Google can bring you back 100,000 answers, a librarian can bring you back the right one.

– Neil Gaiman
Your local ALIA contact

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Email: feedback@alia.org.au with your comments.

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FRONTLINE

There is much happening in libraries at present – not all of it good. The recent announcement by the Queensland Government that some of their departmental libraries are to close has caused the ALIA Board and staff to galvanise around the Dumb Idea campaign. It is designed to demonstrate to the Premier and Cabinet in Queensland the value that their libraries provide and the risks associated with closing these vital services.

I urge all members of ALIA and library and information supporters to get behind this campaign. The sad fact is that some politicians and senior bureaucrats in Queensland (and potentially other jurisdictions) do not understand that the quality of their policies and programmes is significantly compromised by not having access to high quality, accurate, and timely information provided by information professionals.

This move by the Queensland Government is directly in line with the risks that I have raised in previous Frontline columns. Decision makers see the internet as a cheap and practical alternative to their library services. We know that it is not. We must make this point strongly and with hard evidence. ALIA is on the case, but, I reiterate, we need members and supporters to assist us. Please go to the ALIA website, print off the Dumb Idea postcard, and send it to the Queensland Premier.

On a much more positive note, I was privileged to attend the IFLA Congress in Helsinki in August. There were 4000 delegates at the congress and I was able to meet many of the staff and office bearers from other library and information associations. It is my hope that ALIA can further strengthen these contacts and that we can learn from and share expertise and experiences internationally.

The current President of IFLA, Ingrid Parent, selected as the theme for her term, Libraries – a force for change in transforming our societies. There were many papers and meetings that I attended that attested to the role that all libraries play in transforming societies. Public libraries transforming communities through literacy and community engagement; university libraries transforming themselves to meet the changing learning styles of students; and the transformational nature of school librarianship in the new discovery based pedagogies were all canvassed at the Congress.

It is also clear that libraries across the world are grappling with similar issues to us. Copyright complexities, the tumultuous e-book publishing arena, and the view that libraries are not necessary now that the internet is ubiquitous, were all key issues raised and discussed by library and information professionals from across the world. It is very clear to me that ALIA must take its place in the international discussions and decisions around these issues and that ALIA members must be engaged in these debates. So far, no country has the magic solution to these issues, but the conversations are underway and as the key library and information representative for Australia, ALIA and its members have a role in contributing to the solutions.

On behalf of all members I would like to welcome Sue McKerracher to her role as Executive Director of ALIA. Sue commenced in late August and it would be fair to say she has had to hit the ground running with the Queensland Government announcements, the changes to TAFE funding in Victoria and New South Wales, and the closure of some school libraries across the country. Sue is doing a wonderful job of leading the ALIA team and providing the best advice possible to Board members.

It is sad for me to be farewelling a key ALIA staff member at this time. Rob Miller who has been acting Executive Director since early this year has decided to leave ALIA. Rob not only kept ALIA House and the Board operating for much of this year, but he is also responsible for the Library Initiative, a project where the Commonwealth Government funded devices into public libraries around the country for the use of people with visual impairment. The project was a great success, thanks to Rob’s vision, passion, and organisational skills! Rob has also been a great supporter of the National Year of Reading, assisting the Founding Partners through the planning and delivery of this major initiative. Thank you most sincerely, Rob. May your future be full of red wine, fishing in wonderful places, and a great golf handicap!

Please – don’t forget to print and send the Dumb Idea postcard to the Queensland Government to demonstrate the value that library and information professionals, and in particular our colleagues in the Queensland public service, provide to good planning, policy, and decision making.

Vanessa Little
ALIA President
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INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

Have FAIFE

IFLA’s Committee on Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE) has released an international code of ethics. The code is also available in a shorter version for quick reference. www.ifla.org/en/news/ifla-code-of-ethics-for-librarians-and-other-information-workers
Holiday photos, tax returns, job applications, bank statements, school notices, utility bills, cards and emails from friends and family – most of us have a mass of information that we have to process everyday, over and above our work inbox. We must spend hours trying to sort it, file it, and make sure we can retrieve it when we need it. We’re a nation of information amateurs. So let’s hear it for the professionals.

Our members’ vision is of inspired, knowledgeable, creative, literate, enterprising, respectful, and connected communities, where everyone has equal access to information and ideas. The role of library and information professionals is to find, share, and connect – connect people with ideas, books, information, knowledge, resources, and with community.

We know the best places to look. We know how to search more thoroughly and find things faster. We help people discover the missing pieces.

In an expanding information marketplace, especially online, library and information professionals are more important than ever before – anyone can surf the internet; library and information professionals help people navigate it.

Sue McKerracher
Executive Director
sue.mckerracher@alia.org.au

Celebrating the ‘professional’ in Professional Development

Library and information professionals in the digital age are transforming themselves in order to meet ever more demanding and diverse user needs. We are required to develop the skills of understanding and using social media, integrating mobile devices into user-centred interfaces, developing and responding to open access and the formation of digital repositories, satisfying the requirements for evidence based practice, while developing the ability to juggle digital licensing with multinationals, and maintaining intelligent search and retrieval capabilities, effective metadata description and efficient contents organisation, not to mention implementing RDA and DDC 23 and Abridged DDC15. Doesn’t that make you feel superhuman!

Is all this change recognised by employers, by the community at large, and even by us ourselves as we go through it?

We must remember that we have friends and allies who value our special skills. A recent survey in the UK confirmed that we are a trusted profession, especially when it comes to the internet.

As a profession we have a special role to play in the wider sphere of supporting a civil society. IFLA has adopted an international code of ethics that goes to the heart of our professionalism, endorsing the core principles of supporting access to information, recognising responsibilities towards individuals and society, respecting privacy and transparency, open access and intellectual property, neutrality, personal integrity and professional skills, and valuing fairness in colleague and employer/employee relationships by opposing discrimination. We should celebrate our relevance in upholding these ideals and the respect we gain by demonstrating our values.

The concepts of professionalism, recognising and validating qualifications, and ongoing professional learning are also changing. ALIA is embracing a conversation across the LIS industry on how to ensure, despite all this change, we as LIS professionals and advocates retain and enhance our relevance. We hope you will be part of the conversation, looking at our core knowledge and skills and how we endorse their importance through LIS course accreditation and the ALIA PD Scheme. We would very much welcome your contribution to maintaining and sustaining the relevance of the LIS profession, and over the coming months we will be seeking your feedback in a number of ways. Please watch this space.

Judy Brooker
Professional Development and Careers Manager
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ALIA SNAPSHOT

Dr Genevieve Bell has been announced as the second keynote speaker for ALIA Information Online 2013. You can find more information about Dr Bell and the other keynote speakers on the website: www.information-online.com.au

ALIA will partner with TAFESA in 2013 to offer practitioner-appropriate RDA training. The course will be offered online and is fully flexible. More information will be available shortly on the ALIA Training website: www.alia.org.au/training

DIRECTLINE

Dr Genevieve Bell has been announced as the second keynote speaker for ALIA Information Online 2013. You can find more information about Dr Bell and the other keynote speakers on the website: www.information-online.com.au

ALIA will partner with TAFESA in 2013 to offer practitioner-appropriate RDA training. The course will be offered online and is fully flexible. More information will be available shortly on the ALIA Training website: www.alia.org.au/training
Articles on the demise of libraries abound. Many articles argue that in order for libraries to stay relevant, targeted marketing, user-need surveys, and product value-adding are needed. Libraries already implement these techniques. It was interesting to read articles from practitioners, who acknowledge these aspects, but who also offer insightful and probing perspectives.

