What is the future for libraries?

The conference committee has put together a program which is innovative, exciting, and forward thinking. Phillip Adams will launch the conference with his keynote address 'Australian society in the 21st century — who will be our clients?'. Following are abstracts from just some of the many other interesting papers being presented at the conference.

Towards an Australian digital library

Margaret Phillips, National Library of Australia

This paper discusses the concept of an Australian Digital Library and the work undertaken to date by the National Library of Australia and other libraries and collecting bodies in developing this concept into a reality.

Australia's cultural collecting institutions have an established role in preserving and providing long-term access to Australian printed materials, as well as a wide range of information in other formats such as film, video, sound recordings, pictorial images, manuscripts and oral history. A new challenge now presents itself in the form of a publishing revolution emerging in the wake of the opportunities created by digital technology. The National Library of Australia believes that the involvement of public collecting institutions in the preservation of, and provision of long term access to Australian electronic information is vital in ensuring that Australians in the twenty first century will have access to the full range of documentary materials that have shaped their history.

In order to achieve this vision the National Library of Australia is working towards developing the concept of the Australian Digital Library. This concept is based on co-operation with Australian creators, publishers, libraries and other collecting bodies in order to achieve a co-ordinated and systematic approach to providing long term access to this evolving area of Australia's documentary heritage. The Australian Digital Library is envisaged ultimately as a distributed framework for the discovery, appraisal and selection of digital material; its description and organisation; its storage and provision of long-term access; and the development and applicability of common standards and research on migration and preservation strategies. The National Library has undertaken a range of 'hands-on' projects in order to gain practical experience in this field. It has also begun to liaise with the many stakeholders who will play a future role in the creation and management of the Australian Digital Library.

The librarian without a desk

Suzanne Newton and Angela Vilkins

Through the experiences of four librarians, a consultant, a teleworker, a private internet content developer, and an outsourced cataloguer, we explore how technology is changing our work practices and the implications for librarians. We are the librarians without a desk.

Predictions of the virtual library, a library without walls, and even virtual librarians are rife. How close are we to putting into practice the predictions of the future?

Where once our clients needed to visit a physical library to obtain information, technological advances have meant that we can now deliver information and customer services directly to our clients.

There is much discussion about information users being location independent. But what about librarians themselves? How is technology affecting the way in which we deliver services to clients and the way in which we develop a client base?

Will librarians become collection independent, relying on technology to provide access to the necessary information resources to meet the diverse information needs of their clients? Will we continue to rely on the collections of institutions to meet our client needs? Will our client base remain essentially defined or will it become increasingly project driven?

Is the independent librarian, the librarian of the future?

Competition or collaboration?

Establishing the relevance of libraries for communities beyond 2000

Jan Richards, Central Western Co-operative Library Service; Marion Bannister, Riverina Institute of TAFE; Tom Elliott, Australian Taxation Office; Robert Knight, Riverina Regional Library

Libraries from all sectors are currently at a multi faceted intersection in the knowledge economy. They may choose to ignore the imperatives which will empower them to manage and control their futures, or they may be leaders in the change process which will place them at the cutting edge of service provision to their client groups.

The critical areas for consideration in any discussion about the future of libraries are:

- understanding the market in which libraries operate;
- recognising client groups;
- forming strategic partnerships;
- recognising competitors;
- utilizing promotional and marketing opportunities; and

- looking beyond traditional library roles.

The panel have all been key players in the instigation of significant change within their respective library organisations and sectors. Whilst the change implementation process has called upon the perpetrators to cast aside many established library traditions, and to traverse cross-sectional boundaries to facilitate the required change, each program has been developed and introduced with the sole objective of providing a better outcome for the client. In effect, we have taken the opportunity to develop ourselves for the community we serve, instead of force-feeding our communities on a diet of library tradition which does not meet their needs.

Knowledge management: a new task for librarians in the 21st century

Jinhong Tang, Department of Information Studies, University of Technology, Sydney

Issues:

1. To what extent do librarians measure up as knowledge workers?

2. What roles do librarians play in knowledge management programs?

3. What does library culture say about the value of knowledge management?

This paper presents a brief introduction to the emerging concept of knowledge management and makes full analysis of the relationship between knowledge management and library information service in the new electronic environment. Knowledge management is an ambitious concept and practice. It can mean different things to different people. Librarians are one group who have been specialised in organising materials. Libraries have changed from the management of artifacts to the management of knowledge contained in those artefacts.

Libraries will, above all, be a vital factor in fulfilling the mission of managing knowledge. Librarians' jobs should help make knowledge usable and fun to use, rather than just providing access to information. In addition to organising the physical containers of knowledge, such as books and journals, librarians will be organising intellectual units and systems of knowledge.

Librarians have long been involved in organising materials — internet indexing and retrieval is a new challenge. Librarians should have a clear image of the current state of internet indexing and retrieval so as to participate in developing user-friendly search engines and indexes to facilitate user's information seeking. ∎

perspectives on customer service quality in information environments — dissatisfaction, dissonance, disconfirmation and disaffection

Philip Calvert, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand *Service quality in academic libraries: research in New Zealand and Singapore*

Tuesday
Best practice sessions
1:00–1:30pm
BP T12 Jeff Jeffrey, Riley Dunn & Wilson Ltd, Scotland *Disaster — prevention/preparedness/reaction/recovery*

Parallel sessions
1:00–3:00pm
PS W7 Annabelle Herd, ACLIS, *Copyright update* **(Changed from WS M4 to a parallel session to allow more people to attend)** ∎