I could ‘follow’ a handful of librarians that I admired from around Australia. I now follow local, national, and international colleagues and converse regularly on a wide variety of both professional and personal topics. Twitter has allowed me to have a voice and speak up on issues that are of interest to me. I enjoy the speed at which Twitter operates, and I love asking a work-related question and receiving a wide variety of responses from around the world, effectively expanding and broadening my understanding of the original question in ways I did not consider.

Twitter is one of the tools that enhances my professional learning network. I make Twitter work for me, and use it to filter information from a variety of sources including news sites, library and school library journals, educational institutions, information and technology experts, and library professionals. Many of the tweets contain links to new ideas, new trends in technology and education, and new ways of thinking about libraries. I have used Twitter to attend conferences from afar via a hashtag, and can participate or follow the conversation at a convenient time.

I also use Twitter to collaborate with other professionals who have similar interests, most often from around the country, but sometimes from around the world. I have participated in conversations that sparked initial flames, encouraged deeper thinking and reflection, and developed into on- and offline collaborations.

I find it hard to believe that, in 2012, many institutions still see Twitter solely as a social networking tool, and not as part of accepted professional practice. A smart phone or device becomes the perfect accessory, allowing me to connect, learn, and collaborate from my corner of the lunch room.

Jo Beazley
Youth Outreach Librarian
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Twitter for the established professional.

Twitterati – librarians wanted?

Where are there 500 million registered users? According to Twitter’s publicity they reached this point in February this year. Take up suggests the ease of use and desire to connect to others as diverse as the Prime Minister, movie stars, and sporting champions is irresistible. Even that august institution the ABC offers a weekly Radio National Twitterati update in Friday drive time with experts identified from Twitter from diverse fields including climate change, sport, academia, and parliamentary issues. Geoff Bilder of Crossref calls it a “juggernaut”, part of the social media invasion.

So what does this mean for you and me? It is really possible to use 140 characters to communicate? Research indicates that while Facebook is used for social connections, games, and to chat, Twitter is much more even-based covering issues and thoughts, rather than just what you had for breakfast. I find the coverage of Question time in the federal parliament by journalists is brilliant – short, sharp, witty, and well written.

So as a relatively long term user of Twitter here are some tips:

• Post as often as you can – consider using RSS or some automated process to send messages to Twitter, Facebook, Yammer, and as many social media tools as possible with a single step

• Understand that users will use flipboard, tweetdeck, and lots of other interfaces to access tweets

• Short entries can have a link – you can publicise books, seminars, events easily

• Write clearly, check spelling – have a look at how journalists tweets: they are the best users of this new medium

• Try it out professionally – we set up a hashtag for the Value of Libraries Symposium and the conversation online was very stimulating. Next time you go to an ALIA event, try to tweet once!

And there’s nothing wrong with lurking – that’s what I mostly do!

Roxanne Missingham
University Librarian
The Australian National University
director.sis@anu.edu.au
Twitter for organisations

If you haven’t noticed, ALIA has become quite active on Twitter in the past few months. In consultation with my colleagues, I try to regularly tweet on the ALIANational twitter account. Our tweets cover a broad range of topics from information about the Association to international news to fun stories about the LIS profession.

As a fairly new staff member at ALIA, tweeting has allowed me to get to know our members very quickly and in a really fun way. It provides me (as well as ALIA) a window in to what members are interested in, what they are passionate about, and what makes them laugh.

In addition to the insight to our members, Twitter also provides an alternative way for our members to interact with us and ask important questions that they would like answered. These interactions have been very valuable and have given us great ideas for how we can better serve our members.

While Twitter has provided us with such a great communication tool, there are also some frustrating aspects to it. We have many important questions asked via Twitter outside of working hours that cannot get answered until the appropriate staff member is back in the office. This delay is just as frustrating for our members as it is for us.

The other big frustration with Twitter is trying to figure out how to edit down a piece of important information to 140 characters.

That being said, Twitter provides a great way for us to communicate with members and for members to communicate with us. Thank you to everyone that we follow for providing us with such a great Twitter feed to read, and thank you to everyone that follows us.

Erin York
Groups and Events Coordinator
Australian Library and Information Association
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Follow us: @alianational

If we missed you at the ALIA Biennial 2012 Conference

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Using WordPress and Vimeo to create a library video help site

LibraryTV, at sculibrarytv.info is a website that hosts videos created by Southern Cross University library staff to help our patrons use library resources.

The site grew from a successful pitch for new ideas at the library’s annual planning day as described in Karen Jordan’s INCITE article Catch a New Idea (Sept 2011, page 6). The aim was to have a video website similar to a YouTube channel, but with more options to customise the interface. In August of 2010, the LibraryTV project team visited 39 library sites to establish how many Australian universities were providing their own video-help site, either within their site or on a YouTube channel. Only nine universities provided their own site; seventeen used a YouTube channel, a more popular option. At the time, only the University of New England appeared to have a library-specific site, although several university libraries provided lists of video links.

