

ALIA FUTURE OF THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE PROFESSION COLLECTING INSTITUTIONS

Introduction

In 2013, we set out to investigate the big questions about our future.

- How will libraries remain relevant for users?
- What changes will institutions and individuals in the sector experience?
- Will 'library and information professional' continue to be a necessary and desirable occupation?

We received challenging, insightful, inspiring responses to our request for feedback at events held all around Australia. As a result, we were able to identify themes and develop actions to support positive outcomes. The findings from the project were produced as seven reports, available as pdf downloads from the ALIA website www.alia.org.au. These were published in May 2014, to coincide with ALIA's Annual General Meeting.

Three years on, we have reviewed the themes, actions and what we have learned since the original investigation. This is our May 2017 update.

Themes: Did we get it right?

There were five themes that emerged, specific to collecting institutions – our National, State and Territory libraries.

- 1. National treasures direct to your device**
Significant further investment will be needed to digitise these rich collections.
- 2. Linked data enriches the experience**
Galleries, libraries, museums and archives will collaborate to provide a seamless user experience.
- 3. The need for new legislation**
Legal deposit and copyright reform will be essential for these libraries.
- 4. Managing volume**
These institutions will need investment to keep pace with exponential growth in print and digital content.
- 5. Cultural participation**
Participation brings exciting opportunities to open up collections for future generations.

Digital access has been a major driver for the national, state and territory libraries, and for the wider GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives and museums) sector, including historical societies, clubs, and organisations with scientific collections.

The National Library's Trove platform has continued to evolve and build, adding daily to its total of more than 500 million items. For humanities researchers, it has become an essential part of the national research infrastructure, and it has more than 20 million unique users each year. Following intensive lobbying, the critical funding issues of 2015-2016 were addressed with the announcement of \$16.4 million for Trove and National Library digitisation projects in the Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook in December 2016¹.

¹ <https://www.alia.org.au/news/14990/good-news-trove-myefo> accessed 3 May 2017

Managing high volumes of data from cultural collections has created new opportunities for participation. For example, the State Library of NSW is investing in the experimental DX Lab², where the team is developing new forms of data visualisation to encourage library users to connect with collections in engaging and innovative ways.

In 2015, ALIA ran the Cooking for Copyright campaign through FAIR (freedom of access to information)³, which contributed to the sector's success in achieving copyright reform. The Copyright Amendment (Disability Access and Other Measures) Bill was released in December 2015 and was finally introduced into Parliament in March 2017.

New legal deposit legislation came into effect in February 2016, allowing the National Library to collect all published items in Australia, whether in print or digital forms. Most states and territories also have the required legislation for born digital materials.

Scorecard: How did we perform 2013-2017?

This was the action list for ALIA.

1. ALIA will work with LIS educators to ensure library and information professionals graduate with the skills required to support the needs of collecting institutions, for example in the area of digital preservation.

The inclusion of digital technologies and digital capabilities in the LIS curriculum has been an important element of the discussion between ALIA and educators around foundation skills. They have been a focus for the (bi-annual) Higher Education and (annual) VET LIS educator forums.

The partnership between the State Library of South Australia and the UniSA LIS academics to provide students with practical experience in digital preservation and access has been promoted through ALIA conferences and publications.

In 2015, the annual ALIA Research Grant Award was given to the project *Approaches to digital and traditional preservation management in Australian national and state libraries*.

2. We will also provide professional development and training opportunities for staff, to secure ongoing learning.

ALIA supported the National and State Libraries Australasia (NSLA) digital citizenship events in 2015 and 2016, and in 2015, ALIA Training introduced the *Catching the Third Wave: planning and managing digital repositories* course. Since then we have added two additional shorter courses to our annual program, *Born digital practical preservation skills* and *Analogue practical digitisation skills*.

This was the action list for collecting institutions.

1. The collecting institutions will maintain their leadership of the sector, helping to identify new ways of engaging with communities and supporting learning networks. These libraries will continue to bid for funding to digitise materials and increase access to items that are in the public domain.

2. The GLAMR sector will converge in the online space, with even greater levels of cooperation between cultural institutions at local, state, territory and national levels.

² <http://dxlab.sl.nsw.gov.au/> accessed 3 may 2017

³ <https://fair.alia.org.au/cookingforcopyright> accessed 3 May 2017

Conclusion: What have we learned?

During our 2013 consultation, the emphasis was on digital access to collections; providing more people with more opportunities to connect with items which, in former times, would only have been available to patrons on-site, and this theme has played out over the last three years. The sector has progressed this agenda by lobbying for changes in legislation, establishing cultural assets as part of the national research infrastructure roadmap, and working together to promote digital access.

Amendments to copyright law, when they are finally passed, will provide new disability access fair dealing, address preservation copying, bring copyright terms for published and unpublished works into line, and reduce the complexity of educational licences⁴.

The Draft 2016 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap⁵ includes platforms for humanities, arts and social sciences as one of its recommended nine focus areas, and the National Library of Australia's Trove platform is identified, with others, as an existing national research infrastructure asset.

Since 2015, ALIA and NSLA have been two of the three pillars of the newly formed GLAM Peak group, with Museums Galleries Australia. In a major collaborative exercise, funded by the Commonwealth Government through a Catalyst grant, GLAM Peak has produced a draft national framework for digital access to collections, a prototype toolkit, and case studies to inspire smaller museums and societies to make their collections discoverable online⁶. Phase two of this project, in 2017-2018, will involve a series of regional workshops.

⁴ <https://www.alia.org.au/news/15329/captain-cooks-diaries-free-thanks-copyright-bill> accessed 4 May 2017

⁵ <https://www.education.gov.au/2016-national-research-infrastructure-roadmap> accessed 4 May 2017

⁶ <http://www.digitalcollections.org.au/> accessed 3 May 2017