TECHS AT THE TOP

CHALLENGES AND CHANGES AROUND THE WORLD

Proceedings of the 8th National Library Technicians Conference
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INTRODUCTION

Darwin was the venue for *Techs at the Top* the 8th National Library Technicians Conference, conducted over three days in July 1995 with discussion groups and a forum preceding the Conference. Papers and workshops reflected the theme of the Conference *Challenges and changes around the world*. Library tours covered a wide range of libraries.

The Conference was officially opened by the Administrator of the Northern Territory, The Honourable Austin Asche AC QC, on The Terrace at Parliament House on Tuesday evening. The opening address, on Wednesday morning, was delivered by Dr Robyn Young, Dean of Education at the Northern Territory University and the founding co-ordinator of the then Certificate in Library Practice.

The presence of overseas delegates enhanced the atmosphere of the Conference with eight delegates from Indonesia, one from each of Brunei and Singapore and two from the United States of America. Ms Sarah Wirawan from Indonesia presented the Keynote address on Day One and a delegate from the USA, Ms Linda Owen a paper on Day Three.

Keynote speakers set the theme for each day and were complemented by plenary sessions and parallel sessions. Workshops were held on Day One with library visits conducted on Day One and Day Two. *Challenges facing technicians within the workforce* were examined on Day One, the *changes in technology* were explored on Day Two and *international arena, multiculturalism, library technicians from other countries, cross-cultural aspects, overcoming the distance and generally bringing people together* were discussed on Day Three. The majority of papers covering the three days have been included in these proceedings.

The Conference proceedings do not reflect the complete Conference. The ten discussion groups which met on the Tuesday morning prior to the Conference exchanged ideas in their area of expertise or interest. That afternoon a forum was held to debate *Who's left to clean the garderobe?* which looked at where library technicians are in the 90s. Nineteen libraries throughout Darwin and the rural area, although in some cases depleted of staff due to the Conference, welcomed delegates into their libraries. A *technology playground* ran concurrently over the three days giving the delegates the opportunity to experience technology first hand.

*TechX* attracted nineteen trade exhibitors, the largest trade exhibition held in conjunction with a Library Technicians Conference.

Library technicians conferences over the years have strived to bring out the excellence of our peers, and papers from the 8th National Library Technicians Conference indicate we are certainly coming of age. I hope you will be inspired to attend, and perhaps present a paper, at the 9th National Library Technicians Conference in Canberra, September 1997.

Kaye Bartlett
Conference Convenor
OPENING ADDRESS

Robyn M Young

Ladies and Gentlemen — I’ve chosen that way of addressing you because after almost ten years away from working in libraries I realised I could not say fellow library workers. And I regret that I am no longer competent in what I, for so long, regarded as my profession — librarianship. Indeed, quite consciously, I ruefully admit my lack of current competence whenever I visit Northern Territory University Library or a Public Library. I was prompted to think more carefully about this notion of “competence” in a profession by the requirement that I prepare for this brief address and the associated concern about what I could say to a gathering of Library Technicians that might be relevant at the beginning of a conference with such a momentous title — Techs at the Top: Challenges and Changes around the World.

So, what I plan to say this morning deals with the idea of “competence” and what that means for library and other information workers. I am sure all of you are aware of the strong move towards competency-based curriculums in vocational education and training across Australia. Because I am the Chair of the Course Advisory Committee for the TAFE course this university conducts — the Associate Diploma of Arts (Library Practice) — I know that there has been considerable progress in developing the competency standards for library technicians on a national basis. I also know that over the next few days, as you deal with the theme of Challenges and Changes around the World, you will deal with the education and training of library and information workers in detail and on the basis of more current and comprehensive knowledge than I possess.

I suspect, too, that competence and its connection with education and training were matters dealt with in some depth yesterday in the Forum session designed to come up with a “definitive description of a library technician” and with the intriguing title — Who’s left to clean the garderobe?

In talking about “competence,” I will treat only one of its aspects — the one I find interesting and of which I have some knowledge and experience. I should warn you, though, that what I have to say is not the result, in the main, of rigorous research but is rather a more personal view derived from my observations in a relatively isolated context. The main aspect I have in mind, in fact, is the relationship between “competence” and “credentialism,” which is occasionally referred to, somewhat disparagingly, as “academic creep.” I notice in the Conference program that there is a session titled “Credentialism and the library environment,” so clearly “credentialism” is topical.

“Credentialism”, for me, encompasses the idea that, over time, regardless of the knowledge, skills and understandings actually required of people in the workplace, entry to a profession or occupation requires ever higher educational qualifications. It is my view that those with the interests of library and information workers at heart will need to be very aware of “credentialism,” as a potentially potent factor in influencing the work structures and environment of organisations, both public and private. The relevance of the notion of “credentialism” to library technicians has an impact when we consider the type of education and training that leads to recognised qualifications in that occupation.

Perhaps you have noticed that, so far, I have said “education AND training”. I do not intend to get too deeply into the differences between education and training except to remind you of the old joke about the difference between the two, which goes like this:

“If your thirteen-year-old daughter comes home from school and says she has been having sex education at school, you are probably quite approving and think the school is likely to be meeting its obligations to your daughter and the community. If, on the other hand, she comes home and says she has been having sex training at school, you probably have some cause for alarm!” (Janner 1994, p.196)

The implication is that it is the practical or experiential component of the activity of training which distinguishes it from the activity of education. Whether this is quite accurate is a moot point. That education is, in general terms, never “practical” or tied sufficiently to experience or to the future work of students is a criticism often made about universities or higher education. This is a difficult position to argue on a number of levels. When you consider that several of the original teaching areas of universities were very practical and
experientially based – medicine and the law are the clear examples – the criticism is not really sustainable. Moreover, teacher education, nursing and librarianship have been added to the teaching profiles of Australian universities over the last twenty or so years – each of which has a substantial work experience component.

On the other hand, TAFE or vocational education and training, as it is called increasingly these days, is claimed to be based on practical skills and requires participants to perform tasks to a set standard in workplace situations to be successful. The tasks which are performed are pre-specified and are linked to the planned outcomes for a course of instruction.

I have a particular interest in this perceived difference between education and training and the sectors of our education system where these differences are seen by some to be important. My interest comes because, essentially, in the Australian system, education and training have been separated by translating “education” to universities and “training” to TAFE. The end result is a separation of the education system by level of qualification. Of course, this separation of education and training by level is well entrenched in the Australian education system, and especially so in the post-secondary components of that system. The distinction by level means that only one sector of post-secondary education offers degree level courses – the universities. This separation by level ignores the content covered in courses and ignores the relationships between different designations of workers in a particular field. The question is whether such distinctions can continue to exist in practice and, if they do, whether they can or should be justified.

In my view, this separation by level of education and training in library and information science into two sectors in Australia is neither sensible nor sensitive to the real needs of those who seek a career in this work area. In 1992 I did some research into the linking of sectors of post-secondary education in Australia as a matter of system-wide policy development and realisation. One aspect of the data I collected in doing that research was particularly striking to me. This was that, in the perceptions both of vice-chancellors in universities and of chief executive officers of large TAFE institutions, the move by TAFE in Australia towards a competency-based education and training system would adversely affect the ability of the university and TAFE sectors to form meaningful links. Vice-chancellors and CEOs of TAFE institutions were also of the view that the much vaunted ‘continuum or “seamless web” of education and training’ for post-secondary students was at risk because of the introduction of competency-based education and training in the TAFE sector.

I think that this view, which was relatively widely expressed by the informants in my research, that adopting competency-based education and training in the TAFE sector would have negative effects on linking the university and vocational education sectors, is wrongheaded. I think this because I believe the view is based on a very narrow idea of what “competency-based education and training” really means. I take some comfort from the definition which the Mayer Committee gave of “competence”:

The Committee has adopted a broad definition of competence which recognises that performance is underpinned not only by a skill but also by knowledge and understanding, and that competence involves both the ability to perform in a given context and the capacity to transfer knowledge and skills to new tasks and situations. ...This broader definition emphasises that competencies, especially if they are to be transferable, are not automated, ‘trained’ behaviours. They are mindful, thoughtful capabilities. In this sense they cannot be explained or inculcated through the use of behaviourist learning theories which rely on low-level drill and reinforcement. They must incorporate a sense of the learner as one who builds concepts and develops understandings which inform technical applications. Competence requires both ‘heads on’ and ‘hands on’; the capacity to think about performance and also to perform. It goes beyond pure or abstracted thinking to the skilled application of understanding. (Mayer 1992)

I believe that if this concept of competency-based education and training were to be implemented with some fidelity across both sectors, then the notion of linking the sectors of post-secondary education and thereby providing a continuum of educational opportunities would achieve some of the goals which would make us, truly, a learning society where competence really means something. Of course, this would have some significant implications for the occupational divisions between librarians and library technicians. From my relative distance from the library field these days, which I have already mentioned, the gap between library technicians and librarians is narrowing in the workplace and it must be quite difficult for employers to determine how positions should be designated. I predict that this will become an even more exacting task for employers in the future.
Now I'd like to paint some possible scenarios of the future as far as competence, "credentialism" and library and information workers are concerned. The first scenario is that the education and training of library and information workers will align more and more closely with the types of jobs available, as economic forces on the post-compulsory education and training systems are brought to bear in an ever more telling way; education and training as preparation for this work will occur in one sector; movement between levels will be easy, encouraged and how to do it will be clear. In my lifetime, I believe the professional/para-professional distinction will disappear.

As an aside, I must say I was encouraged to hear Virginia Walsh, Executive Director of ALIA, support this prediction when she reported last night at the opening ceremony that a well-regarded library technician says that "library technicians do everything that librarians do except original cataloguing". Perhaps my lifetime was not a good time frame to have selected!

An alternative scenario, and one that I personally, could live with, is that the TAFE sector will become acknowledged, fully, as the training sector and that graduates of universities who have completed a general education and an initial degree will attend TAFE for the skilling component of their preparation as library and information workers. It is interesting to note in support of this scenario that according to one researcher, "at least four times as many students are commencing vocational study at TAFE after previous study at university as are commencing university after study at TAFE"; attributed to Barry Golding, Pathways Project Officer, Ballarat University (Golding 1995, p.74).

Another possible scenario is that "credentialism" will have its wicked way and those considered as professionals in the field will require masters or doctoral degrees for entry to librarianship; sectors of post-secondary education will proliferate by level and something like the former colleges of advanced education will emerge to cater for groups like library technicians who need bachelor degrees to be recognised for employment. This latter scenario will, necessarily, ignore the notion of competence! For me this is by far the least desirable future!

It is, anyway, somewhat arrogant for me to be predicting a future for library workers. This is especially so since I have, in no sense, an elevated position in the field of librarianship or in the work area of library and information science. Such predictions by an eminent librarian might be received with equanimity or, perhaps, responded to with the feminine equivalent of "silly old duffer." I really don't know. I suspect that at least some of you will have had thoughts along similar lines. What I do know, though, is that change and the challenges it presents will affect the roles of all library workers and that this will be in your minds as you move through the Conference agenda dealing with the many and varied topics that I have seen listed in the program.

I wish you well in your deliberations and am pleased and honoured to open the proceedings this morning for the 8th National Library Technicians Conference Techs at the Top: Challenges and Changes around the World. ENJOY YOUR CONFERENCE AND THANK YOU.

References:


THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARY TECHNICIANS IN EASTERN INDONESIA: PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

Sarah Wirawan

ABSTRACT

Because of the high needs for library technicians the government of Indonesia is currently giving strong support for the development of this profession. To boost their professional performance and service, library technicians working in the governmental libraries and information centres have now been given higher recognition in the form of functional status similar to that of the professional librarian. Besides receiving additional income, this status entitles them to have promotion every two years that continues as high up as the professional librarian. In spite of these privileges, however, most library technicians in eastern Indonesian islands are facing problems receiving those benefits. As a result of the insufficient quality of their lower education and limited experience as library users, reading habits, and language skills, their sense of service and creativity is low. In this relation, while most of the present training programs in the country concentrate on preparing staff to face new technology, training for upgrading basic skills is still needed. Opportunities for in-service training in better libraries and information centres in the country and abroad should be made available for potential library technicians. Finally, the plan for library automation should be carried out as soon as possible to improve library image which in turn will attract better people into the profession.

INTRODUCTION

The eastern region in this paper refers to nine provinces: North, Central, South, and Southeast Sulawesi; West and East Nusa Tenggara; Timor Timur; Maluku; and Irian Jaya. The provision of library and information services in this region is still low despite government efforts and emphasis to develop this region since the second year of the fifth Five Year Development Plan (1989/90-1993/94).

The term 'library technician' in Indonesia is usually applied to paraprofessionals who graduated from the diploma program in librarianship. That is, high school graduates plus one year (D-1), two years (D-2) or three years (D-3) of formal training in librarianship. This term is also applied to those who gain skills in librarianship by short and informal training in librarianship in addition to their work experience. Like professional librarians, most library technicians in Indonesia work in government libraries and information centres and are hired as civil servants. Their career ladder generally follows the government regulations for administrative workers.

Because of the demand for better library services, the government is currently giving strong support for the development of libraries and librarianship in Indonesia. Since 1988, to boost the performance and services, through presidential and ministerial decrees, both professional librarians and library technicians have been given functional status or librarian status with more privileges than the administrative status. The biggest change for the library technicians is that now they are being placed on the same career ladder as the professional librarian. Those technicians who have potential and are highly motivated could achieve as high in their careers as their professional colleagues. This paper will try to discuss the impact of functional status to the career development of library technicians in eastern islands and the problems and challenges they face to develop the highest possible career. The discussion will be limited to those who work as civil servants, because the functional status is only applied for them. For background information it will also discuss the current need for the library technicians in this region and efforts being done to fulfil it.

THE NEED FOR LIBRARY TECHNICIANS IN THE REGION

Table 1 shows the projection of the current need for librarians to run the state libraries and information centres available in the eastern region. The estimation is modified from Wirawan (1991) who formerly identified the needs for private libraries and information centres. The real needs for library technicians will be much bigger if we consider the need for the public school libraries at primary and secondary level and also if the government plan to establish a library in every village in the region (9,874 villages) is carried out.
Table 1. The current needs for librarians in eastern Indonesia region by types of libraries and information centres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of libraries &amp; information centres</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Professional needs for each</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td></td>
<td>Paraprofessional*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional library</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public library</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>1,044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State higher education library</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special library/ information centres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of pustakawan needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,073</td>
<td>3,219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


How many librarians are currently working in governmental libraries and information centres in the region? So far, there has been no survey that looks at the problem as a whole. Wirawan (1991) estimated about 1,500 professionals and paraprofessionals working in the library and information centres in the region at that time.

In the last five years the diploma program in librarianship at Hasanuddin University has produced about 200 graduates of D-3. In addition to the regular programs, for the last four years Hasanuddin University by the request from the Directorate General of Higher Education, with a loan from the World Bank, has carried out special training programs for the library staff already working at the state higher education institutions in the region and has produced about 90 graduates of D-2. Another source of library manpower in the region is the library diploma program available at University of Sam Ratulangi in Manado (Northern Sulawesi). In the last three years this diploma program has produced not more than 100 graduates of D-2. If we also considered the additional staff of regional libraries and other government agencies in the region, an estimate of about 2,000 librarians currently working in the region is not too far from reality. If we compared the estimated need for professionals and paraprofessionals and the number currently working in the library and information centres in the region, then the market for them is still wide open.

As mentioned by Wirawan (1991) recruiting graduates from library schools in Jawa is not possible due to the small number of graduates produced there and also to the fact that the market for them in Jawa is still wide open. From the above information it can be said that nationally, the library diploma program at Hasanuddin University and Sam Ratulangi University have strategic roles in supplying the library manpower not only in terms of quantity but most important is the quality of graduates to improve the library services in the region now and in the near future.

LIBRARIAN STATUS

The detailed information for librarian status is well described in the two decrees: the Decree of the Minister for Apparatus Efficiency No.18/MENPAN/1988, 29 February 1988, and Joint Circular Letter between the Minister of Education and Culture and the Head of the Agency for State Personnel Administration (BAKN) No. 53649, 16 July 1988.

The objectives of the Decree of the State Minister for Apparatus Efficiency No.18, 1988 basically are:

a) to improve library services to the community,
b) to determine the career development of librarians, and
c) to determine the standards of profession and performance for workers with librarian status.

In this decree, there is no status differentiation between technician and professional librarian and both workers are called 'librarian'.

The Career Development of Library Technicians in Eastern Indonesia 5
Joint Circular Letter of the Minister of Education and Culture and the Head of Agency for State Personnel Administration is actually the guidelines for carrying out the evaluation of the librarian duties in libraries and information centres in government institutions based on the Decree of the State Minister of Apparatus Efficiency. According to this decree the prerequisite for a *pustakawan* status are:

1. A civil servant with formal education in the field of librarianship, documentation and information, with minimum education in Diploma-2;
2. Has skills related to librarianship, documentation, and information in a government unit (libraries, documentation or information unit);
3. Works in a unit with a collection of at least 1000 titles which consist of at least 2500 volumes;
4. Fulfils the total number of credit points needed;

The *pustakawan* status was implemented right after the issuance of the Joint Circular Letter in July 1988. When it was first implemented, not only graduates from the Diploma program in librarianship and professional librarians were given a chance to choose between administrative and librarian status but also the library staff with at least a high school diploma and who have done library work for quite some time before 1988. But for those who entered the profession after 1988, the minimum requirement for having *pustakawan* status is Diploma-2 graduate.

Table 2 shows the career ladder for a civil servant with *pustakawan* status. A graduate from D-2 or D-3 in librarianship will start her/his career from grade II/b Asisten Pustakawan Madya or junior assistant librarian, then proceed to Asisten Pustakawan or library assistant (II/c), and Ajun Pustakawan Muda or senior library assistant (II/d), and higher. It can be seen from Table 2, that former 'technicians' are now occupying these last three ranks.

Table 2. Ranks, grade and salary scales for civil servants in Indonesia with administrative and librarian status:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative status</th>
<th>Grade &amp; salary scales</th>
<th>Librarian status</th>
<th>credit points for promotion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pembina Utama Pembina</td>
<td>IV/e</td>
<td>Pustakawan Utama</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utama Madya</td>
<td>IV/d</td>
<td>Pustakawan Utama Madya</td>
<td>850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pembina Utama Muda</td>
<td>IV/c</td>
<td>Pustakawan Utama Muda</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pembina Tingkat I</td>
<td>IV/b</td>
<td>Pustakawan Utama Pratama</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pembina</td>
<td>IV/a</td>
<td>Pustakawan Madya</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penata Tingkat I</td>
<td>III/d</td>
<td>Pustakawan Muda</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penata</td>
<td>III/c</td>
<td>Pustakawan Pratama</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penata Muda Tingkat I</td>
<td>III/b</td>
<td>Ajun Pustakawan</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penata Muda</td>
<td>III/a</td>
<td>Ajun Pustakawan Madya</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pengatur Tingkat I</td>
<td>II/d</td>
<td>Ajun Pustakawan Muda</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pengatur</td>
<td>II/c</td>
<td>Asisten Pustakawan</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pengatur Muda tk. I</td>
<td>II/b</td>
<td>Asisten Pustakawan Madya</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pengatur Muda</td>
<td>II/a</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juru Tingkat I</td>
<td>I/d</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juru</td>
<td>I/c</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juru Muda Tingkat I</td>
<td>I/b</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juru Muda</td>
<td>I/a</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What benefit can we get from the librarian status? Besides additional income, the librarian status according to Hernandono (1993) has brought more privileges compared to the administrative status. First, a civil servant with *pustakawan* status who is highly motivated, works hard and is creative may be promoted to a higher rank within two years while with administrative status she/he can be promoted to a higher rank only after she/he stayed in the same position for at least four years and generally longer. Secondly, there is no career limitation in *pustakawan* status. Anyone with librarian status can go up to the highest position (IV/e) even if that person started her/his career from grade II/b. But there is career limitation in administrative status, for example a library technician who entered the profession with a diploma from Diploma-2 will be placed in salary grade II/b and the maximum grade which can be achieved is only to II/c, while someone who started her/his career with
a diploma from Diploma-3 can climb up to III/d only. Thirdly, all duties and activities in libraries are always assessed and evaluated for career development, and thus motivate the librarian to be active and creative. Finally, while for administrative status the retirement age is 55 years old regardless of career achievement, with librarian status for those who can reach Grade III or IV in her/his career life, the retirement age is 60 to 65.

How many librarians in the country have pustakawan status so far? Based on the survey done by the National Library of Republic of Indonesia, Table 3 shows the number of pustakawan status nationally in 1993. From the total number of 2,312 librarian status, 1,489 or 64% of them are technicians. Meanwhile 22% of librarian status holders are working in Jakarta while others are distributed in several provinces and in each province the number of pustakawan is less than 5%. If we assumed in each province in the eastern region the number of librarians is less than 5%, then the number of pustakawan status in the region is less than 45% from 2,312 or less than 1,040. If we look at the estimated number of librarians available in this region, this number indicates that there are still many librarians who have problems in obtaining pustakawan status.

Table 3. The number of pustakawan status available nationally in 1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Ranks</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IV/e</td>
<td>Pustakawan Utama</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV/d</td>
<td>Pustakawan Utama Madya</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV/c</td>
<td>Pustakawan Utama Muda</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV/b</td>
<td>Pustakawan Utama Pratama</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV/a</td>
<td>Pustakawan Madya</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III/d</td>
<td>Pustakawan Muda</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III/c</td>
<td>Pustakawan Pratama</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III/b</td>
<td>Ajun Pustakawan</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III/a</td>
<td>Ajun Pustakawan Madya</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL Grades III and IV</td>
<td>823</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II/d</td>
<td>Ajun Pustakawan Muda</td>
<td>437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II/c</td>
<td>Asisten Pustakawan</td>
<td>731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II/b</td>
<td>Asisten Pustakawan Madya</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL Grades II</td>
<td>1,489</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of pustakawan</td>
<td>2,312</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

source: National Library 1993

PROMOTION WITHIN LIBRARIAN STATUS

As mentioned earlier, with pustakawan status, a librarian in Indonesia may have promotion every two years if she/he can meet required credit points and other administrative prerequisites. On Table 1 is listed the number of credit points needed for promotion in each rank. To be promoted on time, the important task for a librarian is to be active and creative and always keeping track and making self-assessment of their activities. This record, then is submitted to an Evaluation Team who will review it. The number of credit points earned must come from the main activities (at least 70%) and from supporting activities (not more than 30%). Specifically for pustakawan madya to pustakawan tuanra (Grades IV), 25% of those points should be earned from scientific writing/publication. The outline of the main and supporting activities is listed in Table 4.

The Joint Circular Letter furthermore describes the main activities of librarian status into four groups of duties:
1) the main duties for librarians II/b, II/c, and II/d;
2) the main duties for librarians III/a, III/b, and III/c;
3) the main duties for librarians III/d, IV/a, and IV/b; and
4) the main duties for librarians IV/c, IV/d, and IV/e.

The main duties for library technicians (II/b, II/c, and II/d) for example are listed in Table 5.
If we look at the career development for library technicians closely (Grades II), we find that the needed points for promotion within this grade are reasonable.