Knowing that we were working with a limited budget, the project team evaluated hosting options and software tools, before deciding to use the free blogging software WordPress as our platform, a professional subscription to Vimeo for video storage, a professional subscription to Jing for video capture, and inexpensive external hosting to easily allow installation of the WordPress software and plugins. The total annual storage, subscription and domain costs are only $320.

Initially, the use of the LibraryTV website was by liaison librarians who were able to refer students to the site via email, blackboard posts, and at the information desk for easy reference on performing common library tasks such as searching a database or requesting a book. The videos have also been useful as demonstration material when conducting information literacy classes. In addition, the storage platform Vimeo has simplified the embedding of high quality screen capture videos into the university’s first year students’ assignment help website – Assignment Navigator (www.scu.edu.au/assignment-navigator), and into subject LibGuides.

This year, we have been pleased to find an increased direct usage from patrons with the launch of the new library website (www.scu.edu.au/library), as it includes a new icon link to LibraryTV on the front page. For example, in March 2011, there had only been 102 visits; in March 2012, with the new library website, visits had doubled to 223.

Future plans for LibraryTV include information sessions for library staff, so that staff other than liaison librarians can create videos, and the use of QR codes to promote traffic to the site. The project team acknowledges that LibraryTV in its current form may be superseded by any future investment the library may make in commercial products such as ClickView. However, the low establishment cost of the service and the practical and ongoing skills development for library staff will serve well for any future delivery mechanisms.

Tracy Bruce
Liaison Librarian, Southern Cross University
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Assisting clients with their reference and information enquiries is still very much a part of the role of librarians. However, how clients are seeking this assistance and what questions they ask is changing. Technology means that people want answers more quickly and at their point of need. This flows on to libraries having to reconsider their service models, including their approach to online support. This is exactly what RMIT University Library did in the second half of 2011 and what it will continue to do in 2012.

RMIT University Library has provided an email and e-chat service under the name Ask a Librarian since 2006 and 2009 respectively. Originally staffed with a multi-site roster, it was decided to try a centralised team approach between the hours of 9am to 5pm on weekdays. This alleviated pressure on roster writers, improved the quality and consistency of service offered, and helped to meet demand. A team of eleven experienced reference librarians, representative of our six library sites, contributes up to four hours per week to the service as part of a standard roster, and those rostered are relieved of their responsibilities at physical service points during these times. This new model also involved the expansion of chat by two hours each weekday, and additional training on the expectations of the team, including the key resources and types of enquiries that may be encountered during a shift. Documentation was prepared or updated on commonly asked questions, scripted responses, and etiquette, and a Yammer group was set up as one means of communication.

In the transition to this change in service, a variety of issues has inevitably arisen. Rostering to cover absences proves a challenge at times, but has also shown that we have a strong, supportive team whose members are willing to step up to fill gaps, meaning little outside assistance is required. When frustrating technical problems have occurred (particularly with chat), they have identified in many cases where improvements are needed (for example, changes to the client chat widget on our web pages). A lot of work and energy has been put into this program overall, but with increased marketing, expanded hours, and greater quality of responses, there has also been an increase in usage. The number of chats reached 238 in August 2011, while in the same month our email queries fell to 150. Feedback from clients has been positive, and more questions seem to be coming from our overseas-based students. The latter is one of the reasons we wanted to expand our service further this year.

Where previously email was the only online support we offered after 5pm weekdays, and on weekends, our chat service is now available until later on weekdays (concurrent with email), with the possibility of a weekend trial in the future. More staff will be trained to provide support to the service, including loans staff, to assist with non-reference enquiries. SMS reference is also being considered. At RMIT University Library, we realise that our clients’ needs and expectations are changing, and the expansion of our online reference service is one way we can continue to meet them.
As information professionals we are aware of the wide range of online technologies available: webinars, social networking, podcasting, etc. I would like to share one library team’s experience of being online and really communicating via a synchronous platform.

The Land and Environment Libraries team at the University of Melbourne is spread across four campuses and serves a graduate school that spans the four sites as well as a growing population of off-site patrons, nationally and internationally.

Driven by a need to develop more effective ways of communicating and meeting across all our locations, we explored the range of online tools available. We wanted something that gave us the ability to meet as a team and share audio, documents, and screens, but that was also easily accessed by our patrons, with no need to download any files or follow a myriad of instructions. We saw the possibility of also delivering online instructional sessions. To this end, we purchased five Adobe Connect licenses.

Really communicating online, especially without using video, means learning how to listen differently, allowing more space in the dialogue, and picking up ‘body language’ from the voice and what is happening on the screen. It also means being more conscious of how we are speaking and what we are doing. One of the key tips we suggest to new online presenters is to smile and use gestures when speaking as this makes a positive difference to the listener.