There exists a dogma by the iGeneration that libraries are replaceable by web development and digital technologies as if “….technology and mentality are one extended system”. This digital connectivity, explored by Turner, cites works that discuss technology-changing neural responses, placing the brain into a constant state of stress, which can impair cognition. There is solid attention given to these digital natives. This represents some serious discussion, showing a need for further research.

Libraries have been at the forefront of technology implementation for all sorts of solutions to enhance their local community connections. The two articles presented do not shy away from the current state libraries are in, but leverage their long standing social status to advocate the value of libraries. What is offered are perspectives and reflections of the inherent strengths of library services. The article by Turner presents a US historical perspective on the library, both public and school, which also reflects our own Australian situation.

Libraries have strong cultural connections. They are places of information acquisition and access. School libraries are mentioned as a possible model for improving critical thinking skills – vital in the 21st century.

Economic and political factors have also had an impact on libraries; aspirational goals are therefore the library’s hallmark. Libraries are not only information portals, but knowledge centres for connecting, intellectually and socially, creating physical, mental, and emotional spaces, and to stimulate deep thinking and contemplation. “Furthermore, although it has been somewhat diminished by cultural change, the library’s ‘brand’ as a knowledge-center remains unparalleled in American life” (Turner).

As the web changes library structures, libraries find they are catering for many different needs, wants, and user perceptions. They have adopted various prescriptions for sustainability. Libraries work hard to dispel the voice of irrelevancy.

Truitt’s editorial, Koyaanisqatsi (2011) – refers to a “life out of balance”. With the internet, libraries are faced with their own Koyaanisqatsi as the web’s tsunami-like advance challenges our authority and perceived custodial right to be purveyors and disseminators of knowledge. Libraries conduct their business and engage users, comfortable that this is a perception. We need to take stock and put our stamp on services we’re known for. More to the point, our knowledge, expertise, and service make us ideal guides through the quagmire of information now just a mouse-click away. “The library’s status as a knowledge-center remains its best opportunity not only to survive but also thrive in the future”. What can be gleaned from both articles is not a lost horizon of past glories, but an affirmation of our place in society; intelligently engaging users, actively using technology to forward knowledge.

From our collection

ALIA online journals: www.alia.org.au/onlinelisresources

Edward Kostraby is a member of the ALIA Research Committee and Head of Library, St Michael’s Grammar School, St Kilda, Victoria. ed.kostraby@stmichaels.vic.edu.au
A tropical change

It’s Saturday night in Melbourne and I am at a friend’s birthday celebration drinks, being introduced to a new bunch of people. As the conversation progresses, the standard question arises, “So what do you do with yourself?” to which I answer proudly, “I am a librarian.” I then watch the all too familiar looks cross the faces of these new people as they ponder to themselves, why is this young girl wearing a short dress and heels and not a grey cardigan and glasses? I then spend the remainder of the conversation explaining that, yes I did in fact go to university to become a librarian, that I am not obsessed with books, nor do I enjoy telling people to be quiet. I explain with great enthusiasm about the diverse role of a librarian and reveal details of my upcoming position in Tonga.

Ever since I can remember I wanted to become a librarian, travel the world, and volunteer in developing countries. My three wishes came true all at once as I boarded a plane to the sunny tropical oasis of Tonga after accepting a position as an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development (AYAD) to work on a project developing a finance library for the Tongan government. I had decided to take a challenge and swap my job title from School Librarian in Melbourne’s suburbia to Finance Librarian at the Ministry of Finance and National Planning in the South Pacific island of Tonga.

The AYAD program was first brought to my attention during a lecture at RMIT University while I was studying towards my undergraduate degree. The AYAD program is an AusAid initiative that deploys skilled volunteers under the age of thirty to live and work in developing countries on various projects to aid developing nations. The process to apply involved a written application, phone interview, mental and physical health tests, and a five-day training conference in Canberra. When I learned of my acceptance to the position I was incredibly excited, but also a tad anxious about what I had got myself into! My project description required that I practically build a library from scratch, from weeding, cataloguing, designing a database, purchasing equipment with a very limited budget, creating policies, marketing, and training other staff.

Upon arrival to Tonga I was admittedly a little overwhelmed at the enormity of the task at hand. The existing library was spread across three separate buildings in various piles and shelves in total disrepair. It had no order, cataloguing system, policy, or records. I took deep breaths and devised an action plan. Over the past few months I’ve been able to cross several items off the list. To date I have weeded all the resources, created official policies, and commenced the process of cataloguing and entering all resources onto a new database. I know that I am really fortunate to have the opportunity as a new graduate to manage my own project and learn about all aspects of creating a library in the process. The puzzle of what I learned at university (late nights of assignments and endless lectures) is starting to piece together by cementing that knowledge in a practical sense.

Tonga is an extremely culturally rich country; Christianity is core to lifestyle and the royal monarchy holds a great presence. Technology is growing rapidly in Tonga and many government departments and schools are suddenly acknowledging a need for libraries. Each day to work I wear traditional Tongan attire: a Tapenu (wrap around ankle length skirt) and a kiekie (woven strips of flowers tied around the waist). Following King George Taupou’s death in March of this year, Tongan people entered into a period of one hundred days of mourning, for which my colleagues and I are still wearing all black.

It is my advice to new library and information professionals to wear your title as a librarian with great pride and to challenge yourself. We are part of an increasingly rare profession that is being widely sought after around the world. If you have an interest in international development, like to travel, enjoy volunteering, and want to spread your passion for libraries globally, perhaps an AYAD project could be a passport for your future too.

Sophie Blake

After growing up on a beef farm near Wodonga, North East Victoria, Sophie moved to the big smoke after high school and completed her Bachelor in Business Information and Knowledge Management at RMIT University in 2010. She then spent a year working as a school librarian at Gladstone Park Secondary College Community Library in Melbourne before trading in high heels, a hectic social calendar, and high speed internet for thongs, relaxed island time living, and snail mail; and she hasn’t looked back.
The Library Dividend: a major independent study of the socio-economic contribution of Queensland’s public libraries.

In late 2010 Queensland public libraries completed a gruelling two years post local government amalgamation where their focus had been on amalgamating library services, including the systems, people, and processes that involved. Then came a time for library managers to take stock of where they were situated within their organisations and the challenges that they now faced, in most instances, in a much larger organisational structure.

As the new State Library of Queensland Director, Public and Indigenous Library Services, I felt it was essential to listen to public libraries about what were the key challenges facing them for the next two years to ensure that State Library’s response could be relevant and strategic. At every regional meeting that I and my team attended the issue of funding, relevance, and demonstrating the value of libraries to the new councils was raised as a major challenge. Queensland public library managers were now reporting to different senior management, mayors, and councillors whose focus was on finding efficiencies and savings.

In early 2011 the State Library of Victoria launched the Dollars, Sense and Public Libraries study that demonstrated the socio-economic value of Victorian public libraries and there was debate in the library world regarding using the research model to create a national value that all other states could use for advocating for increased funding for public libraries. In discussing the usefulness of a national figure with key Queensland public library managers, it became very apparent that there was not confidence that a national tool/value would provide the persuasive argument for the demonstration of the value of Queensland public libraries at a local level.