Table 4. Outline of the field activities for Pustakawan status holder, according to the Joint Circular Letter (1988)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Main activities, include:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Education, eg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) pursuing higher degree in formal education in librarianship and earned diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) participation in in-house education or training and earned certificate of accomplishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Library practice, eg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) collection development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) processing library materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) servicing library materials and information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Socialization of library, includes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) library marketing/promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) display and exhibition of library information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) write and publish article on library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Professional development, eg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) writing scientific papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) developing appropriate technology in library field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) supervising and advising his/her subordinate librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Supporting activities, eg:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) advising/guiding students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v) participation in seminars, conferences, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vi) membership in professional association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vii) collaboration in scientific publication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(viii) receive orders or decorations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ix) membership in Librarian Evaluation Team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Joint Circular Letter (1988)

It can be seen from Table 2, that the minimum requirement for promotion from II/b to II/c is 60 points and from II/c to II/d is 80 points. My experience as a member of the Librarian Evaluation Team at Hasanuddin University showed that the technicians with pustakawan status generally had never encountered serious problems for promotion within Grades II. Those staff who have discipline and do their job accordingly, may earn points from their main duties only as listed in Table 5 and be promoted on time.

Table 5. The main duties of Pustakawan status: As. pustakawan madya, As. pustakawan, and As. Pustakawan muda (grades II/b, II/c, and II/d)

| 1) assist in the selection, weeding and surveying of library materials |
| 2) assist in the cataloguing process |
| 3) preserve library materials |
| 4) do circulation work and make available the library materials to users |
| 5) assist in reference services |
| 6) assist in story telling for children and school children |
| 7) guide the readers/reading |
| 8) assist in dissemination of new information/compiling bibliographies, index, etc. |
| 9) make known to the community the use and the usage of the library |
| 10) assist in making known to the community the development of the library |
| 11) carry out an exhibition |
| 12) prepare pamphlets, posters, slides, brochures, etc about library activities |

Source: Joint Circular Letter (1988)
However, Table I also shows that the required points for promotion become higher and higher from Grades III, especially from *Ajun pustakawan* (III/b) and on. In this connection, to earn points from routine duties only might not be sufficient. In large libraries with reasonable budgets, there will be reasonable daily activities and programs for the staff. However, since a large library usually hires a large number of staff, then competition between staff will be tight. For *pustakawan* working in smaller libraries with limited activities, to earn sufficient points from daily duties will take a longer period. As mentioned earlier by Wirawan (1991), the holdings of libraries and information centres in the eastern region generally are small—ranging from 5,000 to 30,000 titles, except for a few larger libraries. Besides their routine duties, participation of *pustakawan* status in activities for professional development then is a must.

**PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES**

Based on the above assumption, to improve the library services to the community and to achieve the highest possible career, the library technicians should always refresh and develop their knowledge and skills by participation in professional development. However, there are some basic requirements needed.

According to Line (1988), to be able to participate in professional development, besides ability in practical library skills, librarians should master basic abilities and professional knowledge, and have organizational qualities.

Basic abilities such as reading habits, literacy (reading, writing, and language skills) and numeracy are important for information workers. In the community where reading habits are still low, it is our duty to encourage people to read and develop their reading habits. In this respect we then have to develop this habit ourselves first. A high level of literacy is essential for understanding the recorded knowledge and to communicate to people. Numeracy is the ability to handle figures readily. Librarians need to have a good basic knowledge of statistics, an understanding of how and when to use them, and the ability to understand and interpret the statistics used by others.

Furthermore, Line mentioned that to be a professional and an effective library staff member, some specific knowledge is required. This includes some knowledge of the history of culture and the place of libraries within it, knowledge about books and publishing, and how changes in printing and publishing affect libraries, knowledge of information processing systems and technology, of scholarly and technical communication, and other related knowledge. He added that subject knowledge, linguistic knowledge, and technical knowledge (e.g., computer programming and system design) will be important for professional development.

To keep up with the rapid development and changes in information technology the need for librarians to have organizational qualities is vital. On organizational qualities, Line includes imagination, leadership and vision. Perspective and breadth of vision are also important in addition to problem-solving and analytical skills. The next important qualities are communication and social skills, for dealing with both staff and users. Economic skills, an economic way of thinking can be very important and at very senior level, political skills are also needed. On top of those qualities, librarians and information workers should have a sense of service and a belief in what we are doing.

How can librarians in eastern islands develop these requirements? Reading habits, literacy and numeracy should be developed at school. However, the past political problems and problems in transportation and communication have long affected many aspects of development including basic education in the eastern region. My observation of students in the diploma program at Hasanuddin University showed that in each class only a small percentage has a reasonable level of these basic abilities. The low levels of reading habits and reading skills very much influence their language skills and their ability to read important or scientific articles in the field and to communicate in writing. This condition worsened with lack of experience as library users caused by an unavailability of school and public libraries during their school years. The sense of service is hard to develop if one has never experienced being served by libraries or being attached to and dependent on libraries during one's life. This condition has affected the quality of library and information services in the region.

Leaders of the profession in the country and in the region are very much aware of these problems and many believe that continuing education is one way out. Participation in training and education is also assessed in high points for promotion and has motivated many technicians to go back to school. However, the chances of
participating in further training and education for librarians in eastern islands quite often is not available. As mentioned before, in the region, the diploma program is carried out regularly at Hasanuddin University and at Sam Ratulangi University only. Short courses and other informal training below diploma level are generally being carried out at regional libraries especially South Sulawesi Regional Library. However, education and training above D-3 is not available in the region.

As can be seen from Table 6, besides the scarcity of library schools in the country, all educational institutions in librarianship higher than D-3 also are only available in Jawa. Due to the small capacity of the library schools in state universities of University of Indonesia and University of Padjadjaran in Bandung, and also the presence of slight controversy that skills as diploma orientation and knowledge as degree program orientation have different lines of development, both schools do not accept graduates from the diploma program. The only library school with a degree program that accepts D-3 graduates is the private University Islam of Nusantara (UNINUS) in Bandung.

### Table 6. Higher institutions and types of educational programs in librarianship which they run:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Name of Institution</th>
<th>Types of programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medan</td>
<td>Univ. of Northern Sumatera</td>
<td>Diploma 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riau</td>
<td>Univ. of Lancang Kuning*</td>
<td>Diploma 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jakarta</td>
<td>Univ. of Indonesia</td>
<td>Magister (S2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open University</td>
<td>Sarjana (S1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Univ. of Yarsi*</td>
<td>Diploma 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandung</td>
<td>Institut Pertanian Bogor</td>
<td>Diploma 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Univ. of Padjadjaran</td>
<td>Sarjana (S1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Univ. Islam Nusantara*</td>
<td>Diploma 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogyakarta</td>
<td>Univ. of Gadjah Mada</td>
<td>Diploma 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surabaya</td>
<td>Univ. of Airlangga</td>
<td>Diploma 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ujung Pandang</td>
<td>Univ. of Hasanuddin</td>
<td>Diploma 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manado</td>
<td>Univ. of Sam Ratulangi</td>
<td>Diploma 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* private institution

These conditions have created problems for the technicians who have strong motivation to continue their education. The first problems come from the geographic distance. Because the school is away from their home town, they could not go to school as part-timers and have to leave the job totally for a period of time. This will lead to the nullification of their additional income received from pustakawan status. The second are financial problems. In Indonesia most grants are available only for state university students. Entering private university means students have to pay their own higher tuition expenses. At Hasanuddin University some library staff with D-3 diploma and good GPA are accepted in the degree program in social sciences at the same university. But for others going to private colleges nearby is more convenient.

The government so far has made several efforts to increase the number and improve the quality of library manpower in the country. With the loan from the World Bank, for example, for the last five years, the Directorate of Higher Education has offered scholarships for the degree program for librarians who already work in state higher education libraries and have a degree in other fields. This program is carried out at the University of Indonesia and at the University of Padjadjaran. The National Library also runs the same program for the regional librarians at the same universities. Although the eastern region gains many benefits in the form of additional professional librarians, so far only a few librarians have D-3 diplomas in librarianship plus a degree in another field.

Although organizational qualities which are the most fundamental and important according to Line are largely inborn, he believes that a stimulating and open environment where creativity is encouraged could also make these qualities grow and nurture. With the development in psychological science and teaching and learning methodology, I believe that some of those requirements may develop also from practical experiences and be
initiated through the right training and education which would give attention to the philosophy of the profession besides practical skills and theoretical matters.

Due to the limited number of good librarians in the region, national and international cooperation between libraries and librarians should be encouraged and maintained.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1) *Pustakawan* status which is a unique status for Indonesia gives opportunities to the potential and highly motivated library technicians to be promoted to the highest possible career.

2) Library technicians in Indonesia have strategic roles to improve the quality of library and information services in the country.

3) The concept of long life education by strengthening the requirements of library and information work should be applied not only to the library users but also to the librarians themselves.

4) To improve the basic abilities of library technicians, training in languages especially English, reading, writing, statistical and analytical skills should be carried out preferably by the Indonesian Library Association.

5) Opportunities for in-service training in good library and information centres within or outside the country should be made available to potential and motivated library technicians through library cooperation.

REFERENCES


PARAPROFESSIONALS IN REFERENCE SERVICES: PERSPECTIVES OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE (DUNN & WILSON ORATION)

Helen E Martyn

Abstract  Computerisation of libraries is one of a number of factors that has been identified as contributing to the changing staffing structures and roles in reference sections of libraries. This study explored the impact of technology on reference paraprofessionals in Australian academic and State libraries and sought to identify paraprofessionals’ current roles and responsibilities in reference services. The paper also explored the perceptions of reference paraprofessionals and their managers about technology, roles, skills and task restriction. Significant differences in perception were found between two groups of reference paraprofessionals and their managers.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

This study was made possible through an ALIA Dunn and Wilson Scholarship. The aim of the scholarship is to provide a library technician with the opportunity to investigate a particular project relating to the practice of library technicians, which will increase their professional and occupational experience. I was awarded the scholarship in 1993 to investigate the impact of information technology on the role of paraprofessionals in reference services. At the time I applied for the scholarship I was working as a library technician in the Reference Section of a large academic library and was experiencing first-hand the impact of new technologies. Not only had technology changed the way in which the library was providing client services but it also appeared to have contributed to fundamental changes in roles, tasks and skills of library workers.

EMERGENCE AND CHANGING ROLES OF REFERENCE PARAPROFESSIONALS

Throughout the mid-1980s several articles appeared in the literature comparing the effectiveness of paraprofessionals and librarians at the reference desk (see for example, Courtois & Goetsch, 1984; Murfin & Bunge, 1988; Montag, 1986). These articles provided some evidence that paraprofessionals were increasingly being utilised at the reference desk. The extent to which paraprofessionals have been utilised in other areas of reference services, however, has not been documented as thoroughly and may indicate that reference work has not been a predominant role of paraprofessionals. A national survey of 17 Australian university libraries by MacKinnon in 1982 indicated that only four qualified library technicians were working in information services of the surveyed libraries at that time. In 1984 Broadhead noted that library technicians had made a considerable impact in technical services, audio-visual services and circulation and predicted that there would be an increasing role for them in user services. A study by Oberg et al. (1992), examined the role status and working conditions of paraprofessionals and is one of a few studies to include data about reference paraprofessionals’ tasks. The study firmly established that by the 1990s, paraprofessionals were playing a significant role in the provision of reference services in American academic and research libraries. Matthews (1993:54), stated that the current debate in Australian libraries focuses, ‘not on whether library technicians do have a role in reference work, but on defining and exploring the limits of that role’.

The change in reference staffing structures and role blurring between librarians and paraprofessionals has been attributed, in part, to the introduction of automated procedures (Flowers, 1979; Nettlefold, 1989; Oberg, 1992b; Richardson, 1987; Veaneer, 1984). Flowers, as early as 1979, (1979:371) believed that ‘the introduction of the computer to library operation made massive staff restructuring not only inevitable but imminent’. Cook (1987) also believed that ‘in changing the nature of works to be carried out, as a result of automation, specific tasks, responsibilities and skills required to perform tasks must be logically and clearly defined’. More specifically, Deeney (1990) claimed that the introduction of end-user searching had increased the demand on librarians’ time which had, as a consequence, led to the use of paraprofessionals at the reference desk.

Veaneer (1984) claimed that the automation of very complex or routine work often forces the distribution of tasks down the hierarchy, thus enriching paraprofessionals’ work and providing opportunities for librarians to take on new and challenging roles. In support of this view, Bourne, Hill and Mitcheson (1982:1) claimed that technological change and the utilisation of library technicians freed librarians from routine tasks to pursue ‘more professional aspects of librarianship’. The redistribution of tasks down the hierarchy however, has not been without conflict. Smeaton (1983:35) stated that in areas like reference work ‘there is still great
divergence of opinion among professional librarians about the division of labour between professional, para-
professional and clerical staff. Furthermore, the reluctance of librarians to relinquish tasks that are no longer
considered professional may have contributed to continuing demarcation issues and role blurring (Oberg, et al.

There is some evidence to suggest that restrictions are placed on paraprofessionals both in the tasks they are
permitted to perform and the extent to which they are permitted to perform those tasks. Oberg et al. (1992)
claimed that data from their survey indicated few restrictions were placed on paraprofessionals’ performance at
the reference desk. On the other hand, data from the same survey indicated that paraprofessionals were much
more likely to be restricted when it came to on-line searching and formal instruction in library use. A recent
study by Palmini (1994) examined the impact of computerisation on library support staff in Wisconsin
academic libraries. The study reported that more than one third of the support staff surveyed felt that they
were inadequately trained for computer use and that they lacked adequate time to become familiar with new
technologies.

STUDY OF THE ROLES OF REFERENCE PARAPROFESSIONALS

One purpose of this study was to provide current data about reference paraprofessionals’ tasks. Secondly, the
study sought to identify the perceptions of reference paraprofessionals and their managers concerning the
impact of technology on their work environment, tasks and skill acquisition. The research focused around
questions concerning four central areas:

do paraprofessionals perform these tasks? Do perceptions of task allocation and task frequency differ between
reference managers and reference paraprofessionals?

2. Perceptions of task restrictions. Do paraprofessionals who work in reference services perceive themselves
to be restricted in the kind of reference work they do? Do perceptions of restrictions differ between reference
managers and reference paraprofessionals?

 perceive to be the source of their reference skills? Do perceptions of the sources of paraprofessionals’ reference
skills differ between reference managers and reference paraprofessionals?

4. Perceptions of role change and technology. How do paraprofessionals who work in reference services
 perceive their role, has technology changed their role? Are the nature of these perceptions the same for
reference managers and reference paraprofessionals?

METHODS

Sample: All Australian university and State libraries were approached to participate in the study; 29 of the 38
universities listed by the Council of Australian University Libraries and 7 out of 9 State and Territories
libraries listed by the Council of Australian State Libraries agreed to participate. A total of 503 questionnaires
were distributed, 44% were returned including 159 (43%) from workers in paraprofessional positions and 64
(50%) from managers of reference sections. Personal qualifications of incumbents in paraprofessional
positions did not dictate whether they completed a questionnaire; professional librarians employed in such
positions were therefore asked to participate. Two different groups of paraprofessionals emerged in the
analysis of the study; those who were designated as reference services paraprofessionals and secondly, those
whose designated positions were primarily in other sections of the library but came into reference for short
periods of time to staff the reference desk. In this study the former were called ‘reference paraprofessionals’
(69) and the latter ‘non-reference paraprofessionals’ (90).

Reference Paraprofessionals’ Characteristics: The majority (83%) of paraprofessional respondents were
women. The ages of the paraprofessionals ranged from 18 to 60 years with an average age of 42 years. Nearly
half (46%) were classified at HEW (higher education worker) level 4 and 25% were classified at HEW level 5.
The average minimum and maximum salaries were A$26,436 and A$29,092 respectively. Survey respondents
provided in-depth data that indicated paraprofessionals working in reference are very experienced. On
average, paraprofessionals had spent 11 years working in libraries and 3.9 years working in their current
positions doing reference work. The most common highest qualification held by paraprofessionals working in reference was an associate diploma (35%) followed by: bachelors degree (21%), certificate (12%), graduate diploma (8%) and a further 17% had no qualification. While 58% of paraprofessional respondents indicated they were library technicians, 16% were professional librarians, of which, 10% held their librarian qualifications at the time of their current paraprofessional appointment.

Questionnaires: Two separate questionnaires were designed; one for paraprofessionals who performed reference work and the other for the managers or supervisors of the people in those positions. The questions on which this study was based were answered by both managers and paraprofessional reference workers. The questions were divided into four areas that were central to the study: reference paraprofessionals' tasks, perceptions of reference work restrictions, perceptions of reference skill acquisition and perceptions of role change and technology. The sample was asked to respond to statements using Likert scales.

Analysis: Ratings of the three groups were analysed using analysis of variance followed by Scheffe's post hoc tests. Probabilities for significance were set at the normal probability level of 0.05 (* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001).

RESULTS

Paraprofessionals' tasks
In order to determine what tasks reference paraprofessionals do and how frequently they perform particular tasks, survey respondents were asked to indicate how frequently they performed a large number of tasks.

Table 1: Task Factors Derived by Factor Analysis of Frequency Ratings on Reference Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLIENT SEARCH ASSISTANCE TASKS (7.4%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>instruct clients how to use on-line public access catalogues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instruct clients how to use electronic databases (such as CD ROM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answer directional and basic reference enquiries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADVANCED REFERENCE TASKS (9.1%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>answer advanced reference enquiries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answer specialist reference enquiries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work at reference or information desk by yourself with no professional support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use command languages to perform on-line literature searches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perform CD ROM literature searches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY TASKS (6.5%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>trouble shoot information technology hardware problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>install PC software and/or CD-ROM application packages/updates etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instruct clients how to use information technology hardware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perform tasks associated with the maintenance of information technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPORTED REFERENCE TASKS (5.4%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>work at the reference or information desk by yourself with a professional librarian on-call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work at the reference or information desk with a professional librarian in a support role</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT TASKS (7.0%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>assist in the de-selection of items from the collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de-select items from the collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assist in the selection of items for the collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>select items for the collection</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>READER EDUCATION TASKS (27.8%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>assist with the delivery of formal reader education programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>develop reader education programmes for formal instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>deliver formal reader education programmes</td>
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<tr>
<td>assist with development of reader education programmes</td>
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<tr>
<td>conduct library tours.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A five point Likert scale offered response options ranging from '1-Never' to '5- Very Frequently'. A factor analysis with a varimax rotation was used to reduce the large number of specific tasks by gathering them into meaningful task sets. The 23 specific tasks were reduced to six significant factors which accounted for 63% of the variance within all the items (see Table 1).

Overall, paraprofessionals performed client search assistance tasks more frequently than other tasks (see Figure 1). Generally paraprofessionals were found to perform this task frequently. Of the other five tasks advanced reference work, information technology tasks and supported reference desk work were done from seldom to occasionally and collection development tasks and reader education tasks were seldom performed. There was a significant difference between the perceptions of reference paraprofessionals and both non-reference paraprofessionals and managers for advanced reference work. Reference paraprofessionals believed that they performed advanced reference work tasks significantly more often (mean = 2.8) than the non-reference paraprofessionals (mean = 2.3) and their managers (mean = 2.3) believed they did. There were significant differences between the frequency of performing collection development tasks and reader education tasks by reference paraprofessionals and non-reference paraprofessionals. Reference paraprofessionals reported that they performed collection development duties (mean = 2.2) more frequently than non-reference paraprofessionals (mean = 1.8). Managers also perceived that reference paraprofessionals performed collection development duties more frequently (mean = 2.3) than the level reported by non-reference paraprofessionals. Similarly, the reference paraprofessionals performed reader education duties (mean = 2.1) more frequently than non-reference paraprofessionals (mean = 1.7).

**p < .01

*Figure 1. Reference Paraprofessionals, Non-Reference Paraprofessionals and Managers' Perceptions of Paraprofessionals' Tasks and the Frequency of Task Performance*

Some caution should be used when interpreting the factored data. Individual tasks within sets showed that some tasks were being done quite frequently by paraprofessionals. For example, 41% of all paraprofessionals stated that they answered advance reference enquiries either frequently or very frequently. In the same task set, it was found that 107 (67%) of the 159 paraprofessional respondents stated that they never performed on-line searching, on the other hand, 13% indicated that they did so either frequently or very frequently. Data clearly indicated that tasks such as selection and formal reader education were only done frequently or very frequently by a very small percentage of paraprofessionals (6%).
In order to determine how paraprofessionals and their managers' perceived their reference environment they responded to a set of statements using a Likert scale ranging from '1 – Strongly Disagree' to '5 – Strongly Agree'. An analysis of the overall beliefs of paraprofessionals and managers regarding the impact of technology and the reference environment on their tasks and skills was conducted.

Restrictions Placed on Paraprofessionals
The sample was asked to respond to three statements regarding their perceptions of task restrictions. The propositions put to respondents were that restrictions were placed on:
- the type of reference enquiries paraprofessionals are permitted to answer
- the type of reader education programmes paraprofessionals conduct
- which on-line databases paraprofessionals are permitted to search

Generally both groups of paraprofessionals and their managers slightly agreed that reader education and on-line searching were restricted but tended to disagree that reference enquiries were restricted (see Figure 2). In all cases, paraprofessionals believed that they were less restricted in the performance of their tasks than their the managers believed.

For reference enquiries and reader education, paraprofessionals were seen as more restricted by managers than by both groups of paraprofessionals. Reference paraprofessionals did not believe that restrictions were placed on the type of enquiries they were permitted to answer (mean = 2.4). On the other hand, reference managers held neutral opinions about this issue (mean = 3.0). The managers believed that the paraprofessionals were more restricted in reader education (mean = 3.7) than the reference paraprofessionals believed that they were (mean = 3.2). No significant differences in perceptions were found between groups regarding whether restrictions were placed on which on-line databases paraprofessionals were allowed to search.

Reference Skill Source
Respondents were asked to express their agreement to three statements about how paraprofessionals acquired their current reference skills:
- I 'picked-up' most of the skills I require to carry out my current reference tasks on the job.
I learnt most of the skills I require to carry out my current reference tasks through formal in-house training.

My formal qualifications provided me with most of the skills I require to carry out my current reference tasks.

Generally all groups believed that paraprofessionals 'pick-up' most of the skills they require to perform reference tasks on the job (see Figure 3). There was slight support for the view that skills were also acquired through in-house training but all groups tended to slightly disagree that reference skills were acquired through formal qualifications.

* Figure 3. Reference Paraprofessionals, Non-Reference Paraprofessionals and Managers' Perceptions of the Sources of Skills of Paraprofessionals in Reference Services

Although all groups tended to agree that paraprofessionals picked up their skills on the job, the managers' viewpoint was significantly different from the paraprofessionals'. Whereas reference paraprofessionals agreed (mean = 4.1) with the proposition, their managers only tended to agree (mean = 3.6). Thus, there was a belief that paraprofessionals gained most of their skills on the job and no support for the view that formal qualifications provided them with their skills.