Presenting Endnote webinars has become one of our preferred delivery methods, partly because classes can be presented from any location, urban or regional, to anywhere within Australia and overseas, but also because of the interaction we have with the class. A coursework master’s student, who would normally be on campus for only a two week block, was able to sit at his computer in rural Queensland and take part. Sessions can be conducted after-hours to provide flexibility for part-time students or staff who must work during the day. Participants communicate with others and the presenter via an open chat system, which has proven to be very interactive and builds upon class learning. Everyone participates and contributes to discussion, perhaps because of a sense of anonymity, but also because they are comfortable in their own space. We’ve found that online classes can be even more engaging than delivering face-to-face.

The Land & Environment Libraries team meets fortnightly online and also has extra sessions where we invite other staff to present as needed from their desktop. Feedback from the team to library managers last year was positive, with our online experience playing a key part.
History in your pocket: a mobile application

The Grove Community History collection consists of photographs, oral history interviews, newspaper articles, ephemera, and a small collection of monographs pertinent to the history of the area. The Grove Library has a digital strategy to ensure it maximises new technology and forward thinking. In order for the Grove Community History library to comply with this strategy, we strive to collect digital content wherever possible.

Digitising the collection paved the way for us to use the readily available free software, Conduit Mobile, to develop a community history mobile application showcasing a small selection of our collection to the mobile community.

Historically, it has been necessary to build separate applications for each mobile platform. Conduit Mobile, (www.conduit.com) has removed this burden and features ‘one build fits all’ software. The site is simple to use. There is no coding or programming necessary as the application simply links with other free cloud-based technology to harvest content. Prebuilt modules of programming allow the developer to select appropriate templates to house content. There is also the facility to use a custom module which can be adapted for more specific needs.

The Community History Library decided to use five modules, designed to: detail the purpose of the library, display a selection of historic images, upload a selection of themed audio grabs taken from oral history interviews, link to other web based content pertinent to the library, and relate the opening hours, location, and contact details of the library.

Conduit mobile has the potential to enable library professionals to create mobile applications without the need to learn complicated coding and programming. Prebuilt modules of programming provide easy integration of web based content to create a dynamic presence within the Smartphone community.

Although there are some limitations with regard to customisation and content, Conduit has offered a valuable, low-cost gateway into mobile application development.

Sindy Dowden
Community History Librarian
sdowden@thegrovelibrary.com
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The Grove History
...history in your pocket
The Grove Community History
Library serves to collect and preserve the history of Cottesloe, Peppermint Grove and Mosman Park. This application showcases a sample of our fantastic collection of interviews and images describing life from late 1800s through to modern day.
Please call in to see us next time you are passing!
The State Library of Western Australia has recently launched Your Enquiry Service (YES), an online enquiry service for all Western Australian information seekers. YES is an easy way of finding information across a range of areas using an online enquiry system. Questions received through YES are responded to by experienced State Library staff.

Later this year, National and State Libraries of Australia will join together in providing a national reference enquiry service. This service will ensure that enquiries can be handled by the most suitable library, no matter where the enquiry originated. YES is located at this address slwa.wa.gov.au/find/services/information_services

The implementation of this service is part of the National and State Libraries’ Australasia (NSLA) commitment to providing an effective delivery of information services across Australia and New Zealand.

The State Library of Western Australia is located in the heart of the Perth Cultural Centre. It preserves and provides access to Western Australia’s published heritage and original historical records. The State Library also provides numerous on-line and e-resources, many of which are accessible from your home PC using your public library membership. To see what else the State Library has to offer you please check out the State Library’s web pages at slwa.wa.gov.au

Doug George
Manager Public Programs
doug.george@slwa.wa.gov.au
OCLC helps libraries enter the cloud

Libraries around Australia have begun pilot projects to implement OCLC WorldShare Management Services, the cooperative’s new cloud-based approach to managing library services. WorldShare aims to provide tools to improve library workflows, reduce costs, and offer new opportunities for collaboration, by providing a web-based environment that streamlines cataloguing, acquisitions, license management, and circulation, and offer a next-gen discovery tool for library users. Under the project, libraries will be able to share infrastructure costs and resources, as well as collaborate in ways that free them from the restrictions of local hardware and software. WorldShare Management Services also offer the ability to manage collections of print, electronic, and digital material from start-to-finish, and the integration of license management features into interlibrary loan processes. You can find out more on the OCLC website: www.oclc.org/au/en/webscale/default.htm

Thoughts of a Queen

There’s something delicious about reading someone else’s personal diary – and this thrill is increased a hundredfold when the writer is one of the most famous monarchs in history.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has launched a unique online resource that will allow monarchists, historians, and curious readers the opportunity to do just that. The personal journals of Queen Victoria, all 141 volumes and some 43,000 pages, are now publicly available in their entirety for the first time, thanks to a collaboration of The Bodleian Libraries, The Royal Archives, and ProQuest.