The State Library, with agreement from public libraries across the state commissioned a Queensland state-wide study funded by the Expanding Horizons Public Library Grant. SGS Economics and Planning were contracted to undertake the study, building on their experience delivering Dollars, Sense and Public Libraries. Seven case study libraries were part of the study representing the State’s diverse Local Government environment. They were Brisbane City Council, Sunshine Coast Regional Council, Mackay Regional Council, Fraser Coast Regional Council, Mount Isa City Council, Goondwindi Regional Council, and Paroo Shire Council.

The aim of the study was to expand the understanding of the value of public libraries to the community, prove that public libraries contribute economic benefit to the community, and provide Queensland public libraries with quantitative data to build a stronger case in securing their place as an essential local government service.

The study provides hard evidence of what we knew to be true. Queenslanders value their public libraries very highly and this is true for both users of libraries and non-users. The methodology for the study included:

- Cost benefit analysis, which considers the economic, social, and environmental costs and benefits of public library services.
- Economic impact assessment, which measured how public libraries stimulate regional economies.

The study’s key findings included:

- For every dollar invested in Queensland’s public libraries, $2.30 is the average rate of return in community benefits.
- Public libraries contribute $614 million to Queensland income and support 3135 full-time jobs.
- Over 97% of library users are satisfied or very satisfied with the service of their public libraries.
- 45% of Queenslanders use public libraries. They see libraries as contributing to enjoyable pastimes, lifelong learning, and the improvement of literacy.
- Libraries provide access to a wide range of resources in all formats, digital and traditional, and are regarded as safe and welcoming places to visit.
- Queenslanders reported that they save on average $394 per year through library services.

It should be noted that the study looked at physical services of libraries only, and did not assess the benefits of virtual services and when this is undertaken the value can only increase. The study also acknowledges the special challenges faced by Queensland, given great distances and wide dispersal of population.
The year long project has also resulted in a range of materials to support the Queensland public library sector to clearly and powerfully articulate the quantifiable and defendable benefits of Queensland public libraries.

These include:

- Short Presentation (Powerpoint) outlining the research findings that can be customised for local usage.
- Fact Sheet that summarises key facts to illustrate messages about the contribution library services make.
- Library Value Calculator (Excel 2003): a tool to estimate the dividend of the library service generates for the local community and economy.
- Advocacy Plan template: an outline to guide the use of The Library Dividend and facilitate the development of a Library Advocacy Plan.

All these resources are available from: pconnect.slq.qld.gov.au/manage/championing

The important message from this study is public libraries are held in high regard by both users and non-users and are well used.

State Library of Queensland recognises public libraries as our true partners in extending access to learning and resources to all Queenslanders and will continue to build on this research to champion their invaluable role in delivering 21st century library services to local communities.

With demonstrated economic value and good return on investment, it makes sense to keep investing in them.

Jane Cowell
Director, Public & Indigenous Library Services
State Library of Queensland
Jane.Cowell@slq.qld.gov.au

The latest on QLD government libraries

We have had a generally positive response from members to our lobbying on behalf of Queensland government libraries, but we know that some people are concerned about us being seen to be too forceful with our Dumb Idea campaign. The communications team put a lot of thought into the balance and we knew that to achieve airtime and column centimetres, we had to have a strong voice – we’re now looking at a follow up for the start of October, putting the positive side of the value of libraries, called Good Idea.

Members have also talked about return on investment figures and we too recognise the value of having statistics to back our cause. We have access to figures from elsewhere in the world (mainly the US) but we’re light on Australian data for special libraries. We will be talking with the ALIA Special Libraries Advisory Committee and other stakeholders about how we can build a more robust business case for government and other special libraries over the coming weeks.

To keep up to date with the latest, please visit our wiki at dumbidea.wikispaces.com
be different. do different
12–15 Feb 2013. Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre

Key note Speakers
Sarah Drummond announced as keynote speaker

We are pleased to announce that Sarah Drummond will be joining us as an international keynote speaker at ALIA Information Online 2013.

Sarah is the founder and Director of Design at Snook, a Social Innovation and service design outfit based in Glasgow, Scotland. Snook have worked with an array of clients designing for good in Scotland and across the world including Scottish Government, British Council, Edinburgh Council, NHS, and Skills Development Scotland. You can read more about Snook at www.wearesnook.com.

Sarah focuses on making social change happen by re-thinking public services from a human perspective. While studying Masters of Design Innovation at Glasgow School of Art, Sarah was sponsored by Skills Development Scotland to work alongside their Service Design and Innovation Directorate to implement the design process in their organisation.

Prior to being the Director of Snook, Sarah won £20 000 for a deprived community in Glasgow. ‘Get Go’ used techniques and skills adopted from the service design process to create a co-produced social enterprise that tackled crime. Sarah is trail blazing where design can add value in the public sector and is known for her sheer determination to change things for the better.

We asked Sarah why she feels it is important in today’s world to ‘do different’.

“We need to learn to live in what I like to call perpetual beta: a constant mode of agility, testing, and improving. We need to establish cultures of prototyping and spaces where failure is a respected part of the process. Testing, building, and making our ideas for our futures. This is no easy task and will require paradigm shifts and miraculous levels of hard work and energy. Most importantly, it will require a targeted approach.

We need to work at all levels of our systems, both inside and outside to win our right to design the future we deserve. Infecting governments, institutions, communities, and ourselves with ideas and tools to make those ideas a reality. We need to come back to basics and start being human again.”

We would love to hear why you think it is important to ‘be different, do different’. Let us know by email at events@alia.org.au or stay in touch by social media.

Registrations
Early bird registrations will be opening in October! Register at www.information-online.com.au

Sponsorship and exhibition opportunities
Interested in sponsoring or exhibiting at ALIA Information Online 2013? There are a range of sponsorship and exhibition opportunities which will enable your organisation to make a significant contribution towards the overall success of the event while enjoying strong branding and exposure in a focused, professional learning environment. The prospectus is now available! Contact us at events@alia.org.au or by phone at 02 6215 8222 to discuss opportunities to be involved.

Staying in touch with ALIA Information Online 2013
With the rise of social media engagement on a professional level, it has become a very important part of any conference experience. ALIA’s Biennial conference had over 2800 tweets surrounding the conference. As you prepare for ALIA’s Information Online 2013, we encourage you to engage with us on social media.

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The APA Handbooks in Psychology Series comprises multiple two- and three-volume sets that address the reference needs of researchers and practitioners in psychology. These reference resources provide undergraduate and graduate students with invaluable supplementary texts, not only for “filling in” their own specialty areas but also for gaining a sound familiarity with central and emerging specialties across the field.

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Keeping ALIA relevant to our members – the leadership team discuss

Our members are experiencing enormous changes. Library and information professionals are being asked to come out from behind the desk, member organisations are embracing new technologies and collaborating with new partners. The Association needs to adapt too, to mirror these changes by becoming even more inclusive, collaborative, open, and member-focused.

When ALIA moved from a branch structure to a national office in the 1990s (for good, practical reasons), some of the sense of ownership shifted too. Of course, we have a strong Board of Directors, who set the direction of the Association, but, over time, other members have begun to feel less connected – and yet connection is one of the main reasons why we join associations.

So, we need to find a different balance; one which retains the economies of scale and efficiencies of a national office function, while making it easier for groups and committees to participate and to help the Board of Directors shape ALIA going forward.

In shaping the ALIA of the future, professional services have to be the core of what we do. Course accreditation, professional development, careers, training, awards, copyright: these services are what make us a professional association.

