



# The Australian Library Journal

Journal of the Australian Library and Information Association

Mollie Lukis (1911–2009)

Kay Poustie (1944–2009)

## *Special issue on the ALIA Public Libraries Summit 2009*

Summing up the Summit  
Jan Richards

Children, early reading and a literate Australia  
Geoff Stempel

Making a difference – *Better Beginnings* Family  
Literacy Program  
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Supporting the ageing population  
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digital citizenship  
Roxanne Missingham

Is isolation a problem? Issues faced by rural libraries  
and rural library staff in South Australia  
Rebecca Haines and Philip Calvert

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## *The Australian Library Journal*

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# Editorial

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How can it be that public libraries are so important to the federal government —‘precious common ground in which social inclusion quietly blossoms’—yet so easily overlooked when the bill arrives? In opening the ALIA Public Libraries Summit at the National Library of Australia last July, Senator Ursula Stephens, Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion, was generous in this and other remarks: ‘Libraries today are a hub for community life, offering programs, community services and a neutral, safe place to gather.’ . . . ‘Libraries have responded and adapted to the challenges of the information age.’ . . . ‘Public libraries clearly play a central and valued role in strengthening communities, developing people and building inclusive societies.’<sup>1</sup>

Hmm. Generous words, indeed. Generous deeds as well? Public libraries are funded by local government (a lot), and by state government (a little), and by federal government (not at all). Public library services reach more than half the population, generate 111 million visits and lend more than 183 million items each year—without any federal funding at all. Imagine what 1,500 public libraries and their 8,200 staff and 7,000 Internet computers<sup>2</sup> could achieve if the federal government acknowledged the connection between service reach and quality, and funding.

For many of us, the Summit was an opportunity to consider ways in which the federal government might more tangibly be involved in supporting the public library network. This special issue of ALJ is intended to assist in maintaining the Summit’s momentum by documenting the value of working together, drawing attention to the ‘precious common ground’ where, for example, early childhood literacy programs, services for the elderly, and the co-operative purchase of digital resources have already ‘quietly’ blossomed. As the Senator remarked, libraries ‘every day “walk the talk” of social inclusion’. Imagine, federal government, how much more libraries could do if they had a partner with a national perspective and funding to match.

We include five papers worked up from Summit presentations. The first, from our President, Jan Richards, covers the lead-up, what happened on the day,

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Stephens/Media/Speeches/Pages/Article\\_090717\\_120952.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Stephens/Media/Speeches/Pages/Article_090717_120952.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> Australian Library and Information Association. *The little book of public libraries*. Edited by Sue McKerracher. Canberra, 2009, pp.7–8.

and where to next. You may already have seen documentation on ALIA's consultative approach to creating a shared vision and national framework for Australian public libraries<sup>3</sup>; this is the tangible outcome Jan refers to in her paper.

Geoff Stempel, in a transcript of his Summit presentation, illustrates the fundamental importance of public libraries' contributions to literacy, and argues for a broader, more coordinated approach based on the characteristics of successful programs.

Nola Allen then writes about a spectacularly successful early childhood literacy program, developed by the State Library of WA in partnership with the state government and Rio Tinto, but clearly with national potential—given a national sponsor, Senator Stephens, please.

Regina Sutton, State Librarian and Chief Executive of the State Library of NSW, presents the statistics and examines the implications of our rapidly ageing population. Her conclusion is obvious for those working in this field: federal funding for high speed broadband, Internet training, health information services, and for fostering partnerships with other community service agencies would make a major difference to quality of life for ageing Australians. It's not as if the federal government is not already heavily involved—their just-published and well-designed *Accommodation choices for older Australians and their families*<sup>4</sup> would be an excellent model for a companion publication, also produced by the federal Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and entitled: *Information, recreation and lifelong learning: public library services for older Australians and their families*.

Roxanne Missingham, former ALIA President and current Commonwealth Parliamentary Librarian, writes about Electronic Resources Australia, an object lesson in library co-operation, funded in an opt-in model by 1,200 participating libraries across Australia. ERA, now in its second incarnation, brings high quality digital information to 8.5 million people. Imagine how many more it will reach when Australia has a broadband network that reaches all citizens, wherever they live.

From lofty national considerations and reminders to the federal government that their social inclusion agenda could be progressed by funding more than one public library (the National Library), we include an account of life for library

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.alia.org.au/governance/committees/public.libraries/summit09/vision.and.national.framework.sept09.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Australia. Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. *Accommodation choices for older Australians and their families: what older Australians and their families need to know*. Canberra, October 2009.

staff in rural South Australia. Written by Rebecca Haines and Philip Calvert, their thoughtful study deals with the problems of isolation and reminds us yet again of the disparities between city and country Australia.

Then there's a whole swag of informative and often entertaining book reviews from our team of regular reviewers, offering a great opportunity to catch up on the wider picture for libraries and librarians.

Finally, dear reader, your editor bows out with this issue. ALIA has decided to reduce the number of pages and change the terms and conditions under which the ALJ editor is appointed and the journal is produced. Special thanks to my Editorial Board, Drs Broadbent, Jones and Radford, and to Prof. Gary Gorman, indefatigable reviews editor. It's been a privilege to work with you all.

**Ian McCallum**

Editor

November 2009



**Mollie Lukis 1991.**

*Photo courtesy State Library of Western Australia.*

# **Meroula (Mollie) Frances Fellowes Lukis, OBE, OAM, Hon DLitt, FLAA (1911–2009)**

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Mollie was born on 13 August 1911 in Donnybrook, Western Australia. She lived on a farm at Balingup, being privately tutored until completing her Junior Certificate, after which she attended St Mary's Church of England Girls School, West Perth. She went on to the University of Western Australia and completed a BA Hons in 1932 and a Dip Ed. in 1933.

After graduation she taught mathematics and from 1941-1944 worked on the measurement of weapon gauges at the Department of Defence in Melbourne.

Late in 1944, Dr J.S. Battye, the Principal Librarian of the Perth Public Library, persuaded the WA Government to establish a State Archives within the Library, and in 1945 Mollie was appointed the first State Archivist.

The appointee was a surprising choice: a young woman with maths training and no library or history experience. She started in March 1945 in one room with an operating budget of £250. She later acknowledged that when she read the job advertisement she had not known what an archivist was. Nevertheless, she was the first woman appointed as an archivist in Australia.

By the time of her retirement in 1971, after 26 years' service, the State Archives and the JS Battye Library of West Australian History were widely acclaimed as prime historical resources. Mollie was herself a valuable resource for researchers: having built up the collection she knew its contents and could guide people to the information they were seeking. In the days before computers she was the key.

Mollie was generous in her support for many community organisations, mainly in the fields of Western Australian history and the promotion of education and opportunities for women.

She was a member of the inaugural Library Board of Western Australia from 1952–1955 and again from 1974–1977. In 1964 she was awarded a Foundation Fellowship of the then Library Association of Australia in recognition of her archival work, and in 1989 she was appointed a Fellow of the Library Board.

Mollie was a strong supporter of the Western Australian Museum, most notably on the Maritime Archaeology Advisory Committee in 1965–71, for a time as its Chairman. This was a critical time when 17th century Dutch shipwrecks were



being discovered along the WA coast and Commonwealth and State legislation was being formulated to deal with the situation.

Her support for women's rights was demonstrated in her active membership of the WA Committee for Equal Opportunity, 1958–73, culminating in the achievement of their purpose. She was a member of the Australian Federation of University Women (WA Branch) from 1947. This committee worked towards establishing a purpose-built University Women's College, achieved in 1960 under the name of St Catherine's College.

Mollie was a strong supporter of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society. She advised the Society on its collection policy and kept the Society's records in her care at the Archives from 1955 onwards. She was a member of the Society's Council from 1953–59 and was created a Fellow of the Society in 1971.

In 1959 she became a foundation member of the National Trust of Australia (WA), and remained a member until 1975, serving on the Buildings Committee and the Publications Committee, writing extensively for Trust publications. In 1985 she co-authored with Alexandra Hasluck a photographic record of Perth entitled *Victorian and Edwardian Perth*.

In summing up her achievements in the *ALIAS* encyclopaedia, Bob Sharman refers to her 'pioneering zeal, intellectual integrity and unstinted efforts in the cause of the preservation of the evidences of Western Australian history'.<sup>1</sup>

And a PS from Kerry Smith, former ALIA National President:

'I'd never met Mollie Lukis, but she, like a number of other Australian librarians of her time, left an indelible mark on me as I read about them in my student days in the 1970s and 80s. Now, as I read through her obituary—prepared by three Western Australian librarians whom I admire—I see so many of our truly professional librarians in her story. They may not all have become archivists, but those that I know and respect have involved themselves in many community and intellectual endeavours—just like Mollie. She was before her time and an inspiration to us all.'

## Vale Miss Lukis

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared from notes provided by Lennie McCall and Margaret Medcalf, and from the entry by R.C.Sharman in Harry Bryan's *ALIAS: Australia's Library, Information and Archives Services – an encyclopaedia of practice and practitioners*, Sydney, ALIA Press, 1989.

## Kay Poustie, BA, OAM, FALIA (1944–2009)

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*Photo courtesy State Library of Western Australia.*

Just as we were going to print we heard the sad news that Kay Poustie, internationally recognised friend of public libraries, dedicated toiler for ALIA, distinguished and charming person, had passed away. As library manager for the City of Stirling, member of the ALIA Board of Education and the Library Board of Western Australia, then in her own consulting practice, Kay always sought to improve what she found. We've lost another of our leaders.

A full obituary will appear in a subsequent ALJ, but for the moment we reflect on Kay's contribution to her profession and her community, and offer condolences to her family and friends.

# Summing up the Summit

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## Jan Richards

**The President of ALIA writes about expectations for the Public Libraries Summit, and provides an account of what took place on the day of the meeting, and what has taken place since. In funding terms, the most likely areas of productive engagement with the federal government are considered to be: children, early learning and a literate Australia; encouraging the digital economy and digital citizenship; social inclusion and community partnerships; and services related to health and ageing.**

*Manuscript received October 2009. This is an invited paper presenting the ALIA President's views on the recent Public Libraries Summit.*

## Background: before the Summit

Discussions prior to the ALIA Public Libraries Summit, held at the National Library in Canberra in July this year, clearly demonstrated the desire among stakeholders for a national vision for public libraries.

Friends of Libraries Australia made a powerful case for a strategic framework in their paper *Investing in Australia's future through its public library system – why, who, how* published in January 2008 (FOLA, 2008). Public Libraries Australia (PLA, 2009) also put forward a strong argument for a national public library service delivery model.

There is no doubt that individual library services and, indeed, branches, should develop the services that best suit their communities, and it is a fact that public library management and funding practices vary between states and territories. Despite the resulting broad definition of a public library service, we all recognise the weakness in continuing to present public libraries as fragmented and incapable of speaking with one voice.

While funding may come from local and state or territory governments, public libraries must have a place at the federal government table. We have so much to contribute to government priorities: social inclusion, community partnerships, fairness and equitable access, support for working families, health, safety, well-being, life-long learning and the digital economy.

The aim of a shared vision and national framework is to provide the federal government with proof that public libraries, although managed locally, are able to work collaboratively at the national level and should be invited to actively participate in discussions and decision making.

We need to ensure that politicians and ministers at the highest level have a clear understanding of how public libraries currently contribute to government priorities, and provide a well-structured, considered and itemised proposal for investment in national programs which will enable public libraries to increase their contributions to government objectives.

ALIA is in the unique position of representing public library professionals in all states and territories and having a proven track record of developing and implementing activities across the entire public library network, for example, National Simultaneous Storytime. But this is not a task for one organisation operating alone. The development of a national framework needs to encompass the views and comments of all the associations involved with Australian public libraries.

This is why we are developing a collaborative response, led by ALIA, in partnership with Public Libraries Australia, Friends of Libraries Australia, National and State Libraries Australasia and the state and territory based associations.

## **Next steps: after the Summit**

Some months have passed since the July Summit. Much planning went on before the event; the day itself involved intense debate, and in the weeks following, many discussions have been pursued. Now is a good time to reflect on what we have achieved.

Of course, funding was an issue that many people wanted us to raise—and it was a topic that cropped up often during the day—but our objective has always been to forge a long term relationship with government representatives on behalf of public libraries, and we felt that focusing too heavily on cash as a first step was not the best way to begin the dialogue. Instead, we were keen to showcase the potential for public libraries to contribute to the government's agenda by homing in on important policy areas.

## Engaging government

In the lead-up to the Summit, we asked for submissions from colleagues in public libraries and related organisations. We received more than 20. From these, we were able to identify four recurring themes that might resonate with government. They were early childhood reading and literacy; libraries' role in the digital age; strengthening communities through social inclusion; and services and support for older people.

We fleshed out each of these topics with examples of how current activities deliver value to our communities.

<b>Early childhood reading and literacy</b>	<p>Public libraries help give our children the best start in life, with support for reading such as pre-schooler story times, early literacy programs, Summer Reading Club and Premiers' Reading Challenges.</p> <p>The <i>Better Beginnings</i> Family Literacy Program in Western Australia is just one example of an integrated program coordinated by the State Library of WA and working across libraries, health, education and community services, to provide positive early language and literacy experiences for parents and young children.</p>
<b>Libraries' role in the digital age</b>	<p>Public libraries are one of few places to bridge the digital divide, providing every Australian citizen with free use of computers and the Internet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They promote awareness of cyber-safety and security, particularly for younger users.</li><li>• Many public libraries offer online homework assistance for students.</li><li>• Unemployed people use public library computers to produce professional CVs and apply online for jobs.</li><li>• Often, there are sessions for retirees to learn new computer skills.</li></ul> <p>Libraries are an essential portal for e-government services.</p>

<p><b>Strengthening communities through social inclusion</b></p>	<p>Public libraries have been proven to play a major role in developing sustainable, socially-inclusive communities. They are the original 'street corner universities' and the new village green.</p> <p>Public libraries are for everyone. They bring people together and foster strong community partnerships, involving local councils, businesses, schools and individual volunteers.</p> <p>ALIA supports our members who are working at the coalface to develop programs and activities that support social inclusion. Such programs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• outreach programs for Indigenous children as an introduction to early literacy and to grow in them a love of books via storytelling</li> <li>• programs and resources for non-English speakers</li> <li>• training for seniors in using the Internet</li> <li>• access to and assistance in using e-government resources</li> <li>• providing services to people with a print disability.</li> </ul> <p>Indigenous Knowledge Centres progress the social inclusion agenda in regional and remote communities, while Living Libraries Australia is a particularly successful initiative to encourage a greater understanding of the rich multi-cultural nature of our society.</p>
<p><b>Services and support for older people</b></p>	<p>Future demographics will place an increased focus on the role of public libraries. Older people read more and are more frequent visitors, with those over 65 visiting libraries on average five times more a year than younger age groups.</p> <p>Public libraries make citizens healthier:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading is known to contribute to people's personal well-being and all public libraries have information and advice about wider health concerns, including obesity, cancer, mental health issues, the effects of smoking and the importance of maintaining an active mind as well as an active body.</li> </ul>

Having decided on the topics, we invited speakers to present short papers covering each of the four areas. However, it was also important that this should be a two-way conversation, so while the first part of the day was given over to these presentations, after lunch we scheduled a workshop session, where we asked delegates to give us their feedback about a national framework for public libraries, helping us improve equitable access and benefits to communities right across Australia.

The Summit brought together some 50 politicians and public officials, advisers and senior figures from the library world, to discuss what more could be done to realise the enormous potential of public libraries and acknowledge their vital role for the future. All three levels of government were represented and this provided an opportunity for us to highlight the way public libraries can deliver for different constituencies.

## Opening address and welcome

We were fortunate to secure Senator Ursula Stephens as our first speaker. In her opening address, she said, 'Libraries have a rare and privileged position in the nation's heart'. She explained that libraries had been very close to her own heart for many years, not only as a library user herself, but also in her various political roles, in adult education and learning, and latterly as Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion.

She talked about public libraries as 'hubs of community life', neutral spaces for learning, access to the Internet and e-learning, and she said, 'They will remain a vital part of the future ... a neutral third place, with the capacity to connect people with the outside world'.

Senator Stephens confirmed 'ALIA has a huge role in all of this', describing the existing ALIA public campaigns, Library Lovers Day and National Simultaneous Storytime, as clever initiatives, and the Summer Reading Club as 'a valuable way of drawing in young people'.

The goal of her department is to ensure that all Australians have the opportunity to learn, work, engage with their community and have a voice. Its priorities are jobless families, children at risk of long term disadvantage and locational disadvantage—postcodes that denote predictable pockets of disadvantage. 'Conceptually, we have a massive challenge to create the next intelligent,

engaged, exciting, creative generation,' she said, 'and we need to make libraries an even greater force for social inclusion'.

She told delegates that public libraries have the opportunity to participate in three specific ways:

1. In the national compact, creating a new relationship between government and the third sector, not-for-profit organisations, several of which were represented.
2. In reform of the third sector—and here, Senator Stephens referred to ALIA's recent submission to the Productivity Commission.
3. In a new third sector leadership body and structure.

In her brief welcome speech, Jan Fullerton, Director-General of the National Library of Australia, wasted no time in stating her case. She reminded delegates that the National Library is the only library directly serving the public which is funded by the federal government. Jan made the point that 'public libraries are a critical part of the country's infrastructure, but have not been sufficiently recognised as such' and called for delegates to consider the funding issue as a key part of the debate.

## New initiatives

Next, it was my pleasure to announce several new ALIA initiatives relating to public libraries:

- The development of new National Standards for public libraries, which will give direction to the provision of public library services. Libraries Alive! Pty Ltd will carry out the work, reporting to a specially formed ALIA and NSLA committee. The consultants will use an evidence-based methodology proven in the recent State Library sponsored development of standards and guidelines for NSW public libraries. [http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/public\\_libraries/living\\_learning\\_libraries/index.html](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/public_libraries/living_learning_libraries/index.html)
- The official launch of the Public Library Ambassador campaign, with pilot projects running in Victoria, NSW and WA. The five Public Library Ambassadors are already helping to generate media coverage in their areas. More information and a tool kit are available on the ALIA website, and you can view the ambassadors on Flickr. <http://www.alia.org.au/publiclibraries/ambassadors/>



- The publication of the *Little Book of Public Libraries*, which has received an outstanding reception from library managers looking for a multi-purpose advocacy tool. The original print run of 30,000 seemed ambitious, but we are down to our last few thousand copies. Since the Summit, we have posted examples of how it can be used on the ALIA website at <http://www.alia.org.au/publiclibraries/>
- A new 12-month contract to further develop Living Libraries Australia, in terms of strategy, website and the associated network. Lismore City Council Library's award-winning Living Libraries project has been sub-contracted to ALIA to run on behalf of Lismore and its partners, with the aim of expanding the program to more libraries around Australia.
- I was also able to mention ALIA's involvement in the National Broadband Network public hearing, which was to take place immediately after the Summit.

## Big issues

My brief was to describe the opportunities for public libraries to work closely together on some big ideas, including a united response to challenges at a national level. As our aim was never to have librarians preaching to librarians I based much of my presentation around video footage of community members and this is available on the Summit website.

One of the themes that came across strongly in the submissions in advance of the Summit was the desire by the public library sector to have some form of national framework, which could enable us to develop a stronger, more united voice.

In the Q and A session that followed my presentation, a delegate asked what the barriers might be. This was my opportunity to say that the main one was funding, including the variety of different funding arrangements that were in place around the country. I explained, 'We have engagement at the state level, but at a national level we need to have regular dialogue with the federal government'.

Robert Knight, Chair of the NSW Public Libraries Consultative Committee, took issue with the number of library associations in Australia. He said, 'A very clear impediment is that we have a multitude of library associations, not able to work well together. We have the opportunity in this forum to aggregate our capacity, to grab that national funding we so desperately need'.

The Hon. John Cain, President of the Library Board of Victoria, asked about the opportunity to collaborate with non-traditional partners, such as soccer clubs and choirs. I replied that public libraries were keen to collaborate with any organisation that had something to offer, 'And that's why Living Libraries is such a great win'.

Councillor Graham Smith, Chair of Public Libraries NSW – Country, added, 'One of the major impediments is that many government and non-government organisations direct their clients to the public library, but they do not provide the funding for the provision of that public library service. Public libraries are the service desk for so many of our government and commercial organisations and recognition of that role is vital'.

## Keynote speakers

Geoff Strempele, Deputy Chair of Public Libraries Australia, spoke about public libraries and children (Paper included in this issue – Ed.). He told us of passionate library people delivering reading programs on shoestring budgets with few resources. His recipe for future success was based on 'the power of partnerships, expertise and funding, and working closely with all three levels of government'.

Electronic Resources Australia Chair Roxanne Missingham spoke about libraries in the digital age (Paper in this issue – Ed.). She quoted figures from a report which revealed that 36% of Australians did not have access to the Internet at home, and 76% did not have broadband access. In fact, in relation to OECD countries, Australia came 16th in terms of broadband access. 'It's not only about whether the line is there, it's also about whether it is affordable', she told delegates.