Queen Victoria was a prolific writer and recorded her thoughts and experiences almost daily, starting with her first entry as a young girl of 13 and continuing until just weeks before her death in 1901. Her journals provide a fascinating insight into her life as Queen, giving an intimate first-person account of key events in her life and sixty-three years on the throne, from her coronation and her marriage to Prince Albert to the Diamond Jubilee of 1897. The journals also trace important events in political and social history such as meetings with her Prime Ministers, The Great Exhibition, and the Crimean and Boer Wars, shedding previously unrecorded moments of significance for world history.

More information is available here: www.queenvictoriasjournals.org, and ProQuest has developed a specialised version for libraries. The Queen Victoria’s Journals website is mobile-compliant and can be viewed from all iPhones, Blackberry, and Android phones. The website is supported by a Facebook page at www.facebook.com/queenvictoriasjournals and Twitter at @QueenVictoriaRI.

Whether he’s cranky or hungry, Bear is a winner

As Matthias Litters says in this month’s EEI, there’s an app for that! But when it comes to children’s book apps, they can be very hit and miss. However, we’ve found a couple that we just love.

This year’s NSS was such a success in no small part to Nick Bland’s wonderful story, The Very Cranky Bear. Hundreds of thousands of children across the country sat down at 11am on the 23rd of May to listen to the story of four small friends, a warm cave, and its current cranky occupant.

For a number of participants, this experience was enhanced by the innovative and interactive The Very Cranky Bear app, which was used in schools, libraries, and daycares to extend and augment the reading experience.

If you loved the book and the app, you’ll be interested to know that Nick Bland’s next book about our Bear friend, The Very Hungry Bear, now has an app of its own, with audio recorded by Australian actor Angus Sampson. Children have the opportunity to read aloud and record their own audio, or hear the story read by Angus and help by turning the pages and interacting with different elements throughout the story.

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August – September Courses

Make a new financial year resolution to invest in your professional career!
Here are the courses available from ALIA Training in August and September.

**Managing Challenging Clients Workshops**
Understand and deal with clients who are suffering from problems related to mental illness, disability, or substance abuse. Includes causes, definitions, and symptoms, behavior management and self management.
**PD category:** Informal Learning
**PD points:** 7
**Registrations Close:** 2 weeks prior to course date

**Fundamentals of Supervision Workshops**
An introduction or refresher to the essential skills of staff supervision.
**PD category:** Informal Learning
**PD points:** 7
**Dates:** Sydney 6th Sept, Melbourne 14th Sept. Various locations and dates planned for 2012 please check ALIA Training web page.
**Registrations Close:** 2 weeks prior to course date

**Cataloguing Basics**
A full TAFE unit (Undertake Cataloguing Activities) condensed into 6 weeks and undertaken online. Perfect as a refresher or for those with limited cataloguing experience. Includes an update on RDA. In partnership with TAFESA.
**PD category:** Tertiary Courses
**PD points:** 30
**Dates:** 30th Aug – 4th Oct
**Registrations Close:** 16th Aug

**BREAKOUT : Extending the health LIS professional role – skills and strategies**
This online short course aims to equip health information professionals to meet the challenges offered by new and extended roles in healthcare information in partnership with FOLIOz at the University of Sheffield UK.
**PD category:** Tertiary Course
**PD points:** 30
**Dates:** 3rd Sept – 28th Oct
**Registrations Close:** 20th Aug

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**Electronic Resources Australia**

Australian Libraries working together

Electronic Resources Australia (ERA) is a consortium for all library sectors, offering Australian libraries a collaborative, cost-saving purchasing opportunity to provide their users with access to quality electronic resources.

As a collective, libraries can work together to ensure more people have access to these resources.

**How can my library join in?**

ERA offers libraries a panel of electronic resources across areas such as general reference, Australian news and business, health information, humanities and social sciences, and science and technology. Australian libraries can opt-in at any time with pro-rated subscriptions to align with either a financial or calendar year cycle.

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For more information
- eranla.gov.au
- 1800 182 937
Public libraries, research, and the internet

At the recent ALIA Biennial Conference the ALIA Research Committee ran a panel session titled “Demystifying research”. The panel briefly discussed research, its role in the profession, and the importance of evidence-based practice. Brief examples of practice-based research were then provided. A lively discussion followed. One issue (quite rightly) raised by panel attendees was the perceived divorce between public libraries and research: “why are there no public librarians on the research committee?” and “why is no research reported on the panel emanating from public libraries?” It’s not because there is no research emanating from or about public libraries (just check in ALIA’s subscription to Library and Information Science Abstracts). There is a rich lode. The issue of representation cannot be addressed here. Instead a review of a recent paper is called for. In keeping with the theme of this issue, The Technology of Libraries, and public libraries I focus on a related article.