Our members believe in freedom of access to information, and we must reflect this value. An important example is our website, which needs a major overhaul, so that visitors can find what they are looking for more easily.

ALIA systems and processes have been greatly refined over the last few years, but there may still be opportunities to do things better and to be smart about achieving the desired outcomes in ways that add value at no extra cost to members.

We are confident that advances in technology, innovative ways of working, re-energised relationships, and new partnerships can help us achieve even more for our members in the future.

Professional Services

Our profession is constantly changing and as we face new challenges in technology, systems, and approaches, there is a need for us to keep up-to-date and develop new skills, knowledge, and confidence, to build our own successful and rewarding careers as well as helping the profession remain relevant. But there are ways that the Professional Services teams work to stay relevant – and aid members to do the same.

ALIA continues to support higher education working with relevant institutions to advance quality courses that deliver new professionals for the sector. Having completed an ALIA accredited qualification gives confidence to employers when recruiting staff. ALIA works with education providers and consults with other stakeholders – including students and employers – to ensure courses equip graduates with the knowledge, skills, and capabilities to provide their clients with the right information at the right time. The accreditation process is concerned with ensuring the quality of the course and its relevance to current and emerging library and information practice.

ALIA’s Professional Development Scheme provides a mechanism of formal recognition for ongoing learning. In changing workplace environments, it helps build confidence and credibility and allows you to track your learning progress. It supports coping positively with change by constantly updating your skills and knowledge. Become more productive and efficient by reflecting on your learning and identifying gaps in your knowledge and experience. Having certified practitioner status showcases your commitment to professionalism.

ALIA Training builds on existing partnerships to deliver quality programs to the profession. It provides employers with targeted staff development that aligns with organisational goals. Training activities are closely linked to developing skills for contemporary competence in the profession.

Copyright reflects the essence of ALIA’s ability to have a significant impact on the broad national information landscape. We actively support our members in areas such as copyright legislation reform and practical advice at work.
Copyright issues are on the information agenda at the moment with the release of the Australian Law Reform Commission’s (ALRC) Issues Paper Copyright and the Digital Economy [www.alrc.gov.au/publications/copyright-ip42](http://www.alrc.gov.au/publications/copyright-ip42). Detailed information about how ALIA will support your interests on this issue can be found on page 25 and by following our pop-up wiki at [aliacopyright.wikispaces.com](http://aliacopyright.wikispaces.com).

Member Services

Member Services has a broad range of support functions under its umbrella. Events and conferences, our social media channels, support of our ALIA groups and e-lists, the publishing function, and of course the attraction and retention of members to the Association are all elements of the Member Services team portfolio.

We see ourselves as a customer support service and members as our customers. Improving the timeliness and quality of the support we provide you is the number one aspiration we have. You have the right to have every experience with ALIA staff be a positive one and our aim is to deliver that.

Informing our members of what is happening in the profession and the role the Association plays in framing the core discussions and debates continues to grow in importance for us. Our expanded use of our social media tools to inform and receive ideas will continue to grow. We will ensure that INCITE continues to reflect the common trends and themes of the profession and publishes what your colleagues are thinking and doing. Our scholarly journals will continue to reflect a more formalised dissemination of new practices and research shaping change in the industry.

We will look at all forms of communication we use with our members. The website, e-lists, wikis, direct mail and social media provide information channels. Our challenge is to ensure that we use the right ones at the right time.

Staying Connected

One of ALIA’s favourite ways to communicate with members and to stay relevant is by connecting with them on social media. We are on Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest and LinkedIn.

We enjoy the two way communication that Social Media provides. It allows us to get the word out on issues that are important to our members immediately. It also allows us a wonderful insight into the issues and events that are important to our members.

Social media allows ALIA to engage with members and the library community in general in a fun and informal setting. We enjoy posting fun links on Mondays as well as information about serious issues regarding the library and information sector.

If you haven’t done so already, please follow us and let us know what you think, what you want to see and any fun links you find about the library and information sector.

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Are we still relevant? In my view, the answer is a resounding yes. The essential skills that drew us into this profession are still needed – separating quality information from the huge pile of chaff we all wade through every day, organising it, finding ways to make it accessible, and preserving it for the future. The technological revolution in which we are immersed enables us to apply these skills in innovative ways while adding a whole new layer to our arsenal – innovation, creativity, project management, and change management.

Most librarians and information professionals are passionate about what they do and excited by the potential inherent in emerging technologies, mobile devices, and social media. Promoting that passion and our capabilities to people who still conjure up an antiquated and stereotyped image when they hear the term ‘librarian’ is a major challenge. ‘Librarian’ shouldn’t be a word we avoid or admit sheepishly when asked what we do. We need to wear the label with pride, promote the skills we offer, and convince others that it is a highly desirable and vital career.

In all sectors, librarians encounter the question “can’t I just Google that?” from people outside the profession. In my view, we should grasp the tiger by the tail and acknowledge that, for some purposes, the answer is yes. Google is the obvious choice for queries where ‘close enough is good enough’ and reliance on links influenced by advertising is immaterial. The real strength of our skills begins to emerge when we focus on users whose need for information goes beyond what can be found on the first page of a Google search. High-end users who seek comprehensive or highly specific information rely on librarians to navigate the deep web and identify resources that a simple Google search overlooks. Behind the scenes, our profession’s work to develop standardised and well-structured metadata ensures that deep web content is retrievable. Revealing the wealth of information that still only exists in the print world and helping the

information poor and marginalised find what they need are other facets of a librarian’s role that we shouldn’t underestimate.

The custodial role librarians play in harnessing, organising, and preserving the explosion of information that surrounds us every day raises big questions. Debates around copyright law, legal deposit of electronic publications, mass digitisation, preservation of born-digital information, and open access to scholarly information are all discussions in which librarians need to be involved. We all know there is strength in numbers and that’s where ALIA comes in. There are many ways you can lend your support to your association and keep what we do relevant. Use your satisfied customers to champion the expertise librarians can offer within your own organisation and let other librarians know about your successes. Speak up about the issues facing you in your own work environment and where you think the association needs to focus attention. Encourage your colleagues to join ALIA, attend group events in your local area, and get involved. Of course we are relevant – we all know that. Our task is to make sure others take it for granted as well. Our profession and our association are only as strong as its individual members make it. Help ALIA have a strong and united voice on the issues that matter.

Aileen Weir
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National Library of Australia
ALIA Board of Directors
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Elevator Pitches to prove our relevance

It’s a catch-cry that we hear too often when we tell people about our career in Library and Information Services – “But surely no-one uses them now! Not with the internet!” or “People don’t still read books, do they?” We then spend the next 10 minutes outlining exactly why library and information services are still relevant. To help with this conversation, here are just a few of my ‘elevator pitches’. Feel free to borrow, expand, reuse, or steal to help spread the word:

1. Internet Access
Working in a public library, I can promise you, dear readers, that not everyone (in fact far from everyone) has access to the internet at home. So they come to libraries for free and easy access to the internet. Many libraries also have wi-fi making it a great place for people to come during their lunchbreaks to surf the web or play games on their smartphone or tablet.

2. IT Literacy and Lifelong Learning
For many patrons, even if they have access to the internet, they are not confident in using it. Again, library and information workers are skilled in helping patrons use computers to find information, with many libraries offering regular ‘basic’ computer and internet classes.

3. Readers Advisory and Development
Public and school libraries subscribe to readers’ advisory tools so that they can answer that question “What should I read next?”. And library and information workers are skilled in approaching patrons and helping them to find answers to that question.