Perceptions of roles and technology impact

Four questions answered by the respondents allowed an analysis of the overall beliefs of paraprofessionals working in reference regarding the impact of technology and the reference environment:

- Paraprofessionals are performing reference tasks which have traditionally been performed by librarians
- Computer technology in reference services has made tasks more routine for all staff
- Computer technology in reference services has made tasks more complex for all staff
- Computer technology has caused a redistribution of tasks between professionals and paraprofessionals

Overall, all groups agreed that paraprofessionals were performing tasks that have traditionally been performed by librarians (see Figure 4). In general all tended to agree that tasks had become more complex and disagreed that tasks had become more routine. There was, overall, slight support for the view that tasks had been redistributed.
Both groups of paraprofessionals agreed that they were performing tasks traditionally performed by librarians (means = 4.0), whereas, their managers were significantly less convinced (mean = 3.6). Significant differences in beliefs between the three groups were evident for the three propositions about the impact of technology on paraprofessional tasks. Reference managers (mean = 2.4) and reference paraprofessionals (mean = 2.7) did not believe that computer technology had made tasks more routine. On the other hand, non-reference paraprofessionals, who spent a small proportion of time in reference, took a significantly different position and tended to believe that it had made tasks more routine (mean = 3.3). A significant difference was identified between the stronger support by reference managers (mean = 3.8) and the degree of support of the non-reference (mean = 3.4) for the alternative proposition that technology had increased the complexity of tasks. Beliefs of reference managers, who were unsure that computer technology in reference services had caused a redistribution of tasks between librarians and paraprofessionals (mean = 3.1), differed significantly from the beliefs of non-reference paraprofessionals who tended to agree more strongly with the proposition (mean = 3.6). Opinions about the impact of other variables were not sought in the study and this may have influenced the managers’ neutral opinions. A number of managers volunteered that they believed other variables, such as, the economic climate, were responsible for the emergence of paraprofessionals in reference rather than information technology.

Figure 4. Reference Paraprofessionals, Non-Reference Paraprofessionals and Managers’ Perceptions of the Sources of Skills of Paraprofessionals in Reference Services

**INTERPRETATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Paraprofessionals’ Tasks and Restrictions
The results clearly indicate that client search assistance tasks, such as, OPAC and database instruction and directional and basic reference enquiries form the major part of reference paraprofessionals’ jobs. Nearly half the paraprofessionals also answer advanced reference enquiries frequently or very frequently. The reference paraprofessionals believed that they were relatively unrestricted when it came to answering reference enquiries. Importantly, their perceptions were significantly different to their managers’ perceptions. In addition, all groups indicated that they agreed to some extent that restrictions were placed on the type of reader education programmes paraprofessionals are permitted to conduct. As with reference inquiries, there was an important difference in perception identified between reference paraprofessionals and their managers. Once again reference paraprofessionals believed that they were less restricted in conducting reader education than their managers believed. These results raise serious questions for management regarding issues, such as, training, standards of service delivery and role definition. Differences in opinion as to the extent of reference paraprofessionals’ roles may provide evidence as to why role blurring continues to persist and once again indicates that clarification of roles and responsibilities has not been addressed. The results call for what Matthews (1993:54) described as ‘defining and exploring the limits’ of reference paraprofessional roles. Evidence from this study demonstrated that the majority of paraprofessionals do not regularly perform tasks,
such as, formal reader education and collection development. On the other hand, approximately 40% were assisting with these tasks. Paraprofessionals should also be encouraged by the fact that an increasing number of paraprofessionals appear to have been given some on-line searching responsibilities – 13% in this study indicated that they performed on-line searching either frequently or very frequently.

Skill Acquisition
Despite the fact that managers and paraprofessionals agreed that most skills for reference tasks are 'picked-up' on the job there was a significant difference in opinion identified. This result tended to suggest that managers may not realise the extent to which paraprofessionals are training themselves. The lack of current reference skills acquired through formal qualifications is also of major concern; all groups indicated that they tended to disagree that formal qualifications provided paraprofessionals with most of their current reference skills. The result may indicate that current reference subject curriculums have not kept pace with the automation of reference procedures. The results were consistent with Palmini's (1994) findings that paraprofessionals considered that they were inadequately trained for computer use and that they considered more adequate training on computers to be essential. Educators should be concerned by this result and make some assessment of reference curriculums to determine if current technological skills for reference paraprofessionals have been addressed. In addition, none of the groups was very convinced that paraprofessionals' reference skills were obtained through in-house training. Palmini's (1994) study identified that the lack of technological training for staff was a major source of frustration for support staff. Comments in this study also reflected paraprofessionals' frustration about lack of adequate training: 'training is minimal and there is little, if any, training or support for staff adjusting to the technological changes'; 'it is hard to keep up with new technology and still process the work each day. Many library workers feel swamped by new technology'; 'training is very haphazard'; 'training must be ongoing to meet head on the impact of technology and therefore change. Library technician courses must also keep in touch with these changes and supply relevant subject matter'. There was clear evidence from this study and from the literature that paraprofessionals' training needs for reference work are not being met either in the classroom, or in the workplace.

Roles and Technology Impact
There was agreement from all groups that paraprofessionals are performing reference tasks that have traditionally been performed by librarians. The automation of library processes appear, as Veaner (1984) pointed out, to have forced many task oriented procedures down the hierarchy from professionals to paraprofessionals. One would expect, therefore, that automated processes may have made reference work more routine in nature and easier to perform. The non-reference paraprofessionals were the only group that tended to agree this was the case. Interestingly, all groups indicated that computer technology had increased the complexity of reference tasks. There was evidence in the literature to support the paraprofessionals' perceptions that technology had contributed to the redistribution of tasks between reference workers. Deeney (1990), for example, suggested that technology had created a more professional level of tasks for librarians which had, in turn, provided paraprofessionals with the opportunity to work at the reference desk.

CONCLUSION
Reference paraprofessionals in the mid-1990s appear to be playing a significant role in the provision of reference services. The predominant role of reference paraprofessionals centred around tasks associated with working at the reference desk. Evidence also suggested that an increasing number of paraprofessionals are being given other tasks away from the desk, such as on-line searching, on a regular basis. The results, however, highlighted the lack of sufficient or appropriate training provided for paraprofessionals performing reference work, either through formal library courses, or by management in the form of formal in-house training. Importantly, the study may have provided some basis for the role blurring that has occurred between reference workers. Differing perceptions between management and paraprofessionals about roles, task restrictions and skill acquisition has highlighted this issue and calls for the redefinition of reference workers' roles in light of current technologies.

REFERENCES


Library Technicians and ALIA, I can see some of you rolling your eyes already. You will all be thinking that I am here to try to make you join ALIA and, I am. But I also want to explore with you the role that Library Technicians have played in ALIA, what ALIA has done to assist Library Technicians, what membership means and wander through some possibilities for the future. That said, I would like to start with a bit of a tour through some statistics.

The first year that the Association had Library Technicians as a distinct category of membership was 1980 with 70 members in this category. In June 1995 this number was 312, a growth of 242 in 15 years. When I first joined the National Office, I was curious to see just how many members were Library Technicians. I knew that there were a great many more practising Library Technicians than the 251 who were members at the end of 1993. I then looked at the Technician figures compared to total membership, this was around 3.4%, which represent the smallest category of membership. I have watched these figures carefully each month as the new statistics land on my desk and am pleased to be able to report that the year-end figures for 1994 showed there were 281 or (3.6% of total membership). Last month a new record was set of 312 Library Technician members – finally breaking the 4% barrier.

Technician membership compared to Total membership

![Graph showing Technician membership compared to Total membership]

Around this time we also set about retrieving statistics for the Library Technician membership category, the section membership figures and the total membership figures for the past ten years. They proved quite interesting. The figures had gone up and down each year, in much the same way as the total membership figures. They were high in 1989 and dropped drastically as the recession hit in the early 1990s. It was also interesting to note that in all cases except the 1991 conference in Sydney, membership figures for the state in which the Library Technicians conference was held increased for that year and, in most cases, have remained around that figure or higher.

One interesting point highlighted by these statistics is the number of members of the Library Technician’s Section. The membership of the Section has continued to rise steadily demonstrating to me that interest in Library Technicians and the issues that they face are high on the agenda for many members. In May 1995 there were 300 Library Technician members of ALIA and in the same month there were 515 members of the Section. We need to harness this support and interest and build on it. At the same time I looked at the size of the Library Technicians Section compared to other sections of the Association. Our section is certainly not the largest, but it is by no means the smallest either.
Firstly, we have to look at our base and see if it is truly representative and as strong as it should be. To help put these membership numbers into perspective, I asked every library school in Australia which trains library technicians to provide me with figures for the number of students graduating for 1984, 1989 and 1994 so that I could look at the number of graduates compared to the number of members. The figures that I have collected are not conclusive as some schools did not respond. However, from those that did we can conclude that in the years 1984, 1989 and 1994, over 720 Library Technicians graduated from schools around Australia.

This raises two questions: why are they not all members? and why do they not see any benefit in meeting with other Library Technicians and exchanging information and skills?

This is true for the Association as a whole as well as for Library Technicians. Obviously an Association lobbying government with a membership base of 20 000 has greater clout and influence than one with 8000. Likewise it is far easier to argue for greater resources and support for 10% of the membership than for 4%.

Meg Paul, in her column *What price the profession* in the September 1994 issue of *New Librarian* addressed some of the issues surrounding membership of ALIA:

“I recently questioned a seminar of postgraduate students about why they were not student members and they blamed the cost of membership. Yet student membership is a measly $40 per year – less than the cost of one cup of indifferent cafeteria coffee per week. And for this they get *inCite*, entrance into a varied and free smorgasbord of professional meetings and discussion; cheap rates to ALIA-sponsored professional development activities; membership of a mentoring scheme (in some States); and, most importantly, the opportunity to begin to network and build professional friendships and acquaintances that will enrich and expedite their professional career. I was pleased that once I put this to these students, the majority collected membership forms.

“And why do some members of our profession not join? The cost is again the most common answer. So let’s upgrade the coffee from cafeteria instant to a cup of premium cappuccino – once a week. I wonder if all the free-loaders out there are happy at not having any say nor playing an active role in the future direction of their profession for the cost of one coffee per week?” (Paul 1994)

Using Meg’s comparison: one cup of premium cappuccino per week at, say, $2.50 per cup which would be $130.00 per year, the membership fee for a Library Technician on a middle salary range is $125.00 for 1995. What do we, as Library Technicians get out of our membership of ALIA? There are a range of services that are offered by the Association to its members, some tangible, some less obvious: i.e. benefits include *inCite*, section newsletters, journals, publications, seminars and conferences, the Association’s Continuing Professional Development program (including the CPD Framework which will be launched later today), provision of self-paced learning packages and industrial advice.

Less tangible benefits include the government lobbying and submissions on issues that are vital to the profession. The underwriting of conferences like this, course recognition, the advice given from the National Office to conference committees, office bearers, divisions and journal editors. The development of strategic
alliances with other National Associations and the professional development that is achieved through meetings and social occasions. It is important to realise that even the intangible benefits have a direct impact on individual members. Take for example the lobbying activities that ensure the views and interests of all of us are on the agenda of governments and the bureaucracy. Some of the successes that the Association has had in the past include: the Broadband Expert Services Group Inquiry recommendations (recommendations that include two put forward by ALIA) and the Association’s Federal Electoral Strategy where every member of Federal Parliament will be visited by a delegation from the Association in the lead up to the next Federal Election. There is also our participation in the Library Competency Standards Project, and a recent agreement with DEET to undertake a Career Recruitment Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Australian Library Week is also coordinated by the Association. You might wonder what this has to do with library technicians? The answer is ‘a great deal’. Australian Library Week and the merchandise connected with it has assisted us in obtaining media coverage from local to state and federal levels. Just recently Healthy, Wealthy and Wise (the television program) contacted us for information and materials in order to shoot a story on libraries for a show that will go to air later this year. The media are increasingly approaching the Association for information and comment on articles that they are writing. The National Office was recently contacted by a number of newspapers including The Sydney Morning Herald and The Canberra Times.

The Association has an active International Relations Committee who are building relationships with other Associations in the Asia/Pacific region and are investigating ways in which we are able to provide members with the opportunity to work in that region, thereby providing members with professional development opportunities. Very importantly and quite basic to our activities is the forum we have within the Association in which we are able to express our concerns and aspirations: our National Section and State Groups.

So just how do we get ourselves heard and increase our impact? Library Technicians have played many roles on ALIA over the years. I’m sure that we could all name at least one role model that we have found within the Association. They may have been an office bearer on the State Section, or perhaps they represent you on your Branch Council, ensuring that the views and perspectives of Library Technicians in your State are heard. Or your role model may be someone who is involved in the industry committee commenting on the Technician course in your state, or was a representative for Library Technicians on one of the many Arts Training Committees around Australia addressing the issues surrounding the Library Competency Standards. They may have been active in lobbying for greater recognition for Library Technicians in the industrial relations arena. They may have attended General Council meetings, taking the opportunity present to lobby General Councillors on issues of import to Technicians. Or, as Jean Bailey and Jilleen Chambers have been, they may be members of the Board of Education.

I strongly support Library Technicians being active in sections and groups other than, or in addition to the Library Technicians Section. In fact, I believe that concentrating our efforts on just one section is in the main, detrimental. I have heard the cry many times, in many venues, of an ‘us and them’ attitude that is assumed to be active in libraries. We will not change the reality nor the perception if we remain cloistered inside a safe haven where we argue amongst ourselves about the issues that concern us. As the Association is actively lobbying government on the national level, so must Library Technicians be politically astute and lobby within the profession for what we see as important. This is how we will ensure the changes that we desire.

I have seen many changes in the way in which concerns of Library Technicians are handled and the barriers are breaking down. By being involved in other areas of the Association you can help erode these barriers. Personally, for example, I have been involved in the NSW group of the Technicians Section, in the Western Regional Chapter of NSW Branch and on the NSW Branch Council.

How do we get more recognition at a National Level? Nominate for positions! There are three positions on the Board of Education for which nominations are being called at the moment and there will be positions in any number of sections, regional groups, special interest groups and branches around the country in the next few months. You don’t need to be an office bearer to start with – you can be a member of the committee. Be involved – take the opportunity to learn and network.

Think of the impact you could make, on for example, the Board of Education. The Board recognises library courses around Australia and the value of having a Library Technician on the Board cannot be underestimated. I believe that it is of greater advantage that this position on the Board of Education is not reserved for Library
Technicians. Why? Because it means that any Library Technician elected to the Board is elected not just because a Library Technician must be appointed, but because they have demonstrated their interest, their credentials and that they have been given a mandate by the membership as a whole, and not simply from one group.

So how do we go about getting our issues and concerns onto the agendas of State/Territory Branches and if appropriate General Council? There are a variety of ways that this can be done. You can join other sections of the Association, working with other members and ensuring that they are aware of the issues of concern to Library Technicians.

When there is an issue that requires wider consideration than your group there are a number of methods that are available to you. Firstly, you need to speak to the Library Technicians Section in your state. The group then needs to decide whether it is a local, state or national issue. It is important that issues are referred through this structure rather than acting independently. You will get a lot further if there are a number of divisions responding to a particular issue than you will alone.

If your State group then agrees that it is an issue that they need to address what do you do? You speak to other state groups and the National Section. The issue should then be taken to the Branch, so have it placed on the Branch agenda. The Branch may then agree that it is a state issue, or that it is one of national concern. If it is a national concern then lobby your General Councillor to place it on the agenda for the next General Council meeting. Work with them on the General Council paper.

General Council has in the past two years operated on a system of portfolios. Each General Councillor has a section and a professional issue for which they hold the portfolio interest. In 1994 the portfolio holder for Library Technicians was Kerry Smith, the West Australian General Councillor. I know that Kerry took the position seriously and attended a number of Library Technician Section meetings in Perth. The portfolio holder for 1995 is Di Booker, in South Australia. You immediately have three General Councillors to whom you can speak about the issue of concern. When the issue comes up for discussion you will thus have, potentially, three people who will be familiar with the issue and are able to speak with some authority to the Council as a whole.

You may want to go wider than this — so what about speaking to other state groups? They may have already indicated that the same problem is an issue for them. Ask them to brief and lobby their General Councillor, that’s four, five or even six members of a twelve-member Council that are aware of the issue and the concern surrounding it. This does not, of course, guarantee that you will achieve the outcome you desire, but it will ensure that a number of Councillors are now aware of the Section and that you are united. And you’ve changed the balance. They know you so next time an issue such arises which impacts on Library Technicians they may actually contact you!

What are the possibilities for the future? There are a number of things that will increase the impact and input that we are able to have as Library Technician members of the Association. These include: a larger Library Technician Section, a greater number of Library Technicians joining ALIA and getting involved, more Library Technicians being active outside our section in areas in which they work and which they are interested. There is nothing to say that a Library Technician could not be a General Councillor and take a seat on our National Board, or become the President of a Branch. The sky is the limit — the key is strategic placement, political action and getting smarter in our activities, alliances and lobbying.

Basic to the total policy and direction of the Association is our privilege, as members to vote. The right to vote for our President and the Councillor representing your State on General Council. This Council decides Association policy and direction. They decide what is important, whereas we as members decide who we want to make these decisions on our behalf. If we don’t, then we have no cause to complain. Even those who for whatever reason cannot take a more active role can make a difference — through exercising their right to vote.

REFERENCE:

THE BENEFITS OF MULTI-SKILLING AND JOB ROTATION FOR LIBRARY TECHNICIANS

Kathy Kish

Today I would like to talk about multi-skilling and job rotation; how they work and what the benefits are for staff, management and patrons in libraries; how library technicians are so well suited to multi-skilling and job rotation programmes; and give a brief example of how to implement such a programme.

I was first introduced to these concepts while I was working as an ALT at a university library. The library was divided into two sections (a) circulation and reference; and (b) orders and cataloguing. These two sections were then divided into teams. The first section consisted of circulation, inter library loans, audio visual, reference and closed reserve. The second consisted of orders, serials, cataloguing and end processing. The staff were rotated within their sections, every nine to twelve months. This gave everyone a great opportunity to gain experience in new areas of library work.

I was so impressed by what I saw, I was determined to continue using similar methods in future places of employment. I have only had that one opportunity to work under a formally implemented system of multi-skilling and job rotation, but most other libraries, where I have worked, were implementing the same systems without being completely aware of the concepts which they were following.

I have been working in the information services area for eleven years. During this time, I have worked in ten different libraries, including local, state, and federal government departments; schools; colleges and universities; and private enterprise. By having had these opportunities I have been able to observe and experience a variety of national and international computer systems and networks; various forms of management used to run libraries; a wide range of users and patrons and their individual requirements and needs; and a vast variety of procedures used to achieve the same goals. By gaining as much experience as possible in each library, I became more employable and eligible for positions more senior to that which I was in previously. At present I am at the University of Technology Sydney Library, in a management position.

1. WHAT IS MULTI-SKILLING AND JOB ROTATION?

Multi-skilling is a way of organising work so that staff are able to acquire and use a greater range and depth of skills, coupled with a willingness to use these skills by a means of job rotation. It allows staff to be trained in a greater range of duties.

Multi-skilling is divided into two categories. Horizontal multi-skilling and vertical multi-skilling. Horizontal multi-skilling allows a person to gain a diverse range of skills at a similar level of complexity. It gives the person more variety and less boredom. Vertical multi-skilling allows a person to gain skills at a higher level of complexity. Vertical multi-skilling gives the person an in-depth understanding of the work area, along with a greater interest and satisfaction.

"Multi-skilling is a method of training for work which equips people to perform a variety of tasks and learn new skills by means of job rotation, classroom training, on-the-job training and self-directed learning programs." (National Training Council 1987).

Job rotation cannot function effectively if a multi-skilling system has not been implemented. Staff cannot be moved around if they have not been made familiar with the procedures in their new section.

"Multi-skilling is not moving from one stable state to a better state – it is the creation of a dynamic learning environment that can readily respond to future changes in order to gain a competitive edge in the quest for improved productivity." (Cormack 1991).

2. MULTI-SKILLING AND JOB ROTATION FOR LIBRARY TECHNICIANS

As library technicians, we are fortunate to have studied a wide range of subjects and to have qualified from our courses with a broad knowledge of library work areas. N. Watkins (1976) stated that, "Library technicians have specialist skills and expertise beyond the capacity of the professional librarian." We have a thorough
grounding in areas such as communications and cataloguing; skills in using a variety of reference tools; the knowledge of a wide range of libraries and the different patrons which they serve. We emerge from our courses ready to add practical skills to our classroom training. Due to the constant expanding and developing nature of libraries and information services, it is necessary that as LTs we continue to update and enhance our skills to meet current market demands. Gaining as much experience as possible is a perfect way of increasing our skills. By remaining in the same position, performing the same duties year after year, we are not expanding our knowledge or skills-base, nor are we putting all that we have learnt during our studies into practice. Job rotation is a means of backing-up classroom-type training with on-the-job training. It serves the purpose of maintaining these skills at an acceptable level and ensuring that staff experience a variety of skills in day-to-day work. Library technicians are the obvious choice for multi-skilling programmes, as they already have such a wide range of skills.

3. THE BENEFITS
So why should libraries multi-skill their Technicians? Why bother to implement job rotation? Jobs should be designed so that repetitive tasks are not concentrated in one area. Implementing job rotation eases these repetitious activities and allows staff to be able to implement the variety of skills obtained through multi-skilling. Job rotation also serves the purpose of maintaining these skills at an acceptable level and ensuring that all staff experience a variety of skills in day-to-day work. The ones to benefit from implementing and using multi-skilling and job rotation schemes are the libraries and organisations; the staff working in the libraries; and the patrons (without whom we wouldn’t be here). There are many things to be gained from multi-skilling and job rotation, and all three groups mentioned benefit, but in different ways.

3:1 Improved Patron Service
The library/organisation benefits because the improved service raises the image of the library in the eyes of the patrons. The more they like the services they are receiving, the more likely they are to return in the future. As the usage increases, the need for the library and its staffing is justified. The patrons stand to benefit hugely from improved services. There are more staff available for assistance, therefore reducing the waiting time. The staff receive positive feedback from management and from the patrons, and this in turn raises staff morale. This results in less stress, less sick leave and greater productivity.

3:2 Reduced Costs
By multi-skilling its staff, the library does not have to continually rely on casuals or temporaries as soon as someone is absent. Staff can shuffle and move around, 'step into each others shoes' when necessary, and therefore the work continues. The pace of the work may slow down slightly, but at least time does not have to be spent on training brand new staff. Thus, staff costs are reduced and work flows continue. I am not saying that hiring casuals is completely eliminated, simply that it can be reduced. The patrons stand to benefit from reduced costs, because where staffing budgets may be reduced, the monies for purchasing new material or upgrading the library facilities can be increased.

3:3 Improved Skills and Flexibility of the Staff
As library technicians broaden their already wide skills base, they become more knowledgeable and experienced in areas of circulation desk work, reference and research, document delivery, and technical processing. This opens countless doors for them in advancing their careers. Knowledge is useful, but without the hands-on experience, job opportunities are difficult to obtain. A library technician’s curriculum vitae is far more impressive when they can show that they have had a range of experiences in a variety of duties. It shows that they are capable, reliable, able to adapt to change and new working environments, and that they get along with fellow colleagues as they have had the opportunities to work with a variety of people. By having the opportunities to move around and experience all the working sections of libraries, library technicians are able to decide which areas they prefer to work in, or which sections they are best suited to. By having the opportunities to rotate and expand on their skills, library technicians gain a higher profile in the library world. The library benefits by acquiring a more flexible workforce, and improving the skills of its LTs. It gains a reputation in the library world as having highly skilled, motivated, capable and competent staff. Exchange programs with sister libraries, both nationally and internationally, are more readily available if staff are skilled in the latest computer networks and library procedures. Both the library and its staff benefit from obtaining knowledge from the visiting staff, as they bring new information to the library. Reading about what is available and new in the library world, does not have the same benefits as having one of your technicians experiencing it first hand, and then relaying all that they learnt to the rest of the staff. Learning from other
libraries' staff can only be beneficial. For the patrons, improving skills for the staff simply means improved services for them.