Frank McGuire, a pioneer of the Hume Global Learning Village in Victoria, picked up the theme of social inclusion, saying, 'Libraries are run by big-hearted people'. He ascribed the success of the Hume initiative to generosity on the part of library staff, the partnerships that were formed with three tiers of government, businesses, community, not-for-profit and philanthropic organisations, and making a case for funding based on 'value-for-spend'. In just six years, 50% of the population served by Hume Global Learning Village have become members of the community hub.

Regina Sutton, State Librarian and Chief Executive, State Library of NSW, and Chair, National and State Libraries Australasia brought forward some surprising

figures in her presentation about libraries and the ageing population (Also in this issue – Ed.):

- One in eight Australians is currently aged 65 and over, and by the end of the century this will be one in four
- By 2022, there will be four million people over 65
- The number aged 85-plus will increase fivefold over the next 47 years
- By 2026, one in four of those over 80 will be from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

Drawing on research that shows people over 65 visit public libraries more frequently than other age groups—and read more, thus placing greater demands on the service—she asked, ‘Can we rely on services remaining free?’

Regina described librarians as ‘life coaches for the digital age’ and gave examples of how public libraries serve their communities by providing government and health information in plain language.

She called for support from the federal government for:

- Low cost, high speed broadband access in every public library
- Funding for internet tutorial programs for seniors
- Nationwide access to health information databases via public libraries
- Partnerships with other agencies delivering services to communities.

## Workshop

Four groups were created to discuss priority subject areas.

### **1. Children, early reading and a literate Australia**

Julie Caddy, President of the Local Government Librarians’ Association of Western Australia, said her group had reached the conclusion that the main aim of a national framework should be to re-position public libraries for the 21st century and put them higher on the public agenda.

She called for a National Year of Reading in 2010–2011, based on a national, federally-funded Books from Birth program, delivered in partnership with other agencies and organisations, for example the new federally-funded children’s TV channel. The focus could be wider than reading and include numeracy and taking families into the digital age, and it could carry through early childhood to the teenage years.

This group volunteered to take this idea forward as a self-appointed committee.

## **2. Encouraging the digital economy and digital citizenship**

David West, President of Queensland Public Libraries Association, said that, assuming the National Broadband Network could be delivered, it was a question of content and the quality of content. His group recommended the creation of a baseline of what it means to be a digital citizen, and the use of this to define a national public library standard.

He explained that the current standards relate to access, not content, but if they moved into content, it would enable public libraries to go back to council IT departments to sort out problems, for example clients being unable to open pdf (portable document format) documents.

## **3. Social inclusion and community partnerships**

John Murrell, President of Public Libraries Victoria Network, said, 'We need a statement nationally on the roles of each level of government providing core public library services. One model of service delivery will not fit all Australia. There needs to be a discussion around the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) level, but libraries are only one of a hundred organisations so we must think about how we argue our case'.

He talked about the importance of developing sustainable programs, not ones with just 12 months' funding, and the need for sufficient space and facilities. He also mentioned government's interest in expanding the use of school facilities, but 'we didn't feel that this was the position with public libraries. Public library services are core to a socially inclusive community in Australia ... Libraries could be a mechanism to provide the advantage to address the disadvantage—we could reduce the level of disadvantage'.

## **4. Health and ageing**

Debra Rosenfeldt, Manager Public Libraries, State Library of Victoria, described the plethora of information sources and the need for public libraries to act as conduits to reliable information. There was discussion in the group about linking through to other government interests, for example the forthcoming women's health policy.

Public libraries could be forums for awareness campaigns around high profile health concerns, such as ovarian cancer, prostate cancer, and diabetes.

Information could be provided through print, electronically, and with federally-funded speakers on various topics.

There was a need for federal funding for health databases through ERA—and it wasn't just about physical health; it was also about emotional and psychological well-being.

The ageing population meant more older people 'using libraries as a social space, the computers and collections. We need to create the kind of spaces they feel comfortable in, maybe we will need bigger libraries and retro fitting'.

The group suggested a small piece of national research into how the demands on public libraries have changed as a result of other government departments sending clients their way.

## After the Summit

ALIA Executive Director Sue Hutley said, 'It was clear from the debate during the day, and from the feedback from attendees immediately after the event, that what is needed is a lead body, providing public libraries with a united voice to government. ALIA was recognised as being uniquely placed to be able to deliver this, supported by, and in collaboration with, the state public libraries' associations and Friends of Libraries Australia'.

Delegates effectively gave ALIA a mandate to develop a vision, strategy and national framework for public libraries. Planning work has already begun, with vision and strategy heavily influenced by the submissions posted in advance of the Summit and by the course of the discussions on the day.

When I became President of ALIA earlier this year, I was clear about the contribution I wanted to make during my term in office. I wanted to open the lines of communication between public libraries and the federal government and I wanted to establish a platform on which to build a lasting relationship. I feel confident that the Summit and the work arising from it will go a long way to achieving this.

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For more information about the ALIA Public Library Summit, including the pre- and post-conference blog, visit <http://www.alia.org.au/governance/committees/public.libraries/summit09/>

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# Children, early reading and a literate Australia

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## Geoff Stempel

*Manuscript received November 2009. This paper is an author-edited transcript of a presentation to the ALIA Public Libraries Summit, Canberra, July 2009.*

### Introduction

I want to start off by talking about what we do know about children, early reading and a literate Australia. First of all we know that sharing a love of reading, rhyming, singing and talking with your baby is one of the best things you can do to give your baby a head start in life. If that sounds a bit like a motherhood statement (no pun intended) it's not. In fact there's lots of research that confirms the importance and value of reading to very young children.

Research into early brain development shows that a child's ability to learn and to develop pre-literacy skills is greater if they are read to from birth. Half a child's brain growth occurs between birth and the age of four. The best time to begin reading books with children is when they are infants. Babies as young as six weeks old enjoy being read to and looking at pictures. This is the best way to help the child develop listening and speaking skills.

By age two or three children have begun to develop an awareness of printed letters and words. An avid family of readers to our own children, I remember one of my own children at the age of two being able to recognise brands. Sadly the first thing he recognised was a Coca Cola sign but that's the modern world we live in. Pre-schoolers are especially ready to learn from adults reading to them and with them.

The most powerful predictor of future reading success among pre-schoolers is awareness of the speech sounds that correspond to letters that are introduced to them prior to them attending school.

Dorothy Dougherty in her book *How to Talk to Your Baby* writes, 'most brain development occurs between birth and the age of two. As a baby absorbs new sights, textures and sounds, the connections in her brain that make learning possible multiply and become stronger. But if a baby does not use these connections, or does not use them enough, the connections are lost forever'.

An historical view of how literacy is acquired can fail to recognise the link between language development, early literacy activities, early pre-literacy skills and later literacy success. Literacy acquisition is a process that begins from birth and requires input from families, caregivers and teachers with the growing independent and professional support of the public library network.

## Public libraries' contributions

Helping a child become literate can no longer be thought of as the exclusive responsibility of schools, if it ever was. Families, communities, health, education and library professionals all have a role to play in ensuring that materials and services to promote the attainment of literacy are available to all children and that all children are encouraged to use and explore these materials.

Children entering school without emergent literacy skills struggle to keep up with their peers' rate of literacy acquisition. This can immediately affect the child's engagement with school and in turn affect overall successes in education and life, perpetuating a cycle of low literacy. However the development of emergent literacy skills is obtainable for most children even from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.

Materials to encourage the emergence of literary skills can and are found in all public libraries. Public libraries offer many free services such as access to reading materials and computers and a vast array of other materials including programs that include children's story time sessions. All families need to be made aware of and welcomed into these services and we've already heard about how libraries are well known to many in the community as welcoming places. It's just a little strange that so many people are unaware of what is inside their local public library.

Public libraries can and do encourage the development of emergent literacy skills in children through shared book reading exposing children to various forms of print, playing language games and singing songs. Using these methods literacy acquisition can become an enjoyable experience for both parent and child.

Here are some important statistics based on international research:

- There is nearly a 90% probability that a child will remain a poor reader at the end of year 4 if the child was a poor reader at the end of year 1.
- For 60% of children, reading is not an easily acquired skill, and for 90–95% of the poor readers, they can have average reading skills improved due to early intervention, but if early intervention comes at about nine years of age, 75% of those people will still have difficulties with their reading.



So what have public libraries been doing? Despite the numerous public library delivery and governance models that we've already talked about that are found across Australia, public libraries have been working at the coalface of childhood literacy in one form or another for many years. This work goes largely unrecognised in any practical or meaningful way and one gets the feeling that perhaps the work done by public libraries with children in story time sessions, baby bounce and rhyme etc. are viewed as merely a form of public entertainment rather than as the educational activities that they are.

The reality is quite different from these activities being just merely ways of keeping children occupied. These programs, activities, services and collections are professionally designed and formulated to promote and develop the literacy acquisition of children of all ages. Importantly these programs also include support and training for parents and caregivers to provide them with the tools to build their child's literacy and importantly, a love of reading.

The three main reasons why public libraries have had success in children's literacy and related programs are:

1. Public libraries are inclusive, perhaps more so than many other agencies and they're open to all target groups. So many different people see public libraries as their special place to go. Public libraries are viewed as being safe non-threatening spaces where all are welcome regardless of their age, circumstances or for other reasons.
2. The geographic locations of public libraries within so many communities: there are more than 1,500 service points—more public libraries in Australia than there are McDonald's outlets. Public libraries are well placed and within relatively easy reach of all Australians.
3. Public libraries have a long history of qualified professionals whose skills and interests cross over fields of selecting appropriate resources for the library, understanding enough about childhood and literacy development to match books to readers, and a passion for the value of reading to open access to the world of information and imagination.

Most of the literacy based activities, services, programs and collections delivered by public libraries are operated on shoestring budgets or via grant funding from a variety of sources including state libraries. So how did we achieve what we've done today? So far we've achieved this with relatively poor resources, threatening budgets and no consistent or common service available to all communities across Australia, no nationally agreed funding formula and no nationally agreed policies.

Public libraries have achieved what they've done because their staff are passionate about what they do. They are advocates for their community and they work to make things happen in a very pragmatic way. Sometimes pragmatism gets us to stretch our resources so thinly that we don't ever do things as well as we should. Perhaps by being prepared to deliver early childhood literacy programs on shoe-string budgets we have only reached those who come in to the library, and perhaps we only have the resources to run these programs once a week. What about the thousands of parents who would use the program if they knew it existed? How would we fund such an influx of new customers? Perhaps we don't advertise more extensively because we could not provide daily or twice-daily programs within our existing resources. But with adequate recognition and funding, rather than a pragmatic 'toe in the water' approach we could achieve so much more.

## Successful programs

I would like to talk to you about several early childhood literacy programs that have been making a difference in Australia. There are so many small local programs that we could talk about, but it's interesting to consider the characteristics of successful programs that reach across council boundaries or across whole states or across the nation.

I'd like first of all and in no particular order to talk about one which is national, The Little Big Book Club, a program that commenced in South Australia as an extension of the very successful state-wide Big Book Club for adults.

The success of this program is that it has partners, it has funding and it has people on the ground making it a success. It started with a trial in South Australia and has now spread to the rest of Australia. From a partnering point of view, having a media partner who is committed and able to keep the community well-informed about the program and to maintain interest is one of the key factors for success.

From a funding perspective in South Australia, the state government put in \$1,000,000 over four years with a sense of wanting to commit more money to it as that funding is about to cease. There's also some federal government funding with that program, and quite obviously on the ground, every public library in SA—all 140 of them—are committed to the program, so it can be truly seen as occupying every regional community in South Australia. That program has gone on to become a national success as well.

I'd like to also comment about the Western Australian *Better Beginnings* program (described in the next paper – Ed.). Margaret Allen, Director of the State Library of WA is in the audience today and should be congratulated for this highly successful program. Once again, the success factors are partners, funding and libraries on the ground doing things, and the fourth indicator is universities who are committed to being involved in the project. The project has funding from the state government as well as the State Library. It also has Rio Tinto as a commercial partner who has put money into the program over a number of years to make sure that it is sustainable. It also has Murdoch University conducting an evaluation of the pilot and now the ongoing program.

One of the things that we don't do well enough is actually measure our success. We can give you lots of anecdotes about what we do well but to actually have accredited independent university studies that show we are making a difference is critical to being able to mount our case.

One of the early findings from the study in Western Australia is that almost 50% of parents who were not members of their local library when initially exposed to the *Better Beginnings* course went off and joined and have maintained membership of their local public library. So when we already know that we've got about 50% of people using their local public library to get another half of the remaining cohort to join and push those figures up towards the 75% is quite remarkable. We have a program and we have things that the community can benefit from; however we certainly don't market it as well as we can.

I'd like to draw attention to a small local program that I'm only speaking about because it is in my state and I know something about it. However I am sure that such programs are duplicated in different places across Australia. In the northern suburbs of Adelaide in the Councils of Playford and Salisbury is an outreach reading program that goes outside the walls of the library to the local neighbourhood centres. Supported by federal funds from the Sustainable Regions Program they've been able to formalise their program in a range of ways.

They've been able to develop comprehensive Family Reading Centres that reach out to the community; these are branded centres that people are confident to come into. Some of the customers are parents who are illiterate or barely literate themselves and are prepared to come in and participate and ostensibly be reading to their child but perhaps be learning to read for the first time in their life. So it serves multi-dimensional outcomes.

Once again this program is successful because it has partnerships happening across several councils. It also has council community services staff involved. It has funding from the Federal Government, and involvement from the University of South Australia. University of South Australia students who are doing work in early childhood development and literacy are working in those family literacy centres providing support to library staff and volunteers.

These three programs, national, state and local, demonstrate the power of partnerships, expertise, passion and funding to really crank up local efforts and turn them into successful programs that can make a difference.

## Looking ahead

What do we need to succeed in the future? Coordination that can make a difference. The agenda for libraries as we've heard today is about libraries being involved in the development of a fairer and more equitable Australia and an Australia with stronger community-based service organisations that strengthen the capacity of communities and individuals that they serve. Such libraries promote better understanding of the needs and interests of disadvantaged and unemployed people.

Working together and taking a holistic approach to public library service delivery, especially as it applies to children's literacy and literacy generally, will make libraries stronger. And importantly, stronger libraries will help us to deliver more consistent and equitable services regardless of any form of isolation be that geographic or other forms.

From a Public Libraries Australia point of view the keys to greater success for libraries in purposefully engaging in community early literacy development are:

- national collaboration
- partnerships with people outside our sector
- reliable consistent funding.

And to do this librarians need to be able to engage with potential partners and funders on their terms, using their language, and identifying the compelling reasons why partnering with public libraries makes such sense. We have an infrastructure of 1,500 places across Australia, many of which are doing these sorts of programs on an ad hoc basis. Where you see partnerships, funding and collaboration happening you will see highly successful programs.

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# Making a difference – *Better Beginnings* Family Literacy Program

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## Nola Allen

**The author describes the aptly-named *Better Beginnings* early childhood literacy project. Conducted by the State Library of Western Australia, sponsored by the WA State Government and Rio Tinto Limited, and closely monitored by Edith Cowan University, *Better Beginnings* has been successful from the outset, with proven beneficial impacts on participating mothers and children. It could easily be a national program, delivered through public libraries and other local government agencies.**

*Manuscript received September 2009. Based on a paper presented by Margaret Allen, CEO and State Librarian, State Library of WA at the ALIA Public Libraries Summit, Canberra, July 2009.*

## Overview of *Better Beginnings*

Early years' research has shown that 75% of brain development occurs in the first three years of life. It is widely known that being read to from birth helps children to develop the essential pre-literacy skills needed to learn to read, and learning to read is the single most important factor in school success. Couple this with the findings of James J. Heckman (2000), who demonstrates that investment in early years reaps greater economic rewards than the same investment in later years, and there is strong evidence to suggest that reading to babies is essential for their future and also for Australia's future.

With this background and recognising a gap in current services to children provided in Western Australia, the State Library of Western Australia (SLWA) developed *Better Beginnings*, a universal family literacy program that targets children aged 0–3 years and their families. *Better Beginnings* recognises early years' research and best practice and focuses on working in partnership with families and communities to support children's early literacy and learning.

*Better Beginnings* began as a pilot program in January 2004 in six Western Australian communities (three metropolitan and three country) and later was extended to another five. The communities were selected from identified areas of need with the guidance of the then Western Australian Department for

Community Development, and within the context of the WA State Government's Early Years Strategy. The pilot proved successful (Barratt-Pugh, C et al. 2005) and in 2005, the SLWA received funding from the State Government and Rio Tinto WA Future Fund and participating local governments to roll out *Better Beginnings* state-wide. Since its launch, *Better Beginnings* has reached over 70,000 families across Western Australia and more than 42,000 parents and children have participated in rhyme and story sessions in libraries and other community settings. In 2009, the program will potentially reach the families of 96% of babies born in the State.

## Reaching the community and building relationships

*Better Beginnings* is a successful example of an integrated program with early years, community, health, and library services working together, building a comprehensive, on-going and sustainable model for early literacy that supports parents and their young children, promotes connectedness between families and their communities, and encourages an ongoing relationship between families and libraries. It has also successfully overcome geographical constraints to reach the remote, regional and metropolitan areas of Western Australia and the delivery of the program is not impacted by socio economics, location, religious beliefs or racial background.

Every effort has been made to ensure culturally appropriate resources are provided to each community. The gift book *Baby Ways* was devised, written and produced by SLWA featuring photographs of culturally diverse Western Australian babies. This has increased the appeal of the gift book for children and parents alike, as they are able to identify with the images knowing they are from families like their own.

One of the strengths of *Better Beginnings* is the interagency cooperation required to deliver the program. Funding partners, Rio Tinto and the State Government, are just the first step in the partnerships needed to make the program a success. The Department of Health provides in-kind support for the program as community child health nurses deliver the majority of kits to parents at either the first home visit or the six week check-up. Local governments deliver both financial and in-kind support through the purchase of the gift book and delivery of the program throughout the WA public library system. The SLWA provides resources, training and ongoing support to library staff who work with community child health staff to deliver the program. Currently 100% of metropolitan and 75% of regional local governments are participating in the program.

Public libraries provide 'community hubs' where families are supported with practical strategies to build the confidence of adults in sharing stories and language with their children. Libraries provide parenting information, children's books and a range of resources that promote early literacy. They also run Rhyme Time and Story Time sessions which provide parents with the opportunity to share nursery rhymes, action songs and simple picture books with their babies and children. For many parents these sessions introduce them to rhymes and stories that provide young children with the skills that form an essential basis for learning to read. Many libraries also organise parent workshops where guest speakers, including speech pathologists, physiotherapists and health nurses, are invited to talk to parents in an informal, non-pathological environment about various aspects of their child's development and well-being, or about resources and groups that are available in their local area.

Story kits containing books, puppets and other resources are also provided through *Better Beginnings*, and are available for loan from the library to child care centres, playgroups, kindergartens and other community groups serving babies, toddlers and their families. These help to build relationships between the libraries and the borrowing organisations.

Public libraries and various community groups have been able to leverage off *Better Beginnings* in order to obtain other funding for additional services to the 0–3 year olds in communities across WA. This funding has been used to provide support for parents through information sessions, establishing family reading centres and linking resources and outreach programs targeting the 0–3 age group. *Better Beginnings* has also developed relationships with a number of community organisations such as Ngala, Playgroup WA and the Smith Family.

The kits are provided to the community child health nurses by the local libraries, who monitor stock and order the kits from the SLWA. This builds on the traditional links in the relationship between the community health nurses and the libraries, and provides opportunities for librarians to strengthen ties with the health network in order to arrange parent information sessions for the families in their communities. The libraries participating in *Better Beginnings* coordinate and run regular Rhyme Time sessions for babies and parents, and Story Time sessions for toddlers, combined with occasional parent information sessions. These Baby Rhyme Time and Story Time sessions held at the library are an important part of the *Better Beginnings* program as they reinforce the early literacy messages provided in the kits.



Training and support for both librarians and community nurses is provided formally and informally by the SLWA. The *Better Beginnings* team run workshops at the SLWA, visit individual libraries throughout the state, and make themselves available for one on one training to ensure the best support possible for those delivering the program. A wiki has been developed in order to help the *Better Beginnings* librarians communicate their ideas, news and contacts online. Although this is still in a trial phase we envisage it will become an excellent tool for those in remote and regional areas.

It should be noted that while there have been gaps identified in the program, notably families who do not access mainstream health services, efforts are currently underway to ensure *Better Beginnings* reaches Indigenous and non-English-speaking families, especially new arrivals.

## Evidence at work

Since the program's inception Edith Cowan University has conducted an independent longitudinal study on its impact. *Making a Difference: the report on the evaluation of the Better Beginnings family literacy program 2007–2009* (Barratt-Pugh et al. 2009) provides strong evidence that the program has had positive impact on parental early literacy practices, attitudes and beliefs. Some of the key findings show that:

- 85% of mothers reported that since receiving the *Better Beginnings* toolkit they read to their child. Only 14% of parents/carers reported reading to their child before they received the *Better Beginnings* toolkit.
- After being involved in the *Better Beginnings* program 62% of mothers reported that their confidence in sharing books with their child had increased.
- 79% of the mothers reported that *Better Beginnings* had influenced their beliefs about the importance of sharing books with their child. Of these, 96% now felt that sharing books with their child was very important.
- Before involvement in *Better Beginnings* over half the mothers (56%) commented that their child was not at all interested (38%) or not very interested (18%) in books. After involvement, 94% of mothers indicated that their child was very interested (74%) or quite interested (20%) in sharing books.
- Those mothers who reported their child's increased interest in books also reported an increased enjoyment in sharing books (82%).