Background: Public libraries and the internet

As public access organisations, public libraries have generally considered providing access to information as a key role. As information has become increasingly digital, libraries have provided access to the internet itself, through public access computers and internet connectivity, which in turn has enabled access to online resources and services within and beyond each library’s own walls.

The research

This article draws on data from national surveys in the USA over 17 years from 1994 conducted with the aim of tracking the growth of public library connectivity and internet use. The survey data serves as a basis for promoting public library internet policies at a federal level, and providing longitudinal data to inform state and system level decision making. While the focus of the surveys has evolved over time and with technology, core questions remained providing continuity.

The findings

Nearly 100% of public libraries are connected to the internet (from 20.9% in 1994) and provide public access. Number of workstations has increased, and access has moved from dial-up to broadband, to mobile. Public libraries use their internet connectivity to provide the public with access to databases, e-books, digital reference services, and information technology and information literacy training. Public libraries are increasingly providing innovative, value added services such as helping users understand and use government web resources, apply for government services, and complete government forms. User demands on these facilities and resources are rising. Often public libraries, particularly in rural communities, provide the only free public access computing with internet in their communities, and yet they struggle with inadequate funding.

From our collection


You can read the full article via the ALIA online journals at: www.alia.org.au/onlineLISresources

The future

As organisations, especially government agencies move their information exclusively online and the economic downturn continues, access to computers and internet, and the assistance in using them provided by public libraries is often the only available access and assistance for some people. Public libraries more than ever need resourcing and this data helps to demonstrate that in the US context. The situation is likely to be similar in Australia.

Dr Mary Anne Kennan is a member of the ALIA Research Committee and Senior Lecturer in Information Studies at Charles Sturt University mkennan@csu.edu.au
Registrations for the 16th ALIA Information Online Conference are opening soon!

ALIA Information Online is the premier event for Information Professionals in the Asia-Pacific region. In 2013 we are taking it to a new level with a new city and a new, refreshed vision. With innovative presentations, creative and exciting speakers and an extensive trade exhibition ALIA Information Online 2013 will be a conference experience unlike any other!

The ALIA Information Online 2013 program committee invites proposal submissions. To submit your proposal visit the website at www.information-online.com.au.

For all the latest ALIA Information Online 2013 news you can follow us on www.information-online.com.au
There's an app for that

Unless you've been living under a rock, you will know by now that the information profession has been undergoing a radical shift in the past two decades and is showing absolutely no sign of stabilising. This entire issue of INCITE is devoted to the catalyst of that shift: technology!

I've been a long-time proponent of the strategic implementation of technology to make using libraries easier, for many reasons. Why should a library staff member waste their time hunting down journal articles and books for a document delivery request when our clients can use something like Virtual Document eXchange (VDX) instead? Facebook is a brilliant medium for reaching clients in certain demographics. I could go on!

During my career I've come across many people who have some trepidation when it comes to new technology. It could be easy to assume that I'm talking about older generations, but that's simply not true. I've met plenty of non-Gen Y folks that love to dive in to new technology head first. The biggest arguments I generally hear are, “Oh, I'm not interested in that”, or “I don't have time for that”. Both of these are completely valid arguments, but permit me to make a suggestion: start playing.

What do I mean by playing? Well, you could define play as to “engage in activity for enjoyment and recreation rather than a serious or practical purpose” (thanks, Google). I think that this definition makes light of just how useful play is. If you look at children playing, they are busy learning a lot of important things like motor control, social skills, and language skills. As we're sent through the grind of a formal education system, play becomes less and less important to us until we get to the point of having our own kids.

We all have different approaches to new technology. Some like to sit back and read the manual before turning a device on, whereas others prefer to throw the manual to one side and dive right in. I've been known to do both, mostly depending on how expensive a new gizmo is. I've been known to do both, mostly depending on how expensive a new gizmo is.

But I believe the best way to learn something is to not only have a look at the manual, but actively play with it. I can guarantee that you will engage better with something if you are interested in what it does for you. You might have already had a friend or a co-worker try and get you to create an account on Twitter. You might have already created an account and tweeted a couple of times, but it just hasn't grabbed you. What I suggest is to find a site that's focused on an activity you know you already enjoy. You like knitting? How about Ravelry? You're training to run in the City to Surf next year? Download Runkeeper to your iPhone. Want to find a new dive site? There's an app for that. I imagine you will make time to use technology if it actually interests you.