3:4 Job Enrichment and Satisfaction
For library technicians, improved skills lead to job enrichment. The more they learn, the more experience they can add to their expanding and climbing career paths. It is up to each individual technician to expand, update and enhance his/her own skills. As a result of job rotation, library technicians are able to ‘move around’ and gain new experiences. There is no room for boredom to set in, as there is always variety and change, and something new on the horizon. Staff are retaining enthusiasm for their work, and all of this adds up to high staff morale, low absenteeism and low staff turn-over. The more people enjoy their work, the better they feel about themselves in the work place. Absenteeism will be lowered because staff enjoy working and are not constantly looking for ways or reasons to ‘chuck a sickie’. Staff are less likely to resign, because the duties are varied and interesting, and they are safe in the knowledge that they can be rotated elsewhere within the library should they want new areas to work in.

3:5 Prevention of Work Related Injuries
The practice of job rotation eases repetitious activities and allows the staff to be able to implement the variety of skills obtained through multi-skilling. Rotation has been seen as a suitable strategy for both the prevention of Repetitive Strain Injuries (RSI) and for the management of injured staff returning to work. By performing a variety of duties, constant repetitious movements are eliminated. Needless to say, both library technicians and libraries stand to gain in this instance.

4. IMPLEMENTATION
No multi-skilling scheme or job rotation guideline is going to work, no matter how thorough, if the foundations have not been laid properly. There are two stages involved in implementing multi-skilling and job rotation programmes. First, the groundwork has to be done; approval from management has to be sought (if necessary); and goals and objectives have to be set.

An Implementation Workgroup has to be set up:
- The Workgroup has to be trained so that they know and understand what multi-skilling and job rotation involve; they have to be aware of what their role is in the programme; how the programme is going to affect the workplace; what does the library and its patrons stand to gain from the implementation?
- The Workgroup has to determine in which section of the library the programme is going to be implemented.
- They have to determine the scope of the programme; how large the scheme is going to be. Is it a reasonable expectation? Will there be room for expansion in the future?
- They need to identify and develop plans for long-term support.

Once the go-ahead has been given and the Workgroup has been established, the workplace needs to be prepared:
- Position descriptions have to be current and readily available.
- Procedures for all the duties have to be up-to-date and copies made available to all staff involved in the programme.
- Regular meetings for the Workgroup need to be set up.
- A plan has to be established. Goals and objectives have to be discussed and clarified.
- Procedures taken by the Workgroup have to be documented. This will help make any changes or rearrangements in the future easier. It will also assist in keeping management up-to-date.
- Regular feedback to library management is necessary.

Once the Workgroup knows what its goals and objectives are, the second stage of the implementation can begin:
- The staff who will be rotated need to have the programme outlined to them, and the benefits highlighted. Implementing a multi-skilling and job rotation programme is not easy. Simply to start rearranging staff and duties will only be met with hostile and negative reactions. It is only part of human nature to be wary of change.
• All staff participating in the rotation should be given copies of the work procedures relevant to the sections where they will be working. They need to familiarise themselves with the procedures. By having written procedures, flowcharts and guidelines, the training time is reduced.

• In larger libraries where there are more staff participating, care has to be taken in the training processes and procedures to ensure that the work flow is kept going. For example, implementing job rotation in a university library, using the Christmas/end-of-year break to rotate and train staff would be more logical than in the middle of first semester. Using the statistics from previous years will give a good indication as to when the slow and peak periods of the year, or day, are. The slow periods are when the training should be done. Maybe doing a total change is too much for your library to cope with at once. Rotating all the staff at once may not be feasible in your library. Why not start with a part-time rotation? Perhaps a couple of days a week? Maybe in the mornings? What is a suitable rotation scheme in one library may not be the best solution in another. It is impossible to expect that what a small five staff library does to rotate and multi-skill, will work in a large two-hundred plus staff university library.

• Once staff have established themselves in their ‘new’ positions, regular feedback to the Workgroup is necessary. The multi-skilling results have to be monitored and reinforcement needs to be provided to the staff.

CONCLUSION

Multi-skilling allows staff to be trained in new areas of the library. The benefits that will come from implementing such a programme are well worth the time and effort, and will be of an advantage to all the staff participating in the programme. To have the system fully operational and functioning efficiently, will take time. To set up a multi-skilling and job rotation programme does not happen overnight, and the most vital part of establishing such a programme is the training. Without a properly established and focussed training programme, no progress will be made. It is necessary to look closely at the training needs required in multi-skilling, and match them with the staff who are to be trained. The staff will require training, and the programme will need continuous fine tuning in order to maintain and develop the changing skills base of the staff.

REFERENCES


PROVIDING QUALITY SERVICE IN YOUR LIBRARY

Lorraine Denny

SUMMARY Providing quality service has become vital for all libraries. In order to justify their existence and fight for the ever diminishing dollar libraries need to create, demonstrate and maintain a quality image; to attract new customers and keep existing customers, to provide services that customers want and, at times, to exceed their expectations. Providing quality service is an important function for library technicians whether they deal with customers face to face or indirectly. Technicians are in an ideal position to observe customers' needs and expectations which gives them the opportunity to have a tremendous impact on the type of service the library provides. This paper will examine the changing role of the customer, what makes quality customer service, and some practical strategies and ideas that library technicians can adopt to help them deliver quality service.

I believe it is vital and its importance is increasing every year. Why? For a number of reasons. Firstly, competition. Libraries no longer have captive audiences. Customers can now go elsewhere for their information needs: for example, information agencies, personal computers, CD-ROMs, the Internet, bookshops, and other libraries. Secondly, funding is no longer guaranteed. Libraries need to justify their existence, and measure their performance in order to fight for the ever diminishing dollar. Thirdly, customers are becoming more aware of the importance of customer service and now have much higher expectations. In the past libraries have often been focussed inwardly. For example, acquiring materials on perceived (rather than established) needs, and establishing rules, policies and procedures that made it easier for library staff rather than the customer. Often the concept of customer service was not even considered. Managers in libraries didn't think in terms of competition, staff didn't care and were often not committed and since all employees were comfortable and secure in their jobs, thinking about competition was not a high priority (St Clair 1994).

Tom Peters (St Clair 1994, 10) describes this as the 'inside-out' (ie 'we' to 'them') idea of service, as opposed to the 'outside-in' (ie 'them' to 'us') idea of service. We can no longer concentrate on functions and materials, instead, we now need to concentrate on users' needs and how we can best meet them.

Libraries today need to:
• create and demonstrate a quality image
• attract new customers
• keep established customers coming back
• provide services and materials that customers want
• meet and exceed customers' expectations

This change in library thinking can also be illustrated through the following model.

Today, the structure has changed and the triangle has become inverted. The customer has become the central focus. It is now the front-line staff who are in the best position to advise management of the customer's wants and needs. It is front-line staff who listen to the customers and identify and report problems with policies, procedures or collections and document customer complaints and suggestions (Bessler 1994). It is the front-line staff who make decisions to improve service and these decisions are then supported by management (see model 2).

The University of Wollongong Library is a good example of this model. When I first started at the library 15 years ago, decisions were made on what was best or easier for the library, whether it was in relation to staff or facilities. Front-line staff were rarely consulted in decision making and were not encouraged to question. The
thought of consulting the customers to find out their needs and wants was not considered. Staff felt that the customers were a captive audience, we didn't have any competition. If the students didn't come to us, where else could they go?

Model 1 – Traditional Structure (Adapted from: Total Quality Service: Working on the front line, 1993)

Customer

Management

Middle Management

Front-line Staff

The changes that have taken place over the last 15 years have been dramatic. University Library management and staff are now committed to providing quality service to our customers. 1995 has been deemed "The Year of the Client" and a number of strategies have been put into place to support this commitment. For example:

- all new staff receive a detailed booklet on customer service and a booklet outlining the standards of service the library expects from its staff. These standards were developed as a result of consultation with all staff.
- within six months of their appointment all new staff participate in a customer service skills workshop.
- all staff have the opportunity to participate on quality teams, which are addressing customer service issues.
- workshops aimed at improving our service are held on a regular basis. These workshops identify barriers to providing quality service and develop action plans to break down these barriers.

Front-line staff have also been involved in implementing a number of changes to improve our service. These decisions have been strongly supported by management. They include:

- developing a standard format for all library publications
- dividing the information desk into information desk and reference desk services
- improving the promotion of library services
- ensuring relevant and up-to-date procedure manuals are near the appropriate service points
- improving the turn-around time for books to be checked back into the library
- changing CD-ROM booking time and procedure
- providing staplers for student use (a minor but persistent problem which staff finally resolved)

Some of these developments may appear very minor, but they all have had an impact and improved the quality of service we provide. The staff at the University Library have now adopted a philosophy of continuous improvement through The Quality and Service Excellence Program. Small steps are continually being taken to improve our service. The following quote from JanCarlzon, Scandinavian Airline Systems CEO illustrates that you don't have to make massive changes to improve the service you provide: "We never started out to become 1000% better at anything. Just 1% better at the 1000 different things that are important to the customer. And it worked" (Anderson & Zemke 1991, 76).
In order to improve the quality of customer service, we need to consider the application of Total Quality Management (TQM) practices. To provide quality service, we need to know the skills of the customers and how they interact with the service. We also need to know the impact of customer service and how it affects the organization. We need to continuously develop and improve the quality of customer service. In this way, we can develop our skills and provide quality service to our customers. By doing this, we can develop our skills, learn about the service, provide quality service to our customers, and continuously improve the quality of customer service.

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The model of Quality Customer Service is divided into three levels: Management, Front-line Staff, and Customer. Each level plays a different role in providing quality service. Management is responsible for setting the information desk and ensuring that library staff are trained in promotional activities. Front-line staff are responsible for providing quality service to the customer. Customer is responsible for providing feedback on the service.

The importance of customer service is crucial for any organization. It is not only important to provide quality service but also to continuously improve and develop our skills. To do this, we need to have an impact on the service and how it affects the organization. We need to know the skills of the customers and how they interact with the service. We also need to know the impact of customer service and how it affects the organization. We need to continuously develop and improve the quality of customer service. In this way, we can develop our skills and provide quality service to our customers. By doing this, we can develop our skills, learn about the service, provide quality service to our customers, and continuously improve the quality of customer service.
ago when I was working on the loans desk. It was extremely busy and there was a very long queue. My aim was to get through that queue as quickly as possible. I was on automatic pilot when I heard a voice say "The least you could do is say hello to your brother." I was so involved in what I had to do I didn't even look up and see or acknowledge him. It was then that I realised it was important for me consciously to be aware of the customer, each individual customer. No matter how busy I was or what was happening, each customer is important and deserves quality service.

**Model 3 - Customer Service Mindset** (Adapted from model presented at MTE Value Added Customer Service Workshop, 1994)

![Diagram of Customer Service Mindset]

So what is quality customer service? The above model: The Customer Service Mindset breaks a very complex issue down into three components. The first component is our intention. What are we intending to be the outcome of the transaction? We can't change someone else's attitude BUT we can change our own. The second component is our attention. What are we attending to? Are we giving the customer our undivided attention, for example, through non-verbal and verbal communication. And the third component is our skills—the interpersonal skills of dealing with the customer: listening skills, communication skills and conflict resolution skills. In order to provide quality customer service (QCS) we need to address all three components.

When looking at the components of quality service we also need to define the service transaction. Connellan and Zemke (1993) refer to the service transaction as both the process and the outcome of an exchange. The process is the customer's experience of the steps he or she goes through to obtain the outcome. For example, successfully checking out the book you want is the outcome. How long you wait and the attention received while being served is the process. When examining the service we provide we need to look at both the process and the outcome. Do they both result in the customer receiving quality service?

It is also important to remember that providing quality service is a total process. It does not only refer to times when we physically serve a customer face-to-face. Service to customers is delivered in a number of ways. Scandinavian Airline Systems refer to their countless daily contacts with customers as 'Moments of Truth': "A Moment of Truth occurs anytime a customer comes in contact with any part of your organisation and uses that contact to judge the quality of the organisation" (Anderson & Zemke 1991, 74).

This means we need to look at the service we provide as a total process. For example, the look of the library, the promises made in promotional material, how long our phone rings before it is answered, how the call is handled, e-mail, written correspondence, overdue notices, fines etc. At all times it is important to keep the
principles of quality service in mind. Often we try very hard in the face-to-face contact with the customer but forget about how our correspondence sounds.

So far I have outlined the changing role of the customer and what is quality service. But how do we provide quality service to our customers? Providing quality customer service is made up of important individual actions. Each is relatively easy and simple to master. All combine to make the service you provide memorable. "How well you listen, understand and respond to each customer... how you handle face-to-face contact... how you use the telephone... the words you put on paper... the way you anticipate a customer's needs... and whether you thank them for doing business with you... all contribute to your customer's evaluation of your efforts" (Anderson & Zemke 1991, 43).

The following strategies are suggestions that will help you as library technicians deliver quality service to your customers:

- Practice the golden rule. Treat customers the way that you would like to be treated. Always speak to customers with fairness, courtesy and regard (Customer Service Handbook Bulletin, 1994).
- Avoid saying ‘it’s our policy’. This is very annoying for customers to hear and often doesn’t mean anything to them. Be completely familiar with the rules and policies within your library so that you can explain them to the customer.
- Welcome complaints. Complaints are an opportunity to improve your service. Take them seriously and act on them to the best of your ability. Also pass them onto supervisors. Often complaints never go past the front desk.
- Who are our customers? Remember we have both internal and external customers. Internal customers are our work colleagues. They deserve the same quality service we provide to our external customers. Providing quality service begins from within the organisation.
- Be positive; say what you can do. Before saying ‘no’ to a customer think about what you can do. Give the customer some alternatives. For example, instead of telling a customer we don’t hold a particular book, I could offer to tell them which libraries do hold it.
- Be a role model. Be a positive influence to other staff. Provide service that other staff will want to copy ‘Example is a powerful training tool’ (Bessler 1994, 54).
- Recognise and praise other staff on a job well done in relation to customer service. This can be done in staff meetings or individually.
- Behaviour breeds behaviour. Remember, that you can’t change someone else’s behaviour but you can change your own. How you react gives you a huge amount of power when dealing with customers.
- Referrals. When referring a customer to another department or person, make sure it is the right one. It is unprofessional to give the customer the run around. If you are not sure, check before you make a referral.
- Be honest. Tell the customer only what you know. Don’t give out inaccurate information. If you don’t know, tell the customer and offer to find out for them.
- Take responsibility. Whether the problem is received over the phone or face to face take responsibility for ensuring that it is resolved. This may mean making sure that the person you referred the problem to has sorted it out or it may mean you have to do some homework yourself. Always do as much as you can to solve a problem or query before passing it on. Tell the customer “I’ll take care of that,” and offer your name.
- Contribute new ideas; offer suggestions for improvement. No-one has a monopoly on ideas, we can all contribute. Constantly be on the lookout for that little change that will produce a big change in your customers’ perception of your service quality.
- Customer service is about meeting and exceeding customers expectations, but not at your expense. Don’t try to do the impossible, recognise when you’re getting stressed. No-one should have to take strong abuse from a customer. Do what you can do that is both reasonable and realistic. “Draw a clear line between who you are and what you do – who you are goes home with you at the end of the day, what you do stays at work” (Anderson & Zemke 1991, 120).
- Consistency. Be careful not to over service a customer. For example, doing something totally out of the ordinary. This may raise their expectations to an unrealistic level which would be impossible to continue to live up to. Try to be consistent in the service you provide.
The Five Forbidden Phrases. Nancy Friedman who is known as the Telephone Doctor advocates a ban on the following five phrases which intentionally or unintentionally drive your customers right up the wall in anger or frustration. The forbidden phrases and suggested alternatives are:

Forbidden Phrase   Try instead
'I don't know'    'Let me check and I'll find out for you'
'We can't do that' Offer an alternative solution
'You'll have to ....' Soften the request with phrases like 'You'll need to...' or 'Will you please'
'Hang on a second. I'll be right back' 'It may take two or three minutes to get that. Are you able to hold/wait while I check?'
'No' when used at the beginning of a sentence If you think before you speak, you can turn every answer into a positive response.

(Anderson & Zemke, 1991)

- Being proud of what you do, and being committed to doing it well are powerful motivators.

When on the Telephone:
- Often customers use the phone to contact the library. Ensure that you know how to use the phone correctly, it is surprising how many people do not know how to put a caller on hold or successfully transfer a call. This aspect is often ignored with new staff, we all assume that people know how to use a phone.
- Take accurate messages for your colleagues. It is important to take down the name of the caller, contact number, details of the inquiry, if given, and the best call back time. This can help your colleague save a lot of time if they are aware of the nature of the call (they can prepare information required to answer the call) and also a convenient time to return the call. We have all experienced trying to return a call and the person never seems to be there.
- When on the phone, place the caller on hold if you have to find out further information. Firstly, ask the caller if they mind being put on hold and wait for an answer. This is especially important if you need to discuss the nature of the call with your colleague. There is nothing worse than hearing yourself being discussed by staff within a company. Also, try not to leave the person on hold for longer than a minute without informing them of what is happening.
- When on the phone, explain to the customer what you are doing. Often we need to look up information on the computer, but the customer can’t see us doing this and is not sure about what is happening.
- Always offer to phone the caller back with the required information rather than them calling again.
- Smile. Remember that the customer cannot see you. Smile because the tone of your voice lets the customer know that they are speaking to someone who is happy to be helping them (Customer Service Handbook Bulletin, 1994).

Often at conferences we listen to papers, take notes, maybe think, ‘well that was full of good ideas’, and then file the notes when we get back to work. In order to make this paper a practical one in which you will apply some ideas back at your work place, I would like you to write down at least one idea or action that you will apply when you get back to work which will improve the customer service that you provide. Write it in big bold letters that will stand out, and then turn to your neighbour and share your action or idea with them. I hope that this will motivate you to make a difference to the service you provide.

Before finishing, I would like to leave you with one last thought:

Each customer service transaction is unique, the value of that transaction for both the customer and your library is determined by YOU.
REFERENCES


ENTERPRISE BARGAINING: THE VICTORIAN EXPERIENCE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Isla Gillespie

SUMMARY The introduction of the Kennett Government in Victoria and changes in the Industrial Relations laws have caused dramatic changes in public libraries. Enterprise Bargaining Agreements are important in this environment to ensure that all employees receive regular pay rises and working conditions are suited to the organisation and the employee. These will be discussed in relation to the amalgamation of local councils and meeting the Compulsory Competitive Tendering targets of the Kennett Government. The changes are radical, but will they improve local library services to the public?

1. ENTERPRISE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

In October 1991 there was a National Wage Case decision which was handed down by the Industrial Relations Commission. The new regulation meant that there would no longer be wage increases across the board. On the contrary, increases in pay would be negotiated by unions with employers in the form of enterprise bargaining. This in effect provides a two level system. Awards provide industry level basic standards which are safety net increases and enterprise agreements which provide flexibility to meet employee/employer needs at enterprise/workplace level.

According to the Australian Services Union, “Enterprise Bargaining provides workers with an opportunity to improve job satisfaction, career paths, job security and increases in income with the opportunity for management to have improved flexibility and productivity”. An Enterprise Bargaining Agreement is the documentation committing the employer and employees to the agreed negotiations. Enterprise Bargaining Agreements are legally binding once they are ratified in the Industrial Relations Commission.

Enterprise Bargaining Agreements should lead to:
- Improved service for clients/customers.
- More secure, more interesting jobs.
- Better training opportunities
- Enterprise/Workplace consultation; more co-operative work organisation, flatter management structure.
- More equity at work: equal opportunities, no discrimination
- Fair sharing of improved performance, including wages and conditions.

Enterprise Bargaining Agreements have forced staff and employers to consider more flexible approaches to ‘tried and true’ work practices. The general aim was not to set up a win or lose situation with the employees trading off all their conditions for increased productivity for the employer. On the contrary, it was an ambitious attempt to clarify the goals and future direction of the organisation and try to reach them through industrial harmony.

So, what’s in an Agreement? Mechanisms which provide for:
- Consultation
- Equity
- Better training opportunities
- Improvements in service delivery/efficiency/workplace performance
- Improving work organisation and job design
- Reflecting improved performance in employee benefits

Representatives from management and employees (union representatives) came together to negotiate terms and conditions for the City of Nunawading Enterprise Agreement. The employees had to negotiate with their employers to increase productivity or effectiveness in work practices in order to receive a pay rise. Staff were expected to develop local work area agreements which would be implemented in order to gain the benefit of $12 per week. The Enterprise Agreement was designed to span two years with provisions for three $12 payments. The first was at the signing of the agreement, the second approximately a year later, and the third a
year after that. After each payment, staff in each local area workplace had to agree on another benefit to the employer. This did not necessarily have to be a cost saving exercise: for example, the library employees decided to open the three branches of the library an hour earlier which meant no further cost to the employer, but a gain to the customer. This was seen as an important step in enhancing the image of the library in the community. Other sections within the organisation decided to look at opening hours, address occupational health and safety issues and promote the services to the customer. The importance of the Enterprise Agreement was noticeable in changing patterns of thinking regarding council activities.

Once the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement has been negotiated there are certification requirements of the federal system. These ensure that:

- An award exists
- Negotiation is undertaken by a "single bargaining unit" which means that one union acts as the prime negotiator for all other unions
- There is no disadvantage to employees
- A disputes procedure is in place
- Consultative mechanisms are in place
- Duration of the Agreement is specified
- Employees have been informed and consulted.

**2. COMPULSORY COMPETITIVE TENDERING**

The Kennett Government in Victoria legislated that local government be required to put up a set percentage of their budget for tendering against the private sector each year. This is known in Victoria as CCT or Compulsory Competitive Tendering. The "Compulsory" because we are required by law to do so, "Competitive" as sections of the council would compete against the private sector for the right to provide services and "Tendering" because that is the process for outlining the specifications of the service requirements for both the council and outside companies to assess the value and forward their proposal.

In Victoria, the percentage of the budget required by each local council or shire to put up for tendering each year has been legislated by the State Government. In the first year, 20% must be tendered, in the second year 30% and in the third year 50%. Added to this is another complication. The financial year was changed from the beginning of October ending in September, to fall into line with the taxation year finishing on June 30th. The amounts may not sound so large but bear in mind that there are some things that just cannot be put up for tender, such as water, the fire brigade and local telephone charges. It wasn’t long before everyone in the Council realised that every department would be put up for tender sometime in the three years dictated by the State Government.

The process for putting a service up for tendering required each section to consider benchmarking. Benchmarking is the bottom line for determining:

- a minimum standard,
- an optimal standard,
- the performance of similar others,
- client expectations,
- the section’s past performance or future goals.

In order for the library to be competitive enough to win a tender, standards and parameters had to be determined. A consultant was used to help determine quality. For instance, could any staff member work on the information desk? Or only staff at a certain level, to ensure that the high standards of quality remained?

The types of tasks library staff performed were also examined. Staff were asked to determine the amount of time they were spending on duties which were on a lower banding level. For instance, librarians shelving books was not considered appropriate to their skill or banding levels, and not competitive against an open market. The consultant believed that the library had the right number of employees but at inappropriate band levels which needed to be addressed if the library service intended to make an in-house bid and be successful.