The study also revealed the *Better Beginnings* program has had a significant influence on early literacy practices:

- Over half the mothers with older children reported that as a result of *Better Beginnings* they read more frequently to their older children.
- Mothers also reported an increase in the number of children's books they had and the amount of time they spent reading with their child after being involved in *Better Beginnings*.
- 70% of the mothers surveyed reported that *Better Beginnings* had changed how often they read to and communicated with their child and how often others read to their child (60%).

Another important aspect of the study focused on library membership and use before and after *Better Beginnings*. The following results indicate again how successful the program is in meeting its aims:

- 28% of mothers had joined the library since receiving the *Better Beginnings* toolkit, while only 4% of these mothers had taken out library membership for their child before receiving the toolkit.
- Almost all of these mothers (84%) commented that since receiving the *Better Beginnings* toolkit they had become aware that they could take out library membership for their baby.
- In addition, several mothers who were members of the library before they received *Better Beginnings* toolkit, reported an increase in library visits and borrowing after their involvement in the *Better Beginnings* program.

Parental feedback from the case studies reveals the program's impact and demonstrates the importance of the messages delivered with the *Better Beginnings* kits.

'I always felt stupid reading to her. Now I know it's the right thing to do', 'made me a bit more confident'

'I always felt funny reading to him before, but now I know I am doing the right thing'

'If I didn't get the pack he might not even own a book'

'Encouraged me to be consistent and read early'

'Have a better understanding of child development...wouldn't have started reading until he was older.'

The longitudinal nature of this study will give not only Western Australia, but Australia as a whole a clear indication of the impact early literacy programs like *Better Beginnings* can have on a child's future. It is anticipated that it will have a significant impact on literacy levels across the state, particularly in relation to school readiness, but also beyond.

## Looking to the future

*Better Beginnings* supports the Federal Government's focus on early childhood development and childcare (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations 2009). It successfully supports outcomes in key areas relating to the National Reform Agenda of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), most notably in the priority areas of early childhood (supports families in improving childhood development outcomes in the first five years of a child's life, up to and including school entry) and literacy and numeracy (improving student outcomes on literacy and numeracy).

The program also serves as a proven model that will strengthen Western Australia's focus on early childhood development as a key area of reform, and is anticipated to have an impact on Western Australian communities' performance in the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI). (The Western Australian Government has recently established the Early Childhood Development Portfolio highlighting the state's focus, and complementing the national focus, on the early years). The results from the Edith Cowan University longitudinal study have already shown the impact the program is having on parents, resulting in greater awareness of the importance of early literacy, and it is anticipated that the impact of *Better Beginnings* on school readiness will be evident once the original recipients are measured against the AEDI.

The State Library has identified and addressed the need for an early literacy program through *Better Beginnings*. Recognising the importance of the first three years of a child's life the program provides parents with the tools needed to help their child develop a love of books, language and learning. With ongoing funding *Better Beginnings* will continue the good work demonstrated in the program evaluation.

In August 2009, the Rio Tinto WA Future Fund accepted a proposal from the State Library to fund a new pilot program that will extend *Better Beginnings*, building on and embedding the program's effective strategies to provide support for children aged four and five years when they begin school.

The State Library will work with public libraries and the WA Department of Education and Training and the independent and catholic schools associations to make the link between home and school and also recognise the importance of teachers and parents working together to promote literacy. This extension to *Better Beginnings* will provide:

- **Reading Packs** with age-appropriate picture books, audio CDs and supporting materials to encourage emergent literacy skills of children aged four and five will be delivered through kindergartens and pre-schools while libraries will provide alternative delivery points for children not in formal education settings.

- **Literacy Backpacks** of books, audio CDs, literacy skill development games and literacy resources for families to borrow from libraries.
- **Shared Reading and Read Aloud Book Sets** at libraries and schools to support joint reading initiatives and promote shared parent and child reading.
- An **Information Literacy Online Package** to introduce pre-school aged children and their parents to effective and safe online search skills and resources; and
- An **Indigenous Liaison Officer** to work with relevant agencies and communities to deliver targeted strategies and resources to support the specific requirements of Indigenous families, particularly those in regional and remote communities.

These strategies have been developed recognising that parental involvement is vital to a child's success at school and one of the most effective ways of achieving this is through targeted strategies and resources designed to support shared reading between parents and children. Key findings from *Bookstart* in the United Kingdom provide evidence that initial messages and practices are strengthened through ongoing exposure to reading materials and facilitating quality parent-child interactions around language and literacy (Collins et al. 2005). Over the next year, the program will target almost 9,000 four and five year old children through a trial in selected remote, regional and metropolitan communities. This pilot will provide Western Australia with a fully integrated early literacy program, bringing together education, health and libraries, making it a sustainable and valuable investment in the future.

Given the success of *Better Beginnings*, there is potential for it to be rolled out nationally. There are many advantages in undertaking such a project, not least of which is that the longitudinal study currently being conducted in WA could be extended nationally. While such a venture would take major effort, it can certainly be achieved through the cooperative efforts of all state governments through their state libraries.

For further information:

[www.better-beginnings.com.au](http://www.better-beginnings.com.au)

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# Supporting the ageing population

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## Regina Sutton

**Australians are getting older, faster. This paper presents the statistical picture and describes the implications and opportunities for public library services. The author argues that federal funding for high speed broadband, Internet training, health information services, and for fostering partnerships with other community service agencies would make a major difference to quality of life for ageing Australians.**

*Manuscript received July 2009. Based on a presentation to the ALIA Public Libraries Summit, Canberra, July 2009.*

## A new era in ageing

Hal Kendig, Research Professor of Ageing and Health at the University of Sydney, says that:

Right now one in eight people living in Australia are aged 65 and over. But fast forward to the middle of this century and we can expect this figure to be as high as one in four. (Kendig 2008)

This is unprecedented. We have never before known a world where there are so many older people - either in numbers or as such a large proportion of our society. The ageing of Australia is a challenge for our communities, our governments and our public libraries.

## The statistics

Australia faces a pronounced ageing of its population over the next forty years. One quarter of Australians will be aged 65 years or more by 2044–45, roughly double the present proportion (Productivity Commission 2005). In 2007, there were 2.4 million people aged 65–84 years. The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that this will reach 4.0 million in 2022.

Many people would point to the generation known as the baby boomers to explain this phenomenon, but it's worth noting that the proportion of the 'oldest old' will increase even more. The number of people aged 85 years and over is projected to increase rapidly, from 344,000 in 2007 to 1.7 million in 2056.

The fastest growth in this age group will occur as the early baby boomers enter it from 2030 (ABS 2009). This is a 500% increase in the number of Australians over the age of 85 (Access Economics 2008).

The ageing of our population is also evident in our migrant communities. The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia reports that the older population from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is not only increasing more quickly than the Australian-born in terms of size but it is also ageing more rapidly such that by 2026 it is projected that one in four people aged 80 and over will be from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (FECC 2009).

Although our indigenous communities experience higher fertility rates, the 'life expectancy of indigenous people at birth is 15–20 years lower than that of non-Indigenous Australians' (ABS 2000). The NSW Department of Local Government identifies 'older' indigenous people for the purposes of local government planning as experiencing ageing issues from the age of 45 years (NSW Department of Local Government 2002).

## Rural and remote communities

For Australians living in rural and remote areas the spectre of ageing looms even larger with a higher proportion of older people in these communities and greater distances to travel to access services. In NSW, for example, ageing will be even greater in the communities outside the Greater Sydney area with an average of 32.2% of the population in these areas aged over 65 years by 2051 (Jackson 2004).

## A glass half empty

Ageing Australians face many challenges, including:

- reduced income—the global financial crisis has had a serious impact on the retirement savings of many Australians
- carer responsibilities—either for a partner, family member or in many cases grandchildren
- illness and disease—which often result in increased health spending and increased disability. For example, by 2016 dementia will be the largest disability burden in Australia, surpassing depression and all other chronic illnesses (Access Economics 2003).
- social isolation and exclusion—which has a direct impact on mental health.

These challenges can all be summed up as threats to our quality of life.

## Public libraries—the glass half full

Ageing of the population will place many pressures and demands on governments around the country, but the network of more than 1,500 public libraries offers real solutions to some of these challenges.

Already, 9.9 million Australians are members of their local public libraries. As our nation ages we anticipate the numbers of library members to greatly increase. Research tells us that 'older people read more and are more frequent visitors to public libraries, with people over 65 visiting libraries five times more a year than younger people' (Evans and Kelley 2994).

In 2009, the UK Department of Health funded the development of a 'Library services for older people – good practice guide' (Sloan and Vincent 2009) because they identified that:

Libraries have a strong role to play in supporting the wellbeing agenda, particularly in terms of: stimulation, bringing older people together, cutting isolation and socialisation. Libraries provide information that supports major life events and issues, such as:

- leaving work
- bereavement
- health
- active ageing
- learning
- safety
- transport and mobility
- housing
- finance/benefits
- leisure (Sloan and Vincent 2009).

The legal information service offered by the State Library of NSW is a good example of information that supports major life events and issues. Through a website that is accessible to all NSW residents we provide legal information in plain English. My staff also ensure that library staff working in locations across the NSW public library network are trained to provide assistance to members of the public in using these resources.



On a visit to any public library around our nation you would find a wide range of services that are vital to the quality of life of older Australians, including:

- recreational reading—fiction, and supporting their hobbies and interests
- government information, health and legal information in plain English
- community information—directories and databases highlighting services available in the local community; many of these are available online
- reader assistance—more than 8,000 library staff around the country offer personalised assistance in locating information and resources, providing support to community members.
- genealogy and family history resources
- local history information
- housebound library services to members of the community who cannot visit the library in person due to illness, disability or carer responsibilities
- large print formats for readers with deteriorating vision
- spoken word books
- community language materials, including newspapers and magazines
- national and local newspapers.

Yet public libraries are doing so much more. Let's revisit the challenges ageing Australians face:

## Reduced income

- Public libraries are free to join, free to use and strive to ensure access and equity for all Australians.
- The public library network stretches across the country, reaching even very remote communities via mobile libraries and services like the Outback Letterbox Library.
- Public libraries guarantee free access to the online world for their communities. Many libraries also offer tutorials to help seniors learn to use the Internet.
- Libraries provide programs and events at very low or no cost.
- Libraries provide free resources to support adult informal learning, including University of 3rd Age programs.
- Public libraries are a free community hub, fostering community development through free community information and providing a place for people to meet.

## Carer responsibilities

- Public libraries offer home library services which carers can access, bringing the library to carers and housebound members of our communities.
- Libraries provide information about health and wellbeing, support groups and community based services that carers can access.
- Libraries offer many services online, including access to databases with health information.
- Libraries offer information services via phone, email and letter.

## Illness, disability and disease

Providing older patients with access to health information in plain English empowers them to manage their own health problems in partnership with their GPs. Quality information is available online - as is unreliable and dangerous information. Public library staff provide expert assistance in locating and identifying information upon which decisions can be safely based.

- Libraries offer access to reliable, up-to-date, health information in plain English, in books, medical journals and on the Internet.
- Libraries purchase access to up-to-date health databases.
- Library staff provide expert assistance in searching for information and verifying sources. Staff can also guide clients to information in community languages.
- Libraries are accessible spaces, the majority offer wheelchair access, public toilets and areas to sit and read or rest. Others are fitted with hearing aid loops, provide baskets and trolleys and offer self serve and home delivery for frail clients.
- Public libraries also host free health themed community programs, for example the Managing medicines sessions from the National Prescribing Service.

## Social isolation and exclusion

Social isolation can increase for many older people and with it their experience of depression. National Seniors Australia (2008) identify some of the risk factors for social exclusion as 'geographical location, educational status, socio-economic

status and transport difficulties'. Public libraries also recognise that coming from a culturally and linguistically diverse background can increase the isolation experienced by many older people. Libraries address these issues in a variety of ways:

- For many people, leaving the workforce greatly reduces their contact with other people. Libraries offer volunteering opportunities, book clubs, information about local activities, displays promoting local organisations and activities (e.g. men's shed), programs (e.g. author talks) and the opportunity to engage with staff.
- Research shows that older Australians would prefer to remain and be cared for in their own homes—'ageing in place' (National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling 2004). Home library services will be vital in supporting these people with information and leisure reading.

Many baby boomers and older seniors will seek opportunities to give back to their communities, and their public libraries offer opportunities for community engagement through volunteering. For example, at Campaspe Regional Library volunteers take storytelling sessions to aged care home residents as part of the Library's 'Words on Wheels' program.

## Community engagement

Public libraries are wonderful engines for community engagement. As free public spaces welcoming the whole community they are ideally situated to be partners in delivering community based programs.

## Isn't everything on the Internet?

So often people ask about the future of libraries, 'surely', they say, 'everything is on the Internet these days?' Yet, even if that could possibly be true, not everyone is on the Internet. Public libraries will be vital in our digital world, as they help all of us keep up with the rapid evolution of our online environment and ensure that there is free online access available to community members.

Imagine for a moment if you had retired five years ago, how well would you have kept up with new technology and online information? Imagine if it were ten years since you left the workforce? To put it in perspective, Google celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2008. The only thing we can be sure of is a future full of more

change, new technologies and an increasing dependence on online access to participate fully in community life. Public library staff are ideally situated to be life coaches for this digital lifestyle, providing Internet tutorials for seniors, assistance accessing e-government services, and helping us evaluate the accuracy of online resources.

## A sense of urgency

'On 1 January, 2010, the first Baby Boomer will turn 65, setting off an avalanche of increased demands on economic, health care, and social programs' (National Seniors Australia 2008). It is clear that libraries have a vital role in supporting older people to live independently, remain actively engaged in the community and to continue lifelong learning.

As everyone should know, the major burden for the cost of providing public library services around the country is borne by local government. At the State Library of NSW we are conscious that NSW, along with Victoria, is the second-fastest ageing state in the country behind Tasmania. We are supporting our public libraries as much as possible in addressing the age wave in their communities.

But what support do public libraries need from the federal government to continue to provide these services? It's too easy to simply say 'more money'—yet there are four key things that would make a big impact immediately for public libraries and the quality of life of the older people they serve across the nation:

- low cost, high speed broadband connections into every public library
- project-based funding to support Internet tutorial programs for seniors in libraries
- funding to provide access to relevant health information databases in every public library
- opportunities to partner with other agencies delivering services to their communities.

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and students, and as a member of Chief Executive Women, participates on the Membership Committee. She was recently appointed Chair of National and State Libraries Australasia (NSLA) for 2009 and 2010 and serves as a Director for the Collections Council of Australia.



# Encouraging the digital economy and digital citizenship

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## Roxanne Missingham

**A flourishing digital economy needs broadband access and content relevant to people's lives. This paper describes how Electronic Resources Australia (ERA: <http://era.nla.gov.au/>) was established to deliver digital content. Through national site licensing sponsored by the National Library of Australia, and with an opt-in subscription model, more than 8.5 million Australians now have access to a broad range of authoritative databases through nearly 1,200 participating libraries. The next challenge is to secure high speed broadband access across the nation—and not just in metropolitan areas.**

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## Introduction

Australians live in an environment offering a vast array of information choices - for those in capital cities and with affordable access to networks. For those who are not so blessed, the choices are limited, reminiscent of a time of waiting for the news via horseback. These challenges have been recognised by libraries, and their activities to connect individuals to the online environment and government services are strongly underpinning a digital nation and economy.

In 2009, our understanding of what it means to be an Australian citizen encompasses participation in government and the economy via the digital environment.

The Government has recognised the importance of supporting access and interaction with the formation of the Government 2.0 Task Force. Minister Tanner, in launching the Task Force commented:

Today's citizens are too informed, too smart, too able to access and use information to be simply directed by a centralised government.

And politicians and public servants have to realise that information that is not sensitive for the operations of government or does not breach the privacy of individuals has to be shared. (Tanner, 2009)

Released in June, *Australia's Digital Economy: Future Directions Final Report* (Australia. Department of Broadcasting, Communication and the Digital Economy, 2009a) concludes:

The task of transforming Australia's economy and society into a successful digital economy is a significant one that requires a long-term focus. This paper outlines areas for government, industry and community to work on to ensure that Australia is well on the path to a successful digital economy.

For Australians, being able to participate in the digital world offers many benefits, but there are also significant challenges—in skills, access, accessibility and digital resources. This paper outlines some of the challenges and some of the achievements of libraries in supporting Australians to become more digitally adept.

The term 'public libraries' is used in its broad sense and includes local, state and national libraries.

## What does the current digital environment mean to Australians?

Australians are early adopters of technology. The latest information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicates that 67% of Australian households have home Internet access (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008b). From 1998, household access to the Internet at home has more than quadrupled from 16% to 67%. Broadband access, essential for speedy, effective access to resources on the Internet, has also grown, reaching an estimated 4.3 million households.

As a nation, however, Australia has some way to go before universal access is achieved. *Australia's Digital Economy: Future Directions Final Report* gives the following contextual data:

**Table 1: Comparative data: Australia, UK and Canada**

Digital Engagement	Australia	United Kingdom	Canada
Households with home access to the internet (as a percentage of all households)	64% (2007 data)	67% (2007 data)	68% (2006 data)
Number of broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	23% (2007 data)	26% (2007 data)	27% (2007 data)
Business with own website (as a percentage of businesses with 10 or more employees)	55% (2006 data)	75% (2007 data)	68% (2006 data)



A comparison with OECD (30 countries) finds that Australia is:

- 16th in terms of broadband penetration
- 20th in terms of the average monthly subscription price for broadband
- 3rd most expensive for fixed line services for SMEs (Small to Medium Enterprises).

The World Economics Forum ranks Australia:

- 14th for network readiness
- 16th for the total number of broadband Internet subscribers per 100 population
- 20th for monthly high speed broadband subscription charges
- 25th for accessibility of digital content
- 35th for the quality of competition in the Internet service provider sector
- 29th for the lowest cost of broadband.

Whilst some care needs to be taken in interpreting these figures, they do suggest that widespread, affordable access to broadband and Internet content is not yet with us.

For those Australians living outside capital cities, for example in Lightning Ridge or elsewhere in regional Australia, not having rapid broadband access means that pdf files will time out before they open, videos cannot be played, and access to quality information is limited by the additional costs of subscriptions.

## What can you find online?

While there are countless resources available through the Internet, those freely available can be of highly variable quality. Some are humorous, some informative and some downright misleading. Examples of freely accessible material include:

- a YouTube movie of Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard turning into a snake and eating the Prime Minister in question time when he turned into a hamster <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xn9fgcSuvmA>
- different political messages on <http://www.cecaust.com.au/>
- highly accurate and highly inaccurate health information.

Many quality resources can be accessed through the Internet only via services which have charges, such as electronic journal and books packages. The costs of subscriptions are such that often they can only be funded by organisations with extensive budgets, such as universities.

The combination of limited access because of connectivity and content issues is very frustrating. The Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee in 2003 inquired into the role of libraries in the online environment. The passion of disadvantaged Australians was evident in many submissions:

As a regular and frequent user of public libraries we are very concerned at the disparity in public libraries' provision of free access to the on-line environment.

We have used public libraries in Melbourne and Sydney, and generally speaking there is reasonable, if limited, access to computers and the internet free of charge, and libraries are open in the evenings and weekends. Moreover, you are never more than a few kilometres from a range of public library branches.

However, it is a totally different story when we moved to rural New South Wales. Here in the Regional Centre of Lismore we find that libraries have very limited opening hours, inadequate staff, no technical staff for computers etc. and inadequate numbers of computers. Here in the country residents just don't have adequate free access to the on-line environment. When we enquired why standards are so different in the country, we were told that State Government Funding in New South Wales is over 50% less than any other State, and further that there is no direct Federal Funding for libraries. Why not?

What exacerbates this already inequitable situation is the fact that line costs are higher in the country in many cases, and also there is limited access to broadband. Furthermore, country libraries don't seem to provide training in internet use: they don't have enough staff. Thus many country people remain ignorant of the help and information they could derive from the on-line environment.

Australia currently has developed a two-tier system – the information-rich in the metropolitan areas, and the information-poor in rural and regional Australia. This is a national shame and disgrace. Your Committee must highlight this disparity of provision.

I urge the Committee to ensure steps are taken by both Federal and State Governments to provide specific funding for the public libraries in rural and regional Australia so that country folk have fair and equitable access to the on-line environment. (Field, 2002)

Many Australian towns are still like Mallacoota where I live. Here we have extremely limited access to public TV channels (only the ABC, and not SBS), or radio stations or metropolitan or world newspapers, and only some aging computers at a telecentre which is trying to find its role in the community (and about to close at the end of this month).