Some recommended social networking sites and apps:

- Diveboard ([www.diveboard.com](http://www.diveboard.com)) – An online dive log and dive site discovery network
- Flickr ([www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)) – Photo sharing and discovery
- Goodreads ([www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com)) – Book reviews and recommendations
- Ravelry ([www.ravelry.com](http://www.ravelry.com)) – Knitting and crocheting
- RunKeeper ([www.runkeeper.com](http://www.runkeeper.com)) – Track your workouts using your GPS-enabled smartphone
- YourGardenShow ([www.yourgardenshow.com](http://www.yourgardenshow.com)) – Share garden know-how and resources

Worried about privacy? Many people are justifiably concerned about their privacy. The best advice I can give you is to become familiar with the privacy controls that the sites you use provide. Different sites give different levels of control. If, at any stage, you aren't comfortable with sharing personal information with a site, just don't share your personal information. There is a long and proud history of people on the internet using pseudonyms.

Matthias Liffers
Librarian, Australian Institute of Marine Science
matthias.liffers@gmail.com

Matthias Liffers is a scuba divin’, motorcyclin’, vegetarian librarian. After working in a variety of roles in Perth including Systems Librarian, Web Coordinator, Web Information Analyst, and Emerging Technologies Specialist, he decided to move to the other side of the country to be the Librarian at the Australian Institute of Marine Science (which admittedly jibes quite well with his passion for diving). He is currently helping to organise the 2013 New Librarians Symposium (NLS6), which you should totally attend. He tweets from @mpfl and it shouldn’t be too hard to find him on LinkedIn.
Want to list your event on the ALIA website? Group members and office bearers – don’t forget to upload your event at www.alia.org.au/events/add. Not an ALIA event? Your LIS event may also be eligible to be added to our non-ALIA events. Contact events@alia.org.au for more information.
October’s INCITE: are we still relevant?

LIS professionals are passionate people, and never more so than when this topic comes up. But behind our emotional orations and blustering bravado, it remains our dirty little secret – the topic only really discussed with the closest of friends and a bottle or three of wine. So let’s look at it. Let’s really look at it. Are we still relevant? How? To whom? Are we slipping behind? How do we connect with a community glued to Google? How do we raise our profile in an economy interested only in profit? How do we hold on to our ‘third space’, make the world recognise our importance, and boost our profession to the accolades it deserves? Or are we there? Let’s bring it out to the light – BYO wine.

Deadline 1 September 2012. incite@alia.org.au

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### ALIA New Members List

#### Member to Associate
- Fern Russell  VIC
- Renee Fitter  NSW
- Christine Dall  WA
- Jennifer Kay  QLD
- Geoffrey Lush  VIC
- Catherine Rollason  WA
- Annelise Spos  QLD
- Celine Har  VIC
- Lynda Fatima  VIC
- Gisela Tarascio  QLD
- Helen Rossolen  QLD
- Robyn Ellis  VIC
- Felicity Kelly  VIC

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<td>Fern Russell  VIC</td>
<td>Naomi McNally QLD</td>
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<td>Renee Fitter  NSW</td>
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<td>Evelyn Rogers VIC</td>
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<td>Pamela Mclean  QLD</td>
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#### New Member
- Linda Simrowan  NSW
- Katharine Howard  ACT

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#### Readmitting Associate
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- Nicole Shearer  NSW
- Tracey Ross  NSW
- Anne Duffield  NSW
- Trudi Conlin  WA
- Joana Richardson  QLD
- Erna Van Zyl  NSW
- Lidia Ishchenko  QLD
- Avesti Harris  NSW
- Jane Van Bolen  NSW
- Kristina Adams  VIC
- Louise Eldridge  SA

#### Readmitting Member
- Ariel Arocs  VIC
- Jasmine Sgroi  WA
- Rebecca Browning  NSW
- Julie Hallett  WA
- Phoebe Nimani  TAS
Hacking for the public good

I’ve written a bit recently about Open Government – and the philosophies behind it. The reason is fairly simple: my day job (the one that keeps me from blogging more) has been involved over the past few months with preparing for our government data portal – in particular scouting around to collect a few data sets to publish on it. One of the most interesting things about this quest has been that no one I’ve spoken to in our various agencies has been unwilling to participate. Their only reaction has been to ask (quite reasonably), “where’s the money coming from?” They’ve been preparing data for years and publishing it in tables in their annual report, but now we’re asking for it in an ever-so-slightly different format. Oh, and while they’re at it could they change their business practices so that the data is extracted in this new format on a regular basis? Not a major problem, oh no.

