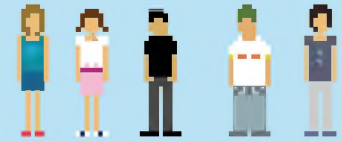




THE SIREN CALL OF 'E' AND 'D'



For a while there I was beginning to think the world was turning into some sort of giant, tangled technological fruit bowl, what with Blackberry, Apple everything and such. Yes, I have a smartphone but I didn't actually buy it on purpose. At least, not for the smartphone capabilities purpose. It has taken my colleagues to explain patiently to me the excitement and convenience of ebooks on planes (more room for souvenirs in your luggage), the joys of the iPad (wait, I'll just show how it works now, then I won't have to email you later) and QR codes (a very cool way to save yourself schlepping around a university library looking for a spare computer - if that library happens to be at Flinders University).

As with the sceptical scales falling from my eyes on the non-uselessness of Twitter during the floods and the so-called Facebook Revolution in the Middle East, for some of us it takes seeing technology applied to understand where it fits in our world view. Fortunately we

have amongst us many more who see the opportunities early and guide the rest of us forward. Our feature this month on all things e(lectronic) and d(igital) includes some inspiring examples and some thoughtful consideration of the challenges that come with the increase in capacity and capability.

You win, folks. Although there will still be days I would rather my public library didn't text me to remind me my books are a tad overdue, I officially hereby renounce my previously jealously protected position of "there is enough technology in my life". This stuff, and what it enables us to do for our patrons, is simply irresistible. We thank all who have taken time to fill us in on the latest, and hope you enjoy reading about what they are doing in these pages.

Lee Welch

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THE DIVINE MISS M

In this age of e and d everything, it is perhaps timely to take a moment to remember how fast and far we've come. ALIA member Laurie Urane contacted InCite to pass on the news of the passing of one of the earliest proponents of technology in libraries, Blacktown Municipal Council's Chief Librarian Betty Cox (nee Malthus).

Amongst her many achievements – including establishing four branch libraries, shepherding the move to the new (and newly named) Max Webber Library and providing a range of such innovative programs that the Sydney Morning Herald named her library as "the best" in 1981 – Betty was one of the very first to take steps to create a computer-based catalogue.

Laurie remembers this first effort as perhaps the first computer catalogue in an Australian public library, with a whopping 14 characters allowed per line in each entry and about five lines per entry. Laboriously punched on to paper tape on a Flexiwriter machine, it then went off to ICL and came back as

an A3 computer printout of author, title and subject listings, updated quarterly.

It was 1966.

Vale to the library world's own divine Miss M.

Lee Welch, with assistance from Laurie Urane

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