4. Research
Not only do library and information workers conduct original research (such as parliamentary libraries, information centres, and special libraries), they also enable others to conduct their own research by increasing access to resources through appropriate cataloguing, indexing, and digitisation, as well as education. I feel our cover quote by Neil Gaiman sums it up brilliantly – “Google can bring you back 100 000 answers, a librarian can bring you back the right one.”

5. Custodians of Information
Through excellent collection development policies State, National, Corporate, Public, Academic, and Special libraries, archives and information centres create digital and physical repositories of resources and information that would otherwise be lost to the world in 10, 50, 100, even 1000 years’ time. Who else, other than a local studies librarian or state library, is going to collect election paraphernalia from a local government election?!

Kathryn Cass
ALIA Board Member
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Like any higher educational institution, Murdoch University Library is a very important component of student life no matter where our staff and students are geographically located. We are committed to ensuring that our offshore students experience the same support from our library as those studying on one of our local campuses or externally across Australia.

To meet this important need, our library provides a large body of learning support and other library services to our Academic staff and students via our website, we were not convinced that we were well placed to effectively communicate that support to students located at our offshore partner institutions. We decided to personalise our offshore support using an assistive technology – in fact, technology was our only option. This was most definitely a project for a small group of very creative Generation Y professional staff at Murdoch that I mentally refer to as ‘our bright young things’. The group was given a background brief, and advised the only non-negotiable outcome was that any solutions identified must fit within our existing library website. This requirement would greatly reduce any need to maintain and edit the solution separately to our existing webpage. The last, but not surprising, piece of advice that I think really encourages creativity is – “there is no budget for this project”!

These aforementioned ‘bright young things’ identified geographical location as an entry point to our library website as a solution. This means that we can identify the country a visitor is coming from and change our library homepage to suit them.

Because of this capability we have established an option for staff and students in Dubai, Singapore, and Malaysia to automatically be directed to a page specifically developed for their institution with relevant and appropriate information regarding available support, both at the offshore location, and from our library in Perth, all within our existing website. We are using MaxMind Geolite’s IP database to provide the functionality for this service. The offshore servers respond very simply – with a country code.

We do not redirect users’ browsers to their country-specific page; quite simply all we do is make it available for them to click through to, from our front page, and a number of measures are commonly in place to stop so-called “browser hijacking”.

All other options to locate our services and teaching and learning support are still available under these dedicated pages and will remain the same as has previously been offered.

Because everything is managed on the user side, it is a matter of making their browsers do what we want, in response to the choice they make, as opposed to giving them what we want them to have.

Students in Dubai immediately began using the page and accessing the resources relevant to their studies, and after being published for just one month, the Singapore Landing Page was providing very reassuring raw data and statistics that students there were also actively seeking access to the specific resources, e-books, and databases relevant to their course from this dedicated space. We have embedded our Facebook page on the offshore landing pages and, in general, students in the Singaporean partner institutions are beginning to use Facebook as a primary means of contact for reference help and not solely as the social space we intended. This student-driven need for us to respond with help in that space will be the cause of further evaluation and investigation by library staff about how best to respond and further develop support if this trend continues.

Jan Rutherford
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Teacher Librarians Stepping into the Third Place

School libraries and teacher librarians can lead learning in today’s interactive knowledge environments, but to do so successfully requires a leap of faith to move into that third place that represents the intersection between work, play, and learning anytime – just like the students of the 21st century.

Various technologies, devices, 24/7 connectivity, and social media platforms are driving an unprecedented re-organisation of the learning environment in and beyond schools.

This is the key – teacher librarians need to be visionary by taking the opportunity to make use of emerging devices, tools, media, and virtual environments as they offer opportunities for creating new types of learning communities for students and teachers in their schools.

The new Australian Teacher Librarian Network (OZTL_NET) just might be a good way to help in this endeavour.

From Listserv to Social Media

Teacher Librarians represent an important sector in library and information education. Charles Sturt University (CSU) has been supporting the Australian Teacher Librarian Network (OZTL_NET) listserv as a professional service to the school library sector since 1992. Since then it has grown to a community of more than 3000 teacher librarians, information professionals, and those interested in school libraries.

Time for social networking to hit the scene!

But the obvious changes in online environments meant that it was time to evolve the potential of this very stable discussion list in a number of social media ways. By casting a wide net into new areas of collaboration, OZTL_NET wanted to ensure that a cross section of information professionals in schools could be supported in the third place as well as the workplace. Social media is a perfect way to allow synergy in discussion and sharing of resources. Social media also provides a strong platform for showcasing the conversation, activities, and achievements in the day-to-day activities of a school library.

We have established a fantastic new web portal, found at oztlnet.com, where all the links to the social media sites as well as access to the email discussion list are provided.

Social media can provide new avenues for thought leadership and innovation, providing a proactive and positive contribution to the strategic futures of school libraries.

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Web Key IT
Unlocking the Web
Catering for the computer in their pockets

With 65% of the general population and 85% of 18-24 year old university students using their smart phones to fill their everyday needs, the vast majority of clients are now walking into libraries with computers in their pockets.

Given that one of the guiding principles of libraries is the free flow of information and ideas, Curtin Library aims to provide as many of our services on as many mobile devices as possible. In August we released a new version of our iPhone app with features such as a new books display and barcode scanner. We also recently updated our mobile website and library catalogue mobile interface to provide a better experience across a wide range of mobile devices from iPhone and Android to Windows Phone and Blackberry.

While there are benefits to device-specific applications, our experience in developing these two mobile solutions has highlighted the benefits of a mobile website over a mobile app, including:
- reaching a wider range of clients,
- reduced development costs,
- faster content updates, and
- easier access for users.

The web is expanding past the desktop interface it started on and becoming multifaceted, with access across a multiplicity of devices. Other industries have adapted their websites and services to mobile device formats in the last five years, which contrasts to the majority of Australian libraries. If libraries expand their web offerings to accommodate access from any device, any location, at any time, they will help themselves remain relevant to a new generation of users.

Michael Wiebrands
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Connecting to Country: Australian place names

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) is a leader in promoting the understanding of the richness and diversity of Australian Indigenous cultures. Dual naming is a current issue in Australian place naming convention and policy making. We participate in this important discussion, “to ensure that Aboriginal place names are recognised by Australia as part of Australian heritage and need to be preserved (CGNA)”.

You may have seen our place name headings in Trove, Libraries Australia, your local library system, or in the AIATSIS catalogue (Mura®).

How can our tutorial benefit information professionals? If you are a cataloguer, indexer, or LIS professional working with materials with Indigenous content, you will find this a useful and practical resource.

At AIATSIS we set standards in the use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander place names in catalogue records worldwide. It is our practice to position the Indigenous place name (where authorised) first in the heading. Our commitment to dual naming and respect for Indigenous and Australian names is demonstrated in our thesaurus.

We had three main learning outcomes in mind when designing the tutorial: basic geographic and information literacy, knowledge of the ATSILIRN protocols, and an understanding of the structure of place names in the AIATSIS place thesaurus.


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We wrote the book.
e-book lending platforms: ready, set, engage!

The face of libraries is certainly changing, or perhaps, more correctly, the inter-face. Today’s library is a dynamic hub of many offerings: storytime, community gatherings, author’s talks, and internet connections.

Libraries are innovatively engaging more people with the many activities and events available at libraries. They are also seeing a greater online community, made up of people who may not have set foot inside a physical library for some time. Forming connections between the vibrant community hub and the buzzing virtual one is the challenge to libraries going forward.