Anyway, one way or another it’s going to happen, and like so many other initiatives over the past decades, the “bureaucrats” will find the time to do this and we’ll get some interesting data on our portals. Which is all to the good, because we’re seeing a growing interest in developers wanting to do things with data. This was brought home to me at a couple of events around the beginning of June: GovHack and GovCamp (www.govcampau.org/report). GovHack had around forty teams of developers looking at various published data sets and in a 48-hour period creating applications or websites that could make something new from them. The new creation might develop a completely new service, or perhaps just a new way of looking at the data to make it more interesting or understandable. A good example of the latter is the Open Budget Project at www.theproject.org (best viewed in Chrome or Firefox) which relies on two factors: a very attractive user interface and the fact that all of the data is gathered together in one place, rather than distributed over a large set of Budget papers. Other developments included an app that charted a path through terrain based on the level of mobility needed to get from point to point: most useful for a person in a wheelchair or someone pushing a pram.

Many of the apps in the GovHack were not well developed (remember that they only had 48 hours to do it) and may at first seem a little trivial. But these are very early days and the people who come along next will have their imagination sparked to branch off to all sorts of directions and many good things will result.

And you might wonder if this has much to do with our profession. Quite a lot, I believe. As I’ve wandered through all sorts of available data in the collections phase and looked at specifying various metadata elements for the portal, I’ve been relying on my long-ago cataloguing training and have been very mindful of keeping the user’s needs at the forefront of our work.

Meaningful names

Connecting to Country: Australian Place Names at www.aiatsis.gov.au/collections/connectingtocountry.html is a well-produced tutorial from AIATSIS that examines their place thesaurus, one of three that makes up the Pathways product. It’s not only useful for people working on systems requiring a knowledge of the background to indigenous place names, but it’s a bit of an eye-opener for those of us with just a general interest in the subject.

Technology trends

There’s a new Pew Report on Public Library Funding and Technology Access that reveals some of the real challenges facing US public libraries in how they’re coping with the demand of new technologies. One of the notable ones is in the lending of e-books. The barriers thrown up by the publishers make it all too difficult or too expensive or both. We shouldn’t be too surprised, of course – they’re clearly still trying to find the right business model, and while they have the product that we need for the future, they will be working to exploit this scarcity for all they’re worth. But it’s still galling.

The other aspect of technology use is the growing role for library staff in technical support. Even with the massive growth in home computers, it seems that there’s plenty of un-met demand for the use of library computers and where there are users there’s always a need for technical support. (Don’t just believe me: look at the experience of Dewey in Unshelved) Do you have a go-to person in your library who knows all about downloading, who can find the appropriate software to open that obscure file type, who knows the ins and outs of the ever-changing copyright laws? If not, you’d better start looking.

More on my blog www.alia.org.au/webbsblog

Posted by Kerry Webb
The Reading Hour

The Reading Hour is on Saturday 25 August 2012, nominally from 6pm to 7pm AEST, but events are taking place all day, all around the country. This weekend is between the end of Children’s Book Week and the start of Literacy and Numeracy Week. Although The Reading Hour has appeal for all ages, the message behind it is focused on families and sharing books with children – ‘10 minutes a day, an hour a week, is all it takes to give your child the gift of reading.’

There will be fantastic events happening around Australia on that day:

- 774 ABC Melbourne will be partnering with the Melbourne Writers Festival, for a fabulous children’s event in Federation Square (BMW Edge), featuring some of Australia’s most popular writers for children. Hosted by ABC 3’s Kane and Amberley, Andy Griffiths, Felice Arena and Jackie French will be among the writers and authors participating in this free event. The ABC trailer will add to the fun and excitement. Child reading champions from around the country will be involved in a money-can’t-buy day out event for this day.

- The Big Issue’s annual fiction edition will be the official publication for The Reading Hour. It will feature stories chosen from open submissions as well as commissioned pieces by well-known writers. This year, the fiction edition features James Franco, the Oscar-nominated actor and writer, and acclaimed locals Margo Lanagan, Tony Birch, Sophie Cunningham, James Bradley, and Wayne Macauley.

- There will be a big screen simulcast link up from Sydney’s Chatswood shopping centre to the screens in Perth Cultural Precinct with authors, celebrities, Marvel Super Heroes, prize giveaways, and other fun activities for all the family. We will be announcing the winners of the Scholastic/Marvel Reading Super Heroes competition www.scholastic.com.au/minisites/readingsuperhero and the winners of the Adult Learners’ Week short story writing competition ‘It’s never too late to learn to read’.

- Disney Junior has made and is airing a TV ad for The Reading Hour – view the ad on The Reading Hour website. The Walt Disney Company and Dymocks are holding pre-Reading Hour parties in Dymocks stores in July, where parents are being invited to sign a pledge to read with their children for 10 minutes a day, an hour a week, in the run up to 25 August. This sponsored commitment will raise funds for Dymocks Children’s Charities, providing books to kids in disadvantaged areas.

- Sydney Jewish Festival will hold a reading hour on the first day of its event; Kumon will be partnering with libraries to run events for families with English as a second language; MS Readathon will be running ‘60 minutes for MS’ as a special Reading Hour fundraiser on Friday 24 August.

