

Your voice

CPD woes

I read with astonishment the 'Frontline' column in the July issue of *inCite*. The Association has been discussing the inclusion of the category of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for some time but I can't believe you are serious. CPD rests on the availability of funds to attend workshops, conferences and training. If your employer is unable or unwilling to commit these funds then CPD is not going to be an option. Commitment of wages and hard-earned recreation leave to these activities is asking a lot of our already underpaid fully-trained librarians and technicians.

As a member of the profession for twenty-seven years I have increased my skill level exponentially simply by being in the workplace. I have willingly acquired subject expertise in every library I have worked in, I know an amazing amount about electronic information retrieval, I can train library patrons and staff, put information on the web and fix just about any copier, printer and minor PC problem going. Am I special? Not really — I am your

everyday competent professional library worker who has spent all her working life acquiring new skills because it is the nature of the industry I work in.

Will CPD deliver any kudos that is recognisable? Not that I can see from the 'Frontline' column. Recognisable kudos must surely consist of money or a senior grading. In the state, federal and local government sectors employment opportunities rest on award (or other industrial instrument) provisions, the availability of jobs at various grades (it is the job requirements, not the individual, that attracts the grading) and practical experience compared to other candidates. As I understand it, neither a Masters degree, PhD or special membership categories will get you a dollar more or give you a higher grade under current industrial instruments.

Continuing education in a formal program can be rewarding for its own sake, to imply that it will increase employment options or salary is not going to be possible for most of the current workforce. We should be strengthening the acceptance of our existing qualifi-

cations and campaigning for professional salaries to go with them, not dividing ourselves into even smaller, more marginalised groups.

Kate Burnham, Library Industry Working Party, PSA of New South Wales

Digital preservation

Digitisation has opened a whole new world for the preservation of printed material. As the trend towards publishing material electronically increases, the preservation of this material needs to be addressed urgently. It appears to me that more emphasis is placed on addressing the preservation of historical information than preserving the information of 'today'. The problems are many. Technology is in a constant state of change. The wide variety of different hardware and software packages available and the variety of different formats in which a digital document can be viewed, makes preservation difficult. Are libraries considering all the issues revolving around the storage and preservation of digital material?

I recognise that libraries as isolated entities cannot keep every format, software or hardware that was, and will be available. However, collectively, libraries may be able to preserve the tools that are used to access the information. I think that it is our role to look ahead and address the issues involved in the preservation of digital material — and ensure that today's history can be accessed by future generations.

**Sharon Moy
Salisbury, Queensland**

Your voice

Your letters on any issue of relevance to the library and information sector are welcomed.

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