With the advent of e-book lending platforms, the way libraries connect with their users will inevitably change. Or will it?

E-book lending platforms offer a myriad of ways to engage patrons. They reach out to improve accessibility for those physically or emotionally challenged, for instance e-books (with font resizing /text to speech capabilities) can give the visually impaired greater access to information and ideas. They also help connect with the younger generation as, in many cases, the online world is where they exist. Music is downloaded, ideas and trends are found though YouTube and other sites, Facebook keeps them in touch with their friends. E-books easily fit into this world. As one librarian pointed out, “They give books ‘street cred’ because a device is involved”.

An e-book lending platform can also be more than just a lending facility. They allow libraries the flexibility to add a local flavour, with local authors and histories etc. It can become part of the digital ‘hub’ of the community.

Publishers can provide add-ons, such as invitations to online author events, or information on upcoming releases. This is interesting to both the publishers (commercially) as well as patrons and librarians who want to be immersed in the content. A lot of publishers are looking at ways of leveraging relationships with readers directly in the new book economy. This is slow to happen through the retail chains, but can easily happen through the huge network of libraries and librarians. Libraries want what the big publishers have (best-selling e-books), and the biggest publishers want what the libraries have – a personal relationship with 90% of the reading population.

With 12 million library users across ANZ and a high conversion rate from lenders to buyers, there surely is an opportunity for publishers and libraries to become new best friends.

Meanwhile, some e-book lending platforms are providing far greater exposure for smaller, local, and independent publishing houses, a boon for that small but significant corner of the market.

The variety of users means opportunities abound for connections by way of librarian recommendations, book clubs, shared reviews, and the like. As virtual as the e-book world may be, people still want to connect with people, be it via a library forum or at a library event.

With technology moving fast, developments in e-book lending platforms over just the last year have seen marked improvements. The accessibility of e-books has increased 10 fold now that users no longer exclusively require an e-reading device (just an app). Touch screen (and wi-fi) devices make borrowing easy for everyone and new features make them even more engaging for the more digitally literate.

Looking into the near future of platforms reveals connection points – features, tools, and forums – which will largely be defined by, and developed in consultation with, librarians and their patrons.

The tools are all there, it’s up to libraries to create new and innovative ways to connect with patrons by enhancing digital literacy and encouraging lifelong enjoyment through books – because it’s not the words that are changing, it’s the delivery.

Eileen Sims
Wheelers Books
www.wheelersbooks.com.au
Across the pond: an ALA response to e-books

The ALA’s Digital Content and Libraries Working Group has released a six-page update on efforts to persuade the ‘Big 6’ trade publishers (Hachette, HarperCollins, Macmillan, Penguin, Random House, Simon & Schuster) to sell e-books to libraries ‘on reasonable terms.’

The ALA’s position is that e-book titles available to the public should also be available to libraries for lending; libraries should have an option to own the e-books they purchase and lend them indefinitely; and that publishers should provide metadata to make e-books easier to find in library catalogues and databases.

The ALA acknowledges that its stance is some distance from the industry it seeks to engage: “Some major trade publishers will not sell ebooks to libraries under any terms; others do so only at inflated prices or with severe restrictions.” And this short document is a shot across the bows of the trade flotilla: “business . . . models that are explored in the year ahead may well pave the way to the models of the future. It is therefore important that libraries negotiate aggressively for the most favourable and flexible terms possible.”

Make no mistake, this is a call to arms, and the ALA has hoisted its colours. Sorting out the e-book issue, especially for popular fiction, may well be the issue for public libraries, and what the ALA does will determine outcomes in our neck of the woods. If you’re involved with e-books, you need to read this despatch from the front.

To keep up to date with developments in the e-content field see the ALA’s list of resources at: americanlibrariesmagazine.org/columns/outsidein/essential-bookmarks

The PDF for the report is here: americanlibrariesmagazine.org/sites/default/files/EbookBusinessModelsPublicLibs_ALA.pdf

Ian McCallum
Libraries Alive!
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The Reading Hour Wrap Up – advocacy in just 10 minutes a day

On 25 August 2012, the National Year of Reading launched its second headline event – The Reading Hour. This was a signature event for the National Year of Reading 2012 and also the campaign’s call to action for families – “share a book with your child for 10 minutes a day, an hour a week”.

Margaret Allen, chair of the National Year of Reading founders and State Library of WA, explained, “The phrase ‘10 minutes a day, an hour a week’ is our ‘slip, slop, slap’. It’s the take away message that we hope will become the accepted norm. We know it’s not always possible for parents to share a book at bedtime with their children, but if they can manage 10 minutes most nights, their child will have the best chance of becoming a good reader, with all the social and educational benefits that brings. Most of our brain development happens between birth and three years of age, so it’s not enough to assume that children will learn to read when they get to school. Parents need to share stories and rhymes right from day one – and a good way of finding out more is to join storytimes, rhymetimes, baby bounce, and toddler sessions at the local library.”

The Reading Hour was nominally from 6pm to 7pm on 25 August, but events happened all day around the country. Key partners included Dymocks, Scholastic, The Walt Disney Company, and ABC Local Radio. Some highlights from across Australia include:

- Big screen fun at the Urban Screen at The Concourse, Chatswood, Sydney, with Marvel reading super heroes and prize giveaways, also beamed live to the Cultural Centre Screen in the Perth Cultural Centre.
- The Reading Hour party for kids at the Melbourne Writers Festival, in partnership with 774 ABC Melbourne and featuring ABC 3’s Kayne and Amberley.
- Young reading champions were flown to Melbourne from all around Australia for a ‘money-can’t-buy’ weekend, including being the special guests at the Melbourne Writers Festival Reading Hour party. The champions were the winners of competitions run by ABC Local Radio in every state and territory.
- The announcement of the winners of the Adult Learners Week competition ‘It’s never too late ... to learn to read’, made possible by funding from the Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education through VET National Programs Funding.
- The launch of the Big issue annual fiction edition, featuring stories by well-known writers.

Every edition sold directly helps people who are homeless or disadvantaged.

- The Sydney Jewish Writers Festival opening night Reading Hour panel discussion with NSW Premier Barry O’Farrell and famous name authors.
- MS Readathon’s ‘60 Minutes for MS’ fundraiser on 24 August.
- Kumon Education Centres partnered with libraries to run events for families with English as another language.

The Reading Hour was supported by Disney Junior. You can see the stunning video spot specially created for the event on the website www.thereadinghour.org.au.

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with many requests that The Reading Hour become a yearly event. The National Year of Reading founder partners are looking at ways to carry forward some of the projects that have worked well during 2012 and have greater longevity.

On 12 November, at the National Library of Australia, in Canberra, there will be a legacy event for 200 invited guests to help shape what the future might look like. The National Year of Reading legacy event will be officially opened by Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC CVO, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia. It will be a celebration of the achievements of everyone who has participated in the campaign and it will be an opportunity to make recommendations to policymakers about the future of reading in Australia.

AUTHOR FELICIA ARENA ENTERTAINS THE AUDIENCE DURING THE READING HOUR 2012
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Library Study Tour of Timor Leste

Libraries for Timor-Leste (LFTL) was established in 2004, formally incorporated in May 2011. Recognising the significant contribution libraries make to social, cultural, educational, and economic development it aims to:

1. Support the development and sustainability of libraries in Timor-Leste.
2. Raise funds to assist library building infrastructure projects, collection development, lifelong learning, reading, and digital literacy programs.
3. Provide scholarship and other appropriate opportunities for current and prospective Timorese library staff to access library skills, training, and development.
4. Increase community awareness and action to support Timor-Leste library needs.