- You can also find lots of local events on The Reading Hour calendar at www.thereadinghour.org.au.

So, what are you planning for The Reading Hour?

State Library of Victoria hits major milestone

It was one small step for staff, one giant leap for digital collections as the State Library of Victoria chalked up one million newly created eRecords in its bid to make its entire heritage collection searchable online.

The one millionth record – an achievement in itself – was especially important as it marked the discovery of a rare collection of maps and plans from the American Civil War. Published in 1891, the collection was uncovered by a librarian as part of a trove of large folio books acquired by the SLV in the late 19th Century. It is now included among the library’s rare and significant objects.

The digitisation project, designed to create electronic resources for the early catalogues including over a million hand-written and type-set cards, will cost $23 million over five years.
Abax Systems | 26
Allied Pickfords | 15
Chess Moving Australia Pty. Ltd. | 14
Ezi-Scan | 22
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National Library of Australia | 17
North Coast Institute of Tafe | 3
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Beazley, Jo | 7
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Fahey, Gerry | 12
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George, Doug | 15
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Kennan, Mary Anne | 18
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Webb, Kerry | 24
York, Erin | 8
Christchurch City Libraries has 22 branches and enjoys huge popularity – over 72% of residents are library members. In 2009 the library service celebrated its 150th anniversary and the decision was made to convert the collection to RFID. Australian company FE Technologies was selected to install RFID hardware and software into the libraries and by 2010 work had commenced to convert the collection to RFID.

RFID technology replaces the old barcode system that existed in the libraries. Unlike barcodes, RFID does not need line of sight, meaning items can be read quickly and in multiples when placed on or near an RFID reader.

Christchurch City Libraries were looking forward to a new world of improved customer service – RFID gives the library’s patrons the ability to checkout their own items, which frees up staff time to provide valuable services such as research assistance, running children’s programs, and other specialist library services.

But things were thrown off schedule when in February 2011 a catastrophic earthquake struck, resulting in a large loss of life and significant damage to buildings and infrastructure across the city.

The conversion project at the library service had to be put on hold as many of the Mobile Retrospective Encoders, (mobile equipment used to print and encode RFID tags) were left trapped inside damaged buildings. Thankfully no staff or patrons were injured. Undeterred, Christchurch City Libraries and FE Technologies put their heads together and formulated a revised project plan. FE Technologies extended the loan period of the Encoders and, after some time, the buildings were declared safe and the Encoders were retrieved, tested, and put back to work.

Over the next few months with further shocks and tremors, building standards in New Zealand changed rapidly which continued to challenge project schedules. Fortunately FE Technologies’ conversion system has been cleverly designed so that libraries can actually stay open during the conversion process with no loss of security for the collection. Shipments of RFID equipment were often held in warehouses or moved between sites, until eventually the Papanui Library was reopened to the public with a full suite of RFID equipment including:

- **Self Loan Stations** – easy to use touchscreen kiosks that allow patrons to borrow up to 5 items at a time
- **Security Gates** – 3D security gates able to read items in any orientation and featuring people counters to give valuable information about peak traffic times
- **Circulation Assistants** – facilitate multiple item processing and even the ability to encode new tags for items returned after...
RFID amid Earthquakes

the conversion process had finished.

- Portable Scanning Unit – a special portable mini computer and wand
- Smart Bin – returned items are automatically and instantly checked back in.

Patrons were delighted to have their library open again, and with several branches still out of action due to the quakes, Papanui was inundated. It was now hosting patrons from across the region and performing three times the number of loans than previously. This is where RFID technology and its multiple items processing capabilities really stepped up to the challenge. The Self Loan Stations are so easy to use – a simple three step borrowing process and onscreen animations mean patrons were borrowing books themselves, quicker and more efficiently than ever before. In fact, reports library staff showed that patron self checkout was at a staggering 90 – 100 percent!

So busy was Papanui that FE Technologies approached library management to see if it could test its new Smart On Holds Shelf at the branch. The innovative Smart On Holds Shelf uses RFID technology to transform the onerous reservations process. At Papanui patrons are notified that they have an item awaiting pickup at the Self Loan Station which tells them which shelf number their item is located and prints a docket. Expired items are automatically identified and can be either placed back into circulation or left to await the next patron waiting for the item.

Christchurch City Libraries are now three quarters of the way through their RFID project, and are impressed by the efficiency gains they are already seeing at the newly installed branches. Patrons are enjoying the interactive touchscreens, and the speed and ease of borrowing. Staff are delighted to be performing the high-value customer service oriented tasks that they enjoy and with the recent delivery of a customised Emperor Penguin Self Loan Station, even the youngest patrons are borrowing their own items without staff intervention.

Shane Forde
FE Technologies
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www.fetechnologies.com.au
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