

Information Literacy (IL) your Interest?



For 10 years the University of South Australia Library has held national information literacy conferences to profile IL as a professional, educational and societal issue.

The proceedings of the fifth conference **Information literacy: the social action agenda**

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The proceedings of the conferences constitute a substantial resource on information literacy issues and developments. The set (including the fifth) can be purchased for only \$165.00 including postage and GST (saving of \$77.00)

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Libraries – what would we do without them?

'Libraries have supported me in difficult situations', Magnolia Carona

Magnolia Cardona has only thirty minutes to spare for the interview. Her role as co-ordinating epidemiologist for the State of Queensland means she not only offers advice on health projects, but she must keep up-to-date with chronic disease, epidemic and health economics information.

We sit across from each other in the Queensland Health Central Library in Brisbane. She doesn't have much time to talk to me, she apologises, but she feels a need to tell her story.

'Libraries have had an impact on my work life,' she says, 'but they have also had a tremendous impact beyond it.'

Libraries are not just educational institutions to Magnolia. They continue to be a source of friendship and community. They have also been a source of refuge in difficult times — a link to culture, reality and hope.

She begins her tale by telling me about South America, where she was born.

'Libraries are much different in Colombia,' she says. 'I found the library to be a great source of data about the world and I became interested in medicine.'

In 1988, Magnolia, then in her twenties, left Colombia to migrate to Australia. She later took up the role of public health advisor as an international aid volunteer in Africa for two years. During that time, libraries became her 'best friend'.

'One of the African countries I worked in was a military dictatorship during that time and we were not allowed outside of our house, unless we had someone with us.

'In a country plagued by insecurity, curfews every night after 6pm, discrimination against women and limited recreational activities, the library really did become my best friend,' says Magnolia.

'The only place I could really go to was the library. I borrowed books and read at home every night. I didn't care whether I read about epidemics, foreign languages, cooking or gardening!'

Magnolia's friends and associates set up libraries at different houses so they could 'borrow' from each other during those difficult times.

'In the first seven months of my stay, I read, borrowed, exchanged and finally donated, about 100 books,' she says.

Before her time in Africa, Magnolia studied at Sydney University and completed post-graduate qualifications in Public Health and Applied Epidemiology.

'I remember the old days when I did my Masters thesis. I used to spend hours at the University library searching the paper medical index and then photocopying the required texts!'

Not anymore. Now this has changed, with electronic requests for documents, interlibrary loans, book reservations and specialised search requests.

She now uses the Queensland Health Central Library daily — a routine started back in 1998. One of her favourite services is kTOC, supplied by divine Information Services: weekly alerts by e-mail to inform her of topical articles from her favourite medical journals, such as the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health.

She also requests (quite frequently, she admits) specialised searches on topics and the Queensland Health Central Library staff do the hard yards for her.

'I really like the fact I can get new book and magazine acquisition announcements without having to physically go the library and browse,' she says.

For a busy woman like Magnolia, no wonder. I look at my watch. She's given me more than thirty minutes. The look in her eyes tells me it's ok — she really wants to give something back to the library community.

She says that libraries have been an invaluable source of data, enhancing the quality and presentation of her work over the years. But she says the cultural and emotional assistance libraries have offered has also had an impact on her life.

'During my pregnancy, I borrowed videos from the Queensland Health Central Library on antenatal care and what to expect of the birth.

'Even better, during my maternity leave, staff from the public library in my area and the Queensland Health Central Library provided me with intellectual

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stimulation, companionship, and entertainment for my baby.'

Libraries are truly a part of Magnolia's life. As I talk more with Magnolia, it is clear that she just can't leave libraries alone. If there is one within a kilometre radius, she will find it.

'Libraries — what would we do without them?' she says with a smile.

About Queensland Health Central Library

Located in the heart of Brisbane, the Queensland Health Central Library serves officers of Corporate Office, Queensland Health staff in districts without a library service and various non-government organisations.

Central Library is one of the nineteen libraries operated by Queensland Health. The remainder are mainly associated with hospitals throughout the state.

One of the key services supplied by Queensland Health is kTOC, provided by divine Information Services. kTOC provides in electronic format the Table of Contents of journals subscribed to by Queensland Health Central Library through divine Information Services. The kTOC sourced Tables of Contents are mounted on the library's home page on Queensland Health's intranet. This allows Queensland Health officers and clinicians throughout the state to quickly view a listing of articles in their preferred journals.

For more information, contact Queensland Health Central Library's library technician Michele Wathen on 07 3234 1330 or divine Information Services' marketing executive Kym Howell on 07 3371 7500.

About divine Information Services
divine, inc., is focused on extended enterprise solutions. In Australia, divine Information Services has a long history in

the knowledge management area as ISA Australia and then RoweCom Australia.

Through professional, software, and managed services, divine extends business systems beyond the edge of the enterprise throughout the entire value chain, including suppliers, partners and customers. divine offers single-point accountability for end-to-end solutions that enhance profitability through increased revenue, productivity, and customer loyalty. The company provides expertise in collaboration, interaction, and knowledge solutions that enlighten, empower and extend enterprise systems.

Founded in 1999, divine focuses on Global 5000 and high-growth middle market firms, government agencies, and educational institutions, and currently serves more than 20 000 customers. For more information, visit the company's website at <http://www.divine.com>.

Kym Howell, divine Information Services



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Age 6: She'll make autumn leaf collages in the children's room of her local library.

Age 15: She'll write a report on herbal remedies based on interviews with Native American healers collected by the Smithsonian Institution.

Age 26: She'll study 3-D models of the molecular structure of rare plant species using her medical school's database resources.

Age 32: Her daughter will make autumn leaf collages in the children's room of her local library.