The Group’s inaugural Annual General Meeting was held on 29 August 2012 at the newly redeveloped and gorgeous ground floor level of University of Melbourne’s Baillieu Library.

Immediately following the AGM an information evening was held sharing the experiences and findings of those who participated in a study tour of public, academic, and special libraries in Timor-Leste. Over 12 days in September 2011, a group of 11 participants travelled through Dili and many districts visiting libraries and meeting with staff, volunteers, and community. The purpose of the tour was to understand progress to date and to inform future fundraising and awareness raising activities.

Libraries visited include the Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosae (UNTL), Dili and Hera, the Dili Institute of Technology (DIT), the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR), Dili, and the Baucau Teachers College, among many others.

The study tour group was impressed by several libraries including standout and exemplar Biblioteka Ermera in Gleno – a beautiful, purpose-built two-storey community library which opened in 2011 and provides collections, storytimes, outreach programs, visits to new mothers, Tetun publishing, and storytelling on the radio. They have since opened a second branch in Hatolia.

Baucau Teacher’s College Library is operating out of a new building and features an excellent collection of text books and teaching materials to support the curriculum of the college. One of the few libraries visited which actually has an automated library management, it is well used by the students and regularly provides placements and work experience for staff from other libraries.

It was a great privilege to meet with Kirsty Sword Gusmao at the Xanana Gusmao Reading Room. As the Reading Room’s Founding Director she had much information to share about the library including its plans for a major building redevelopment and re-establishment of the Reading Room Board.

The libraries all provide much needed services and, while much progress has been made in the past decade including the opportunity for staff to access some library skills training, there is little by way of coordination of the library sectors and certainly very little, if any, government funding. Collection development is challenging as is providing information technology infrastructure and services.
LFTL is currently working on a strategic plan. Following the tour it is contributing funding to Biblioteka Ermera in Gleno. Haburas Moris Library is also receiving a contribution to help re-establish the Mobile Library Service to more remote parts of Atauro Island. Other libraries will also receive assistance from future fundraising. The next major fundraiser will be the group’s fifth Trivia Night featuring the magnificent Brian Nankervis (of RockWiz) to be held Saturday 23 March 2013 at the Geelong West Town Hall. It would be great to see you there.

Emerald Leung, LFTL Committee Member, has put together a wonderful Prezi presentation with information and images from the Library Study Tour of Timor-Leste and it can be accessed via: librariesfortimorleste.org.au/reports.htm and clicking on the first heading titled Study Tour 2011 – on line presentation.

If you would like to explore opportunities to contribute, please contact Patti Manolis via patti.manolis@geelonglibraries.vic.gov.au.

**Current office bearers**

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Vice President – Sabina Robertson (University of Melbourne - Library)
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Member – Pam Saunders (Princes Hill Secondary College)
Member – Anne E Stewart (Storyteller Extraordinaire)

**Patti Manolis**

President, Libraries for Timor-Leste Inc & CEO
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Future-gazing: our overview of the industry to place ALIA in its 75th year ends right where we should all be – looking forward. We’ve covered as many topics industry-wide as possible this year, but where are we going? What do the next 75 years look like? How would you envision librarianship and information management in the future? What steps are you taking to get there? What technologies will become commonplace, and which will fade away? Here is the opportunity to consult your crystal ball and tell us – what is the future of the industry?

Deadline is 1 December 2012. Please consult the guidelines for submissions available here: www.alia.org.au/incite/guidelines. All submissions to incite@alia.org.au
Let’s continue to be real careful out there

It’s a good thing that bad things sometimes happen to good people (and here endeth the philosophy lecture). You will probably have heard something of the trials of Mat Honan, a writer for Wired magazine, who had various online accounts hacked and as a result lost a lot of personal data. Read his story at tinyurl.com/8q2jwswu.

Following the publicity (and the outcry) arising, both Apple and Amazon – whose admittedly lax password recovery procedures had facilitated the hacking – have changed their processes. Now this is going to make life a little more complicated for all of us when we want to recover a password, but I think it’s a fair trade off. I’ve long argued that I don’t implement more complicated security on my accounts because of my “risk management” practice, i.e. who’s going to target me? It’s not really a defensible argument though. There are lots of people out there with time on their hands and lots of spare cycles on their computers, ready to see what mischief they can cause. And if you want to know more about what’s possible, there’s a scary story on Ars Technica at tinyurl.com/cf6neq9 that goes into the issues more deeply.

So, every day it becomes a little more likely that no matter who you are, you might just get caught by the bad guys. It pays to be always on your guard: change your passwords regularly, make them as hard to guess as you can, don’t use the same user name on different systems, and back up the data that you can’t afford to lose.

Back to Mat Honan: he was able to get a great deal of his data back (tinyurl.com/9gklf2m), thanks to the efforts of a disk recovery company and a couple of thousand dollars. But don’t let that stop you doing the right thing with your security.

What’s a library for?

Noting that the story at tinyurl.com/9nonyho is a journalist’s view of what a library manager is supposed to be saying in a paper that hadn’t yet been published, I’m just a little surprised at the generally defeatist attitude reported here. What I think he’s saying is that libraries have a lot to offer the world of open data because they’ll be giving their patrons internet access – either through library computers or wi-fi points. If this is so, I see it as a wasted opportunity to assist in information provision – and don’t forget that you can get plenty of wi-fi access at McDonald’s. I think public libraries would be better served by bringing their expertise to the challenge of guiding people to the sources of information and helping them to interpret it in ways that are useful to them. Or maybe they can just sell hamburgers.

Opening up

It’s been a good week for the Open Government Data movement in Australia. First, the Victorian Government Data Directory at www.data.vic.gov.au was relaunched and then the ACT Government’s Data Portal went live at data.act.gov.au. Having worked for some months on the ACT system, I have an idea of what goes on behind these systems – and it can get pretty complicated. We can try to get the data publication process as automated as it can be, but there’s usually a huge amount of work in identifying, checking, cleaning, and reformating the data before it can be published in a form that brings credit on the organisation. The important thing is to share our experiences so that each iteration of the concept continues to improve.

How the cookies crumble

It started with a simple question in one of my groups: a member had followed a link to a website and then left without signing on or providing any obvious information about himself. A couple of hours later he received an email message from the site thanking him for his visit and advertising a free offer. He was a little confused and asked the collective mind how this could happen, because if a site writes a cookie to your browser, it can’t access the rest of your computer – so where did it get the email address? After a couple of fanciful suggestions from people who thought they knew the answer, the truth was revealed: the site uses a third party service (herein called the Spam Facilitator) which writes a cookie on the user’s computer and then uses this to check to see whether the user has registered with any other of their clients. Any data that’s been collected can then be shared by the Spam Facilitator with anyone else who signs up for their service. The good news is that you can protect yourself from this sort of practice, and it’s quite easy to implement: see www.bobulous.org.uk/misc/third-party-cookies.html.

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

Posted by Kerry Webb
Copyright is a hot issue at the moment with the release of the Australian Law Reform Commission’s (ALRC) Issues Paper, Copyright and the Digital Economy.

The paper asks 55 questions on such issues as how current library exceptions, statutory licenses and licences for blocks of digital material are working in the digital environment.