The reason for participating actively regarding the standards of the library and the roles of the personnel who would be undertaking the new roles in the library was to ensure that the quality standards of a good library
would stand and also, more importantly that the staff could be taught how to win their jobs in a tender process. This process was put on hold as amalgamation with a regional library service was imminent.

3. AMALGAMATION

Local government has changed dramatically with the forced amalgamations imposed by the Kennett government. Victoria had 210 local councils before the amalgamation process began, and 78 after the amalgamations had occurred. The former City of Nunawading was merged with its next door neighbour to the west, the former City of Box Hill which became the new City of Whitehorse. This was basically two municipalities joining as one. This was considered a better arrangement than some places where 'bits' of up to five councils had to come together to form a new municipality. Commissioners were appointed by the State government to replace the elected councillors. In the City of Whitehorse one of the problems faced by the Commissioners was what to do about the library service. The former City of Nunawading had a municipal based service and the former City of Box Hill was part of a regional service. A decision relating to the outcome had to be made so that the budget for the library service could be accounted for under Compulsory Competitive Tendering. Six months after amalgamation a decision had still not been determined. At this stage the date set for the tender of the library within the new City of Whitehorse looks as if it will be on July 1, 1996, the latest possible date for maintaining the set percentage targets of the budget.

So, how has having an EBA affected amalgamation and CCT? Having an Enterprise Bargaining Agreement started the ball rolling in regard to addressing change and the need to look at better practices. It has ensured that there are processes for the introduction of change and preparation of a bid under the requirements of Compulsory Competitive Tendering. Policies regarding redundancies were also incorporated as the amalgamation process would obviously mean forced job losses.

The implication for local public libraries has meant that changes are imminent regarding the structure and quality of services provided. The changes are quite radical, but they have forced everyone within the industry to assess everything they do in order to maintain, improve and continually build on their improved library service.
LIBRARY MERGER - OR THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY

Heather Linnet

Introduction

The title of Hugo Montenegro's musical work, The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly, perfectly describes what amalgamations of organisations are and how they can effect departments and in particular, the human resource factor. I will describe from personal experience the effect amalgamation has, particularly in libraries, on existing staff, the interactions of existing with amalgamated personnel and how, if open ended unbiased communication coupled with a collaborative team approach has the potential to be a rewarding and enhancing experience for all. I will further demonstrate that if open ended communication and a collaborative team approach is not adopted, anti-trust, suspicion, and lack of acceptance for ideas will prevail and the amalgamation will remain, The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly. My paper will describe a brief history of the two hospitals involved, aspects taken from a feasibility study which eventuated in the merging of the Adelaide Children's Hospital (ACH) and the Queen Victoria Hospital (QVH), both in Adelaide, South Australia, at an eventual cost of $53 million.

I intend to present the difficulties encountered by staff, and in particular the libraries of the two hospitals. I will show how the interaction between Professional and Para-Professionals - Library Technicians - should have resulted in greater rewards for all. I will show how the eventual deskilling of a Library Technician could in fact have been reversed and how the ability to effect personal change provided an opportunity for skill transfer.

1 The History To understand the emotions which were felt by all associated with this merger I believe it is extremely important to understand the history which surrounded the organisations.

1:1 Adelaide Children's Hospital

The Adelaide Children's Hospital first made its presence felt when it was founded in 1876. At that time a group of “upper class” men and women met to discuss the founding of a Maternity and Children's Hospital. It was the afternoon of September 12th 1876 (Barbalet 1975). There was major opposition to the building of the Hospital due to the perception it would interfere with the enjoyment of the local residents. However, despite opposition the foundation stone was laid at 11.00 am on June 20th 1878 by Chief Justice Way. Charity remained the main source of funding and the “Ladies Committee” worked to supplement the financing of the hospital. The date chosen for the opening of the newly completed Adelaide Children’s Hospital was August 6th, 1879. The building consisted of two floors. Two thirds of the total cost of £9,918.9.5d. had been donated by the citizens of the province (Barbalet 1975).

1:2 Queen Victoria Hospital (alias The Queens Home, alias Lady Tennyson’s Maternity Home)

The Queen Victoria Hospital had similar beginnings. It was the time when the rich women in the colony employed a midwife and delivered their babies at home. Not much has changed, the women of today are, in increasing numbers, electing to revert and have their babies at home. For the poorer women, who could not afford to employ the services of a midwife, and as hospitals of this time did not allow expectant women, there was nowhere, other than the workhouse, for women to go. A select committee was appointed by Lady Tennyson, the wife of the current Governor Lord Hallam Tennyson. The Lady had written to her mother, “that it was her dream to establish a lying-in hospital for the women of the colony”. The hospital would be for “worthy and respectable married women”. The time was November 1900 (Forbes 1988). Following the death of Queen Victoria, the decision was made to change the original name of the Lady Tennyson Maternity home to the “Queens home”, and the emotions and convictions surrounding this hospital had begun.

Charity continued as the major source of funding for both hospitals and through this period the Queens Home had become known as the Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital. By 1984, both institutions were facing major
renovations and a feasibility study recommended a new facility could be constructed at a cost of $30.85 million.

Amalgamation Talks, Discussions, Arguments, Good, Bad and Ugly

2 The Good On April 1st 1987, a memorandum of intent to amalgamate was signed on behalf of the hospitals. This followed many times when the Queen Victoria Hospital had fought off previous intentions. The first was back in 1900 when it was considered desirable to place the maternity hospital on the existing ACH site. Later it was thought the QVH might be suited to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital or the Royal Adelaide Hospital. Several times amalgamation talks had begun and ceased and all agreed this time would be no different.

2:1 Vision Statement: Philosophies and Principles

2:1:1 The Vision The new hospital's vision statement was an excellent one. It called for an institution which would enhance and promote the health of women, children and young people by specialising in care, research, education and health promotion. It would be a leader and innovator and aim to achieve Local, National and International recognition. Further it was agreed the hospital would deliver its services according to predetermined principles.

2:1:2 Philosophies and Principles

- service quality – Total Quality Management
- staff rewards – All staff would be encouraged to perform at high levels of expertise
- patient access
- families as partners – families to be encouraged to have greater involvement in health care
- patient privacy
- public involvement in service provision

2:2 Major Advantages These were many, and included:

- improved facilities
- continuing health care
- on site location for paediatric surgery – removing the need to transport sick babies
- child birth choices – birthing units, labour baths etc
- birthing centre
- adolescent services
- family and mental health care
- en-suite facilities in all rooms
- neo-natal intensive care
- parent facilities – allowing parents to stay with their children at all times
- surgical facilities
- car parking on site
- ante-natal diagnosis
- fetal therapy
- more cost effective hospital
- new improved services and amenities
- enhanced liaison and better teaching facilities

2:3 Impact on Libraries - Staffing For the amalgamating libraries, the Good was very good. Both libraries were in make-shift accommodation with extremely cramped working conditions. The library at the Queen Victoria Hospital was very small and had relocated several times to find adequate space. Two staff members were required to look after this unique collection. The Adelaide Children’s Hospital was a larger concern. Its collection was also unique to the specific disciplines but was large in terms of special libraries and required three full time equivalents (FTEs). It relied heavily on volunteer input.

The new library with an already agreed upon name of the Eric Sims Library would have all new fittings. It would be spacious, provide new technologies, student space, long term study with lockable desk space, and automation. They would not, however, amalgamate immediately and this proposed some "Bad" aspects. The
new Eric Sims Library was opened in 1993. The library had been appointed very well, with surroundings overlooking the play deck.

2:4 Technology New technologies would have a major impact on the new library.

Prior to amalgamation both libraries provided reference services using Medline-on-line. With the advent of CD-ROM both libraries purchased this technology allowing users to do their own searches. This would continue to be a highlight of the new library thereby freeing staff for other duties. Automation of circulation would be a priority. The automation of serials and Inter-library loans would follow as funds became available. The Eric Sims Library, ACH has five terminals operating: four OPACs, incorporating Medline and Health Rom, and one terminal using Current Contents.

The Library QVH also had CD-ROM incorporating Medline, and a Nursing data base. On physical amalgamation these will total seven terminals to be installed in the amalgamated library. As funds become available the amount of terminals will be increased. Physical amalgamation will offer patrons greater depth of resources, increased technology, automation, larger accommodation and better conditions.

3 The Bad There were many major threats to the success of the amalgamation.

3:1 Identity Crisis It had been agreed and stated by the Board in the feasibility study that no employee would be disadvantaged by the amalgamation process. Again a wonderful theory, the Board should be congratulated for its insight. However, the human factor and human emotions were the problem. People considered they were being encouraged to leave and that natural attrition would answer the Board’s problems. Staff fought over hospital identity and limited car parking was a major issue. Many felt the smaller QVH would be dominated by the larger ACH who would have a stronger voice in the amalgamation process.

This theory is supported in Sherer (1994). After all, consideration must be given to the obvious: if a larger hospital merges with a smaller one doesn’t it seem logical to assume that the larger culture will dominate? She adds, "Some experts believe firmly that one culture – typically the larger, the stronger and the richer will almost always override the smaller". If this theory is right, and I believe it is, this happened in the library – the smaller collection being absorbed by the larger.

3:2 Anti-Trust Issues It's easy to understand the concept of anti-trust and see why staff felt threatened. It was generally felt by the QVH personnel it was they who were losing their identity, they who had to move out, they who would need to integrate. Feelings of distrust, threat, anxiety and anguish escalated. Real emotions needed addressing by management very early in the amalgamation process if they were to be defused thereby preventing further stress and tension. However I don’t believe they were openly acknowledged let alone addressed. There were no guarantees for anyone involved in this amalgamation.

3:3 Job Losses – Attrition – VSPs/TSPs The bad aspect accelerated. About this time the Federal Government in their wisdom cut funding to health, and Voluntary Separation packages were offered. I believe that many long term employees of both hospitals felt they had no option and opted to take these packages. Was this attrition? Many believed so, but it did save the Board from making some decisions which might prove unpopular. More negative actions and lack of options prevailed.

3:4 Career Paths So not only were there anti-trust, job losses, natural attrition and Voluntary Separation Packages (VSPs), but also lack of career paths. The financial restrictions placed on the Board must have been a heavy burden. However I would think it is fair to say, the positions being lost were not, it appeared, in the higher bracket. Life was indeed frustrating.

3:5 Impact on Libraries Prior to amalgamation the Librarian at the QVH retired and the Clerical Officer was required to transfer to the ACH so the deputy Librarian ACH could take up the position at the QVH full time.

However, there was another option. The Librarian QVH had retired, the existent Clerical Officer was a qualified Library Technician who could have taken over the immediate duties (serials, inter-library loans, reference and retrieval) with all professional duties being transferred to the newly appointed Director. It might have been considered that this arrangement would have centralised acquisitions and cataloguing, and this
officer was responsible for these duties anyway. However, this was not the preferred option and the issues and lack of job rewards remained.

3:6 Duplications of items The time was 1992, physical amalgamation was still three years away, and services needed to be maintained. Serial subscription did not and would not be changed until physical amalgamation. Monographs would continue to be ordered on both sites, causing continuing duplication – in my view a giant waste of resources. But of course all staff wanted to maintain those services they had come to take for granted. It seemed that resources both financial and human were being wasted.

Another bad aspect for the libraries involved was what to do with surplus materials. Equipment was just vacated to the stores. I expect that it will all be sold eventually. Surplus or duplicated volumes are another issue. What can be given away will be, what can be sold will be, and that remaining disposed of.

3:7 Storage A major issue was storage. What to select and where would it be? Who will access, and how? These issues need attention, and at the time of writing this paper had not been resolved. However, it appeared that it would be on site, and probably accessed only by Library Staff, who would regularly visit the main floor storage. The uncertainty of the whole amalgamation process was indeed extremely negative for all. However, there was worse to come, and much of it was just plain ugly.

4 The Ugly The Ugly was rearing its head long before the construction of the new QVH Building had even commenced. Employees were being transferred to the ACH site, sometimes for short periods of time, sometimes for longer. I remember a fellow work friend saying they were told late Friday afternoon to report to the ACH site Monday. This was often without prior warning. I was given four days' notice of my impending relocation. I had no prior warning.

4:1 Management Strategies By now management began to hold information sessions for staff. Meetings were organised on a regular basis in an attempt to allay fears. Staff were extremely anxious as their roles and positions were being dismembered. Anti-trust, identity losses and job security were major issues without any guarantees of any remedies. About this time the hospital board was having its own doubts and problems and the amalgamation process was attracting at times unfavourable media attention.

4:2 What's In A Name? Another major issue for the Board was the hospital's name. This had been a topic of discussion for some time. The name chosen after many surveys and much deliberation was The Adelaide Medical Centre for Women and Children, (AMCWC). This name had been ratified and was in use. Some considered the name too lengthy and it was at times a subject of ridicule. Taxi drivers referred to the hospital as the “WC on Kermode Street”. More discussions followed and the name was subsequently changed to The Women's and Children's Hospital, incorporating the Adelaide Children's Hospital and the Queen Victoria Hospital.

All of these aspects failed to instil security in the minds of the hospital employees. It only appeared to fuel already tense situations and even though I believe management appeared to be attempting to diffuse strained relations they appeared irreconcilable.

4:3 Time Frame One ugly aspect was the time frame to physical amalgamation. The original date for occupation was 1993. However, it did not eventuate until May 1995. So for many it has been a lengthy period of wondering and uncertainties.

4:4 Impact on Libraries The impact on the libraries has on many occasions been extremely ugly.

4:4:1 Staffing Issues Staffing issues in the first instance did not really affect the continuity of the libraries as a reconfiguration of staff was applied. The only person really affected by this reconfiguration was the former QVH Library Officer/Library Technician.

4:4:2 Job Prospects – and Career Paths The Library Technician ACH was granted full time hours so this amalgamation benefited her greatly. The Deputy Librarian ACH was granted full time Librarian at the QVH, so this amalgamation provided job enhancement, and the rewards for professional development could be considered excellent.
The Chief Librarian gained a completely new station as Director along with a new Library and a perceived more qualified staff – two and a half librarians including a newly appointed Systems Librarian and two qualified Library Technicians. The new structure would be:-

1 Chief Librarian = Director
1 Deputy Librarian = Full time
1 Systems Librarian = Half time
2 Library Technicians = Full time (1 Serials, Circulation, Tech Services, 1 Inter-Library Loans)

However, the Ugly got Uglier.

Following physical amalgamation it appeared evident that much of the professional/reference work would go to the returning Librarian, leaving at least one Technician with mostly boring repetitive and mundane processing issues. The serials and circulation component of the Library Technician's duties would eventually be automated so there was not much room for advancement or job satisfaction there. The Director had already stated this position could be downgraded in the near future. Inter-library loans would also be eventually automated and I feel that the Library Technician involved in that duty should look seriously at the role.

A meeting held for staff re “Preparing for May” – amalgamation time – stated that circulation desk rostering and opening hours would face some changes.

The returning Librarian’s role would be Supervisor and a major duty would be the circulation desk responsibilities. I cannot help but wonder what this meant for the library technicians in the department, if the current budget cuts to health continue will the positions even be there or will the department only require professionals to function, and then only with a limited number? This may sound cynical but I feel it is a real possibility. So, following amalgamation job prospects, career paths and even simple desk shifts could be limited, particularly for the Library Technicians.

4:4:3 Anti-Trust The transfer of the Library Officer QVH to the ACH was an extremely difficult time. Moving into a long established work group created problems. Anti-trust seemed to be an issue. Existing staff, I feel, were threatened by the intrusion of another, and being the only officer involved in the transfer I felt extremely alone. The word alien comes to mind. This may sound like sour grapes and perhaps it was to some degree. However, existing staff had no real adjustments to make. There were no real changes to their roles and functions.

The team appeared dysfunctional. In fact if a definition of a team is a group of individuals collaborating towards a common goal, then there was no team. The situation definitely needed reversing. Unfortunately I was left wondering if the Library Director had the ability, training or the inclination to deal with the issues.

5 Team Approach – Change How to turn a dysfunctional team into a functional one was the question which needed addressing if the amalgamation was to succeed. This aspect is probably the most interesting point in my whole paper.

The concept surrounding the issue is very complex and needed the following components to be recognised and acted upon:

1. The ability to change both at organisational and personal levels.
2. Sound management practices, strategic thinking – expanding one’s vision
3. Open ended unbiased communication at all levels.
4. Strong leadership qualities and the ability of management to retain employees.
5. Staff development training and job redesign on all levels.
6. Creating a collaborative and progressive team climate.

Nichols (1994) quoted Merks, P. Roy Vagelos as saying, “So many mergers throughout business history have failed because managers didn’t recognise the complexity of bringing two cultures together or didn’t act quickly enough to fulfill the potential of the merger. Just as most research projects fail, most mergers don’t live up to expectations”. I have wondered about these words and believe that they can explain many things.
The controversy over the name of the new hospital, general non-acceptance of skills, staff stress and anxiety are just some areas where these words can easily apply to the realities of the amalgamation.

6 The Change Process - Personal Drucker (1980) wrote, “A time of turbulence is also one of great opportunity for those who can understand, accept, and exploit the new realities. It is above all a time of opportunity for leadership.” These are very wise words. If we accept this amalgamation and change our ideas about our positions and look realistically at our prospects then we are well on the way to effecting a personal change. For a person like myself this was the only answer. I needed to change my ideas and expectations.

It is no secret, however, that change is a very scary concept. Dunphy expressed these words when he wrote, “That change challenges and threatens our sense of self, that core of our being which each of us call ‘I’ and the psychologists call ‘ego’” (Dunphy, 1981). These words are true indeed and if used, analysed and understood by individuals, these too will assist when deciding how to effect change and become whole human beings.

6:1 What makes people change To affect change, we need to decide and analyse the reasons which make people want to. Points for consideration could include:
- desire to change
- recognition of the inadequacy of their current situation
- a clear vision and a new focus
- creating opportunities to practise a new and more appropriate method or approach.

7 The Change Process - Organisational Sherer (1994) wrote, “In a recent study of 40,000 employees conducted by Human Resource Services in Chicago that employee satisfaction with new policies declines an average of 14 per cent after mergers, the perception of job security plummets 25 per cent and 80 per cent of employees perceive the restructured management to be more concerned about company finances than about quality ... or about them”.

In principle, amalgamations are generally about economics. Crucial to merging organisations are communication, staff development, work rewards and satisfaction. It would be wise for management to realise that if the merger was to be successful employees needed to be motivated to be productive; that people wanted to come to work because they believed in the organisation and wanted to work in an environment where their input would be valued. This was true for the libraries, due to the culture, the staff ratio, in particular the barrier between Professionals and Para-Professionals.

Managers needed to be aware of impending problems and organise strategies to combat these problems.

8 Strategies for Combating Staff Problems In order to do this management needed to recognise issues which would be detrimental to success. These issues include:

1. Low morale – bruising of egos
2. Retention of staff
3. Dissatisfaction
4. The handling of staff on an individual basis not as a group
5. Using a leadership style to suit the situation
6. Training and development/job rewards and enhancement

I’m certain all these issues are well acknowledged.

8:1 Sound Management Practices Strategic planning and sound management practices are major issues for management to consider when dealing with staff problems. Creative thinking and awareness does promote and enhance the process of self change. Management needed to adopt and maintain open and honest communication with employees through the whole amalgamation process. They needed to develop and promote protection strategies and understand the emotional needs of all employees.

9 Strong Leadership Qualities Management needed to promote a collaborative climate ensuring that the merging of the two hospitals would succeed. Training and development programmes, and counselling sessions

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are required to assist staff to change and to accept realities. A leadership style which would be conducive to
the promotion of collaborative team work was necessary for success. There was a vital need for all managers
to be provided with adequate training and education and the proper skills in leadership. These areas appeared
to be sadly lacking, with some managers appearing not to have adequate ability or experience to do the job.

Job redesign, reskilling, was necessary. Multi-skilling would have improved relations and further improved
quality of services. Job involvement, satisfaction and feedback forums are issues which needed addressing by
management right through the process, and following. I believe these strategies would have promoted growth
for all.

10 Impact on Libraries The libraries involved in the merger were an extremely small part of the overall
picture in relation to services and staff. However, there were issues which needed addressing. Library
management needed to realise that even though the staff was small in comparison there needed to be a
commitment to all. Staff at all levels needed to feel committed, involved and valued. Training needed to be
available and opportunities made available across all levels.

Senior library staff needed more education in management and leadership if they were required to lead and
manage staff. Team work needed to be heavily focused to ensure that all ideas and aspirations across all levels
and any barriers to success were broken down. Regular meetings and the promotion of library services and
staff at all levels needed to be constantly evaluated.

11 Likely Outcome The amalgamation forced me to look realistically at myself and my former position. I
decided change was the answer, and I have been fortunate to find myself in a position where I will be able to
extend myself and have available to me the type of duties which will, I believe allow me to find the types of
rewards denied me in the hospital arena where deskilling had become a real problem.

Dunphy (1981) wrote, "Technology should be used as a means of increasing rather than decreasing job
satisfaction". I believe, in the library concerned, it will be reversed. Technology will push staff out, and
particularly for the Library Technicians I can’t see any increasing rewards being brought about by
technologies, unless the current Library Management changes its philosophy.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I believe the amalgamation of the Adelaide Children’s Hospital and the Queen Victoria Hospital
will continue to flourish for the community it serves.

For the libraries I don’t know. I have concerns for Para-Professional staff in the department. I am fortunate
that I will not be there to contend with any further downgrading of duties, lack of job rewards and
dissatisfaction.

So my fellow delegates, I believe that in so far as Library Merger — or The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly,
these will remain issues unless the change process and the ability to recognise change dominates in the minds
of those people who, like myself felt secure and confident enough to grab and hold on to any opportunity which
presents itself.

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Introduction

Libraries are changing as they become increasingly technologically oriented. Library staff, including library technicians, need to change with them or become redundant. Therefore initial and continuing education are becoming vital issues for library staff in the mid 1990s. A number of issues are influencing education for library technicians and these include: the release of competency standards for the library industry; a national curriculum for library technician education; articulation arrangements with librarianship courses; and continuing professional development for library technicians is now essential. In this paper, I will provide an overview of these issues and discuss what affect they may have on library technicians.

I am certain that many will be aware of the Commonwealth government's National Training Reform Agenda. Through training reform the government aims to increase the skill levels of the Australian workforce and hopefully the country's economic position. What does this have to do with library technician education? It started a ball rolling.

Competency Standards

The reform agenda includes the development of industry competency standards. In 1994, Arts Training Australia (ATA), the Industry Training Advisory Body (ITAB) for the arts and cultural industries (this includes libraries), received funding to develop competency standards for the library workforce. Industry standards focus on competencies used by staff performing various tasks and do not refer to traditional job titles, classifications or occupational standards (Thurstans, 1994, p. 31). The library standards will be launched in Sydney later this month.

The Australian Standards Framework (ASF) levels, developed by the National Training Board, outline eight levels of competency with ascending degrees of complexity, judgement, and self management in the tasks performed. The paraprofessional levels are five and six. The ASF levels were also equated with the new qualifications framework which has been operating from the beginning of 1995. The standards developed for the library industry identified six industry competency levels, A to F, which align with the ASF levels two to seven. The need for library industry levels equivalent to the ASF levels one and eight will be reconsidered when the standards are reviewed in two years' time.

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The library standards are the product of collaboration and hard work by many people. During the initial development stage, library staff at all levels, including library technicians, were interviewed. After the release of the first draft, many useful comments were received from a wide cross section of the library community including ALIA and library technician sections. The result is a document that provides a snapshot of competencies used in modern libraries.