At a time when the electronic media makes it possible for anyone using an online computer to speak to climbers as they ascend Mount Everest, Mallocoota residents are being starved of even the most basic information available online. For the first time in history it is now possible to stay abreast of events and knowledge anywhere in the world and from wherever you live and it is not happening for very many in our small town...

The town's public library is a mobile bus. If it does not break down on the long route from Bairnsdale via the mountains every second Wednesday it rumbles into town and parks just off the main road where the librarian plugs the vehicle into a telegraph pole and opens for business from 6.30pm to 8.30pm that evening and again the following morning from 8.30am to 12.45pm.

Readers of all ages borrow from the bus. Its strengths are that it is a borrowing library for popular fiction and magazines (even if they are at times several years out-of-date). It is a place to register a request for specific books to be brought "next time". If the requested book is held in the base library the charge is small (better not to be poor and needing information if you live in Mallocoota). If the book is held further afield, then the cost is considerable (better not to be either rich or poor and trying to educate yourself if you live in Mallocoota). These borrowing charges certainly quashed thoughts I had a few years back of being able to do research in the town. I went to live in Hobart instead.

People still need a quiet public space for research and reading. And they need online access.

Online libraries are a goal to aim for. (Brandl, 2002)

The committee recommended that (Senate. Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee, 2003):

- a. the National Library of Australia identify a number of key databases for which national site licensing might be desirable; and
- b. additional Australian Government funding be extended to the National Library of Australia for this purpose.

Although additional Australian Government funding was not forthcoming, the vision of national co-operation for the provision of access by all Australians was accepted with alacrity by the library community.

In the following years (2004 to 2007) four National Licensing Proposal/National Site Licence Forums were organised by the National Library of Australia to resolve the issues involved in working together nationally with the whole library

sector. An Issues Paper was published in 2004, with 70 responses received, 28 of these being from the school library sector, 17 from government libraries, and 9 from public libraries. A Reference Group and four sub-committees worked through key issues of Products, Pricing, Governance, and a Communications Plan. At the fourth and final National Licensing Proposal forum in 2007, four financial model options were proposed for establishing the consortia (National Licensing Proposal, 2003–2007). At this meeting:

- An 'opt-in/opt-out' model was agreed to implement the vision outlined in the 2005 issues paper *Making Online Information for all Australians a Reality*.
- A vendor/library financial model was agreed, where subscription payments are made directly between vendors and libraries.
- A governance framework was adopted.
- A communications strategy was endorsed.

Agreement to proceed was also achieved at this meeting and reaching this point was an important step in a four year journey. The Director-General of the National Library, Jan Fullerton, showed energy and leadership throughout the consultation process.

ERA (Electronic Resources Australia) was officially launched in May 2007 at the 4th National Licensing Proposal Forum held at the National Library. The groups who made the decision to 'go' were:

Arts Libraries Society Australia and New Zealand (ARLIS)  
 Association of Parliamentary Libraries of Australasia (APLA)  
 Australian Government Libraries Information Network (AGLIN)  
 Australian Law Librarians' Association (ALLA)  
 Australian Library & Information Association (ALIA)  
 Australian School Library Association (ASLA)  
 CAVAL Collaborative Solutions  
 Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL)  
 CSIRO  
 Government Libraries and Information Network in NSW (GLINN)

Gulliver/VICLINK

Health Libraries Australia (HLA)

National & State Libraries Australasia (NSLA)

National Library of Australia

NSW.net

Public Libraries Australia (PLA)

Public Library Services [South Australia]

TAFE Libraries Australia

TAFE Libraries NSW.

Two groups were not present but had been involved through the process: State Library of New South Wales (SLNSW) and Victorian Government Libraries Association (VIGLA).

## Why do Australians need access to quality information?

As noted above, digital citizenship is a fundamental concept for modern democracies. In this context information access is vital for participation, accountability and democratic practices.

There is a range of daily activities for which the digital environment is vital. We increasingly rely on online information—our needs include:

- education—study, VET, schools, lifelong learning
- local community information
- health needs
- life needs, including legal information
- government information to do daily business including registering our cars, doing tax, asking about services, applying for allowances and interacting with local, state and Commonwealth government.

Australian libraries have taken as a key tenet their role in supporting these activities. Developing a program to use online resources to support Australians in all these aspects of their lives in the digital environment has become a major objective. Working together to achieve these outcomes was a natural, although very complex process.

## What did libraries do together to help Australians secure access to quality online information?

Libraries met, discussed, explored options and agreed in May 2007 to the formation of ERA, a national purchasing consortium, based on an opt-in approach.

Collaborative action was seen as an important step to support individuals wherever they are in Australia to overcome the isolation experienced daily by those living in rural and remote regions, by delivering quality information in the fields of:

- Australian news and business information
- general reference
- health information.

For data creators and suppliers a collaborative approach by libraries offered business opportunities and economies of scale. For libraries the approach strengthened their bargaining position by negotiating as a consortium, making content more affordable and offering standard services such as remote access, and virtual enquiries. The broader Australian community could now realise the benefits of electronic resources.

The focus has been, and remains, on Australian full-text content. This assists those across the country to obtain relevant, authoritative and quality information resources.

The collaborative approach was created in phases. The first, which commenced in 2008, involved a major tender process resulting in the selection of nine products that were made available to Australian libraries. Approximately **6,750,000** Australians were served by libraries that subscribed to resources through ERA. In total there were 485 libraries and consortia from all sectors subscribing to products through ERA.

In 2009, a second phase was implemented, with the consortium increasing product coverage to provide access to approximately **8,500,000** Australians through 1,193 participating libraries. ERA includes Australians served by public, academic, school, TAFE, special, state and national libraries

**Chart 1: Membership of ERA 2008-09**



ERA - Subscriptions  
2008-09

Summary of libraries/ consortia subscribing through ERA.

	ACT	NSW	SA	WA	VIC	TAS	NT	QLD	Total
Public	0	39	17	3	15	0	0	8	82
Academic	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	1	3
School	12	213	83	76	177	6	3	75	646
TAFE	1	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	5
Special	16	7	0	1	4	1	1	3	33
NSLA	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
Totals	31	261	102	81	201	8	5	89	778

Across the nation Australians can now use encyclopaedias, consumer health information, and Australian journals online. But there is still work to be done: many Australians do not yet have access.

## Importance of access

For libraries there were clear indications that access to quality information was vital for education, community, health, life and business needs in their communities. Research suggests that access to these resources via ERA, supported by the work of public libraries, has an important impact in ensuring a community develops successful literacy skills and can thus participate in the digital economy.

The *Implications of Poverty on Children's Readiness to Learn Focusing Study* (Hilferty and Redmond, 2009) reported recent research:

'readiness to learn' is defined broadly as the ability of children to develop and learn at each stage in life. Learning within this conception is viewed as an ongoing and multi-faceted process, incorporating children's physical wellbeing and motor development, social and emotional development, language development and cognitive development.

The study found strong evidence that preventive programs—put in place before problems start—can make a real difference when they are of high quality, intensive and easy to access, and offer services to children and parents simultaneously at home and at childcare or school.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has found that illiteracy is a significant issue. Their most recent study (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008a) found that approximately 7 million (46%) Australians aged 15 to 74 years had scores below the level regarded by the survey developers as the 'minimum required for individuals to meet the complex demands of everyday life and work in the emerging knowledge-based economy' for prose. Results for document literacy were similar to prose.

Compared with other countries, Australia ranked in the middle of each scale with 57% of the population 'achieving the minimum required for individuals to meet the complex demands of everyday life and work in the emerging knowledge-based economy' on the prose scale, 57% on the document scale, 50% on the numeracy scale and 32% on the problem solving scale. Of the seven countries, Norway ranked highest on the prose scale (66%), document scale (68%) and



on the problem solving scale (39%), with Switzerland ranking highest on the numeracy scale (61%).

Those with literacy scores on or above 'the minimum required for individuals to meet the complex demands of everyday life and work' were more likely to have used the Internet. 79% of this group used the Internet for email at least a few times a week, compared with 40% of people with scores below this level.

Creating an environment or economy where Australians have ready access to broadband is clearly only a part of the solution. Access to information can only be effective if literacy skills, particularly information and digital literacy, are addressed. Public libraries are active in the delivery of such programs. The benefits to the nation are quantifiable and considerable—but national funding is urgently needed.

## Issues and barriers

Three issues dominate: connectivity, content and capacity.

### ***Connectivity***

As noted above the lack of broadband access and affordable Internet access remains a very significant issue in Australia, both for individuals and the libraries that support them. The National Broadband Network represents a major commitment by the government that we hope will enable the majority of the population to overcome this barrier. The Government announced in 2009 (Prime Minister, 2009) the establishment of a company to build and operate a new super-fast National Broadband Network to connect '90 percent of all Australian homes, schools and workplaces with broadband services with speeds up to 100 megabits per second—100 times faster than those currently used by many households and businesses'. While the intention was to roll out services in Tasmania this year, there have been some delays. The overall commitment to the project is substantial; the government's current estimate is up to \$43 billion. A initial tender has been called to build, operate and maintain backbone transmission links to regional locations (Australia. Department of Broadcasting, Communication and the Digital Economy 2009b) including Darwin, Geraldton, Broken Hill, South West Gippsland, Emerald, Longreach and Victor Harbour.

## Content

While great strides have been made in providing quality content to many Australians, the current model is very fragile and only serves less than half the population. For a real digital nation to be achieved:

- Funding models need to be implemented which would allow all Australians access to reliable content—it is much more cost effective to take a national approach than having every library subscribe individually.
- Online government content is required that is comprehensive, easy to find, easy to use, supported by access through libraries and consistent. A recent report (Australian National Audit Office, 2009) found that parliamentary documents from Commonwealth entities were not all online—a national archive could be built within Pandora, the National Library's Australian archive.
- Research funded by the Australian government also needs to be made freely available to build the digital economy.

## Capability

Australians need to have skills to be able to effectively use the Internet and the available digital resources:

- Public libraries need to be supported to provide training and support to the community to access government services and information including Gov2.0 services.
- Online services need to be user-focused and easy to use.
- Digital services and resources need to be accessible to those with disabilities.

## Conclusion

Overall a clear, targeted strategy is needed to deliver social inclusion in the digital environment. A digital economy can only be built by a community with digital access and digital content that supports their lives and digital skills.

The government's social inclusion agenda is closely related to the needs outlined in this paper. The website states:

The Australian Government's vision of a socially inclusive society is one in which all Australians feel valued and have the opportunity to participate fully in the life of our society

Achieving this vision means that all Australians will have the resources, opportunities and capability to:

- Learn by participating in education and training
- Work by participating in employment, in voluntary work and in family and caring
- Engage by connecting with people and using their local community's resources
- Have a voice so that they can influence decisions that affect them. (*Social Inclusion* website, 2009).

The challenges in building capacity, connectivity and content to enable the whole Australian community to work, learn and live in the twenty first century are significant and require a national approach and national funding. It is time for the federal government to respond with more than rhetoric. Right now is the opportunity to invest and develop citizens for the benefit of the future digital nation and economy.

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# Is isolation a problem? Issues faced by rural libraries and rural library staff in South Australia

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Rebecca Haines and Philip J. Calvert

**The aim of this research was to investigate current issues faced by public library staff in rural South Australia and to examine some of the reasons why people choose to work in rural libraries. The study took a mixed methods approach, combining interviews and questionnaires to gain a fuller understanding of the issues and experiences of rural librarians.**

**The findings show that rural library staff in South Australia are a dedicated group of individuals who are motivated by personal interactions with their communities. Constraints imposed by distance, travelling times and geographic isolation concerned many staff - especially the difficulty of finding professional development opportunities, with travel to Adelaide for workshops the most commonly stated barrier.**

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*This is a reviewed paper.*

## Introduction

For some people, working in a small rural library might seem like an ideal way to be employed. For others, to accept a job in the same small rural library could seem like a career-ending move. Empirical evidence suggests that managers find it hard to find suitable people to appoint to rural library positions, suggesting that some librarians are reluctant to work in those libraries; and those staff who do take employment in a rural library become frustrated with some aspects of the post, especially professional isolation and the related problem of career development. In 2005–06 there were 1,111 people working in public libraries and joint-use school and public libraries across South Australia. 144 of these people were employed in rural libraries serving communities with a population of less than 4,000 and no closer than 100 km to a town or city with a population greater than 20,000 people (Public Libraries in South Australia, 2006). About 13% of all

library staff in South Australia work in rural libraries. This figure alone could make problems among rural library staff significant, but when it is remembered that these staff provide library services to whole swathes of the state, their importance becomes even more apparent.

There has been some research conducted that examines the phenomenon of rural libraries in Australia (Amey 1997; Bundy 1997), but none that examines the professional motivation of rural librarians. The researchers sought to discover the specific issues for rural public libraries in South Australia, and whether isolation affected the staff who work in them. The project was intended to look at professional development problems faced by staff, assess the extent of problems in recruiting suitable staff to rural libraries, and determine what was being done to address these problems. Related to the last point, the project asked if there were specific difficulties in retaining suitable staff in rural libraries and if so, what could be done to help managers retain staff?

Motivation and job satisfaction play a central role in the ability of an organisation to attract and retain staff no matter where the job is located or the industry in which the employment occurs. Frederick Herzberg's dual-factor motivation-hygiene theory is therefore appropriate as a theoretical perspective to guide this research. Herzberg's theory states that job satisfaction consists of two unipolar groups: extrinsic factors known as hygiene factors; and intrinsic factors known as motivators. Hygiene factors are described as those that eliminate dissatisfaction such as supervision, interpersonal relationships, physical working conditions, salary and job security. Motivators are those factors that 'satisfy the individual's need for self-actualization in his work' (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959, p.114), such as achievement, advancement and growth. Herzberg's theory comes from a psychological perspective, and this suited the topic under study.

## Literature Review

Is there a reason for professional services finding difficulty recruiting suitable staff in rural posts? It has been suggested that the prevailing economic conditions are a significant influence on a professional's desire to work in a rural community, for when supply and demand are closely aligned, rural communities will have difficulty attracting and retaining professionals (Boylan & Bandy 1994). This, however, is true of all libraries and not just those in rural localities, so often it is people's perceptions that make the difference. Rennie's (2003) study of rural health workers revealed that many of the participants grew up in rural areas and seemed to have a preference to remain in rural areas. He describes this as 'a high situation loyalty to the rural location' (p.25). In Cheers and Lonne's (2004)

study of social workers in rural Australia they found that rural positions were often taken up for reasons of professional interest and career advancement. Taylor (2004) also cites community participation as a major factor assisting in the retention of doctors. Boylan and Bandy (1994) listed seven variables that affect both the recruitment and the retention of rural professionals: selection, multiculturalism, community, paraprofessionals, government, induction/mentorship, and preservice/in-service training. The variables most relevant to this project are: the role of community; induction/mentorship; and preservice/in-service training.

The two main reasons given for the lack of continued training for rural library staff are geographic isolation and inadequate funding (Wigg 1995). Boon (2006) discussed geographical isolation as a factor which negatively influenced ability to take advantage of continuing education. Some of her interviewees said that travel time to and from a course would often be longer than the course itself. In Cheers and Lonne's study (2004), professional development and career advancement are viewed as important employment motivators. In small rural libraries where there is often little or no opportunity for promotion, career advancement is probably not a motivating factor. This issue of motivation is one that needs further investigation; by better understanding staff motivation it may be possible to improve staff retention.

The literature outlines major concern in the professions regarding recruiting and retaining suitable staff in rural and remote areas, in particular, the lack of professional development opportunities available to staff working in rural and small community libraries. There is also concern for the effect that a lack of education and training has on the services staff are able to provide. This project was designed to help understand the particular issues that are of concern to library professionals working in rural and remote areas of Australia.

## Methodology

The study called for data that demonstrated depth of opinion rather than simply quantity, so qualitative methods were used to collect narrative data.

Qualitative techniques, in the form of interviews, are predominant in this study. Analysed qualitative data was used to provide the themes that formed the questions for the quantitative part of the study. The quantitative element, in the form of a questionnaire, provides a wider understanding of the motivation of people who are working in South Australian rural libraries. Triangulation was used because most of the data sought in the questionnaires was used

to validate the data obtained in the interviews. Combining these two methods enriched the research with both the breadth and depth necessary to address the research problem. One of the strengths of mixed methods research is the use of 'numbers to add precision' (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) to the narrative data that was obtained through the interview process.

Interviews were the main data collection technique because they gave an in-depth understanding of the issues faced by rural public library managers in both their position as employer and employee. The interviews also sought to obtain a human perspective on how these librarians view their position/situation and how these views are shaped by their decision to live and work in a rural location. Four library managers were interviewed. They were representative of the most extreme cases of geographic isolation in South Australia. The interviews took place over the telephone and lasted between 20 and 40 minutes. An interview protocol was used to provide a semi-structured guided interview format (Appendix A). This ensured key data was gathered consistently, yet interviewees could still express their thoughts and feelings.

Data from the interviews was coded to draw out key themes, which were then used to create a survey questionnaire to collect the thoughts of staff working in South Australian rural libraries. The questionnaire included statements related to the recurrent themes from the interviews and respondents were asked to say if they agreed or disagreed. The questionnaire had two formats: one distributed to all rural library staff; and the second, with more statements, was sent to library managers. Appendix B is the manager's questionnaire. The staff questionnaire was exactly the same except it did not include Part Three. Analysis of the surveys was kept simple because it was regarded as validation for the interviews, and, for the sake of brevity, not all of the data from the surveys is reported here.

The main areas of investigation concern professional development and staff retention/motivation. First, interview data will be reported, then data from the survey.

## **Managers' views on professional development**

The participants were asked about the opportunities they have to attend professional development and training events while working in a rural library. These are important for a number of reasons including not only extending one's knowledge, but also for the networking opportunities that they present.



When asked if they had attended meetings since working in their current position the answer was generally 'yes'—although once the topic was investigated further it was discovered that often a desire to attend was not always accompanied by the opportunity.

Yes I have, some, not too many because it's 400 kilometres to the city where a lot of them are held and getting time off from your other teaching things, it's not always easy.

...there's a lot of twilight stuff in Adelaide and when you've got to travel a day there and travel a day back to go to something that's on from 4–8pm it's just not feasible.

One respondent new to a post felt she had not received the training necessary for her role and blamed this on the distance and time it takes to get to training sessions in Adelaide. Time away from her job was not her only concern; she was also concerned about the length of time it would take her away from her family still settling into a new town. Participants were asked about the main reasons for not attending professional development events. As previously mentioned, distance emerged as a major deterrent to attendance. Other comments involved:

...the cost, even if you book [flights] well in advance the minimum cost is \$400 and if you book later, it's considerably more.

...you can't justify three days away from the school and three days out of the library for a half day meeting or a two hour meeting.

Occasionally when it's a two day conference in Adelaide and because I'm only working 0.5...it's hard to attend.

Rural library staff are often only able to attend out-of-town events if they use a personal vehicle because flights from rural locations are normally expensive or not at convenient times. This may involve at least two full days away from the library because of the length of the car journey. Also, the amount of wildlife on the roads at night makes it unsafe to travel in the dark. Despite deterrents of distance, cost, time, and safety, there were nevertheless some factors mentioned that the participants said encouraged them to attend. These included support from council, school and parents.

The principal here's really good so they will get someone to cover and the other girls will back fill for me.

Most meetings now are on Sundays and Mondays – although you are using your weekend that is better than having three days out of the school.

Contrary to expectations, one participant said she may even attend more training than some city librarians.

I probably attend more than some of the city based libraries because they don't make the effort or say there are five librarians on staff and only one will go so in some ways they have less training opportunity or like on the public libraries two day conference last year they rotated different people at different sessions...I get to go to it all, so as I say I probably do as well as city people because we make the effort and there's only really myself to share the librarian's training with.

## Managers' views on staff retention and motivation

There were some predictable responses to questions about the good and bad parts of the job. Managers enjoyed providing a service, promoting reading, and other aspects of public library work. They disliked red tape, budget preparation, keeping statistics, and administration. Frustration was expressed about the time it takes for freight (books and other materials) to arrive, which can sometimes be months after the order is placed. All participants said they did not want a higher paying job outside of the library but their reasons for this differed.

I wouldn't change it...you meet people from the community all the time and you know most, all of them and they drop in and you have a chat to them all...so I don't think I would change it.

The last guided question involved obstacles to attracting suitable candidates to vacant positions.

The graduates are scared of the unknown...I think it's just the distance, the distance and being afraid of the temperature and the fact that it may be the wild west.

They allocate librarians on numbers in the community so we're only entitled to 0.6 for the school and to get someone to come up who's qualified to [only] work 0.6.

They have the separation thing from their family and friends...social activities withdrawal. I think sometimes suitable accommodation...but I think mainly it's the social side of things.

People don't want to live in the bush, there's no shopping, there's nothing.

Another issue mentioned was the difficulty of networking. With the small size of the community and the lessened need for more than one librarian in a location, the only professional networking is with staff from libraries in other towns.

## Findings from the questionnaires

27 manager's questionnaires and 39 staff questionnaires were returned; a 46% response rate. The main reason rural library staff live in rural locations is family. Some respondents were attracted to living in their rural location because of the job prospects on offer. Another respondent made an additional comment about how she did not actually live and work in the same place, 'I live 50 minutes away, this is the closest full time library position. I live on a farm and considered living away during the week to get a position'.

