Meet your new Directors

Roxanne Missingham
Vice-president, President-elect 2007

I am delighted to be able to greet ALIA members and colleagues through *in-Cite*. It is a great privilege to have been elected Vice-president of ALIA and I am looking forward to seeing many of you over the next two years.

But here my task is to introduce myself to you all. I have spent many years in special libraries, the National Library, and in information technology. I started at the National Library in 1977, one of three in the graduate library intake. I was then fortunate to work in a range of government agencies, currently as the Parliamentary Librarian.

You may recognise my name from the many presentations I have given on Libraries Australia/Kinetica across states and territories in recent years. Working at the National Library was a fantastic experience: the sharing activities of libraries that underline the importance of our profession and our commitment to delivering services based on the nation's resources.

What characteristics are important for libraries and their future? 'Resilience' is a word we have been using in the Canberra community since the bushfire. When many had lost so much it was hard to look to the future. In libraries we often face hardship with closures, threats of closures and downsizing. It is hard to remain positive and resilient. I hope to contribute to ALIA's advocacy on the value of libraries to the Australian community.

This brings me to the second 'R' – relevance. In complex information environments, libraries need to be there. I have experience in developing and redeveloping our online presences to let our great collections and services reach new users. My third 'R' is 'reaching out'. ALIA is in a wonderful position to access funding and decision-makers to place libraries in the context of broadband on educational initiatives. I hope to be able to contribute to this through the Board.

Michelle Brennand

It was a pleasure to be elected to the ALIA National Board of Directors and I must first of all thank everyone who took the time to vote for me.

I see the role as a very important one as essentially we take on the role of managing the Association on behalf of the ALIA membership, which is an enormous responsibility. I am looking forward to the many challenges and new experiences ahead and will particularly enjoy advocating the value of ALIA as broadly as possible to attract membership and support. ∎

Let's join in: technology and community

Who has the time to keep abreast of technological changes, especially when they happen at the speed of an Ethernet packet? South Australian Librarians do! ALIA Information Science and the Australians Law Librarian's Group (SA) (generously sponsored by LexisNexis) recognised the need for an informative, targeted seminar about technology relevant to library staff. On a chilly Adelaide evening in June, over 50 librarians came along to find out what the future will hold...

David Wallace, the IT co-ordinator for the Disability and Information Resource Centre, and Mike Seyfang (formerly of Microsoft) spoke about blogs and podcasts, and how the immediacy of the technology deepens community connection and documents living history. For all you budding bloggers and podcasters, the podcast of the presentation and a variety of useful links on how to get started can be accessed online at http://www.lifekludger.net/cu06talk/.

Echoing the theme of accessible technology was Sean Abel from the State Library of South Australia. He spoke of his experiences using a wiki to record and maintain documentation in the workplace. Although wiki technology is not complicated, Sean noted that a cultural shift may be needed before an organisation is comfortable using it, as a corporate path must be navigated through the issues of fraud, trust and ownership.

Margareta Nichols from SirsiDynix provided an accessible overview of RSS – which she assures us means Rich Site Summary, or possibly Really Simple Syndication, but not Royal Statistical Society! http://www.syndic8.com offers a taste of the vast range of content available for users to have automatically updated on their websites.

Sean Boden from the Charles Sturt Library Service introduced us to the online community of gaming – including the costs and benefits of setting up online gaming in your library. He discussed the types of games and the hardware and software platforms available, now and in the future. Most importantly, he showed us that using technology is about having fun, and not just about work!

The grand finale was John Banbury from Flinders University, whose subject was social tagging. Through sites such as http://del.icio.us/ users can tag sites with keywords that make sense to them, to help the user remember and 'refind' information on the internet. These sites give you the ability to access the Favourites of thousands of other people, arranged according to their own non-controlled subject headings. John explained that the major benefit of tagging, apart from the ease of use, was that it latches onto our natural cognitive processes, rather than using the formalised structure of subject headings which may not be intuitive.

The theme of the evening was Technology and Community – and the discussion demonstrated how technology can enable greater social and intellectual connections between individuals. You can practice what we preach by consolidating your relationship with the Information Science community, and accessing copies of the presentations through the ALIA website!

Nel Svendsen, Manager, customer services, State Library of South Australia