The standards list seventy-one units of competency covering six industry levels A to F. The outline for each unit of competence includes a brief description, its elements or components, and a number of performance...
criteria that comprise individual elements. Also included are contexts, within which, the competency may be demonstrated. At each industry level, common or core competencies have been identified. Demonstration of competence at a particular level will include common competencies plus a stated number of specific competencies (see Appendix 1).

It may be helpful to define what is meant by competence as it is not the narrow performance of a specific task. It includes the "knowledge and skill and application of that knowledge and skill" (National Training Board, 1992, p. 10) necessary to successfully complete a task in the workplace, and the ability to translate these attributes to new or unfamiliar situations.

It was thought the competency project would provide a clear delineation between the work of library technicians and librarians. However, the levels at which some competencies appear may surprise sections of the library community. Tasks traditionally performed in many libraries by librarians, have been slotted at paraprofessional levels. One interesting example is original cataloguing at level D and complex cataloguing at level E. Level D or ASF 5 is the level at which a majority of library technicians would operate, with senior technicians overlapping with librarians at level E. Both levels include a varied range of competencies including client education, cataloguing, indexing and abstracting, library promotion, team leadership, collection development, and at level E, management of these activities. Over the next year, libraries will be looking at the standards and examining ways in which they may be applied in the workplace.

The National Library Technician Course

Industry competency standards may be used in a number of ways, for example, identifying training needs, the recognition of prior learning and the development of career paths (Hazell, 1994, p. 10). An initial use of the library competency standards has been the development of a competency based library technician course which offers, for the first time, a national approach towards the education of library technicians. The development of national competency based courses is also part of the training reform agenda mentioned earlier.

Until now, library technician courses were structured around guidelines set by the ALIA Board of Education and input received from local library industry representatives. Graduates of ALIA recognised courses are eligible to become library technician members of the association. Although there was consistency in core library subjects, variations occurred in course focus and hours, and caused confusion for students transferring interstate.

In 1994 Canberra Institute of Technology, Box Hill College of TAFE and Arts Training Australia applied to ACTRAC (Australian Committee for Training Curriculum) for funding to develop a national curriculum to ASF level five (Diploma) for library technicians. The project commenced in October 1994.

The curriculum development project has been managed by Donna Reid from the Canberra Institute of Technology with Ann Hannan from Box Hill as project officer. A steering committee was also formed with nominees from each state, ALIA, ACLIS, Arts Training Australia and the unions. I have had the good fortune to be the Queensland representative on the committee, and I would like to pay tribute to Donna Reid and the other committee members. They have worked extremely hard within a tight time frame, and Donna has been the driving force. She is a real dynamo and has kept the project on track, and as near as possible, on time. The draft curriculum is currently being circulated for comment. The course proposal, including subject modules and accompanying material, must be presented to ACTRAC by the 1st September 1995 for implementation in 1996.

The new course is in competency based format and has been written to reflect competencies identified in levels A to D of the library industry standards. It is very difficult to reduce any vocation to a set of achievable educational objectives, and it would be impossible to cover, in detail, all the competencies identified in the library standards. Therefore, the course concentrates on identified core skills and provides a sound base for the further acquisition of skills in the workplace, or through extra study. The committee was conscious of the need to keep the course within a manageable time frame.

The course will take 1360 hours, two years full-time, or part-time equivalent, to complete. It includes 200 hours of work experience and approximately 100-120 hours of electives. These hours may differ slightly in the final version and electives vary from state to state. As the course is competency based, students will receive a
pass or a not-yet-competent report. However, the committee is investigating whether it is possible to have grading for selected subjects. Graduates of the course will be awarded a Diploma.

The course is varied and will provide an excellent basic education for library technicians moving into a customer focused and constantly evolving workplace. Reflecting current trends in libraries and librarianship courses, it has a strong client focus and includes communication, management and computer based subjects. It also includes 190 hours of cataloguing subjects, 60 hours of reference skills, and a collection development module. There is a wide range of electives including research skills and records management modules (see Appendix 2).

The number of hours allocated to cataloging reflects a trend, noted by Judy Clayden (1994, p. 6), on the changing balance between librarianship and library technician courses. While librarianship courses have taken an increasingly theoretical approach to cataloguing and the organisation of information, the cataloging component of library technician courses has increased. When I recently queried a librarianship educator over this change in focus, he was unconcerned and saw library technicians as the cataloguers of the future.

Students not wishing to complete the full course will be able to exit at the Certificate three level. Those choosing this option will need to complete the first half of the course, including 100 hours of work experience. They will receive a sound library education with an emphasis on basic information skills, lending services, acquisitions, workplace communication and information technology.

Course entrants will need year 12 or a mature age equivalent. Other prerequisites are: demonstrated study skills, keyboarding, and elementary word-processing and spreadsheets. Many applicants possess these skills and the committee wished to include more advanced subjects in the course and still keep within the time frame.

**Upgrading Current Qualifications**

Qualified library technicians holding a Library Technician Certificate or Associate Diploma may benefit from the new course in two ways. Firstly, to upgrade current qualifications to a Diploma. Applicants wanting to upgrade have two options. They may either undertake subjects that do not correspond to competencies gained in the previous qualification, or apply for the recognition of prior learning or RPL. In an RPL situation the focus is on competencies gained not only from previous study but also in the workplace. The applicant is assessed against the competency outcomes of the nominated subject and, if successful, is granted a pass without having to attend classes. A good time saver, plus there isn’t the frustration of having to attend classes when you probably know as much as the teacher.

The second way in which library technicians may benefit from the new course, is to select subjects which will improve knowledge and skills in specific areas. Beside the core library subjects, a wide range of electives has been identified as useful for library technicians. These could form a base for continuing professional development.

**Articulation with Librarianship Courses**

Another facet of the training reform agenda is the establishment of articulation pathways not only within TAFE, but between TAFE and university. Although various credit arrangements have existed for a number of years, in late 1994 a credit transfer agreement was reached with a number of participating universities. The agreement granted credit, equivalent to at least one third of a librarianship degree, to holders of an associate diploma. This extended credit arrangement applies to students commencing degrees in librarianship after 1st January 1995.

I do not wish to discourage library technicians who want to undertake librarianship studies, far from it. However, I would like to sound a word of caution and encourage would-be librarianship students to obtain more information about courses, before they sign up. I would also suggest a critical self-evaluation. Why do you want to do this to yourself? The focus of library technician courses, and the work we do, varies markedly from librarianship. As you are aware, a library technician course focuses on the practical aspects of library work, and this is its strength. Librarianship courses have a theoretical and philosophical focus. I know some librarianship student who think they should have undertaken library technician studies as they are more interested in these practical aspects.
Because associate diploma holders are granted the equivalent of a year's credit in a librarianship course, they start on second year subjects without the preparatory groundwork that would have been established in the first year. Many library technicians make the switch successfully. However, I recently heard of surveys undertaken by a couple of universities, that noted a high drop-out or failure rate among library technician applicants. This is of concern to them because no one wants students to fail. There are, admittedly, a number of possible reasons for this situation. Is it because the course is not what students expected; the change in focus to much of a contrast; the work level too demanding in conjunction with work, family etc; or students discover they are not cut out for university study?

I suspect a lot of the blame may be placed on lack of understanding of what is involved, and I would like to offer a couple of suggestions. One would be to encourage universities to offer an introductory or bridging subject for library technician applicants. The subject would give students an introduction to university demands but they would receive extra help and information beyond what would be normal with second year subjects. This would ease the transition and lay a foundation for further study. Another suggestion would be to send applicants more detailed information on what will be required of them, subject outlines, sample notes and assignments.

Concerns have been raised about articulation from the new competency based course to university. This problem will vary from one university to another and depends on whether grades awarded in the library technician course are used as determinants for entry. If they are, then an alternative selection criteria may have to be found. Some universities grant all holders of a library technician qualification a set university entrance mark, and this practice will probably remain unchanged. Applicants are not ranked and are offered places in the order of receipt of application.

**Continuing Professional Development**

In spite of current trends that downplay the prominence once placed on qualifications and favour the recognition of demonstrated competencies, initial qualifications are still recognised as denoting a certain level of skills. However, they are only a starting point. Qualifications rapidly become out of date if skills and knowledge are not kept current, particularly in areas of rapid change and emerging technologies. Demonstrated competence is becoming the catch phrase of the modern workplace.

I realize this is echoing speakers at previous conferences, however, I will repeat the message. Continuing professional development is vital for library technicians. The library industry standards, by identifying training needs, will also add impetus to the pressure to undertake professional development. Along with other library staff, library technicians must take control of their own professional development, especially if promotion or the development of new skills is the goal. No longer is it sufficient to rely only on work-related training provided by the employer, as tightening budgets are taking their toll on staff development funding. In today's budget conscious library training is usually related to the needs of the current position not to future goals.

The library industry competency standards can also be used to chart competencies needed to move into a particular area or level of library work. As mentioned before, matching identified training needs with subjects or electives in the library technician course would be a first step in a structured self development project. Suitable subjects may also be drawn from management and information technology courses. Another avenue is to become involved in local library technician groups, attend continuing education workshops or seminars, or share your knowledge as a speaker on these occasions.

To assist members in planning their professional development the ALIA has recently launched "The Framework for Continuing Professional Development". The Framework views professional development as a cooperative between employer and employee, and can be used to plot a proposed course of action and keep track of professional development activities undertaken. It will also serve as a helpful reference, in conjunction with workplace competency standards, in performance planning and review interviews and in enterprise bargaining. The Framework is only available to ALIA members on request, and it is free.
Conclusion

I have touched on a number of issues in this paper, each one worthy of a paper in its own right. One thing is certain, they are all going to influence library technicians in the next few years. However, in conclusion I will highlight the following. Firstly, to repeat my suggestion that universities offering librarianship degrees, look at measures that may aid library technicians make the leap to librarianship studies. Secondly, that library technicians become involved in the application of library competency standards in the workplace. My third and last point, is to urge library technicians to take advantage of all opportunities for continuing professional development. Competencies are here, and will be for the foreseeable future. Are we going put them in the too hard basket, hide our heads in the sand and ask someone to wake us when it is all over (they may forget), or are we going to face the challenges and make the most of them? How we deal with these issues will be vital for our future success as integral members of the library community.

References


UNIT 45

Collect, analyse and evaluate information for research

The methods for collecting, analysing and evaluating information is appropriate to the objectives.

**KEY ELEMENT**

Each key element has a number of criteria which specify the required outcomes by which performance can be assessed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key element</th>
<th>How are you assessed if the key element is being performed to the required standard?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The type and range of information is clearly identified in line with an appropriate activity plan.</td>
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<td>2. Information sources are identified and evaluated for their contribution to the research.</td>
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<td>3. Where appropriate, information sources are approached with a clear explanation of the purpose and direction of the research.</td>
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<td>4. Procedures and other processes required to access information are clearly specified.</td>
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<td>5. There are clear rules of engagement as material from the information is used.</td>
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<td>6. Characteristics of key elements are identified and the appropriate statements taken to deal with them.</td>
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Collect information to address research objectives. Information sources are accessed according to appropriate procedures and agreements made with information owners.

The type and range of information is clearly identified in line with the activity plan.

**COMPETENCY STANDARDS**

ASCI Industry Competency Level and Units

D 5

Released Units 27 and 59

If the unit has any related units they will be indicated by a symbol and the units listed underneath. If there are no related units it will be indicated by a symbol.

**Range of Variables**

These provide the context in which the competency is carried out, e.g. the places or situations where the competency could be exercised, the range of techniques or technology used, legal or other requirements.

**Collect, analyse and evaluate information for research**

The methods for collecting, analysing and evaluating information is appropriate to the objectives.

**Range of Variables**

These provide the context in which the competency is carried out, e.g. the places or situation where the competency could be exercised, the range of techniques or technology used, legal or other requirements.

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### National Library and Information Studies Curriculum Project

**DRAFT FRAMEWORK FOR PROPOSED CURRICULUM AT ASF2-5 LEVELS (Industry levels A to D)**

revised 2 June 1995

**Total hours for Diploma course**: 1360 hours with two levels of work experience (100 hours each) and two series of electives (40 and 60 hours each)

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<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>Collection Development 30 hrs</th>
<th>Managing Self (NGMS209) 20 hrs</th>
<th>Information Access for Client Gps 30 hrs</th>
<th>Client Education and Training 20 hrs</th>
<th>Work Experience 2 100 hrs</th>
<th>Electives (50 hrs)</th>
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<td>4/5</td>
<td>Cataloguing Procedures 30 hrs</td>
<td>Managing Operations - Change (NGMS105) 40 hrs</td>
<td>Client Interaction (NCS011) 20 hrs</td>
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<td>Research Sources &amp; Strategies 30 hrs</td>
<td>Subject Access 40 hrs</td>
<td>Managing an Information Agency Environment 40 hrs</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Basic Reference Skills 30 hrs</td>
<td>Lending Services 2 20 hrs</td>
<td>Bibliographic Description &amp; Access 60 hrs</td>
<td>Library Acquisitions 20 hrs</td>
<td>OH&amp;S Man Lib Industry (NOH3) 40 hrs</td>
<td>Data Comm Applications (ITG401) 20 hrs</td>
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<td>Information Literacy 20 hrs</td>
<td>Materials Receipt 20 hrs</td>
<td>Man. Effect. Work Relate (NGMS106) 40 hrs</td>
<td>Work Team Communication (NCS004) 40 hrs</td>
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<td>Information &amp; Services 1 20 hrs</td>
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<td>Database Searching &amp; Retrieval 30 hrs</td>
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<td>Library Maintenance 30 hrs</td>
<td>Multimedia Equipment Usage 40 hrs</td>
<td>Library Technicians at Work 20 hrs*</td>
<td>Dealing with CurClients (NCS018) 20 hrs</td>
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| Entry to Diploma = Completion of Certificate III

**Total hours for Certificate III**: 700 hours (560 core teaching hours plus 100 hours work experience plus 40 hours of electives)

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<th>Information as a Product 30 hrs</th>
<th>Bibliographic Control 30 hrs</th>
<th>Library Ordering Procedures 30 hrs</th>
<th>Man. Effect. Work Relate (NGMS106) 40 hrs</th>
<th>Work Team Communication (NCS004) 40 hrs</th>
<th>Comp Sysm Basics (ITC201) 20 hrs</th>
<th>Work Experience 1 40 hrs</th>
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| Entry to Certificate III = Year 12 or equivalent plus demonstrated ability in keyboarding, use of a word processor and spreadsheet package, and basic communication skills  
* module title under review

National Library and Information Studies Project Newsletter No 3
IMPLEMENTING BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES IN THE
NORTHERN TERRITORY UNIVERSITY LIBRARY: A CASE STUDY

Barbara Keogh

Anne Wilson, Best Practice Coordinator
Alex Byrne, Chief Librarian and Project Manager

I would like to start today telling you about a recent day out for NTU library staff courtesy of the Best Practice project. To enhance our teamwork and encourage individuals to challenge themselves, to go beyond our boundaries by creating an awareness of our ability to accept change, in routines and thought patterns, we were given the opportunity to go abseiling. I have never done this before, but offered a challenge and I tend to grab it, hence I'm standing here now, I'm not sure but I think jumping off a cliff was less nerve racking. I was very keen to go abseiling so I volunteered to go first. Bad move; I ended up stuck down the cliff face, back flat against the wall, head down and in total fear. I had to be rescued, the instructor came and explained to me how to get myself back into a position whereby I could proceed. As you can see, I made it down and now you’re probably wondering what this has to do with the Best Practice Project, apart from its sponsorship of the event. I hope this paper enables you to understand, but briefly put if an organisation does not, or can not be flexible enough to recognise when it is dangling, it may never be able to recover and proceed forward to the future. Without the right people, instructors or leaders it cannot go further. Best Practice sets out to challenge and encourage organisations to improve teamwork and individual performance, to change routines, create awareness of the organisations' potential and ability to adapt.

The Australian Best Practice Demonstration Program

The Australian Best Practice Program aims to encourage Australian organisations to adopt international Best Practice, identify effective methods and approaches for its implementation, and to promote a more widespread understanding of Best Practice organisations in general. Introduced in 1991, and administered by the Department of Industrial relations in association with the Australian Manufacturing Council, the Program has provided assistance to 43 organisations to accelerate the introduction of their change projects and their move towards international Best Practice.

Over 400 firms submitted proposals for the first two rounds and 267 for the current round. The proposals were considered by an expert panel and selected on the basis of each organisation's record of change and the potential of the organisation and its project to act as a demonstration model for a wide cross section of Australian industry. Selection criteria focused on the characteristics of Best Practice organisations. Short listed organisations were visited by an assessment team. The University Library's assessment took the form of a one day site visit involving a detailed presentation of the project goals and objectives, a site tour to give the team an opportunity to meet staff, meetings with management and workplace delegates. It was an exhausting day and staff involved in the presentation had no idea how well it had been received. It was important to ensure that the assessment team understood the implications of the rapidly changing information environment and the nature of the University Library's project. High level access to and utilisation of complex electronic resources particularly the Internet are an integral component. The assessment team appeared to hold the usual more traditional view of the role of librarians and reference work and were to some extent unaware of the dramatic impact of recent technological advances on reference services.

During the lifetime of the project, the successful organisations are evaluated on a 6 monthly basis by a project management team which visits the site. They are also required to demonstrate aspects of their project and overall improvement processes to other organisations through site visits, seminars, participation in networks, publication of articles and reports, provision of information materials and Australian Best Practice Week.

Best Practice Principles

Best Practice is a moving target. As the leading organisations continue to improve, the Best Practice goal posts are constantly moving. Hence the emphasis on continuous improvement. Some general principles have emerged from the experiences of organisations which are pursuing Best Practice in Australia. The application of these principles to the University Library can best be illustrated by reference to the original submission for funding under the program.
The submission emphasises the communication and consultation processes which library staff believe are fundamental to the University Library's success. There are 12 generally accepted principles.

1. **Shared vision for world class performance** The University Library has a threefold mission to provide quality information services and resources to support learning through Northern Territory University courses; research and independent study by University students and staff; and activities in the wider northern Australian community.

2. **A strategic plan developed in consultation with the workforce** Strategic planning in the University Library involves all staff members in an ongoing participative process. At the individual level, staff members discuss their individual goals, seek support to achieve them and exchange feedback with their supervisors through the Goals and Feedback Agreements scheme. Library divisions, functional groups and teams have regular meetings to discuss, interpret and propose policies and procedures for ratification by the Policy and Planning Team. Conversely, proposals from that Team are referred to those groups for input.

3. **A commitment to change throughout the organisation** Staff members have all been involved in the change process notably through the mechanisms of the 1994 restructure. Many library staff members are active participants on committees and working parties and are encouraged to be so.

4. **Flatter organisational structures** The University Library is characterised by team approaches in which the shared vision is put into practice in a co-operative and participative manner. These approaches aim to devolve authority and responsibility to staff 'at the cliff face' and to encourage teamwork. Leaders for many teams are chosen for their expertise and leadership skills and to provide them with staff development opportunities. To further facilitate this trend, the University Library underwent a major restructure between March and September 1994.

5. **Co-operative and participative organisational culture** As has already been indicated, the University Library is strongly committed to teamwork, consultation and participation. Planning and policy development seeks to encourage input from all staff members. A member of the Planning and Policy Team is elected annually by the University Library staff. There are two workplace delegates of the CPSU. Thus there is considerable informal consultation with the Union whilst formal consultation is via the established consultative mechanisms between the University and the Union.

6. **Commitment to continuous improvement and learning** Recognition that the career opportunities in the University Library are limited led to an emphasis on the best use of employees. There is considerable commitment to staff development. The University Library also takes the broader view in accepting a degree of joint responsibility with each staff member for that person's development so that they can pursue their career aspirations. Thus the recent restructure was based on principles of equity and career opportunities as well as effectiveness and cost efficiency.

7. **Focus on customers both internal and external** In 1993, the University Library undertook a Delphi study and the analysis of the Stakeholder Survey for the University's *Towards Total Quality Management* project. Client intelligence was obtained which to a degree, updated the results of a previous survey of library clients - the University Library's *external* customers. Ongoing market research techniques have been implemented in the Best Practice project including the use of focus groups, formal and informal consultative mechanisms and the use of the client satisfaction performance indicator. This understanding of client priorities and needs is vital to a service organisation. Their significance is also highlighted in a separate *Commitment to Service* leaflet developed by a working party of three library staff members. The University Library's strategies, policies and procedures are being developed to address proactively client priorities and needs. Recognition of the identity and needs of *internal* customers has been challenging since staff members have not been accustomed to thinking of colleagues in such terms.

8. **Closer relationships with suppliers** While it has its own services and products, the University Library can, in a sense, be seen as a retailer of information products and services, a great proportion of which are imported. Effective relationships with suppliers are thus crucial to the University Library's effectiveness.

9. **Innovation in technology, products, services and processes** The University Library is being recognised as a leader in the application of electronic library concepts to operate world class information services in a University located thousands of kilometres from other university libraries. The Library's Searcher service makes an extensive range of electronic information services available to students at the campus libraries, elsewhere on all the University's campuses and off campus through dial-up or network access. Those services include a range of databases on CD-ROM, locally developed databases, and resources elsewhere in Australia and overseas which are accessible through
Internet links. In August 1995, the University Library launched its own Home Page on the University’s web server on the Internet and has already launched two electronic discussion lists one of which, Quality, offers an electronic forum for the discussion of quality service issues and initiatives.

10. Performance measurement and benchmarking. The University Library has used both qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure such areas as customer satisfaction, document delivery performance, resource availability and employee satisfaction. The University Library has also acted as a beta test site for three of these indicators in a nation-wide initiative to provide standardised tools which will permit industry benchmarking.

11. Environmental management. Library staff are very sensitive to environmental issues and have taken steps to minimise the use of paper and to optimise energy efficiency. There has also been considerable attention given to issues of environmental accessibility with particular concern to create a physical environment which will be hospitable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

12. Networking with other organisations. All staff are extensively involved in formal and informal bodies and activities external to the University Library. The relationships extend throughout the University, the local community, the wider North Australian community and the information industry in Australia and overseas. Since the Best Practice project commenced, networking partnerships have extended further to encompass other service organisations and industry groups. Computer links through AARNet have greatly facilitated interaction with remote colleagues. The University Library has recently signed a service agreement with the Trade Development Zone Authority which will provide the TDZA and its tenants with a high level research information service as well as access to the University Library’s collections and document delivery services.

Quality and the University Library

Background

Quality is a central issue for the University and is pursued actively through the strategic planning process, a project to initiate the implementation of TQM, the establishment of a University Quality Council, the appointment of a quality co-ordinator and a series of quality improvement initiatives. The University Librarian was a founding member of the University Quality Council and the University Library is an active participant in the University’s quality initiatives. Library staff have participated in many of the University’s quality improvement teams and have made particularly valuable contributions to the quality improvement projects on the development of electronic information services and the improvement of services to support coursework at undergraduate level. The opportunity to take a lead in pursuing quality initiatives in research information services seemed the next logical step. After attending local sessions during Australian Best Practice Week in April 1994, a submission to participate was drafted and submitted.

Organisational Culture – the Restructure

- The University Library’s structure was established in 1989 in the wake of the merger which created the Northern Territory University. The following years saw considerable change as the University and its Library developed and more and more technology was implemented throughout the University Library. Early in 1994, through the ongoing series of quality improvement team examinations of its activities, the University Library identified the need to review its structure.