Motivation came from two main sources: the nature of the work itself, and working with the community. 95.5% of respondents say working with other staff is a motivator. The same number said the job had enough challenge to motivate them. Helping adults and children to read was a motivator. Many staff enjoyed reading and said it was a rewarding part of the job: 59.1% of respondents agreed with this statement while 22.7% disagreed.

66.7% of respondents said they would not leave their current job for another with greater pay, which validates the interviews in which all four participants said they had no desire to leave their library. However 21.2% said they would consider leaving their library position for another with greater pay. Career advancement is not a major motivator for 69.7% of respondents, which may be a reflection of a particular difficulty with career development in rural libraries due to small staff numbers and lack of positions.

Only 24.2% said they were not keen to get higher or more appropriate qualifications, whereas 60.6% were keen to upskill their qualifications. A positive 69.7% of respondents agreed with the statement that attending training sessions would help with their careers; however 12.1% did not think that attending training sessions would assist in career advancement.

87.9% of respondents agreed with the statement that they have been given the opportunity to attend continuing education and other library-related meetings, while only 6.1% felt that they had not been given the opportunity. One comment highlighted how a desire to attend must also accompany the opportunity: 'much of my participation occurs because I attend in my own time'. Another manager felt her attendance was well-supported both financially and professionally.

Surprisingly, the majority of respondents, 59.1%, said they were not discouraged from attending training sessions because of the time and distance (primarily, to Adelaide). However there were still 30.3% that did feel discouraged by time and distance. Of these, two commented that their discouragement was

personal rather than involving senior staff and managers. Interview participants highlighted a number of reasons why this is so, including lack of public transport, the cost of flights, and inconvenient flight times.

When asked if the small staff numbers in rural libraries made it difficult to attend out of town meetings, 45.5% disagreed and 39.4% agreed.

One staff member felt that rosters assisted in being able to attend out of town meetings. One part-time manager felt the need to attend these meetings was so important that she usually went on days when she was not paid.

## Managers' views

25.9% of managers felt they (personally) had not been adequately trained for their managerial role; 44.4% felt they had received the training they required. One person who felt training had been adequate, commented that the training had been on the job and mainly self taught.

48.1% agreed that it is often difficult to fill vacant positions; 14.8% disagreed. Respondents said it was particularly hard to find applicants if they did not already live in the town. This could be for many reasons including the need to relocate family and find jobs and schooling for other family members, or because some jobs are part-time. 70.4% of respondents thought the staff they had were suitably qualified for their jobs. Managers agreed it was hard to find library school graduates, but this was not seen as a big problem.

92.6% of respondents valued support from the public library network. This was an overwhelmingly positive response and it reflects well on the public library network in South Australia and the way that it works to support staff in rural locations. One manager even added that Public Library Services 'are absolutely great – strongly agree'.

## Discussion

According to Herzberg's motivation theory, supervision helps to eliminate workplace dissatisfaction. This supervisory element can also be equated to support—which was mentioned in all interviews. Support ranged from the school principal helping with time off for professional development to other staff covering during absences and supporting each other professionally.

...because we've got such a good network here and good support and leadership I don't feel that [disadvantaged] at all.

Responding to the questionnaire, 25 out of 27 managers agreed that the South Australian Public Libraries Network helps to reduce isolation. Clearly, isolation did not result in a lack of support that might lead to negative job satisfaction.

Salary is one of Herzberg's hygiene factors. If the salary level is adequate to meet one's needs then it should not be a factor in deciding to leave a position. Although one participant mentioned that the job was more about the service than the money, for the older interviewees the salary package was mentioned as a factor that stopped them looking elsewhere for work.

...it's my long service leave as well as my teaching award...then there's the locality allowance.

On the other side of these extrinsic factors are the intrinsic factors which Herzberg labels as motivators. These are factors that satisfy the individual need for self-actualisation and include achievement, advancement and growth.

Adair (2006) describes achievement as including 'successful completion of a job, solutions to problems, vindication and seeing the result of one's work' (p.73), and a sense of achievement is often derived from how others appreciate what you do. One participant mentioned the appreciation that customers have of library displays as being a motivating factor, and that 'just being helpful to people is a good motivation to keep doing what we're doing'.

Advancement factors were not mentioned at all by the participants. Participants had no desire to move to a metropolitan library, which would possibly be the only way to secure promotion.

When asked if they felt disadvantaged for not having any official training and whether they would consider doing any, one participant said:

Absolutely, yes...until it was actually put in front of me, I had never even thought about it.

One participant had considered professional training, but was put off by the distance.

I did think about it, but to do it I would have to take eight years doing it correspondence or four years university...the distance, just can't do it.

Rural library staff would much rather be working than travelling long distances to training sessions. Despite this, professional development opportunities are regarded as important not only for the knowledge obtained but also for the networking opportunities they present. The main issue expressed during the interviews was the distance, time and cost involved with attending these sessions. This supports Boon's (2006) research that found rural library staff were

often discouraged from attending training because the travel time would often be longer than the training itself.

It is important that professional development opportunities are available to rural library staff so they are able to remain familiar with the many changes occurring in today's dynamic library world. One interview participant mentioned a way of ensuring training reached those who are geographically isolated and wondered why this no longer continued.

I guess on the public library side of things they always hold their meetings in Adelaide or in the suburbs where there are big libraries so I guess that will always stay, but we used to have hub groups that were really good but they sort of dropped off, I'm not sure why...and so we had a central place, or sometimes they came here ...but like I said they dropped off, I'm not quite sure why...so it's much easier if things are more regional.

The possibility of using distance education methods, such as video and audio conferencing, should be evaluated for delivering in-service training for rural library staff. This would overcome most of the problems of time, cost, and safety that were listed by rural library staff as barriers to attending training opportunities in Adelaide. What would need to be considered, though, is the concurrent loss of networking that could easily result.

Interviewees did, though, express other feelings of frustration due to distance from the major urban centres. These involved the lack of book stores to do hands-on purchasing and the time it can often take for orders to arrive. Such factors will always remain difficult to overcome when towns are small and there are vast distances between them, as in many parts of South Australia. Comments made by the interview participants show that this aspect of where they had chosen to live was something they had learnt to live with and accept.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to better understand current issues faced by public library staff in rural South Australia, including why people choose to work in rural libraries. The most significant issues were those associated with geographic distance. Distance has a huge impact on the ability to attend professional development and training events. For all respondents, the South Australian Public Library Network helped them feel less isolated.

The study was guided by Herzberg's motivation theory (1959) which was used to look at the various ways that rural library staff may be motivated in their positions. The study found that rural library staff in South Australia were dedicated to their work and motivated by the contact they have with their communities. It was this human aspect of librarianship that came through as one of the greatest motivating

factors for both staff and managers. Motivation was also derived through a sense of achievement that rural library staff experienced simply by completing daily challenges and helping their customers.

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## Appendix A. Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed today. I want to reiterate that this interview is part of a formal research study, and that your participation in this project is entirely voluntary; you are free to stop at any time.

As a researcher I am interested in the motivations of rural librarians and the issues that they face as a result of geographic isolation. During the interview I will ask you about your experiences both as an employee and employer/manager in a rural library service. I have several questions written down, but please feel free to tell me anything you think is relevant to this topic.

How long have you lived in \_\_\_\_\_?

What attracted you to living here?

Tell me how you became a librarian and how you became the manager here.

How do you explain your job to relatives, neighbours or others unfamiliar with the library?

### Professional development

During your time here as librarian, have you attended library related meetings and continuing educational events?

Have there been events/meetings that you have wished to attend but haven't?

What are the main reasons for not attending these events?

What components are likely to encourage you to attend?

What components do you find least desirable?

### Staff retention and motivation

What do you consider to be the biggest motivating factors in your job?

What de-motivates you?

If you could make the same salary in your community, with the same time commitment, would you leave your library position?

If you were offered a similar position at a metropolitan library, what factors would influence your decision to take it?

What do you consider to be the biggest obstacles to attracting suitable candidates to vacant positions?

## Appendix B. Manager's Questionnaire

This study will look at issues of attracting and retaining suitable staff at rural public libraries in South Australia and the effect that geographic isolation has on staff. The main purpose of the study is to explore issues related to the professional motivation of rural library staff. Demographic information will be used to establish a picture of who works in rural libraries.

You are invited to complete this short questionnaire and return it in the provided self addressed envelope.

This questionnaire contains three parts: Demographic Information, General Issues and Managerial Staffing Issues. It will take you about 15 minutes to complete.

All data will be confidential to the researcher and supervisor; your library and your identity will not be revealed in any way Your completion and return of the questionnaire is taken as giving informed consent.

All questionnaires will be kept secure for one year after the completion of the research at which time they will be destroyed. A copy of the completed research paper will be kept in the Victoria University of Wellington Library and may be published in academic or professional journals.

### **Part One: Demographic Information** (please tick the appropriate boxes)

Age    16–20    21–30    31–40    41–50    51–60    60+

Gender    Male    Female

Education and Qualifications (you may tick more than one box)

- High school
- Undergraduate degree in Library Studies
- Undergraduate degree in something other than Library Studies
- Diploma in Library Studies
- Diploma in something other than Library Studies
- Masters in Library Studies
- Masters in something other than Library Studies
- Other

Position

- Librarian
- Technician
- Teacher Librarian
- Community Library Assistant
- Clerical
- School Services Officer
- Casual

**Part Two: General Issues** (for each of the following statements please indicate if you agree or disagree with the statement).

1. I am motivated by the challenges my job presents.	Disagree-----Agree
2. I never feel like there is enough time to get my job done.	Disagree-----Agree
3. I consider my role in the library to be as a mediator between people and books/information.	Disagree-----Agree
4. Working with people motivates me.	Disagree-----Agree
5. Helping children and adults to read motivates me.	Disagree-----Agree
6. I am motivated by the daily challenges my job presents.	Disagree-----Agree
7. I applied for a job in the library because I needed a job, any job.	Disagree-----Agree
8. I decided to work in a library because I love reading.	Disagree-----Agree
9. Most people understand that working in a library involves more than just issuing books.	Disagree-----Agree
10. Many people think that working in the library is a 'soft job'.	Disagree-----Agree
11. I would consider leaving my position for another outside my library with greater pay.	Disagree-----Agree
12. Possible career advancement motivates me in my current position.	Disagree-----Agree
13. Since working here I have been given the opportunity to attend library related meetings and continuing educational events.	Disagree-----Agree

14. Attending library related training sessions will help me to advance my career.	Disagree-----Agree
15. I am discouraged from attending training sessions because of the time and distance it takes to get there.	Disagree-----Agree
16. It has always been my career goal to be a librarian.	Disagree-----Agree
17. I am keen to advance professionally by up skilling my qualifications.	Disagree-----Agree
18. Small staff numbers mean that I am often unable to attend meetings out of town.	Disagree-----Agree

**Please circle all that apply:**

19. I was attracted to living here because:

Have always lived here / Family / Job prospects / Community life

20. When I go to training sessions outside of my own town I travel by:

Car / Bus / Plane / Ferry / Train (circle as many as applies)

**Part Three: Managerial Staffing Issues** (for each of the following statements please indicate if you agree or disagree with the statement).

1. I am always available via telephone to help staff when I am not at work.	Disagree-----Agree
2. I have been adequately trained to deal with managerial responsibilities e.g. budgets and statistics.	Disagree-----Agree
3. It is often difficult to find suitable candidates to fill vacant positions.	Disagree-----Agree
4. I am satisfied that my staff are suitably trained for their positions.	Disagree-----Agree
5. It is hard to recruit suitable staff to positions when they don't already live in town.	Disagree-----Agree
6. I am discouraged in my role due to a lack of funding.	Disagree-----Agree
7. The public library network helps me to feel less isolated as a manager.	Disagree-----Agree
8. It is difficult to recruit library graduates to vacant positions because of the perceived lack of career opportunities outside of the city.	Disagree-----Agree

## Book reviews

### Excellent young adult services—highly recommended

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***Excellence in library services to young adults*. 5th ed. Ed. by Amy Alessio. Chicago: Young Adult Library Services Association/American Library Association, 2008. 144 pp. price not reported soft cover ISBN 9780838984574**

This book comes with very high credentials: it is an updated 5th edition in the very popular Excellence series, it is under the umbrella of the American Library Association (ALA) and the Margaret A. Edwards Trust; and the preface has been contributed by Dr Mary Chelton, an eminent librarian and powerful advocate for young adult services in libraries. The book's primary purpose is to present the winning library programs in the competition titled Excellence in Library Service to Young Adults Recognition Project 2007–2008, which was judged by selected members of YALSA (Young Adults Library Services Association, a part of ALA). Twenty-five programs exemplify excellence in library services to young adults (YAs). The competition not only rewards excellence but also aims to inspire and stimulate those YA practitioners who strive to encourage teens to read for pleasure, to find joy and purpose in the library facility and to interact in a practical way with library initiatives. Though this publication is intended for public library staff, it has much relevance for secondary teacher librarians, inviting reflection about possibilities for their situations.

In the introduction the editor sets out the criteria for judging the entries. The format for each of the book's 25 winning programs includes a program summary, steps taken to implement the program, description of the library hosting the program, intended audience and rationale for the program, numbers of YAs reached, numbers of staff and volunteers used, budgets and costings, marketing, youth participation (in preparation and presentation), evaluation, suggested variations for other communities and relevance to overall YA services at the public library.

The book has seven main chapters, collecting programs into categories: enhancing teen spaces (physical and virtual), creative teen clubs, reading initiatives, community connections, outreach to diverse communities, programs for under \$100 and special events and festival tie-ins. Within each chapter there are three or four programs from different libraries to fit the category. The range of programs is broad, with a wide variation in the level of expertise, space and money involved. Most of them could be applied to any library with sufficient

enthusiasm/expertise/space/money. The practicalities are clearly explained, and each program begins with the name of the program, the library involved, the targeted audience and the e-mail address of the contact person. This last listing is an especially generous act in sharing knowledge with other practitioners.

The appendices of this book offer additional inspiration. They set out the YALSA application form which could be a blueprint for anyone wishing to build on this idea, the YALSA set of competencies for Young Adult Librarians and two YALSA White Papers with references: 'The Need for Teen Spaces in Public Libraries' and 'The Value of Young Adult Literature'.

This book easily justifies its place on the desk of anyone handling a teenage library service. It comes highly recommended.

**Heather Fisher**

New England Girls' School

## Laughing and learning

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***Reading is funny! Motivating kids to read with riddles.* By Dee Anderson. Chicago: American Library Association, 2009. 216 pp. US\$40.00 (ALA members US\$36.00) soft cover ISBN 9780838909577**

Why do skeletons read riddle books? To tickle their funny bones.

I love to have my funny bone tickled, so I was looking forward to *Reading is funny!* and I was not disappointed. Eight reasons for sharing riddles with children introduce the book—most importantly, to make children laugh. Reasons encompass the educational advantages, not least of which are exercising young minds with the multiple meanings of words and improving vocabulary, and making the library a fun place to visit.

The first section includes activities for using riddles in the library, both public and school. These are for primary school children, but some may be modified for other ages and even adults. Anderson's suggestion of sharing riddles at the circulation desk would work for all ages, and makes an entertaining alternative to chatting about the weather. Activities include: riddles on bulletin boards, library promotion through riddles, games with riddles, and sharing riddles with puppets. The puppet section includes some useful tips for puppetry—Anderson has previously written about puppets. The riddle file and riddle jar are particularly worthwhile.

Half the book comprises riddles ordered by theme for easy discovery, with links between related topics. Libraries, fairy tales, animals, holidays, sports and more

are covered. I laughed a lot during this section. Some riddles are US-based, but the majority work just as well in Australia. There is a riddle about Graeme Base, but other riddles on books and authors, and the book list, are American. Anderson provides tips on making your own riddles to alleviate this somewhat. Appendices include scripts for puppet plays, stencils for bulletin boards and games, activity sheets, and templates for promotional bookmarks using riddles.

Anderson contends that *Reading is funny!* is about riddles, humorous plays on words. I found it hard to overcome my need to call them jokes because they were funny. I think of a riddle as an extended play on words that needs to be solved, for example, when confronting Gollum or a troll guarding a bridge. You must answer the troll's riddle to gain safe passage, and he is not asking to make you laugh, but because he will eat you if you answer incorrectly. Anderson recommends more friendly trolls on bridges as a riddle game in the library, but I bring them up to explain the problem I have with the book's cover. The laughing children make for a bright, inviting scene, but the very thick, hardcover book that is so funny is definitely not a joke book (riddle book does not sound quite right); perhaps it is the dictionary where you can always find money when you're broke.

If you want to tickle the funny bones in your library, I recommend *Reading is funny!* for all public and school libraries working with primary school children.

Clare Snowball

Curtin University of Technology

## LC, OCLC, and cataloguing controversy

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***Responsible librarianship: library policies for unreliable systems.* By David Bade. Duluth, MN: Library Juice Press, 2008. 173 pp. US\$22.00 soft cover ISBN 9780977861767**

This work is a collection of three papers and an appendix (pp. 137–172) of bibliographical entries in OCLC, before and after correction. Noteworthy too is the Foreword! [sic] by Thomas Mann of the Library of Congress (LC), whose writings on proposed drastic changes to the catalogues at LC have caused much comment. 'Perhaps', Mann writes,

after reading the timely and much-needed study by David Bade, the library profession might actually consider a counter-proposition [to one he mentions earlier]: The even greater enemy of the good is the slipshod, the incompetent, the superficial, the incomplete, and the demonstrably incorrect.'

Clearly David Bade will lead us into contentious realms and we need to have our wits about us.

The major work in this book, *Politics and policies for database qualities*, (rev. 2007, pp. 1–107) is a sustained analysis about questions so basic and contentious that it should become a classic. But the questions are ones keenly seized upon by the administrators of library systems, looking for ways to lower or share costs and willing to take far-reaching decisions without too much bothersome consultation with professionals or users.

At the basis of this book and its extensive research into questions of co-operative data sharing, creation of databases and the role of the human operative, standards of quality control and what finally the work of libraries is meant to achieve after all this, is the internal organisational struggle the Library of Congress is undergoing under the ill-starred Deanna Marcum. Thomas Mann, also an LC officer, is important in that context; librarians are urged by this reviewer to consult his online paper, 'What Is Going on at the Library of Congress?' (<http://www.guild2910.org/AFSCMEWhatIsGoingOn.pdf>).

Marcum has found in Karen Calhoun of Cornell University Library the driving intellectual force for the changes which are seen as desirable at LC. Bade has placed the work of Calhoun at Cornell under his meticulous microscope and arrives at conclusions which would not be useful to have on one's CV. Bade sees Calhoun's restructuring of cataloguing procedures and ideas (Classification on Receipt, COR) leading to the creation of a 'catastrophe in the building of an information system'. He concludes: 'COR records are neither trustworthy nor reliable'. There is a lot more denunciation and hard language not quoted here because the whole work requires reading, not just selected passages. In American librarianship in the 21st century, does one notice a slight seismic tremor? Perhaps it is overdue?

In discussing the quality of databases, the largely neglected attention to human input factors, the criteria for deciding quality in systems and services, and the reason why failures that can destroy database integrity and reliability are often not even noticed, Bade displays a terrier-like persistence in uncovering the facts, and, most importantly, cites real examples. One example from OCLC is worth serious attention: almost the total metadata in the example from OCLC is wrong in some aspect or other. This includes the language in which the book in question is written (Albanian, not Russian). Bade concludes:

Once reliability is seriously questioned, trust is impossible and the entire system collapses.



A final quote from Bade puts his personal position clearly and invites us to see where we might stand once we have a better grasp of the intricacies of what is involved:

It is the position of the present author that the repudiation within libraries of the values and commitments of science and scholarship...cannot lead to libraries which reliably serve science or scholarship.

The two other sections in this book dovetail well with the principal section and will not be further considered here. *Responsible librarianship* is a powerful book, hard-hitting and from a tradition of librarianship which is no longer dominant. It has the grand moral passion of a Zola (*J'accuse*) and it should be widely read by those who found Nicholson Baker's *Double fold* so gripping. Professional ethics and concerns such as 'our core values' are all implicated in this work.

It is wordy at times and certainly over-laden with references which could be profitably trimmed. A steady editorial hand seems absent too. It is not an easy read nor is it mastered in just one reading, but it is a questioning and unsettling work. Above all, it reminds us that library science can produce material of challenging intellectual quality. It is a book with which the reviewer will not part.

R.L. Cope  
Sydney

## Special spaces for teens

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***Teen spaces: the step-by-step library makeover.* 2nd Ed. By Kimberly Bolan. Chicago: American Library Association, 2009. 240 pp. US\$40.00 (ALA members US\$36.00) soft cover ISBN 9780838909690**

The author is a library consultant to public and school libraries in the US, focusing on facilities planning and design, strategic planning, teen and youth services, technology services, customer service and marketing. All these perspectives shine through this most interesting, practical, relevant book. It is easy and appropriate reading for frontline staff, librarians serving teenagers, administrators, parent-teacher or community supporters—it applies to new library planning, renovations, revamping and simple alterations to provide a dedicated, attractive, safe, motivational, teen-oriented space which acknowledges teen clients and their needs.

