Fiona Thomson

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University of South Australia

How did you get into libraries?

I'd been a commercial IT professional from the days when computers filled rooms. I was looking for a job a little less 'back office' using my technical aptitude of nerdish geekism, and this meant finding a role supporting people's use of IT where terms like database and file already had some meaning. I discovered that a Grad Dip could not only turn me into a librarian but that there was a field ready made for me – library systems.

What do you currently do for a crust?

It's called Infrastructure & Metadata Services Coordinator, in the Information Resources & Technology section of the UniSA Library. Our team supports the IT environment in the library, including staff desktops and servers, fits it in with the University's network, runs the helpdesk, keeps the library management system happy, writes programs and MARC loading scripts, and covers original cataloguing and support.

Tell us about your involvement with ALIA

I joined ALIA when I completed Library Studies at Melbourne CAE. As a newcomer to the profession it seemed a great way to get involved, to add to my knowledge, to network, and to be exposed to library workers from all kinds of institutions. I endorse the concept of joining your professional association and groups and am a Member of the Australian Computer Society and of the Institute of Training and Development.

I signed on for the relevant ALIA groups. Attending open meetings and professional development opportunities is a great way to keep up with some of your PD requirements. A founder member of the Information Science Section of ALIA in South Australia, I have reaped the extra benefits of being on a group committee.

Why do you enjoy volunteering for the library profession?

Volunteering is a natural fit for me. My chief community involvement, with Girl Guides Australia, has just been recognised by a life membership in SA and I find similarities of leadership, mentoring, training, development and fellowship in the professional sphere.

What are you currently reading?

Stacked around my bed are mostly non-fiction books including penguins, science trivia, Antarctic explorer memoirs, labyrinths, one of those everything you'll ever need to know about anything books, a couple of computer magazines and some detective novels – all waiting for me to get off the net to read them!

What do you want to advertise?

If you possibly can, get to an Aurora Leadership Institute – a great development opportunity that expands your personal and leadership horizons in the most amazing way http://www.alia.org.au/~aurora/index.html

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