Staffing issues included the need to ensure that all parts of the University Library should be staffed in a manner that prevents interruption to services when individuals are sick, on holiday, resign etc. Project work should be facilitated and teams emphasised more strongly but with an acknowledgement of the need for leadership. At an individual level, there should be opportunities, and support, for multiskilling.

Areas were grouped into six branches, three large and three small – Administration, Cataloguing, Information Technology, Lending and Collection Services, Purchasing and Processing, Research and Information Services.

In addition to restructuring at the macro scale, the University Library took advantage of the new ten level higher education worker structure approved by the Industrial Commission in December 1993 to review and reclassify all positions so that they would be better oriented to deliver quality library service.

A practical example of this has been the appointment of a highly skilled library technician in the Cataloguing Branch to a level previously requiring a professional qualification in librarianship. Library technicians also manage two of
the four Campus Libraries, the Document Delivery and External Services Units, and occupy many of the middle management positions.

Team building, training in quality principles and clarification of the role of each of the new Branches are now being progressively implemented. This is being pursued through the Best Practice project, other quality improvement initiatives, staff development programs and a detailed review of the strategic plan.

**Best Practice in Research Information**

In the midst of the restructure we received notification that the Best Practice project had been short listed. We were visited by the Assessment Team in May, notified of our success in June, attended the awards ceremony in July and signed the contract in August. Talk about jumping off the cliff.

The Best Practice in research information project focuses on developing Best Practice in research information delivery. It aims to take a lead in providing relevant, prompt and cost effective research information. The project's objectives are:

- to achieve continuous improvement in the quality, effectiveness and cost efficiency of research information delivery at the Northern Territory University and to business and government in North Australia; and
- to establish the Northern Territory University Library as an international exemplar of Best Practice in innovative delivery of research information services.

The Best Practice project “resides” in the Research and Information Services Branch which is responsible for reference services to staff and students; staffing the Information desk; satellite services to other campuses and locations and remote students; liaison with faculties, schools and disciplines; research information services; collection development; information skills training; database creation; and commercial research support services through the recently established VeNTUre initiative.

Implementing Best Practice principles in a non trading organisation can to some extent be equated with pioneering in the wilderness, or abseiling off cliffs. There are very few guideposts, no maps, but a desire to achieve the goals set. The University Library is fortunate to have a Project Team with excellent navigating and directional skills. The Team comprises six staff members (three managers, a librarian, a library technician and a trainee library technician) who represent four of the Library’s six branches. Each member of the Team has specific responsibility for a particular aspect of the project and the Team meets fortnightly to discuss progress, problems and future directions.

**Focus Groups**

The project commenced in August 1994 with a series of nine focus group meetings between the Project Coordinator and academics and postgraduates representing all Faculties and most disciplines. The primary aim of the focus groups was to assist the project team in establishing the hallmarks of a quality research information service. As the main users of the service, focus group members were considered to be the best judges of what should constitute a quality service. The questions addressed in the early correspondence and expanded on at the meetings included:

- type of information required
- type of access to information required
- promptness of document acquisition, including document delivery
- role of Research and Information Services Branch
- disbursement of costs associated with research information service and delivery
- resources for research training of post graduates
- other issues pertaining to improvement in the library's performance in research and information services

The input of the focus groups enabled the project team to identify indicators of quality, areas for improvement and processes suitable for benchmarking. Major issues included better communication and training particularly in the Research & Information Services Branch, speed of document acquisition and delivery, and wider publicity for the library's research information services. In August 1994 it would have been accurate to state that less than 25% of academic staff were aware of the full range of services the University Library provides – the channels they currently pursue in undertaking research are indicative of this.
The focus group report contained twenty two recommendations, the majority of which are being implemented. In the Research and Information Services Branch, performance and progress is being measured in all the suggested performance indicators. The processes identified for benchmarking will involve activities in three of the other Branches. The focus group report has been circulated to all Branch Managers for comment in consultation with staff and the submission of suitable processes for benchmarking to the project team is expected by the end of April. The formulation of a benchmarking model and implementation plan, the identification of suitable benchmarking partners and the planning of site visits by appropriate staff have commenced.

Key Performance Indicators

The Best Practice project requires the collection of data to measure progress in eight key areas:

1. productivity
2. competitiveness
3. management/employee relationship
4. people management
5. organisational skills and responsiveness
6. workplace skills and training
7. customer relationships
8. impact on specific groups

Indicators were selected on the basis of their ability to indicate progress in the project and to assist in indicating areas where improvement/change could be made. The measures are a mix of general to the library, specific to the project, qualitative and quantitative.

1. Productivity

A. The number of research queries to Research and Information Services Branch staff, categorised by:
   - type of client – NTU academic staff, NTU postgraduate student, other research institute staff, other business organisation
   - sources consulted – print, on-line databases, other electronic resources.

B. The number of documents delivered to the same client groups, categorised by:
   - type of client
   - mode of delivery – standard interlibrary loan, document delivery broker, purchase

While productivity is as important to a service organisation as it is in manufacturing, it can be difficult to identify an appropriate measure. Simple increases in the number of some services provided may not indicate overall improvement in service delivery but merely failure in other areas. For example, an increase in document delivery services might be a result of failure in collection development. The complexity of individual research queries and the search methods used can vary greatly making a single indicator hard to define. Issues addressed included: debate on the definition of “research query”; collection of data via research query and document delivery statistics forms; seasonal decline in research activity between December and February. Data collection has provided useful information for process improvement. Future networking and benchmarking activities will provide valuable information on the experience of other organisations and measures adopted by them.

2. Competitiveness

This is closely related to productivity

A. Success rate on research queries counted in 1A.

B. Fill rate for document delivery counted in 1B.

Data is collected via the same forms as for productivity. “Success” is assessed by the informed judgement of appropriately qualified staff with the participation of clients engaged in research. Due to the seasonal decline in research activity between December and February unfortunately insufficient data was available to analyse progress effectively during the first six months. Progress is also linked to KPI6 (Workplace Skills and Training). An increase in success rate is expected as research skills increase. Process improvement has commenced in document delivery
with the formation of a Document Delivery Review team. Information Desk standards have also been formulated and adopted.

3. Management/Employee Relationship

Staff participation in committees and working parties has increased steadily since 1989. Participation has been measured from 1989 onwards in terms of the proportion of staff members, except Managers involved in committees and working parties. It has been reported annually for the years 1989-1993 and six monthly for 1993-1995, to coincide with the Program milestones.

A longitudinal perspective was taken. Substantial progress has been observed in the level of staff participation in committees and working groups. Over the last eighteen months, committees and teams have started to appear with no management representatives included. The effect of the organisational restructure, and increased emphasis on team based problem solving and decision making, has stimulated further increases in staff participation levels and more committees with no direct management involvement.

4. People Management

A 'morale barometer' is distributed quarterly by the Best Practice Coordinator to a randomly selected sample of staff to map changes in overall morale. The intuitive nature of the instrument adopted has made it most effective. It clearly indicates the effect of the restructure on levels of morale within the organisation. Readings taken before and after the restructure indicate dramatic improvements in morale as staff members settle in to new roles and work patterns and contribute more effectively to the future direction of the University Library.

5. Organisational Skills and Responsiveness

The University Library's capabilities have expanded dramatically since 1989. The levels of organisational skills and responsiveness have been indicated from 1989 onwards by documenting the challenges addressed, annually for the years 1989-1993 and six monthly for 1993-1995, to coincide with the Program milestones. As a qualitative indicator of the change in organisational skills and responsiveness the University Library has documented the challenges addressed since its establishment in 1989. Most notable are the expanded teamwork, greater customer focus, more externally oriented vision, greater opportunities for staff development, and increasing sophistication of information technology use.

6. Workplace Skills and Training

Research and Information Services Branch staff competencies in the use of key research systems will be measured against a competency scale (from no knowledge ... to ... able to develop systems) and reported six monthly. A computer skills self assessment instrument has been developed and completed by all RIS staff. Training needs have been identified and a jointly funded Information Technology Co-ordinator's position has been established. RIS staff are also pursuing alternative solutions including the sponsoring of recognised experts – Anne Lipow and Jim Cleary – to run short courses, and adopting a “train the trainer” approach utilising expertise from within the Branch.

7. Customer Relationships

The Client Satisfaction Indicator, developed by the Council of Australian University Librarians, has been used to measure client satisfaction for client groups listed under 1A. The survey was distributed to all academics and a large sample of research postgraduates in October 1994. Non arrival of software analysis disk has as yet precluded analysis of the data.

8. Impact on Specific Groups

The research competency scale mentioned in relation to KPI6 will be applied to the client groups in 1A as they are involved in the project. The impact of the project will be separately assessed on the DEET target groups (women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from non-English speaking backgrounds). Focus group interviews provided initial data on client competencies. The computer skills instrument developed for KPI6 will be
adapted in consultation with the Information Technology Coordinator and distributed to target groups in mid 1995. Data will be used to organise discipline specific training.

Benchmarking

The benchmarking process involves the following steps:
- identify key processes/indicators to benchmark
- identify enterprises that demonstrate world Best Practice
- communicate with enterprises to arrange benchmark visit
- review articles, reports etc.
- discuss issues to benchmark with management of the enterprise
- form a benchmark team to fully investigate the process(es)
- conduct benchmark training
- formulate questions to be discussed at site visit
- conduct site visit
- analyse gaps and implement strategy/change
- review

A series of one day Best Practice workshops conducted in April provided an excellent forum for the whole staff to identify and discuss processes for improvement and benchmarking. Benchmarking activities will not be confined to activities within the Research and Information Services Branch. The focus group report has been circulated to all Branch Managers who, in consultation with their staff, will indicate suitable processes for benchmarking. Benchmarking partners will be sought both within and outside the library and information industry. Suitable partners within libraries and information services have been identified through the use of the Australian university library statistics, attendance at conferences, electronically through the CAUL e-mail link and the Quality discussion list, and from professional literature. Outside the industry, partners were identified through attendance at Australian Best Practice Demonstration program functions, contact with other small and medium enterprise Best Practice sites particularly those with a strong customer focus such as the tourism industry, Colonial Mutual, banks, suppliers, information technology vendors.

The University Library’s benchmarking methodology comprises a mix of approaches including electronic, documentary, workshop and site visit. The Benchmarking Self Help Manual has been selected as the benchmarking model. The Northern Territory office of the Department of Industrial relations will assist in training staff in the techniques of benchmarking. Documentation from other benchmarking workshops has been disseminated. Benchmarking site visits will be conducted by one-three staff members, generally whoever is closest to the issues will be involved. Site visits will also be conducted in combination with other trips – attached to conferences, study leave etc.

Information capturing processes will include:
- preparing and circulating questionnaires and surveys,
- exchanging procedure manuals,
- flowcharting,
- documenting results of contact,
- implementing change.

Significant emphasis will be placed on the benchmarking component of the project over the next few months.

Problems Encountered

The Project Team has experienced some difficulties in the implementation of the Best Practice Project but none that have been insurmountable. Problems that have arisen have generally been solved or alternative methods found. Difficulties have included:

A. Geographical and Professional Isolation The Northern Territory University Library is the only major academic library within the NT. It serves clients from TAFE entrance to doctoral and post doctoral levels in research.
Networking activities have to a certain extent been hampered by the isolation factor. Promising lines of inquiry which have arisen during phone or electronic mail contact with interested parties have had to be put on hold until an interstate visit could be organised. The difficulty of interacting with partners to benchmark processes has hampered progress in improvement. Greater face to face contact would facilitate networking.

B. Specificity of the Project The Best Practice Project is fairly specific in its application to the Reference and Information Services Branch within the Library. Initial difficulties arose due to a lack of understanding of or interest in the relevance of Best Practice principles by staff in other University Library Branches. As the Project Team have become more familiar with Best Practice principles and the philosophy behind Best Practice, the knowledge and enthusiasm of Team members has gradually spread through all the Branches and has been further reinforced by a series of one day Best Practice workshops which all staff members attended. Many of the issues raised at the focus group meetings involved processes in other Branches and the staff of those branches are now much more aware that the achievement of Best Practice in research information services is not possible without their input and commitment to the implementation of Best Practice in their own work areas.

C. Terminology The Northern Territory University Library is the first and, to date, only non-trading organisation, and one of very few service organisations to be awarded funding under the Australian Best Practice Demonstration Program. Publicity, guidelines, procedures and examples produced by the Commonwealth Department of Industrial relations are very much aimed towards the product driven, for profit sector of the economy. Whilst this is not an insurmountable problem it has meant the reassessment and reinterpretation of many of the requirements of the Program to make them of immediate relevance and value to the project. It has been recommended that the terminology and guidelines associated with the Program be broadened to encompass the service and non-trading sectors of the economy.

D. Library Restructure Between March and September 1994, the University Library underwent a major restructure which affected the entire staff. There was a high level of anxiety associated with the inevitable changes to workflows and processes. It has, at times, been difficult to make headway with the Project when staff members have been concerned about their futures.

E. Conflicting Priorities All Project Team members participate in the Best Practice Project in addition to performing duties associated with their positions in the Library. Inevitable conflicts in the priority of tasks has, to some extent, affected progress. The decision in December 1994 to remove other duties from the Best Practice Co-ordinator’s position has enabled the University Library to have one staff member fully employed on the Best Practice Project.

F. Teething Problems Progress has been slower than anticipated and the team were probably overly ambitious in the number of activities designated to happen in the first six months of the project. The new organisational structure is much more responsive and through the creation of work based teams staff have greater control over processes and decision making mechanisms. The environment is now much more conducive to the implementation of Best Practice principles.

Lessons Learned

Key lessons have been:

- The importance of internalising Best Practice principles within the organisation to facilitate client change and successful benchmarking.
- The hazard of expecting too much too soon. The need to allocate sufficient time when external staff/organisations are involved.
- The commencement of the Project during the Library’s major restructure had unanticipated effects. Organisational change places staff members in “survivor” mode and creates an environment which can hamper the introduction and promotion of new projects which themselves call for changes in workflow and processes.

However, the Best Practice approach has been demonstrated to provide an effective means of improving the quality of services offered by the University Library.

In closing I would like to say Best Practice like abseiling for the first time can be daunting and nerve racking, but once the challenge is accepted and embarked upon it can be and is exhilarating. Like abseiling, Best Practice has had its moments of joy and pain, but I do think we are all richer for the experience.
TURNING CHANGE INTO CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Fina Fichera

Melbourne City Libraries Workplace Restructure

The City of Melbourne has committed itself to being one of Australia’s ‘Best Service Providers’. This commitment ranges from producing effective, efficient and productive work practices to providing a high level of customer service to Melbourne’s ratepayers, workers and visitors. Melbourne City Libraries was one of the many service areas that went through Work and Job Redesign to produce a ‘more efficient and cost effective library service to its clients’. This process involved a Work and Job Redesign team and all staff members having input in redesigning work practices and developing WorkRole Descriptions.

This paper describes the process of Work and Job Redesign at Melbourne City Libraries. Today, Melbourne City Libraries serves the residents, workers, visitors to the city and the City of Melbourne office staff through its two public libraries at East Melbourne and North Melbourne and the Corporate Library. During the Work and Job Redesign process the libraries of Flemington and Carlton were a part of the system; prior to the restructure of Local Government boundaries in Victoria in 1994.

I want to begin by documenting the process of Work and Job Redesign that Melbourne City Libraries went through and illustrate the changes that took place. Then I will describe the role that I and other library technicians took in contributing ideas to discussions on expanding professional and technical opportunities in work practices, organisational structure, and future professional and educational developments.

Election of Work and Job Redesign Working Team

Before any work could begin on the Work and Job Redesign process, the working team had to be elected. This working team needed to represent staff members from all qualified and unqualified levels – librarians, library technicians and library officers, and to represent all service areas. A meeting was organised for all library staff with a facilitator to outline the process, to chart the schedule that the Work and Job Redesign would take and to elect the working team. This working team would work under the direction of the facilitator from the Council’s Human Resources Branch to organise and manage the work schedule, the job satisfaction survey, and formulation of the WorkRole Descriptions. Staff members were able to nominate themselves or other members to participate within this working team and to represent their professional levels or work places.

Schedule for Work and Job Redesign

A detailed schedule was established by the Work and Job Redesign facilitator itemising all the tasks and data that the Work and Job Redesign Working Team had to collect, analyse, discuss and present to the workplace. The completed scheme would later be presented to the Corporate Classification Committee which is a joint management/union panel overseeing the Work and Job Redesign process across the organisation.

Week 1: Information Collection on Current Work Systems:
- Establish ground rules (eg reporting back process);
- Develop work flows (consult with workforce);
- Identify problems and blockages (ask workforce for comment).

Week 2: Work Systems Analysis:
- Analyse results of job satisfaction survey;
- Identify causes of major problems;
- Develop criteria for what a new work design should do. Gain work place agreement on these features.

Week 3: Change Options:
- Develop change options – meet with work place;
- Sketch out WorkRoles.
Week 4: Defining the Preferred Options:
- Review work place feedback;
- Define preferred option including: new jobs, tasks, working arrangements, skills required.

Week 5: Working Party Presentation:
- Working party presentation, includes work role proposals, organisational structures and team work arrangement;
- Incorporate feedback from working party.

Week 6: Classification:
- Refine WorkRoles for classification;
- Prepare implementation plan and allocate any outstanding skill definition work.

What makes a good job?

One aspect of Work and Job Redesign was to look at the principles that make a good job. Understanding of the components that make a good job was discussed by all staff members with the facilitator. It was necessary that all jobs must have an appropriate blend of these job design principles and that no job should be composed only of disconnected, fragmented or menial tasks or be characterised as unskilled or semi-skilled.

Work and Job Redesign principles are:
(i) Skill Variety – redesigned jobs must consist of a balanced range of tasks and skills of different types and levels of complexity.

(ii) Task Identity and Significance – redesigned jobs must be made up of tasks and responsibilities that constitute whole segments of a work function, enabling people to see the significance of the job and where it fits into the purpose of the overall operation (ie library services objectives etc).

(iii) Autonomy – redesigned jobs must provide substantial amounts of freedom, independent decision making and discretion to plan and schedule work, decide on appropriate methods and procedures and influence workgroup goal setting and planning.

(iv) Feedback – redesigned jobs should have clear and objective standards for tasks performance and skill assessment based on competencies actually needed in the workplace. These should be negotiated between management and workgroups and people should receive clear, direct and regular job performance feedback, reviews and counselling.

(v) Career Paths and Skill Formation – redesigned jobs must provide opportunities to acquire new skills, as the basis for clear and equitable movement through the skills/classification framework. Skills development should encompass not only task specific or technical skills, but also skills that can be used by employees for future career development.

(vi) Working Environment – redesigned work must eliminate occupational hazards, unsafe work practices and provide healthy workplaces free from discrimination and harassment. All jobs must be redesigned in alliance with EEO, OHS and other legal and statutory requirements.

(vii) Sociability and Support – redesigned work must eliminate social isolation and provide meaningful interaction, support and mutual help from others in the work area. A central strategy here will be the promotion of work arrangements based on teamwork.

Job Satisfaction Survey

This definition and knowledge of ‘what makes a good job’ gives staff the skill of looking at aspects of their job that can be made more fulfilling and rewarding. One project which all staff participated in was the job satisfaction survey. This survey provided an opportunity for staff members to review their jobs in relation to the level of job satisfaction and identify causes of major problems. The questionnaires were collected, collated
and analysed by the human resources consultant. Results were discussed and distributed to all staff members. This work system analysis would assist the working team in developing new work designs and assisting implementation of the change process.

The importance of input from all staff members on the job satisfaction survey was a major concern for the Work and Job Redesign team. Without the staff consultation and input in identifying major concerns, no workplace improvement could be achieved. Consultation between the staff and the working team was arranged by holding weekly meetings where feedback was collected on all issues.

General staff issues collected from the survey included:
- an increase in levels of responsibilities with a decrease in restrictions and checking;
- a decrease in routine tasks;
- recognition of and opportunities to learn more skills;
- a greater participation in decision making;
- more variety of tasks;
- better communication;
- increased flexibility with less rigid structures and procedures;
- new opportunities for career development.

Some specific issues collected from the survey for Library Technicians included:
- broader skills opportunities;
- recognition and use of training;
- less rigid reporting procedures;
- task variety;
- more responsibilities;
- better career paths;
- more delineation of responsibility,
- more public contact for office based staff.

Work Role Descriptions: the document

The WorkRole Description is made up of ten areas, such as 'WorkRole Framework'; 'Responsibilities and Accountabilities' and 'Knowledge & Skills'. Each of these sections details the requirements needed for each position within the organisation. The WorkRole Description documents were designed to replace 'Job Descriptions' because the structure of the document enables multi-skilling; more career opportunities and increased levels of responsibilities. It is also seen as a document that is flexible enough to change as future organisational, professional and technological changes occur.

The implementation of the WorkRole Descriptions allowed for the commencement of the annual employees' SDR (Staff Development and Review) program. This program enables employees and employers to implement an annual staff development and review program where employees acquire new skills and if successful upon review, receive a yearly salary increment. Both WorkRole Descriptions were written by the members of the working team with the assistance and consultation of all staff. The facilitator co-ordinated the working team in how the WorkRole Descriptions were to be written.

The decision was made to design two WorkRoles Descriptions; one for the librarians and a combined WorkRole Description for library technicians and library officers. The combination of the Library Technician and Library Officer WorkRole Description allows for more opportunities and extension skills for a library officer to develop within the library technician stream. All drafts of the document were circulated to enable all staff to input any changes or queries. The draft of both WorkRole Descriptions were considered and finally approved by the Corporate Classification Committee.

Organisational structure and Appointment process following Job and Work Redesign

Changes occurred throughout work areas and the organisation altered to reflect a flatter and leaner management structure.
Some significant changes for library technicians within the new organisational structure are:
- increased responsibility for library technicians in the provision of information;
- significant changes made to address job satisfaction issues such as monotony and under-utilisation of existing skills;
- development of the Business Support Stream;
- broader career opportunities;
- increased responsibility and broader task variety for Library Technicians;
- remuneration based upon work and responsibilities, for example Senior Technicians could be banded on a higher classification than some entry level librarian positions.

New positions were developed within the new structure. A new organisational structure was completed and existing positions within the old structure were vacated. An appointment process was implemented and staff had to apply for the newly created positions within the organisation.

Case Study: Information Provision

The major issue in relation to job satisfaction and operational efficiency was the delivery of information services and the roles of librarians and library technicians. Previously, library technicians were not involved in a formalised way in the delivery of information services, such as being rostered for information desk work and technicians were perceived as being able to answer only 'ready reference' and 'directional queries'. The job satisfaction survey, highlighted the longstanding issue of who was qualified and trained in the delivery of reference and information services. Prior to Work and Job Redesign these queries were to be referred to the librarian at the reference desk or on the circulation desk.

In discussion between the working party and staff members factors such as educational qualifications; training and work level guidelines were all analysed and questioned. Throughout this process, relationships between the librarians and library technicians were strained. It has always been a contested issue between the two parties. Technicians, especially at the branch libraries have felt that their skills, knowledge and training haven't been fully utilised. Library technicians who had recently trained or who had many years experience believed that they too had skills which could be utilised in areas of reference and information inquiry. Librarians were concerned about issues such as de-skilling and lack of career opportunities within the new structure proposed. The reference and information services provision was seen, by librarians, as one of the areas that required professional training.