The book has six significant chapters which lead the reader through the stages of developing a teen library area, beginning with understanding teens and their spaces and continuing with analysis of the site, planning and setting

out proposals, designing and decorating, promoting the area and setting up policies and practices. It is followed by five appendices which include templates for teen community surveys, feedback sheets, questionnaires, brainstorming worksheets, budget worksheets, planning worksheets, an inventory checklist and similar time saving devices. There is a very extensive bibliography which is linked to each chapter.

The chief value of this book is the myriad of perspectives it offers: some ideas are big budget items, while others are clever decorative touches. The author believes that it is essential that any teen space be comfortable, colourful, interactive, flexible in design and filled with technology. The environment should be welcoming, have visual impact, be versatile, and encourage a positive, independent use of the library. In the text there are frequent text boxes, illustrations, photographs, quick tips, graphs and tables supported by detailed positive and encouraging notes. Coloured photographs would have added immeasurably to the quality of the publication, but it would also have added substantially to the costs of production.

This is a worthwhile book to read and digest and certainly warrants a place on the professional bookshelf. However, it is more useful for public library planning than for school libraries which have educational imperatives requiring study and research space for classes of 30 teens, access to computers and A/V technologies for whole classes as well as space for private study students and recreational library use. Of course, both kinds of libraries need to consider the role they perform, and this will inform their decision-making, but equally both will be committed to attracting and engaging teens. Such a book offers motivation to transform for a better environment.

**Heather Fisher**

New England Girls' School

## Version control for tales and fables

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***Twice upon a time: a guide to fractured, altered and retold folk and fairy tales.***  
**By Catharine Bomhold and Terri E. Elder. Children's and Young Adult Literature Reference Series. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2008. 208 pp. £25.95 hard cover ISBN9781591583905**

In this volume, 302 versions of 27 well-known folk tales, fairy tales and fables (although not mentioned in the title) are discussed. These are versions which are significantly different in some way from the accepted retellings: there are Chinese, animal, Jewish, feminist, Cajun, reversal and many other approaches.

'Cinderella' is the tale retold most frequently: there are 75 'fractured' versions here, as opposed to only two of 'The Bremen Town Musicians'. Other favourites included are 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff', 'The Emperor's New Clothes' and 'The Tortoise and the Hare'.

The preface explains the authors' approach. They collected versions of tales familiar to American readers which were changed in some obvious way from the best-known version—perhaps it was set in a different culture or given a new ending, or was rewritten as parody—and available in picture book format. For each (with the exception of 'The Turnip'), the 'original' version is recounted, then the 'fractured' versions follow, with publication details, country or culture represented, motifs apparent and a synopsis emphasising the new elements. For most, a brief history of the tale is given. There is a bibliography of original versions and secondary sources, and separate indexes by author, title, illustrator, country/culture and motif. The versions are numbered, and the indexes refer to those numbers. The publication dates of the picture books themselves range from 1980 (Raymond Briggs' classic *Jim and the Beanstalk*) to 2007.

The titles of some versions speak for themselves: 'The Wolf Who Cried Boy', 'Goldilocks and the Three Martians', 'M.C. Turtle and the Hip Hop Hare: A Nursery Rap', 'Giants Have Feelings, too'. Some have been made politically correct by a simple gender reversal or the use of a different ethnicity (there are 16 African-American versions), while others are truly strange, like 'Bigfoot Cinderrrrrella' [sic]. The fact that motifs include 'handicaps', 'holidays (Passover)' and 'ecology' demonstrates the likely reasons for the appearance of these new versions.

Although there is an index of the illustrators of these picture books, there is no comment whatsoever on the illustrations, even as to medium or style. Where appropriate, however, the inclusion of pronunciation guides, foreign words and even recipes is noted. The listing of the source countries and cultures and the wide variety of motifs that can be found adds to the value of this book for both school and children's librarians, as well as for teachers.

This would be a useful work for those interested in either serious folklore or new approaches to old tales, although this approach to traditional tales is not unique: Gail de Vos and Anna E. Altmann in *New tales for old: folktales as literary fictions for young adults* (1999) covered some similar ground. The current work can be recommended, however, because it is the most complete of its kind, is well-researched and of obvious use to the right professionals. 'The Little Red Hen Makes a Pizza', anyone?

**Heather Fisher**

New England Girls' School

## The big picture: international access to information

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***Access to libraries and information: towards a fairer world.* Ed. by Theo J.D. Bothma. IFLA/FAIFE World Report Series, 7. The Hague: IFLA, 2008? 480 pp. price not reported soft cover ISBN 9780838984888**

This title is on the one hand a very depressing read. However, on the other hand it is quite inspirational and if, as professional library/information specialists, we have an interest in the 'big picture' and feel some professional camaraderie with librarianship globally, then it is also a very interesting read. It is depressing because of the overwhelming number of countries where there is evidence that there are serious difficulties with freedom of publishing of information (especially in relation to newspaper media), with freedom of access to information and with freedom of debate and expression. It is inspirational because there are strong believers in the right to expression/publication/access to information and they work at local, national and international levels towards positive change in their countries. Many are both gatekeepers and watchdogs and tread a difficult, arbitrary line balancing political expediency with moral right.

The title begins with six short papers which make fascinating reading: three offer South African experiences dealing with censorship, access to information, government barriers to freedom of expression, archives and rights of access and legislation in the struggle. Another paper originates in Russia, where the discussion focuses on corruption and the lack of transparency and the challenges this poses for libraries, while a paper originating in Tunisia looks at censorship in the Arab world. A discussion of the impact of legislation on libraries focuses on the USA's Patriot Act, expressing serious concern about the intruding powers of this Act in the name of anti-terrorism.

A recognised national library body or chief librarian completed a questionnaire for each country, and the responses were then used as a basis for a report on the country. A chapter setting out the rationale for each section of the questionnaire and its structure also included discussion of the difficulties of language and terminology, definition of terms and data collection. The actual questionnaire is reproduced in English, French and Spanish in the Appendix. This 2007 World Report used the responses from 116 countries to provide a snapshot of a wide range of library services and issues, with a particular focus on access. Data analysis covered the responses plus further additional research to cross-check for accuracy and consistency as IFLA strives to reflect the real situation. The reports are arranged in alphabetical order by country,

and each shares the same structure, based on the sections of the questionnaire. Website evidence is sprinkled throughout the reports to verify statements, especially where there was some divergence between submitted reports and other sources. A lengthy chapter follows all the short country chapters, offering the analysis and conclusions to be drawn from all the foregoing evidence. This is meticulous and scholarly, dissecting the responses question by question.

This is an encyclopaedic work which reminds us all of larger responsibilities than some of the minutiae which occupy many of our days. It is difficult to absorb all the acronyms which proliferate, sometimes requiring prior knowledge, but the essential elements of the text through the articles, country reports and the analysis dominate and demand reflection. This is a large work on large issues.

**Heather Fisher**

New England Girls' School

## Library ethics: 125 case studies

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***Case studies in library and information science ethics.* By Elizabeth A. Buchanan and Kathrine A. Henderson. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2009. 175 pp. US\$49.95 soft cover ISBN 9780786433674 9780786433674.**

Not another book of case studies! Of course, it is fun creating scenarios for students to consider, and in the past many of these have been put together for publication. So, what is different about this one which may tempt us to buy it? Does the usage value of the intellectual content make it a bargain for the ANZ professional to buy?

The North American orientation of this admittedly interesting book is unfortunate; for example, the index notes references to one Canadian and several US organisations, but no professional associations from the rest of the world—though Ghandi and others do get passing mention in the text! Given that international bodies such as IFLA and FID are also ignored, do the geographical limitations of this book exclude it from consideration in this part of the world? The matter of professional ethics is indeed one of international concern, but are they in fact culturally related? Indeed, can codes of ethics change national cultures in order to establish a global one, and actually be used as tools to colonise the thinking and behaviour of librarians and other information workers? Is there (should there be) an ethics of ethics?

Buchanan and Henderson have succeeded in planning and compiling a useful, practical book in which 125 library-based case studies are presented. Each is quite short, and the impression is that many hint at political correctness (which raises the question of a relationship). Perhaps the really valuable features are the brief but pertinent discussions of professional ethics, and the bibliographical references. Following the introduction, the main body consists of five thematic chapters: intellectual freedom; privacy; intellectual property; professional ethics; and intercultural information ethics, which reprints a handy paper by Rafael Capurro and goes some way to raising a wider awareness. However, 'intercultural' is not culturally international. The format is the provision of a brief introduction for each chapter, and 25 short relevant case studies, each followed by three or four questions for thought.

Some background information is included in the case studies, but generally they are so brief as to exclude environmental factors. The case studies certainly raise current ethical areas of concern (such as case 4.21 about students downloading music and films, and case 6.8 on donation of relevant books to the National Library of Afghanistan—though this reviewer faced very similar ethical questions in the early 1970s relating to the same country).

Is the book a bargain? That depends largely on the knowledge of the topic which individuals already have—but as a source for stimulating discussion among students and helping the development of a professional philosophy to assist practice, the purchase price could certainly be worth it for group work.

**Edward Reid-Smith**

Charles Sturt University

## US legal text for libraries

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***Privacy and confidentiality issues: a guide for libraries and their lawyers.* By Theresa Chmara. Chicago: American Library Association, 2009. 98 pp. US\$40.00 (US\$ 36.00 ALA members) soft cover ISBN 9780838909706**

There is much debate about privacy and protecting our users' information on the one hand and how we could better mine that data on the other. Overlying this are the legal requirements we all have to follow, alongside the potential community benefits and consequences, which we have to weigh up.

This guide aims to help libraries learn where they stand in the eyes of the law and develop strategies to deal with the complexities that emerge. It does this in the form of frequently asked questions (FAQs) organised into the general areas of law, the Internet, statutes, minors, federal law and library policies.

The first chapter provides a brief overview of the sorts of instances where privacy and confidentiality issues arise, giving some real-life examples of where requests have been made by law enforcement agencies or employers and how they were dealt with by the libraries involved. It then moves on to the FAQs for each area. The US First Amendment and other legal considerations are covered in the next chapter; although we do not have the same rights here, the principles are similar, and it is worth the time to read through the various questions and responses for some guidance on what to do in similar situations in Australia and New Zealand.

The chapter on the Internet is valuable for all libraries, as this is still a much-untested space. The FAQs cover the questions of Internet and the law, filters, claims of responsibility, liability, minors, inappropriate content, policy and reporting obligations. A brief chapter on state statutes brings out the issues of parental access to a child's information, law enforcement and policy.

The following chapters deal with minors, their standing under the law and the impact of federal laws on issues of privacy and confidentiality. It then discusses the need for libraries to have a privacy policy and what this would entail and finishes with coverage of the particular legal statutes of each of the states of the USA.

Given the US orientation, there are many parallels in Australian law and library dealings that make this a valuable source. Although short, the FAQ format covers the issues in a helpful manner. Easy to read and with a transferable relevance from US to Australian law, this book will be a helpful tool for any library concerned with privacy and confidentiality.

**Michelle McLean**

Casey-Cardinia Library Corporation

## **Craft's cool man, but colour would be cooler**

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***The hipster librarian's guide to teen craft projects.* By Tina Coleman and Peggie Llanes. Chicago: American Library Association, 2009. 104 pp. US\$40.00 (ALA members US\$36.00) soft cover ISBN 9780838909713**

This book is designed as a handy guide for young adult librarians and schoolteachers who may be looking for up-to-date crafts to attract the attention of teenagers. Many libraries conduct school holiday activities for young children; however, it can be difficult to find craft that is suitable for teenagers and ideas that will capture their interest. The authors state that 'crafting can provide an

outlet for them to express their individuality and gain confidence'; and there is the added advantage of providing entertainment for bored teenagers, in addition to giving teenagers skills including 'problem solving, patience, teamwork and self-sufficiency'. There has been increasing interest in traditional crafts like knitting, crochet and paper crafts among all age groups, including teenagers, as craft is suddenly 'hip' and 'cool'. Libraries can tap into this interest by creating craft activities that give teenagers a creative outlet, engaging their attention in addition to promoting the library and providing holiday activities for the local community.

*The hipster librarian's guide to teen craft projects* contains 12 craft projects to be conducted by librarians using inexpensive and recycled materials. Each project is rated for the level of difficulty, time required, supervision, group size and 'mess factor'. It is a pity that most of the activities are for small groups of up to six (the largest is eight people), as most public libraries tend to cater for larger groups. Also, the 'mess factor' of many of the projects is high, which can be a problem if the library does not have a special room that can be used for craft, although this is not an issue for schools.

Each craft project has a list of required supplies and tools, materials and room requirements. Step-by-step instructions explain each craft, and there are additional online resources such as a blog and useful reproducible handouts available from the website ([www.ala.org/editions/extras/](http://www.ala.org/editions/extras/)). Crafts include bookmarks, fabric collages, jewellery, vinyl tote bags and 'book pillows'. The authors also provide tips for adapting the projects for young children and for adults with developmental disabilities, and the section titled 'Spin-offs' lists variations on the theme for further craft projects. The final craft product is illustrated with a small black and white photograph. Colour photographs, while increasing the cost, would greatly improve the appearance and usefulness of the book, as a craft book without colour lacks vibrancy and does not encourage people to attempt the crafts. Also this book is designed as a teaching workbook, so the use of spiral binding would have been helpful.

Overall this is a handy craft book for public and school libraries that provides detailed, low cost, modern craft projects that use recycled material that would appeal to many teenagers.

**Kay Neville**

TAFE New South Wales



## Rethinking archives

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***What are archives? Cultural and theoretical perspectives: a reader.* Ed. by Louise Craven. Guildford: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008. 196 pp. £60.00 hard cover ISBN 9780754673101**

In recent years the archival profession has been grappling with a number of fundamental changes. Some of these are obvious—technological change and the move to electronic records, for example; but others are rather less visible, particularly issues relating to the social and political role of archives and the impact of new ways of thinking about culture and heritage. The Fourth International Conference on the History of Records and Archives (ICHORA), held in Perth, WA in 2008, was one of several international conferences devoted to this theme. This book has its origins in a similar conference convened by the Society of Archivists in September 2006. The papers presented by a range of British archivists look at various aspects of the relationship between archives and concepts of identity, heritage, and culture. According to the editor, Louise Craven of The National Archives, it represents an attempt to address the question ‘why archives?’ rather than providing yet another account of how to manage archives.

A common concern of the contributors is to get away from the kind of archival theory which focuses on organisations and their records, and was codified most clearly by Hilary Jenkinson in the 1960s. Jenkinson emphasised the ‘official character’ of archival records and their continuing preservation in official custody. Andrew Prescott, in contrast, talks about breaking down the distinction between the ‘official’ archive and other types of archives, especially those connected with communities. He, like several other contributors, draws on the ideas of post-modernist thinkers like Foucault, Barthes, and especially Jacques Derrida—whose ‘Archive Fever’ essay has had a profound effect on some thinkers in the profession. Andrew Flinn also discusses ways of ‘democratising the archives’ and ensuring that they become more representative, especially through collecting materials from campaign groups and networks, community groups and social movements. Caroline Williams looks at personal papers as archives, and examines their relationship to organisation-focused archival theory and practice.

Several contributors reflect on the new possibilities offered by the digital world. Andrea Johnson reports on a research project examining ways of modelling user behaviour in order to design digital services. Michael Moss and Jane Stevenson discuss new audiences and new kinds of access in a digital environment, including such ideas as ‘Your Archives’ – The National Archives’ initiative to invite users to add their own information to its catalogue.

This is an exceptionally interesting, stimulating and challenging collection of essays. You do not have to agree with them to find them valuable and thought-provoking. For librarians, they raise some additional questions: in the digital world, what are libraries? And why is there so little theoretical discussion of this kind in the library profession? With the move of so many electronic resources out of libraries to the publishing 'cloud', are the distinctive elements of libraries and archives converging?

**Toby Burrows**

University of Western Australia

## Great for teachers and students

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***Information science 101*. By Anthony Debons. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2008. 241 pp. £33.00 soft cover ISBN 13: 9780810852891**

'Unlike matter, information can be in many places at once' (Debons, 2008, p. 214)—which is precisely why we need trained information scientists who understand how to use technology to complement and extend human skills and knowledge in the management of information. However, advanced technology alone is not the solution. Bigger and smarter computers and courses in computer science are merely one facet of the broader social and cultural world in which people create, store, manipulate and disseminate information today, and in the future. *Information science 101* is designed to guide students to an understanding of how to manage the increasing avalanche of information and the often bewildering advances in associated technology, and to help students identify and select appropriate training for careers in information science.

The book is divided into four units with several topics in each, making it an ideal sourcebook for teachers of information-based subjects as well as their students. Each chapter opens with clearly stated learning objectives and an introductory overview and concludes with a summary and a series of exercises designed to challenge students and lead them on to more comprehensive thinking on each topic.

Unit 1 deals with the nature of information and knowledge as part of human interaction with the world. The chapters in Unit 2 identify information science as a discipline and examine the occupations and professions involved in the acquisition, transmission and processing of data, enabling a person to become informed. The focus of Unit 3 is the development of understanding of ways in which technology can influence human competence and problem solving,

and how technology affects social values and practices. Finally, Unit 4 examines major issues in information science, including the quality of information, security, privacy, equity, ethics and, of course, the future of the discipline in an ever-changing world. Specific future developments discussed include distance learning; computer sensory recognition (including voice control); supercomputers; intelligent software programs such as navigators, expert systems; and, predictably, the future of the library as a place to seek resources and information.

*Information Science 101* is the most comprehensive coverage of the topic that I have seen. In addition, it is well indexed and contains a useful glossary of terms and an extensive bibliography. It is logically arranged, and a glance through the detailed contents pages helps the reader quickly locate relevant topics. I would recommend it to everyone involved in the teaching of information science as well as the students. This is thoroughly good value.

**Helen Dunford**

Tasmanian Polytechnic

## Refurbishing? Save time, read this

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***Renewing our libraries: case studies in re-planning and refurbishment.* Ed. by Michael Dewe. Guildford: Ashgate Publishing, 2009. 284 pp. £60.00 hard cover ISBN 9780754673392**

On receiving this book for review my first thought was 'Oh, yes—been there, done that!' And we have: for almost three years we shunted and juggled our resources and clients as first one half of our library and then the other was totally gutted and rebuilt around us, to allow for the addition of 50 computers for our new FlexiTrain centre. Having managed to remain sane and survive all this, my next thought was, 'I wonder what these studies can tell us that we didn't figure out at the time?' And the answer is, not much, as far as the basics are concerned, but oh how much easier it would have been if we had read this book before we started. Massive amounts of time which we spent in meetings with architects, finance officers and facilities management staff could have been saved. Further time spent mindlessly moving furniture and resources could have been devoted to improving services. If only we could have said, 'This is how they did it at xyz and we think that would work here'. If only....

So, although we managed our renewal without the benefit of Michael Dewe's book, this is not a course of action I would recommend to others in our situation.

Before you even start planning you must read this book. It contains 16 well chosen and detailed case studies from libraries (mainly in the UK) which have undergone projects to modernise, extend or expand library services. The studies are presented in five sections: heritage buildings, widening the library's role, creating modern university learning environments, modernising and adding space, and creating a refurbishment template. The introduction and the concluding chapters unify the studies and review the policies, processes, design issues and problems which are features of the case studies.

The book is well indexed and has a bibliography of print and electronic resources, the most useful of which is *Designing libraries: the gateway to better library buildings* at [www.designinglibraries.org.uk](http://www.designinglibraries.org.uk). This database contains details of over 250 libraries which have been built, refurbished or extended between 1995 and the present.

Today's library users expect services to be provided in well-designed and welcoming physical surroundings. In achieving this aim everyone involved with modernising and raising the profile of any library must read *Renewing our libraries*—and this includes architects, financial consultants and facilities managers, as well as library professionals.

**Helen Dunford**

Tasmanian Polytechnic

## Accelerating access

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***Best practices in access services.* Ed. by Lori L. Driscoll and W. Bede Mitchell. London: Routledge, 2009. 381 pp. price not reported hard cover ISBN 9780789038524**

This is a fascinating book for any librarian. It embodies a sense of change that is a paradigm for any library that is not stagnating; it offers a feast of innovative ideas that have been implemented and evaluated; it is fresh with energy and enthusiasm. There is something inspirational in reading about the achievements of others who are somewhat like yourself in a library context somewhat like your own, accomplishing quite extraordinary changes in access for their community.

Access is a pivotal concept in every library service: it involves the organisation and administration of a collection of resources and facilities to serve its community. Implementing access is complex and multifaceted, and this book reveals a great number of innovative ways in which access has been extended for a more productive service to the community.