In response to this paper ALIA is collecting information on problems members are having with copyright. What are some of the challenges you face with copyright law as it currently stands? What do you currently avoid doing in your workplace because you are unsure of copyright law?

We have asked for input from our members and have set up a wiki to provide you with information about the shape our submission is taking. We have had more than 30 responses. They have come from public libraries, school libraries, information professionals in special libraries, students and others, all of whom want copyright law to adapt to changed technology and digital materials. These responses have not been one-liners. They are based on serious thought and reflection, and indicate how much weight our members attach to copyright law. We are feeding into the Australian Libraries Copyright Council submission, as well as preparing our own, allied response.

The major issues reported so far relate to the sections of the paper on libraries, archives and digitisation, orphan works, data and text mining, educational institutions, statutory licences in the digital environment, fair dealing exceptions, fair use and contracting out. For example:

- Difficulties with the complexity and restrictiveness of digital licensing, such as 12 month embargoes on the digital copy, if the library does not get the print as well
- Confusion between fair use and fair dealing
- Issues surrounding the 10% rule in educational institutions
- Problems surrounding updating formats

While we have not completed our submission yet, we plan on reflecting these basic principles:

- Simplifying copyright legislation so that everyone can understand their rights and responsibilities
- The importance of a degree of flexibility in a rapidly changing online environment
- A technology neutral approach
- The need for libraries and archives to be able to carry out mass digitisation of unique collections
- Licences for digital collections should not remove the library exceptions
- Legislation that embraces the ethos of creative commons, where it doesn’t disadvantage creators or have a detrimental effect on their work

The issues paper:

The wiki:
aliacopyright.wikispaces.com
NSW
4 October
ALIA Sydney’s Shades of Grey
Have you dealt with some tricky situations in the library where there was no black and white answer? Has someone challenged the inclusion of something in the library collection? More info at alasydney.blogspot.com.au

17 October
ALIA New Grads Professional Development Workshop
This workshop on job interviews is designed for new LIS grads and students, with short panel presentations on interview skills, networking and developing your professional identity. RSVP, space is limited. Cost $5 Members, $10 Non members. alianewgradnsw@gmail.com

VIC
20 October
ALIA Schools Learning in a Changing World
Connect, communicate, collaborate & virtual worlds. Judy O’Connell will unpack her two books through lectures, a discussion and a hands-on workshop. Contact sandraryan64@optusnet.com.au

20 – 21 October
ALIA VIC Lib Techs River of Opportunities
ALIA’s River of Opportunities: This weekend seminar at the Grand Hotel in Mildura will enable delegates to examine new initiatives and provide a forum to discuss issues and ideas with colleagues from similar libraries. Contact Kim Wilson 03 8664 7138

WA
25 October
ALIA NewGrads WA Casual Meet Up at Taski in Northbridge
Contact: tamarageorgettecapper@gmail.com

CONFERENCES
10 – 11 February
ALIA 6th New Librarians Symposium
Information on the website available here: Contact newlibrarianssymposium.com. Contact Christina Granata, ph 02 6215 8222, events@alia.org.au

12 – 15 February
ALIA Information Online 2013
Visit the conference website for more information. www.information-online.com.au. Contact Christina Granata, ph 02 6215 8222, events@alia.org.au

This is just a taste of the events on offer across the library and information sector. For a comprehensive and up-to-date list, check the website at www.alia.org.au/events.
the last word

Valuing libraries: when push comes to shove...

We can’t afford to be complacent.

Libraries have often been seen as a soft target – one of the first places where budgets can be cut and sometimes the last place where additional funds are allocated. The recent spate of library closures in the US, the UK, and now in Australia has reminded everyone how precarious our position really is and has got many thinking about what might be done now to prevent this happening to our libraries. The “Valuing Libraries” Symposium held in Canberra on 31 May 2012 was a great starting point for looking at these issues and for discovering what some libraries are doing. Of particular interest were the sessions run by John Tierney and Vanessa Little, but it was also good to hear about the recent NSW and Victorian reports from Mylee Joseph and John Murrell.

Former Senator Dr John Tierney’s speech was especially enthralling as he outlined a course of action that would see library professionals descend en masse on New Parliament House and create a buzz by speaking to as many politicians as possible using one clear consistent message. This is not something library professionals have been exposed to before and the idea of participating (and possibly organising) and seeing what happens is exciting. However it does raise important questions about advocacy. ALIA has an advocacy role of course, but who is ultimately responsible for coordinating and collaborating? Who takes the responsibility to see it through?

John Tierney stressed that it is incredibly important to be strategic and deliberate about who we – as an industry, as a library, as a professional, as an individual – influence, how we influence them, and why. John came up with a list of 22 MPs – those on the NLA Council and those politicians on any government committees concerning libraries and

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education that could be targeted. He also thought that we could use the tenth anniversary (Oct 2013) of the ‘Libraries in an online environment’ Senate Committee Report of October 2003 to highlight or force a report or enquiry, and also possibly tie in with the implementation of the National Broadband Network (an issue both newsworthy and topical). It was fantastic to hear tips and ideas from an experienced politician.

Which brings us to what Vanessa Little was discussing. Vanessa’s presentation was titled ‘Creating a truly community-value-oriented service’. Vanessa stated that we need to be clear about the business we are in, and who pays the bills. Align the library to the business, Vanessa said that when she first became head of Libraries ACT, she would read reports from other areas of the ACT Government and noted how little the public library service featured in any other reports. The ACT public libraries were not part of ACT Government business. Vanessa stressed that a lot of her work is attending meetings and writing reports and making sure that Libraries ACT are in the mind and eye of ACT Government. For instance, earlier this year the ACT Government held a series of Twitter Cabinets. For the last of these, Libraries ACT was able to provide Twitter training before the Cabinet as well as making computers available for people to participate in this open government initiative. Again, Vanessa stressed the key messages – to be prepared, strategic, and proactive. We would also add: make sure you know the capabilities and limits of your organisation as everyone knows there is danger in promising too much.

As often happens after a conference or workshop – what next? How do we maintain the momentum and take this to the next level? What is the next step? We asked this question in our evaluation of the day and got a range of responses that included – a wiki to reach a wider audience (with information and tools), more collaboration for ‘like’ libraries to discuss, a workshop on ROI for different sectors, an annual symposium, lobby government, a national value of libraries report, develop an advocacy policy/statement, a working group to develop guides for providing evidence of value. All of these suggestions have merit, but even if they were implemented tomorrow, it would be some time before we receive or appreciate the benefits.

What will we be doing next? Well – lots of things. We’re making time for this topic, talking to our colleagues (a lot!), looking for small positive, practical changes as good next steps. Planning big for the future, learning to become more proactive, and treating demonstrating our value as core business are also important topics. We’re developing networks among users and non-users, creating tools that can be used in different ways to demonstrate relevance, learning to manage upwards and outwards, and to market ourselves. There are so many things to do, things that we can do. And lobby, we do need to lobby. Who will take up the baton to lobby loud and clear?

Demonstrating value effectively is an area of our libraries that needs urgent attention with the emphasis on the long term view and slow, long lasting, sustainable change because when push comes to shove, we would rather be shoving before someone starts pushing.

Links to recordings of the ‘Valuing Libraries’ sessions can be found at proactiveblog.blogspot.com.au/2012/08/recordings-of-valuing-libraries.html

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See page 6 for more information about the QLD library cuts. To keep up to date with the latest, please visit our wiki at dumbidea.wikispaces.com.
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