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Katherine Sumbak completed a Graduate Diploma in Library and Information Management at the University of Canberra in 2005, and has taken a big leap to become a Know How Officer at Slaughter and May, a leading international law firm in London. Katherine provides a taste of her working life on the other side of the world.

#### How to Know How

I reminisce in the mornings. Fighting my way onto the train, my nose so nearly embedded in the pin-striped sleeve of my neighbour, I think of my time in Canberra with fondness. But as I emerge from the underground and the onto the London streets, a free paper is forced into my arms, I join the throng of people pounding the pavement to work, and suddenly reminiscing can wait.

True to librarian form I had arranged appointments with recruitment agencies before leaving Canberra. On arrival in London (and after parting with AUD\$7 for my first pint), I was glad I had done so. Within a month I stepped through the doors of Slaughter and May. My first taste of law librarianship was to take place in one of London's 'magic circle' firms.

My knowledge of the law had been limited to ignoring my brother as he regurgitated legal terminology from his law books in attempts to impress. Therefore I felt like an intruder as I was introduced to my future colleagues. Information Services at Slaughter and May includes Information Resources and Research Services. Research Services provides user services, electronic services, and is responsible for acquisitions and distributions. The staff of Information Resources handle the selection of external and the maintenance of internal material and information files, and respond to enquiries in specialist fields.

As an Information Assistant within Information Resources, I assisted the Financial Regulation Know How Officer with the current awareness service. I have tested the patience of my fellow colleagues with endless questions, but have been very lucky to work with a great team who no longer run in the other direction when I head their way with another question relating to 'MiFID' (Markets in Financial Instruments Directive) and 'UCITS' (Undertakings for Collective Investment in Transferable Securities)!

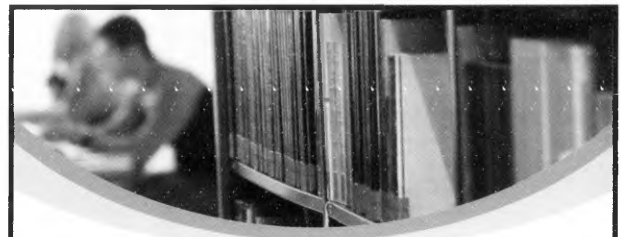
After four months on contract I was offered a permanent role as a Know How Officer. 'Know How' applies to information produced internally and considered to be of use to lawyers. It can come in a variety of forms, and Know How officers are responsible for

making this information available to the firm on its knowledge management system. We are provided with the material which we then abstract, which includes noting metadata such as related legislation and cases. The know how is then published onto the database, and advertised on the weekly Know-How Update. In addition to this we answer enquiries and hold training sessions for trainees and new joiners in order to familiarise them with the system.

I was assigned the role of Dispute Resolution Know How Officer in April and have been exposed to a new practice stream altogether. I look after the know how that is produced by the group, and maintain the files in the Dispute Resolution satellite library. I am encouraged to attend the weekly training sessions organised for trainees. These are a valuable way to familiarise myself not only with litigation, but with members of the group as well.

Fourteen months ago I just wanted to fund my European jaunt, and my future plans involved returning to Australia and parking my ute beside the public library I would run in a rural locale. Over a year later I have held true to my resolution of seeing as much of Europe as my budget allows, and my plans don't necessarily involve a farm vehicle anymore. I might wake up each morning and dread the daily commute, but not the thought of work. I have been and continue to be challenged by the law, I work with a fabulous group of people, and I'm looking forward to what lies ahead. Commuting aside, I may have found my niche.

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