The aim of this book is to present a variety of ways in which access can be improved, and one of the strengths is the variety of evidence shared. Over 33 chapters share the stories from different locations and different kinds of libraries. Wellington City Libraries (NZ) network devised a revolution in change management and business practice, and West Palm Beach Library undertook a makeover of the library's interior decorating and better customer services training. Lake City Community College Library decided to try letting go of some of the rules and established comfortable lounges, food and drink vending machines, aggressive weeding, expansion of budgetary allocations for magazines, increased digital resources, DVDs, ambient lighting, and hosted many social events. The Ohio University Libraries Reference Department experimented and refined the idea of video kiosks for more widespread reference assistance using Skype. Georgia Southern University reported on the way in which they delivered a 24-hour service from Sundays to midnight on Fridays.

The University of Central Florida worked on the morale, attendance, enthusiasm, quality of service and communication skills for staff. A library at the University of Chicago had a mission to improve quality of access through speeding up their operations and reducing any waste of time and effort ('lean thinking') and began with focusing on daily shelving practices. The University of Denver worked on systems to streamline the handling of lost and missing books. The Cheng Library worked on quantifying the volume of materials used but not borrowed in the library when they contributed to a significant degree to the work of the Library staff. Eastern Washington University Library had a project to circulate laptops, and the University of North Carolina developed systems to facilitate circulation of 123 wireless laptops for student use as well as DVD players, MP3 players and other peripherals. These and many other chapters make captivating reading.

Each of these initiatives is discussed by the implementing library professional who succinctly sets out the details (in many cases with references) in the spirit of sharing the experience. There are practical matters as well as philosophical foundations, successes, adjustments and evaluations. Best practice can be on a grand scale or it might be a small achievable step, and librarian-readers in almost any library will feel empowered to think about their own workplaces.

**Heather Fisher**  
New England Girls' School

## Leading from the middle—a powerhouse of analysis

***Collaborating with administrators and educational support staff.* By Lesley S. J. Farmer. *Best Practices for School Library Media Professionals.* New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2007. 217 pp. price not reported soft cover ISBN 9781555705723**

This title offers an intense discussion of collaboration as a specific strategy for maximisation of outcomes for the school library media specialist (hereafter called the teacher librarian). The author believes the adage, if it takes a village to raise a child then it takes the entire school community to raise a student. The school community embraces everyone who is in the school environs including the principal, the teaching staff at every level, the administrative staff and the students. Success for the teacher librarian can depend on the relationships and the dynamics among all these players, and this can be successful and constructive or otherwise. The author actually does not explore the fragmented and difficult path to tread if there is no collaboration, simply describing the immense benefits and leadership opportunities to be gained from developing skills of collaboration. The skills offered are practical and relevant; the tone is supportive and not didactic.

Teacher librarians must position themselves to exercise 'leadership from the middle', as the author calls it, to include a welcoming and interactive environment, a relevant collection development program, resource access for every student in a variety of formats and ability levels, professional and efficient management and collaboration with every member of the school learning community to develop valuable networking links.

Collaboration skills need to be embedded within an organisational, political and social context so that the teacher librarian can be confident, street-wise (read school-wise), committed to be a change agent, inclusive and savvy about marketing achievements, especially giving credit to others in collaborative partnerships. In some ways the author seems to suggest some crass, obsequious strategies but in the larger context, the actions are probably realistic.

The early chapters on how schools work and the role of the teacher librarian are necessarily American and of limited value in Australia and New Zealand. However, from Chapter 3, when discussion turns to the skills of collaboration,

this book is a powerhouse of analysis, strategies for implementation and directions for collaborators. There follow strategies for interacting with the principal, administrative staff, teachers, specialist teachers and co-curricular personnel, each being dealt with in a very specific manner, suggesting ways in which the teacher librarian can position himself or herself for maximum benefit. The last section of the book relates to measuring the impact of the process of collaboration from various perspectives, including the impact on improving overall school literacy.

A short citation list is attached to each chapter with an extensive bibliography at the end of the book. This title is more than a treatise on the leadership role of the teacher librarian—it would, in fact, be a valuable read for everyone in the school community. It is motivational and practical as well as a fascinating read.

**Heather Fisher**

New England Girls' School

## **Drawing Mole and Ratty and Mr Toad and Mr Badger and . . .**

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***The illustrators of The Wind in the Willows, 1908–2008.* By Carolyn Hares-Stryker. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2009. 192 pp. US\$55.00 hard cover ISBN 9780786439485**

*The Wind in the Willows* is one of the world's best-loved children's books and was first published a century ago; even so, it is perhaps surprising that over 90 illustrators have tackled it in a variety of full, abridged, simplified, pop-up, colouring book and animated versions. The work of these illustrators is the subject of this book.

For each illustrator—all are included, three of whom are anonymous—there is a brief biography; a comment on their other work; how they came to illustrate *Willows*; a discussion of their illustrations for it, including medium and style; and usually two pictures as examples. A few illustrators have no examples; the most important, such as Robert Ingpen for his centenary edition, have five.

The illustrators have a wide variety of backgrounds—from working at *Penthouse* to designing postage stamps, and they represent nine nationalities, including Australia (Ingpen, Pixie O'Harris), New Zealand (Graham Percy) and Iceland.

The illustrations themselves range from the quirky to the naturalistic (with naked animals) to the atmospheric.

The book is arranged chronologically by decade and, within each decade, by year of publication. Less important versions (in Hares-Stryker's opinion) are accorded a page or less, while some others, like those of Ingpen, Tasha Tudor and Charles van Sandwyk, are given four or five; Shepard himself is only given two. There are 16 full colour plates; the remainder of the illustrations are in clear black and white. There is a preface, a bibliography of secondary sources and an index.

This is an interesting book, especially, of course, for lovers of Grahame's work: it is revealed, for example, that E.H. Shepard was not the first full illustrator; rather it was an American, Paul Bransom. Moreover, the first edition had a single illustration, a frontispiece unrelated to the novel, by one Graham Robertson. Some versions are unashamedly 'Shepardesque', while others, even in full-length editions of the novel, range from reversed silhouettes to computer-generated illustrations. Even so, the illustrators all found the same problems, most notably how the size of the characters could best be dealt with as, on some occasions, they behave as humans and, on others, as small animals. Perhaps, too, Pan might well have been left to the readers' imagination; few of the illustrators who dared to try to represent him succeeded.

The work itself has its own problems: there is no list of the versions discussed; there are typos ('Egytology', 'Elpsbeth'); and some exaggeration, like reference to the 'remote mining community' of Moonta which is, in fact, only a couple of hours' drive from Adelaide. Understandably, the author does not evaluate her illustrators or their pictures; she merely records their existence. However, especially in the case of those versions for which no illustrations are shown, it is difficult for readers of this book to form their own opinions. Still, this work is recommended for not only fans of *The Wind in the Willows*, but also those interested in the development of children's book illustration over the last century.

**John Foster**

University of South Australia



## Practical approach to professional indemnity —highly recommended

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***Professional liability issues for librarians and information professionals.***

**By Paul D. Healey. *The Legal Advisor for Librarians, Educators and Information Professionals*. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2008. 235 pp. price not reported soft cover ISBN 9781555706098**

Healey is arguably the authority on the subject of professional liability for information professionals. Having practised law before becoming a librarian, he is now a tenured faculty member at the School of Information Studies, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. The appearance of this work neatly coincides with the increasing pressure for professionalisation in sectors of the library and information profession in New Zealand and throughout the world. US legislation and examples are referred to in this book, but the concepts and issues are universal.

Part 1 provides essential background explanations. The first chapter outlines liability as an issue in the information professions, including what liability, and professional liability, is, and the effect of liability issues on information professionals. It describes the distinction between the roles of librarian, archivists and museum curators and information brokers. It discusses the work information professionals do, and covers the relationship information professionals have with patrons, users, clients and customers. It comments on the division between public services where staff interact directly with users, and technical services where the work involves indirect interaction with the public.

Chapter 2 examines legal concepts for a thorough understanding of professional liability, and Chapter 3 goes into torts, contracts and other legal issues that can arise for information professionals. Chapter 4 focuses on the personal nature of potential professional liability, and the necessity to determine what duty of care exists for information professionals in carrying out their work. In this chapter Healey discusses the concept of 'profession', its importance in liability issues, what a profession is, whether the information professions meet the definition of a profession, the concepts of fiduciary and consultant, employment status and personal liability and standards and duties of care for the information professions. Chapter 5 explores potential sources of liability claims and where harm arises when information is wrong, when errors occur, types of errors, and guarantees, authority and expertise.

Chapters 6 to 9 in Part 2 address specific professional liability issues for librarians, law and medical librarians, information brokers, and archivists and curators. Part 3 covers proactive tools and approaches to avoid liability claims in each of the information sectors. Chapter 10 covers the hidden cost of liability fears and ways to approach general liability issues; Chapter 11 provides suggestions for training; Chapter 12 makes policy suggestions; and Chapter 13 provides a list of questions for a liability audit to identify potential areas or issues for information professionals.

The book is easy to read, and includes a glossary and indexes to cases and subjects. Its practical, explanatory rather than fear-ridden approach will help librarians, archivists, curators, and information brokers understand liability issues, how to control or avoid potential liability in their work, and to know when to seek legal advice. It is highly recommended for both private and public sector managers and decision makers, and front line staff seeking knowledge and tools to assess and prevent professional liability, or at least raise awareness of potential risks for their professional sector.

**Lois Robertson**

Archives New Zealand

## Great text on 2.0 tools

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***Web 2.0 for librarians and information professionals.* By Ellyssa Kroski.  
New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2008. 209 pp. price not reported soft cover  
ISBN 9781555706142**

*Web 2.0 for librarians and information professionals* is a recent addition to other writings about these revolutionary online communication applications. Ellyssa Kroski has apparently worked with information technologies for over 10 years and specialises in Web 2.0 technologies. She is a reference librarian at Columbia University, an information consultant, conference speaker and adjunct faculty member for Long Island University's LIS program. She characterises Web 2.0 as 'sites using participatory and collaborative technology'. Her stated intention is to introduce readers to 'a vast array of cutting-edge tools', defining, justifying and applying this technology in the process.

In gauging Kroski's attainment of such goals within her ensuing chapters, she certainly seems to meet them at a very high standard. Content is professional and provides an intermediate degree of detail—succinct rather

than ponderously textual, yet enough information to make this worthy as a sourcebook. This is a striking excursion through a portfolio of powerful innovations. Another of the book's merits is the author's acknowledgement of the higher-level social context—significantly, Web 2.0 is about connecting people with people rather than merely connecting people with information and technology.

The comparatively recent arrival of various interactive Web 2.0 tools is well documented here, packaged in an attractive and effective way. Each chapter focuses on one particular application, be it blogs, RSS, wikis, social networking software, answers technology, social cataloguing or podcasts, to name just some. Evidently there are both professional and recreational Web uses for most of these tools. Included are many screen shots of 'the most popular or representative example in each category' for practical illustrative purposes and also case studies, plus briefer library anecdotes about their uptake. There are liberal sprinklings of leading Web addresses for each type of tool throughout. For instance, from reading about video-sharing websites (YouTube, Metacafe, Revver) one can choose to leap over and discover vertical search engines (VSEs), such as Technorati, that attempt 'to be a one-stop shop for all things related' to a topic area.

Another feature of this book is the deliberate autonomy of chapter content, a genuinely modular construction that enables readers to target each chapter as they choose. Two appendices—a glossary and list of 'resources for Web 2.0 discovery' (recommended blogs, books, publications, websites)—are other handy inclusions.

This is a great resource, a topical cross-section summarising and reviewing outstanding technologies that have actually already permeated libraries, their 'constituencies' and broader society. Despite the perpetual volatility of development cycles, enhancements and ever-widening practical library and social applications, this remains a quality compilation. The book is attractive for the calibre of Kroski's definitions, her meticulous explorations of key concepts and annotations of leading contemporary examples. 'Thumbs up' to *Web 2.0 for librarians and information professionals*.

**Michael Cullen**

The University of Notre Dame Australia – Sydney

## Creating kid-friendly libraries

***Libraries designed for kids.* By Nolan Lushington. London: Facet Publishing, 2008. 173 pp. £44.95 soft cover ISBN 9781856046572**

This is not a bibliothecal animal farm handbook, but a wide-ranging illustrated work on children's libraries published simultaneously in the USA (by Neal-Schuman) and the UK. The author is an American library design consultant, and the book is printed and bound in the USA. As may be expected, the text, pictures and bibliographical references are very heavily biased towards the US; certainly this does not invalidate its interest for other countries, but the library world is a big place, and this limitation must be noted. For example, Chapter 7, on age-related design, has 13 illustrations of US origin (all except one with details of the libraries and designers) and one small picture (p. 88) simply labelled 'slanting book display bin shelving at an English library'. The section on suppliers (Appendix E) refers entirely to the US, so that for this UK version a URL has been added referring to a CILIP website which is updated daily 'for readers in the United Kingdom and Europe'.

The text is clearly presented in an introduction, ten chapters and six appendices, with a glossary and index. In addition to flowing text the dot point format is used freely, helping to keep the book to a handy size. Chapters, each averaging about a dozen pages of text and large illustrations, cover topics such as planning, design, physical organisation, furnishings, and three pages of simple quick fixes (e.g. weeding) and common mistakes (e.g. 'No quiet area—There is no place that a child can go to read quietly. Solution: Rearrange book stacks and seating to create a quiet area, such as an alcove'). These 'quick fixes' are, of course, noted in greater detail in the appropriate chapters. Although the intention of this work is to raise awareness in librarians of the issues involved in planning library services for children, the author notes that he founded the consulting firm of Lushington Associates in 1970 to specialise in enhancing library facilities. In Appendices B and C the author presents two case studies; in the first the layout of an existing building was redesigned, while the second was a new building. These studies not only encapsulate the author's philosophy but take the reader in a practical way through many of the problems and ideas already discussed in the main chapters. As in the chapters, points are well illustrated by photographs.

There are many books on library design, and this one is a useful addition to the literature incorporating up-to-date ideas based on the observations of a design professional of how children use libraries. If you are thinking about improving the use of your own children's library services, this could be a handy starting point.

**Edward Reid-Smith**

Charles Sturt University

## Arrive by accident?

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***The accidental librarian.* By Pamela H. MacKellar. Medford, NJ: Information Today, 2008. 406 pp. US\$29.50 soft cover ISBN 9781573873383**

This is a remarkable book written for a specific audience—library directors, managers and staff with little or no formal training. MacKellar writes in a clear and interesting style and has skilfully offered sufficient detail to be helpful without overloading the inexperienced reader. For those seeking additional material, there are suggestions throughout, as well as appendices giving recommended reading and listing websites which have been mentioned. There is a website where updates to the latter are given, but greater value would be added if this included all websites listed in the appendix rather than just updated and extra ones. MacKellar adds colour to her style by occasionally stressing her point of view in a conversational tone such as one might use when seeking to socialise a new recruit. Also, throughout the book are stories from individual 'accidental' librarians.

The book, or sections of it, will appeal to a fairly wide audience. Examples are given for different sectors of library work; however, the greatest emphasis is on public libraries in the USA, and it will be invaluable for that audience. Appendix A provides some sample policy statements; Appendix B lists US and a few Canadian colleges and universities offering library and information science courses; and Appendix C gives American Library Association statements and information on legislation. While many of the references throughout the book are relevant to all, many are also so US-specific that readers elsewhere will need to seek out the equivalent for their situation. With the amount of material included, it is still a good purchase outside the US.

There are four main parts to the book: basic library principles, basic library practice, technology and the library, and career development. The topic coverage within these is impressive. There is an emphasis on an informed customer focus and good planning in the first section. The second section

covers developing a collection, acquisitions, cataloguing and classification, information retrieval and dissemination, library services, library policies, management, marketing, and removing barriers. These are explained in simple language, and I spotted only two technical terms introduced without explanation. The chapters tell readers what tools to look for and what they need to know—but, understandably, people will still need to investigate further. Part 3 is on technology and is impressive, covering public access computers, catalogues, online reference tools and Library 2.0. Although Part 4, on career development is US-centric, it will still be useful to other new library staff, as it recommends electronic discussion groups, blogs, and gives an excellent short list of online publications. The book concludes with a thorough index.

This is an ambitious book that is highly recommended for new and 'accidental' librarians.

**Julia Leong**  
RMIT University

## Horses for courses, according to Colin

***The library at night.* By Alberto Manguel. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. 373 pp. US\$49.95 hard cover ISBN 9780300139143**

***Quiet, please: dispatches from a public librarian.* By Scott Douglas. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press/Perseus Books Group, 2008. 330 pp. US\$25.00 hard cover ISBN 9780786720910**

Argentinean bibliophile Alberto Manguel, who now resides in France, is best known for his authoritative and stimulating book, *The history of reading*, which was an international bestseller and winner of France's Prix Medicis. *The library at night* is his tribute to the physical library. Manguel undoubtedly prefers the comforting wrap-around cultural warmth of real books and libraries, such as the library he has installed in a 15th-century barn in the Loire, to the virtual ones of cyberspace.

Manguel ranges widely in his definition of libraries, including 'biblioburros'—libraries on donkeys, supplying books to remote Colombian rural areas. His 15 chapters analyse the historical and cultural value of libraries from a variety of conceptual perspectives, such as the library as myth, as order, as power and as space (but not MySpace!). He includes in his discussions some marvellous physical libraries, such as the Laurentian Library in Florence and the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel.

Manguel bemoans the fact that 'The library that contained everything, has become the library that contains anything'. His comments on the virtual library in general, and Google in particular, were, however, written in 2005, and the Internet world has moved on significantly since then. Nonetheless, the issues of digital preservation remain very relevant.

Robin Derricourt, Publisher and Director of the University of New South Wales Press, has reflected recently on ABC Radio National on the impermanence of the digital word. He concluded:

And when our own civilisation finally ends, as each civilisation does, where will be the repository that maintains what we now have as knowledge, perhaps even through some future dark ages, for later societies to inherit? They will still have Aristotle or Darwin, but they may not have the 21st century equivalents to read.

Manguel reflects that physical libraries are also often under threat. They can be destroyed, either by natural disasters or by human agency, as occurred in Nazi Germany and the looting of museums and libraries in Baghdad. The quarantining of knowledge through censorship can take a variety of forms, such as the control of the Internet in China and the news media in Zimbabwe. Augusto Pinochet in Chile, according to Manguel, even banned *Don Quixote*, as he believed it promoted civil disobedience.

Research libraries serve both to access and preserve knowledge, but what is a public library's role in the digital era? In the USA a large percentage of the circulation in a public library comes from popular fiction and DVDs. In the UK there has been a vigorous debate as to the dumbing-down of public libraries, and even the British Library has been criticised. Claire Tomalin, quoted this year in *The Times*, described the BL reading room crowds as intolerable: 'It's full of what seem to be schoolgirls giggling. I heard one saying, "I've got to write about Islam. Can I have your notes?" It's what you expect to hear in a school'. Public libraries are certainly for use, and if there is a gap in Manguel's survey, it is the general public library. Maybe he could see the future!

Scott Douglas, in *Quiet please: dispatches from a public librarian*, is certainly at the other end of the bibliophilic spectrum from Manguel. Douglas, who started life as a blogger for literary magazine *McSweeney's*, recounts, in suitably ironic style, his recent experiences as a young librarian in public libraries in Anaheim, California.

Douglas says he began as one who thought that libraries were about books, but soon realised that they are about people, who include unruly teenagers printing off pornography, crotchety seniors who can't use the computers or

just want to talk because they are lonely, the homeless, the mentally ill and dysfunctional fellow library workers!

Douglas adds, 'I think it's fair to say that if you take the bus to the library there's an 85 per cent chance you're clinically crazy and a danger to society'. This is in the context of another library in California which is now offering patrons a drive-up library window to pick up their books. On average, 2,043 people a month used this service in 2008, but at what petrol cost one wonders? In the bigger picture the annual federal budget line for US public libraries (not by state) has been quoted as US\$25 million, which is the daily cost of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Drive-ins conjure up fast food outlets. Douglas wonders, for example, whether his library serving free popcorn on Saturdays to attract kids was a good idea, since the books and keyboards soon had grease on them and rats emerged at night! Douglas' boss, however, rebukes him, 'more important than books is community! Libraries are about community! And community loves popcorn!'

Douglas ends up advocating a changing role for the public library, after seeing users ignore shelves full of books in order to update their MySpace profile or do research using Wikipedia. He envisions a public library offering food and drink and electronic services, including Google-type catalogues, Facebook and Second Life. It also means running reading incentive programs through the lure of fast-food coupon prizes and letting the homeless sleep in the corners. Is this the library as social centre for the disadvantaged, rather than as knowledge enhancer?

Maybe it can be both. Certainly libraries need to re-examine their role and revisit the fundamentals. Since basic, albeit often unstructured, information access is now relatively easy, libraries need to ensure value-added layers of quality information—a 'mashup', rather than a fry-up!

Douglas is more closely linked to the biblioburros of Colombia than the bibliophilic libraries of Manguel, but we certainly need both. As newspapers refocus their content on the greying readership who buy the physical paper, and cater for the younger demographics online, maybe libraries need to bifurcate also. Library horses (burros) for courses?

**Colin Steele**

Australian National University



## Big wrap for RA reader

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***Research-based readers' advisory.* By Jessica E. Moyer et al. ALA Readers Advisory Series. Chicago: American Library Association, 2008. 278 pp. US\$55.00 soft cover ISBN 13: 9780838909591 (available from Inbooks)**

This book deals with the literature and practice of readers' advisory work in public libraries. It is written by and for researchers and practitioners, so readers will learn from previously published work and from librarians' experiences. Its 12 chapters cover different aspects of readers' advisory work, beginning with an overview of the state of readers' advisory services by two well-known writers, Joyce Saricks and Barry Trott. The other chapters cover adult readers, non-fiction, audiovisual material, children and young adults, book groups, romance and genre readers, the readers' advisory interview, tools for readers' advisers, cataloguing/classification and browsing, collection development and management, and the future of readers' advisory.

Each chapter in the book is in two parts—Moyer's review and summary of key research and publications, and a librarian's view of operational and practical issues and ideas. Each research review section serves as an overview of the principal work in that field, with detailed notes and reading lists at chapter ends for those who wish to follow up the sources with further reading. The chapter authors provide ideas and tools to support and justify the importance of readers' advisory work, and to help practitioners improve services to readers.

Services for specific age groups, genre, non-fiction and tools for readers' advisers are typical topics for readers' advisory articles, and the contributions in this book are valuable additions to the field. Discussions of cataloguing or collection issues in a readers' advisory context are less common, and the two chapters on these topics round out the content, reminding us that collection management is an important aspect of readers' advisory service and crucial in developing a responsive library. These chapters deal with topics such as subject headings for fiction, OPACs and Web 2.0 technologies, selection and acquisition, shelf classification and arrangement of fiction ('genrefication'), and the importance of weeding.

All chapters in the book, and particularly the last one, on the future of readers' advisory services, encourage reflective practice. The content of the book is accessible by means of a detailed and generous index, which includes in one sequence subject concepts, author/title and title entries for publications

discussed. This feature adds to the book's value as a tool for practising readers' advisers, in addition to its value as a very readable and informative text.

*Research-based readers' advisory* is an excellent resource which should be in the toolkit of every readers' adviser. It is also very interesting professional development reading for anyone working in a public library or in any library which lends recreational and contemporary fiction. Highly recommended!

**Sherrey Quinn**

Libraries Alive! Pty Ltd

## Universal dial tone: libraries and mobiles

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***M-Libraries: libraries on the move to provide virtual access.* Ed. by Gill Needham and Mohamed Ally. London: Facet Publishing, 2008. 287 pp. £44.95 soft cover ISBN 9781856046480**

In the digital age the mobile device has moved to the forefront, with the number of people accessing content from mobile phones and other digital devices increasing daily. Libraries which move to make their services and content available through such devices are ensuring their viability well into the digital future.

This book consists of contributions from experts in the field, as gathered at the First International M-Libraries Conference, held in the UK in 2008. Conference delegates came from 26 countries, and the chapters herein come from those with expertise in the field of mobile access both within and outside libraries, from Europe, North America, Africa and Asia.

The papers encompass four topics. 'The Changing Landscape' includes the place of libraries in a networked society, Net Gen learners and libraries, mobile access and encyclopaedic content, mobile accessible libraries, mobile learning and mobile technologies and library service development. 'Mobile Technology for Development' includes papers on using mobiles for teacher education, applications in a South African university library, mobile information access for community health workers and a mobile-friendly library to support mobile learners.

'Initiatives, Innovations and Challenges' covers mobile devices and library access for students, public libraries and mobile learning, mobile support for distance learners, mobile learning and teaching, developing e-learning content for mobiles and metadata. 'Practice Perspectives' looks at how mobile devices

are made into library access tools, mobile phone informatics, mobile service connectivity for library and information literacy on mobile devices. Worthy in its own right is Lorcan Dempsey's insightful foreword on libraries in a world of 24/7 connectivity.

As mobile devices become more prevalent here in Australia and our telecommunication plans become more economically attractive, our users will look to them more for their information needs. Libraries need to be planning now for their content and services to be accessible through these devices, and within this book are the inspiration, ideas and experiences that will help us to do that.

For any librarian planning mobile accessible library services, this book is an invaluable tool for background information and success stories.

**Michelle McLean**

Casey-Cardinia Library Corporation

## Insider history of Dunedin Public Library

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***Freedom to read: a centennial history of Dunedin Public Library.* By Mary Ronnie. Dunedin: Dunedin Public Libraries and the Dunedin Public Library Association, 2008. 412 pp. NZ\$49.95 soft cover ISBN 9780473134624**

Magnificent! This is a social historian's library history, set in the context of the developing and expanding city as well as national cultural changes. Printed on coated paper for the many photographs and other illustrations, it is physically a heavy book to hold—but a delight to read for its light and highly readable though informative style.

The introductory chapter on older libraries in Dunedin is necessarily, though perhaps regrettably, brief; however, Mary Ronnie is well qualified to write this history of the public library, having been employed there for four decades and culminating as its fourth City Librarian. The ready support of many friends and colleagues of the archives helped with the documentary foundations, but it is her own lively mind which has stamped this work with its emphasis on people rather than administrative events. There are lovely vignettes such as Miss Elizabeth Bryant (wartime Acting City Librarian) with fob watch in hand waiting for staff arriving late. The Deputy at the time was Mrs Dorothy White, whose relations with Miss Bryant 'being uneasy', became first librarian of Dunedin Training College in 1944. It is to the credit of the History Committee, as well as an acknowledgement of the author's own personality, that her

personal beliefs and attitudes have so successfully created this authoritative text (in its original 'weaving' sense) which so often slips into the first person.

Inevitably in a work of this size, there are some technical problems (for example, on page 200 a few words incorrectly appear in italics before a book title), but these are rare. The index is particularly valuable, as the book is likely to be the basic reference work for many years to come. Every person mentioned in the text appears to have an index entry—even Bill Dacker, who was employed for only six months, though Margaret Adie née McMurtrie was indexed only under her married name. Although it would have increased the size of the index, its international potential has not been recognised: Wilfred Black, City Librarian of Glasgow, is indexed by name, but not Glasgow itself. However, the index does not mention Australia or its townships, with which there have been connections over the century. Mark Cohen arrived in Dunedin from London by way of Ballarat and Melbourne and became an important figure in the library's early days. Euan Miller, deputy at Dunedin from 1968, was appointed to Moonee Valley Regional Library (Melbourne) in 1974. Bernie Hawke (whose smiling photograph is on page 340) arrived from the State Library of Queensland to become library manager in 2002. Mary Ronnie herself headed the library school at Monash University after being National Librarian of New Zealand. These are relatively minor faults in a great production, but it is precisely because it is such an event that this book will remain the main source of information.

At this price this book is a real bargain which you cannot afford to miss; after all, you will have to wait another hundred years for the next one!

**Edward Reid-Smith**

Charles Sturt University

## Steadily improving building design checklist

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***Checklist of library building design considerations*. 5th ed. By William W. Sannwald. Chicago: American Library Association, 2009. 211 pp. US\$55.00 (US\$49.50 ALA members) soft cover ISBN 9780838909782**

This ALA *Checklist of library building design considerations* has grown steadily since its first edition, a modest 77 pages, was published in 1988. Sannwald, Library Director at the City of San Diego until his retirement in 2004, remains committed to continuous improvement: he writes that the Checklist is 'a living document' and invites suggestions for future editions. If the Checklist has a general weakness, it is that Sannwald's background means that the base assumptions of many sections reflect a public library environment.

New material in this edition includes a chapter on sustainable design, and sections on information commons, special collections, wireless technology, and—particularly valuable—the behavioural aspects of space. It is somewhat alarming that an ALA publication took 20 years and four revisions to include these important topics; the upside is that this material is now included, making this edition a rich planning resource.

There is some apparently unintentional humour ('Budget', Sannwald announces solemnly, 'sometimes is the deciding factor'), but for the most part the questions and commentary are keenly focused. The opening chapter, 'Building Planning and Architecture', starts with a systematic examination of the reasons for renovation or rebuilding: 'Has the mission of the library changed? Has the population served by the library increased or decreased? Have the demographics...changed? Has the library formed a partnership or alliance with another institution?'

Sections dealing with specific areas offer valuable catalogues of minutiae. 'Special Collections/Rare Books/Archives', for example, asks: 'Do the... institutional guidelines spell out the security necessary in the room? Is there a desk strategically located to allow an attendant a clear view of the readers? ... Are reading tables arranged in open positions, allowing maximum supervision? ... Are a few larger tables provided for...large folios? ... Are reading and exhibit areas separated?'. Many of these questions might seem to belabour the obvious, but in the hurly-burly of planning and negotiation the obvious is too easily overlooked, or over-ridden by competing imperatives.

Some sections attend to specific US regulatory requirements; Chapter 6 in particular addresses the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Non-US readers will need to use these sections in the light of their own jurisdiction's laws, but the general points are well made (for example, 'Are the accessible parking spaces and aisles level so that wheelchairs will not roll if left unattended?'). There is nothing (apart from a passing comment in the section on hiring a consultant) about conferring with stakeholders, or indeed community engagement more generally. Other than that, it is difficult to identify any significant omission.

Ticking the boxes in Sannwald's *Checklist* won't secure you the funding or the site for a new building. At the very least, though, it will give you a finely detailed picture of the strengths and weaknesses of your existing one, and useful insights into the way you work within it.

**Ian Morrison**

State Library of Tasmania

## Source book for graphic novels

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***The librarian's guide to graphic novels for children and tweens.* By David S. Serchay. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2008. 272 pp. US\$55.00 soft cover ISBN 9781555706265**

Graphic novels are popular with young readers, but, unlike comics, their less sophisticated cousins, they are found in many libraries. (Serchay defines graphic novels as 'bound books, fiction and non-fiction which are created in the comic book format and are issued an ISBN'.) This work is an introduction to graphic novels in general and to their place in libraries; additionally, a full annotated bibliography of recommended titles is included.

The first section of the book deals with the history and nature of both comics and graphic novels; the genres of graphic novels, from superhero to nonfiction; and the diversity therein, including the gender and ethnicity of characters, as well as manga and other foreign examples. After listing the educational positives of graphic novels (visual literacy, advanced vocabulary, approachable nonfiction), the following section concentrates on how to build a collection, and covers such topics as methods of purchase and titles to buy—arranged by publisher—and even what NOT to buy. There is a lengthy treatment of 'trade editions', stories issued in comics that are then collected and republished as graphic novels. The final section covers collection management and maintenance; cataloguing and shelving; displays and promotion; lessons to use with classes; and potential problems, from theft to complaints. Every few pages a boxed section called an 'exhibit' can be found: in these, the author discusses in some detail a topic of interest, such as Comic Book Conventions and Comic Book Adaptations in Film and Television.

An 80-page annotated bibliography of graphic novel titles and series recommended by the author for this age group (which includes *Archie* and *Batman* as well as *Asterix* and *Tintin* and the less well-known but highly-regarded *Bone* and *American Born Chinese*) is followed by lists of additional books and further reading, and online resources. A bibliography and two indexes complete the volume.

Given the current popularity of graphic novels, the very subject of this book makes it useful for librarians whose knowledge of graphic novels and their value is limited. Perhaps surprisingly, then, comics themselves, notably their history, manufacture and censoring, are discussed at length, while many of the titles and series listed in the bibliography seem to be just plain comics, rather than

graphic novels. Furthermore, the information concerning distributors and places of purchase is totally US-oriented, and many titles may be difficult to source outside that country.

However, the author's enthusiasm and knowledge are apparent—even if his sense of literary style is sometimes missing—and he covers all the important aspects of which the librarian dealing with graphic novels should be aware. This book can be recommended, then, as a resource tool for those who, whether in a school or public library, are interested in this important format.

**John Foster**

University of South Australia

## New light on graduate students

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***Libraries and graduate students: building connections.* Ed. by Gretta Siegel. London: Routledge, 2009. 211 pp. US\$45.00 soft cover ISBN 9780789034434 (also published as a special issue of *Public Services Quarterly*)**

When discussing information literacy strategies for students, a common perception is that undergraduates need it the most. At the same time some librarians and definitely some students question whether information strategies are needed at all for a generation that has never known a life without ubiquitous Internet and online information.

In the February 2009 *Project Information Literacy progress report*, authors Alison Head and Michael Eisenberg found that:

no matter where students are enrolled, no matter what information resources they may have at their disposal, and no matter how much time they have, the abundance of information technology and the proliferation of digital information resources make conducting research uniquely paradoxical: research seems to be far more difficult to conduct in the digital age than it did in previous times.

This particular report focused on undergraduates and may be at odds with a common perception outside the LIS and education sectors that young undergraduates in particular are born knowing how to research, including how to use the library.

Do the same assumptions and difficulties afflict graduate students? The graduate student has been overlooked, but this book does much to remedy that. Siegel states in her preface that graduate students are both 'more sophisticated in skills

and needs than undergraduates, yet are not quite as adept at navigating the myriad array of resources that their professors are'.

The editor selected the chapters from across small to large institutions, humanities to sciences, and both private and public libraries, to give a good cross-section of how graduate students, libraries and scholars could interact. Included are case studies of establishing skills in graduate students enrolled in a Canadian theological school; a study of MBA students at the Anderson School of Management who, at least initially, were more used to directing others to research for them instead of developing their own research strategies; and a report on the Purdue University Chemistry Ice Cream Seminars. At least two studies focused on the ethical role of the librarian in preventing plagiarism through interaction with faculty and students. Some LIS staff could argue that faculty are better teachers about academic integrity and plagiarism; however both chapters build interesting defences for involving the library.

*Libraries and graduate students* provides a broad and intriguing look at an almost forgotten academic population. Its breadth, integration and interdisciplinary approach make for a fine read on a subject that previously had little literature devoted to it. The index is excellent, with cross references to topics, authors, titles and places.

This is a valuable book and is highly recommended for academic and research libraries.

**Doreen Sullivan**

RMIT University

## Pragmatic school and public library collaboration

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***Library partnerships: making connections between school and public libraries.***  
**By Tasha Squires. Medford, NJ: Information Today, 2009. 203 pp. US\$39.95 soft cover ISBN 9781573873628**

The first word in Tasha Squires' book is 'collaboration'—collaboration between school and public libraries; collaboration as the philosophical lynchpin of all library work; collaboration between the similar yet distinct school and public libraries, both of which can focus on youth, reading and learning.

Simultaneously she acknowledges the rub that occurs between two different cultures with different responsibilities to stakeholders. She does not shy away



from outlining roadblocks and problems that could happen for the collaborators. She admits that administrators could balk at implementing such a program. She encourages librarians to consider the benefits of partnership: more resources, perhaps richer budgets, and the development of lifelong learning in students, who would still use the public library long after their compulsory schooling has finished. Benefits exist for library staff too.

The book is written for an American audience, so some of the funding, curricula and budgetary suggestions are not applicable for Australasia. However, this is one aspect of a book written for an American audience: ideas can be adapted. The text brims with suggestions for how such collaboration could work, and how librarians or libraries would achieve it.

This reviewer has had significant experience working in public libraries in areas populated with several nearby schools. Interlibrary cooperation between public libraries and schools tends to consist of classes visiting the library to become familiar with it, do research work for projects, and to borrow en masse. Sometimes public librarians are surprised by sudden demand for topics. This can also happen to school librarians caught on the hop by unanticipated topics from some teachers.

Certainly threads of informal cooperation may exist between the youth services librarians and some school librarians. Squires' book looks at formalising such a network, and shows how such a partnership can be accomplished. Squires starts her book with information on how to begin such a scheme. Each step, each chapter, builds onto the next chapter. She addresses the psychology of the staff in joint schemes; acknowledges the real possibility of rejection; considers social networking and Web 2.0 cooperation; writes about individual, local partnerships all the way up to the possibility of state or national schemes. Her approach is even-handed, and she writes of classroom management issues for public librarians visiting schools and for school groups visiting public libraries. She lists pros and cons of collaborative approaches, and possible reasons why a library director or school principal might dismiss partnerships.

*Library partnerships* provides practical and realistic ideas for collaboration between school library and public library professionals based on both the author's own experience and several in-field interviews with other librarians. This is an engaging read, all the more so because Squires considers pitfalls as well as successes. This book is highly recommended for the school or public library professional.

**Doreen Sullivan**  
RMIT University

## Encouraging boys to read

***Connecting boys with books 2: closing the reading gap.* By Michael Sullivan. Chicago: American Library Association, 2009. 120 pp. US\$40.00 (US\$36.00 ALA members) soft cover ISBN 9780838909799 (available from Inbooks)**

Michael Sullivan identifies a crisis in boys' reading ability. The focus of the book is on the USA, but I agree with the author that the crisis is general in the developed world. More than ever before, boys are not acquiring the reading bug. But they do not start out this way—pre-school boys love storytime.

So how has this crisis arisen, and is it too late to change? Sullivan points to a number of factors: gender bias in education, biological differences, lack of parental and other role models, educational policy concerned only with standardised testing, lack of exposure to books being read aloud, competition from other media, blaming boys themselves for laziness. The grotesque US educational policy, 'No Child Left Behind', comes in for some well-deserved criticism.

Half of all boys in US secondary schools identify themselves as non-readers. Over a million American boys are on Ritalin for supposed ADHD. Sullivan argues that, in effect, 'We have made being a boy a learning disability'. Reading must not be presented as a 'feminised' activity. 'Just the vision of a man with a book will do at least something to plant in boys' minds the idea of men and books together', he states.

Sullivan has many good suggestions for promoting reading to boys. His ideas for boy-friendly book groups and how to operate them make a lot of sense. Boys like to read different stuff from girls, more visual, action-packed, humorous material, but what they like to read is undervalued by librarians and educators. Books which boys like are rarely books which win prizes, which is arguably a reflection on the mindset of prize committees. The author's suggestions for books boys will like are spot-on, and there are quite a few Australian authors who fit the bill, too.

If things are to change, the school library (full of books) needs to be at the heart of school life, and the school librarian needs to be honoured. Scant signs of that happening—but if we want our boys to reach their full potential, the school library is where the fightback begins. And ultimately, the more people who read, the more need there is for librarians.

I strongly recommend this title. Sullivan has an easy style, and his many sharp anecdotes point up the various arguments he presents. But for barely 100 pages of text, the ALA are doing us no favours with their pricing: this book should be given away free or at nominal cost to whomever will listen.

**John MacRitchie**

Manly Library

## **Approaches to change in higher education**

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***Transformative learning support models in higher education: educating the whole student.* Ed. by Margaret Weaver. London: Facet Publishing, 2008. 222 pp. £39.95 soft cover ISBN 9781856046442**

This book, about transformative learning support, what it is and how to achieve it, is divided into three parts. The first two focus on the institutional context of change, and the third, on the integration of practices for holistic learning. Writers, mainly from the UK, explore themes influencing transformative learning, the changing profile of students and the redesign of institutional structures and processes.

Part 1 concentrates on transformation through strategy, policy and organisation and explores the changing profile of learners and the redesign of learning support. Watson focuses on the learner and the changes that have taken place in the higher education system over the past 15 years. Roberts and Stewart show successful collaboration depends on academics' shared understanding, roles, behaviours and beliefs. Stephenson advocates widening horizons and dissolving boundaries to achieve the organisational change needed for students to play a key partnership role in their learning experience. None of this will be accomplished, according to Marsh, until the focus is shifted from learning to a learner-centred approach and the key role of learner support services in helping to develop learning.

Part 2 focuses on transformation through the delivery of learning experiences and how reshaping the physical, virtual and temporal learning environment will engage learners. Cohen and Harvey examine Next Generation learning spaces and offer a toolkit for changing pedagogical practice. Weaver and Hough describe how technology-rich learning spaces and multidisciplinary teams are transforming learning conditions, and the range and boundaries of services offered. Rennie discusses solutions and problems with new technology in a

flexible delivery environment with a high proportion of adult, part-time, distance learners studying from home or attending a range of regional learning centres, ranging from well-resourced purpose-built academic sites to simple access to a computer and desk space in a community organisation. Brophy discusses a range of European approaches to blended learning and services to support higher education learners. Concluding this section, Platt describes library involvement in widening participation pathways at university and the range of new partnerships forged in the process.

Part 3 focuses on transforming through integrative practice, learning from each other using research-informed approaches. Martin describes the professionalisation of teaching and learning, changing learner support roles and the emergence of multi-professional teams. For Brown and Porterfield, critical success factors for achieving the vision lie in understanding the campus culture, making alliances, and practical considerations in managing changes. Atkins describes the establishment of an integrated model of learning support based on a research and enquiry methodology to embed new practices in a distance learning institution employing many part-time teaching-only staff. Weaver and Levy highlight the role and importance of practitioner research in developing holistic learning support practice.

Chapters are organised in sections, grounded in case studies, and well indexed. The case studies, chapter references, key findings and recommendations of writers may be used as a checklist.

This book is highly recommended for library managers and organisational leaders, and higher education librarians who are working in teaching and learning roles in multidisciplinary teams alongside academics, and learning support staff.

**Lois Robertson**

Archives New Zealand

## Guidelines for authors

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

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

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

ian.mccallum@alianet.alia.org.au

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

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

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

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

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

Contributions are equally welcome from established and beginning authors.

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