In order to resolve the areas of conflict the staff sought to define and clarify skills, training and experience against each other professional skills and roles. Staff members also sought information from other library services on their policies for providing delivery of these services. Information was also obtained from the professional library associations to define what the industry's definition of who is qualified to answer reference inquiries and provide information services.

Issues which had to be addressed by the Work and Job Redesign team included:
- to address job satisfaction for library technicians;
- to broaden task variety for library technicians;
- the need to recognise and use the skills that library technicians have been trained for and to introduce some flexibility in the branch libraries (ie potential for library technicians to cover the reference desk when the librarian is unavailable).

Regarding the librarians' WorkRole there was the need to recognise that the skills of the Librarian were more extensive in responding to the overall information needs of the community by:
- responding to in depth reference/information needs of patrons,
- using analytical and conceptual skills and knowledge;
- contributing to the development of library services;
- development of collections; and promoting resources and services.

All issues were discussed by the Work and Job Redesign Working team and facilitator, and a decision was made to conduct a ballot which would enable all staff members to be involved in the decision making process. A staff meeting was held to summarise the two proposals and all staff were urged to vote. Ballot papers were
collected and counted by the facilitator and the library manager. The proposal for technicians to participate in the delivery of the information services won. It was agreed that both parties had different levels of training and this fact had to be recognised, so that each would be given an appropriate role to ensure that quality service levels would be maintained.

It was proposed that library technicians:
- be rostered on the reference desk;
- have the training and skills to respond to general/ready reference questions from patrons at all times;
- receive training/updates on reference collection and accessing resources.

This proposal aims to recognise reference skills gained by library technicians within their course of study and to address job satisfaction and broaden task variety for technicians. It enhances the support role for library technicians in the provision of Information services. Within the new library support WorkRole significant changes have been made to address job satisfaction issues such as under-utilisation of existing skills. The creation of the new WorkRole has enabled the provision of broader career opportunities.

Organisational Change and the Library Technician participation

As a library technician and staff member, I can’t stress enough how much I learned by being involved as a member of the working team. It was an ideal opportunity to input, to analyse and collect information about work practices. This has been of benefit both to myself and other library technicians. This change process made me look at the tasks I am performing as a library technician and all tasks which other library technicians are currently performing and what technicians could be performing in the very near future.

Tasks such as:
- developing flow charts of work procedures;
- identifying problems and blockages in current work practices;
- developing change options will increase my understanding of each person’s tasks and how they come together to produce an efficient and effective library service.

Having the opportunity to participate in voicing my concerns through the job satisfaction survey was another process of participation; and having those concerns analysed and changed to improve individual jobs is a benefit to all.

Change and IT opportunities for Library Technicians

Turning change into opportunities was my goal in being a member of the Work and Job Redesign Team. I consider it important to have contributed to the development of further skills that library technicians can gain in providing a highly focused library and information service for its customers and clients. And also being a pro-active participant in the future professional developments of library technicians in the workplace. Also changing the current perception of library technician within the library and information industry to one that recognises the value of our educational and workplace experiences. Being able to turn ‘workplace change’ into a pro-active, positive and efficient vehicle where library technicians and your career can benefit within this process of change is a key goal to aim for.

Opportunities to be gained from Workplace and Organisational change

Library technicians should take a pro-active role in the current climate of ‘organisational change’. It is an ideal opportunity to challenge the current educational, professional and workplace guidelines and work practices applying to technicians. We need to understand and accept that change is occurring rapidly within the work environment and be able to learn, adapt and move forward with skills that will empower the individual and the profession as a whole. Also library technicians need to examine, exchange, question and research new skills, work practices and have new ideas for professional development to improve our current work environment within this huge and rapidly changing information industry.

We, as library technicians have the skills, vision, flexibility and commitment to challenge and question what we have achieved and advance at the same rate as organisational and technological changes.
MARKETING LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES IN A DOWNSIZING ORGANISATION

Judi McLean

Background The Hunter Water Corporation changed from a public utility to a state owned Corporation on 1 January 1992. Essentially the organisation continued to provide water and wastewater services to the community of the lower Hunter and few people would be aware of the many changes that occurred within the organisation as a result of this change.

Economic Rationalism Economic rationalism is a term which is familiar to all of us and no doubt most of us have experienced its effects. At the combined Australian/New Zealand Library Associations conference in Auckland last year Kathy Knott made the comment: “Economists know the cost of everything and the value of nothing”... In my experience this is often very true when it comes to Library and Information Services. It is difficult to convince the economic rationalists of the value of these services as in many cases their focus is very specific and they rarely see anything from a global perspective. I am going to outline what happened at Hunter Water, and how staff promoted a service and actually increased usage, when the client base was shrinking.

Why Marketing is Important... I have always been an advocate of well planned marketing, promoting and advertising strategies. It probably stems from one particularly bad experience which dates back several years and bears no relevance to libraries or for that matter, my current position. Some years ago I was approached by my father to do a sign for his RSL social golf club. He required a simple sign for the notice board inside the club, to inform the members of details of the next round of golf. Knowing very little about RSL clubs and the clientele, I formed my own opinion based initially on a Bruce Ruston “look alike” and “think alike” and opted for producing a sign just a little bigger than a centrefold. In fact, it was a centrefold displaying a somewhat well endowed female in a rather scanty little outfit, followed by some of my best printing: “NOW THAT I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION......The next round of social golf will be....etc.” As you can probably imagine the ensuing results were somewhat disastrous, more especially for my father who was totally oblivious to the sign’s existence. Having made this mistake I can only add, that if a lesson is learnt and it impacts positively on future actions, it is always worthwhile. Now let’s get back to why I am here.

Business Units, Profits, Cost Responsibilities and User-Pays... When Hunter Water corporatised, each section became a single business unit, selling services to other business units, or to outsiders for a profit. In the library’s case, it wasn’t essential for the business to run at a profit, but simply to break even. This proved to be more difficult than most people could imagine for the following reasons:

1. The library was in a position where certain services for the running of the business units were essential. (e.g. accounting services, computer services, property management and maintenance. The Library, a small section with 1.6 staff and a relatively small budget, was forced to pay $15,000/pa for accounting services, $12,000/pa for hiring of computers and $25,000/pa for rent). These three services alone were very costly, and the library’s fees similarly became high to accommodate these unrealistic charges.

2. Often managers didn’t have an understanding of the Library’s function and the service provided, so it was difficult for them to justify paying for the use of an information service, more especially when they had the idea that they could walk into the public library and get things for nothing. They seemed to be of the opinion that Library services were free. Therefore, if they wanted to make some cut to the budget, it was a relatively simple process to say, “this business unit no longer requires the library’s service – we’ll use the public library next door.” This was an area that had to be addressed – the ignorance of these managers was partly because of a lack of promotion on the library’s part in the past.

3. It is often difficult to assign a responsibility and therefore a charge, to many of the library’s day-to-day tasks. Our library, for example, is accessed by the public and this can often be time consuming, not to mention costly. Tasks associated with collection development are very difficult to assign to specific sections. Collection and maintenance of the Corporation’s relevant historical material can be troublesome when assigning cost responsibilities. There are several other areas which come under this category. However all
these tasks contribute to the library's costs and must therefore be recouped from the users. I could continue for some time on this, but I'm sure you get the picture.

**The Marketing Strategy...** Part of the rationale behind corporatisation was to introduce competition, more especially outside competition into the organisation with a view to making each section function cost-efficiently, in the same way as outside businesses. In effect, each section was expected to perform better than any equivalent outside business. Given management's ultimatum that business units would now sink or swim, there was now more than ever a real need for a successful marketing strategy... The marketing strategy employed, relied on some of the well established marketing procedures and a few of my own initiatives.

1. **Mission statements, goals and values...**

A general rule for the mission statement is to make sure that the section's mission statement fits in with the organisation's. In my case that hasn't been too difficult since the organisation is focused totally on service that represents value for money.

As strange as it may seem I firmly believe that the organisation has in fact provided such a service and to date it hasn't been at the expense of the customers. Hunter Water has developed a reputation for effective, cost-efficient service and has continued to lead the way in regard to technological advances in the provision of its service. In the eleven years I have worked in this organisation staff has reduced from 1500 to less than 800. People are working harder and longer, but still providing a good service. Most of our employees have a very strong commitment to their work. With all that in mind my library's mission statement is: "To provide an efficient, cost effective service to employees of Hunter Water, while at the same time servicing some of the environmental information needs of the community..." The general rule when setting goals is to set goals that are realistic and attainable, but not without challenge.

One of the main aims of our library is to provide a service to all of Hunter Water's workforce. This is not realistic! However, all employees are regularly provided with library news and this message attracts quite a few of the fringe dwellers for one reason or another as I shall point out later. It is necessary to have "annual challenges". Each year the Library, along with all other sections of the organisation, produces a business plan. This is where those annual challenges are listed so that reports can be presented at the end of the year to assess progress. Most of the ones that I set are achievable it is very important to achieve. (They have included such things as weeding the collection, setting up a journal acquisition register on the library's automated system, setting up a database from research requests etc.)

2. **Image**

In an organisation of approximately 1,000 staff, comprising professional, clerical and blue collar workers, it is unlikely that a library and information service will attract everyone as clients. It is also very likely that a large percentage of this group still envisages the library as that dusty little place you visited when you were young where silence was paramount and if you didn't cause too much inconvenience you could actually borrow something. The library's existence is now very much dependent on altering this image to promote the information revolution: People's general impression of libraries and the sorts of people who minded the book stock had to be changed to: "This is a product that you can't afford to be without.....This service could be the difference between stagnation and the future....We are your link to technology and security..." "This service is essential for your very existence - if you don't use it you are going to fall behind!!!" (A slight exaggeration, of course, but not too far from the truth.)

3. **The Product**

Information is fantastic. Everyone needs it even if they think they don't. So many significant changes have occurred in the last decade or for that matter in the last week which serve to make our product so appealing. Just think of the basic services we can offer and more especially how it can be presented. It is almost limitless, even on a relatively small budget especially if you have the right networks (and I include human networks).

**Uniqueness** The uniqueness of our in-house library and information service had to be established. As I mentioned before, many people are of the opinion that libraries are all the same and the public library around
the corner will provide everything they need free of charge. (This is true of some services – if you discount the fact that a portion of most people's land rates represents their library usage fee – many councils chose to eliminate this service from their rates because it caused them considerable anguish when every second rate-payer insisted that they shouldn't pay this bit since they never go to the library!) The real differences between outside services and what our library had to offer were highlighted. The Hunter Water Corporation is a special agency with very unique needs not associated with local industry, academia, public libraries etc. We specialise in water and sewage engineering and service. We have experts, we are leaders in the area and our library reflects this! Our library staff know what you want, we know our customers and we can deal with your needs now and in a personal way.

**Convenience** This Library Service is convenient. We are here for you right now and we will address your needs this very minute if need be. We can deliver information to you today if necessary, even to our regional offices. We know the jargon (in most cases) and the customers – our customers are very important.

**Value** It can be difficult to convince some people of the value of library services – I say some people, not all people. This area will be expanded later in the "real cost of no library". In our library’s case, we were very fortunate to have some really influential supporters, who used the library to excess and had considerable clout within the organisation. These are the people you look after and to whom you promote new services and recent discoveries etc.

**Product range** Libraries today have endless scope when it comes to the range of products available. In a small special library the focus is on researching for specific projects when required, but requests for more general information are every day occurrences as well.

**Reference Enquiries** These enquiries vary from technical enquiries to simple information on CPI figures for the quarter. Like most libraries we have had our share of unusual requests. Information is provided from a number of sources including our own collection, local collections, state, national and international sources.

**Literature searching using both on-line and CD-ROM facilities** Many requests for information are satisfied through on-line searches and CD-ROM databases. This generally results in knowledge of conference papers, journal articles, reports etc. that are available locally, nationally and internationally.

**Inter-library Loan Service** Most of us recognise its vital importance in any library service. Scientific texts and journals are more often than not very expensive items. In many cases it is more cost efficient to borrow items or obtain photocopied articles than to purchase or subscribe. ILLs often provide access to out of print material.

**Current Awareness Service** This is the most valuable service offered by the library. It provides users with up to date information from our journal collection or from special lists and bibliographies. This is a very personalised service and certainly one to promote.

**Production of Bibliographies, Series Lists and Accession Lists** These lists are very valuable for dissemination of specific information. In our library there are a number of series that arrive irregularly, but generally in large batches. Lists are easily produced and can be quickly circulated to relevant sections. Accession Lists are produced and circulated to all areas. My experience has taught me that the smaller the list the better the response from our clients. People in our organisation have little time to read tomes of information – if the list is short, they will at least glance through it and more often than not find items of interest.

**Purchase Facility** The principle of business unit operation tends to be a bit divisive with sections doing their own thing, purchasing what they want etc. with little thought for the fact that essentially rate-payers' money is being used. By providing a central purchase and recording process (cataloguing), items can be made available to more people within the organisation. This is a tricky area to promote. Some time back I enlisted the service of a local book supplier who will take orders via the fax machine, order from suppliers on my behalf and deliver stock to the door with up to 15% discount on many items. This has streamlined my purchasing procedures considerably and saved me lots of dollars! The library offers this service to its clients, including cadets who require TAFE and University texts. Any items purchased with HWC funds are catalogued prior to despatch to clients or sections, even those required for permanent use within specific sections.
The Collection The issue of collection development, while always of concern to most libraries, seems to have reached a higher level of importance in recent years. Unfortunately this library’s purchase power has diminished considerably in the last five years and a stronger focus on providing service and access to information elsewhere has emerged. The core collection is utilised heavily however, and must therefore be maintained and marketed to the users. Every effort has been made to retain popular journals and to provide sufficient funding for the necessary texts. Our collection comprises some 6,000 catalogued items and approximately 250 journal titles. The collection has been culled twice in the last five years, once after the Newcastle earthquake and the second time just recently when the library extended to an additional area.

The Environmental Library Facility This was the brainchild of ex politician Tim Moore, who thought it would be a fabulous PR exercise to provide the local region with access to another source of environmental information. From Hunter Water Corporation’s point of view, this facility has proved invaluable. It has provided an access point for the public and taken that responsibility away from a number of sections who previously had to deal with customer enquiries on a wide range of issues. As a result, the library has become the repository for public documents which were previously circulated to community groups by specific sections (e.g. Environmental Impact Statements which require public response). The library staff have taken on these additional responsibilities with very little in the way of improved assets or funding, and no increase in staff numbers. (One of the greatest changes in operation of HWC since corporatisation has been the increase in responsibility for no additional compensation. It is difficult for staff, but an advantage for the community if cost-savings are passed on to customers.)

The catalogue The library uses an INMAGIC library package to accommodate a number of functions, including the catalogue. The catalogue is available to all staff from their desks, providing they have access to the corporation’s computerised system. A mainframe system is accessible for a number of corporate functions including budget information, HRMS information, water resource statistics, purchase operations etc. The library’s catalogue is user-friendly and provides users with usual catalogue information plus loan status of listed items.

Access to the Internet Recently Hunter Water made application to use the Internet via the University of Newcastle’s gateway. This was the cheapest way to access the system while assessing its usefulness for the Corporation. The e-mail facility is probably the greatest advantage to many people in the organisation who previously didn’t have this access. Some of the key research areas now have access to many of the specialist groups on the Internet, but it hasn’t eliminated their need for literature searches done by the library.

4. Promotion This is the most challenging and rewarding part of the exercise. The experts say that a proportion of the budget should be set aside for promotion. I agree, but in my experience I found several methods for marketing or promotion which cost very little.

The Users
* Assess your clients (Don’t assume that they are all Bruce Ruxton). Blue collar workers today are quite often qualified people who can’t find appropriate employment. Lots of people do courses and need assistance.
* The researchers in our organisation have remained my most supportive customers. They recognise the real worth of a library facility and therefore receive preferential treatment. Any information or work that they generate for the library always takes priority.
* Most importantly, as Moira Collyns pointed out in the Australian and New Zealand Conference last year, know your funders. These include people who don’t use the library to excess. They in fact become “gold customers” because they can make the difference between surviving and having the funding to improve the service.

Gold Customers The Gold customers or funders are the ones that have to be worked on – they provide the money. It is very necessary to obtain their interest and support in the library. On the rare occasions when the non-users require information, jump to it and don’t hesitate to point out that in the space of half an hour you have located the appropriate information from a colleague in woop-woop and because of this fabulous contact here is the information faxed through from Victoria!! (But it was nooooo trouble!!) What influences their buying decisions? How can I influence them? How can I engage their emotions? These are the things to consider.
Attracting the fringe dwellers Sometimes if you can’t attract all the funders you may have to attract their staff and hope that the message filters through. If a new customer arrives on the scene, make sure the service you provide is going to encourage their return. If good service is provided, the client quite often will pass the message on to others.

Methods of Promotion Advertising of Library Services is best done by direct contact. In my organisation most business units conduct monthly meetings, weekly meetings, or daily meetings. In fact, meetings have become an art form at Hunter Water. Organising an invite to one of these meetings isn’t a problem.

Formal Presentations These have to be appropriate for the section you address. Research the basic functions of the group concerned and talk about problems and information that is appropriate to the group’s needs. My general approach was to do a literature search on a topic specific to that business unit, and provide the group with the results of that search. Items which are available from the library’s collection are highlighted and locations for the remaining references are given, along with a cost of retrieving these items. This would include sources such as British Lending Library and overseas organisations like the American Water Works Association. Many people have no concept of what’s involved in retrieving information. I generally found that most people were suitably impressed.

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Brochures containing a brief outline on other services offered (including the current awareness service) is also handy along with copies of accession lists, etc. As well as this information I gave an outline on the real cost of retrieving the same sort of information if there is no library or they decide to discontinue using the library service. (I will discuss this in further detail later.)

Gimmicks are a great way to introduce yourself, and often by role-playing, because you’re not really yourself, there is less likelihood of nervous tension. I presented myself at the first meeting as a bespectacled, bun-headed mousey critter in a gorgeous little twinset and skirt and then proceeded to convert to the real me as I discussed how libraries ain’t what they used to be and neither are the people who manage them (or at least in this particular library). The presentation was relatively brief, with fact sheets to reinforce what I had said. It’s not what you say but how you say it - if you are enthusiastic the message rubs off. The success rate in obtaining the support of management through this methodology was almost without exception. Once you have obtained support from a few of the key players in an organisation, support from other areas follows.

Other Methods There are always the doubting Thomases and knockers. The secret is to continually chip away at them with “niceness.” By sending appropriate information to these people on a regular basis, they can be made aware of the library’s existence. Quite often journal articles may crop up or publisher’s information on recently published books or reports - a yellow sticky attached to the front with a note “John, Thought you might be interested in this one. Regards Judi” - does wonders to improve your image and promote the service.

Perhaps one of the cheapest methods of informing all HWC employees is through our monthly newsletter “Backwash”. Every employee receives their own copy and it costs the library absolutely nothing to have 2 pages included each month. I like to get the last 2 pages (most journalists will tell you position is everything) and include a couple of cartoons to attract attention. I try to include a couple of brief book reviews, information about both new and old services, plus provide a list of no more than ten titles which may be of general interest, and more importantly a bit of trivia. The trivia tends to attract attention to more important issues that need promoting. The important thing is to be ever present... Although many consider Macintosh computers are a little antiquated, I have found the library’s Macintosh computer has perhaps been the most valuable piece of equipment in the library. It is a simple task to produce brochures, library accession lists and the Mac easily adapts to perform on-line literature searches which can in turn be adapted to the clients’ needs. They are almost foolproof.

Lists of technical books, reports or series are circulated to relevant sections. I used to produce a library-specific publication called “info-link” and with the assistance of my part-time library assistant an environmental newsletter called “Green Scene” was also produced. However, their production was very time-consuming and the response from our users didn’t justify production. The two-page addition in Backwash has been much more successful and certainly less costly.

The Cost of No Library In July last year, the Hunter Regional ALIA group were fortunate enough to have Rishpal Singh from the NSW State Library as a speaker where he spoke on outsourcing in library and
information services. I had attended a course run by the State Library some time before on cost-benefit analysis for special libraries run by the same speaker. It sounds like riveting stuff, I know, but in actual fact the sentiments expressed by this man were invaluable to the survival of my service. Few people when considering the closure of a library and information service think of the hidden costs associated with individuals having to retrieve their own information. For starters, they’re not always good at it – they don’t have the expertise or the contacts and networks to know where to go. Library specialists on the whole are paid a pittance whereas professional engineers and researchers are often on much higher salaries. It is far more cost-efficient to have the library trained person get the information. There are costs associated with travelling elsewhere to obtain information. Quite often if a service is outsourced the cost of the consultant’s fee is higher and there are no guarantees that they will in fact have the expertise to know the jargon etc. associated with the specific organisation. If for example the service is outsourced to a bigger library, their first commitment may be to their own users so there is no guarantee of fast service unless the desired fee is paid. Fast-track isn’t cheap...I’m sure you are getting the general idea.

Evaluation of Service When I first started to manage the library, a new Managing Director was appointed to Hunter Water. He was an economist who wanted to make dramatic changes which would result in instant cost savings. His first decision was to try and close the library. I asked him for the opportunity to provide him with a good argument for retaining the service and after quite a bit of effort convinced him that the service was very necessary. It was at this point that I realised the importance of the library customers who substantiated my claims and supported me in trying to retain the library service. This was a very valuable evaluation process.

As I pointed out earlier, some services provided netted little in the way of customer response and therefore the decision was made to discontinue the service or to find an alternative which is more appropriate. Time is precious and cannot be wasted. Similarly in the climate in which our library operates if the library service is poor, sections are no longer obliged to retain the service. Customer surveys have their place, providing they are designed in a way that will provide appropriate feedback.

I have never circulated a customer survey which is probably a poor admission. On the other hand I have been subjected to a number of them from a variety of sources. Excuse my cynicism, but if surveys are correctly worded they can always net a positive outcome. As far as I can see the proof is in the pudding. If the service is good, staff are committed and accommodating, customers will keep coming back. In my eleven years at Hunter Water, one of my most used phrases is “This is a really good library...” When the opportunity presents itself I use the phrase – I know it’s a really good library and it doesn’t take long for the message to travel!

Conclusion

Life is full of exciting challenges. In the last five years we at Hunter Water have had our share. The statistics from 1993 to 1994 indicate that we are getting more and more customers and still meeting the demands placed upon us. I have no doubts that we will reach a point where the current staffing can’t handle these demands. We have streamlined a lot of our operations in the last five years to try and make our work more efficient and to provide additional time for our customers. When the time comes it will be difficult to convince the economic rationalists that we need more people, but like I said life is full of challenges.

Library technicians today are presented with far better training in their courses than I was given several years ago. I am a strong advocate of teaching technicians skills in marketing, promotion and presentation. I am realistic and know that I am very privileged to have the opportunity to run my own library and make use of these sorts of opportunities but you will be surprised at how useful these skills are in your every day jobs in promoting your own worth. We are Library Technicians, well-trained, optimistic and have a lot to offer the information world. Don’t ever lose sight of that fact.

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SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At what is now Adelaide Institute of TAFE, we have been working since the late 1970s in an attempt to make our Library Technician course available to a wider student population. Our first attempts were to make it available to country students in South Australia and that is something which we still are not entirely happy with – for some reason or another, we do not seem to attract significant numbers of country students, but it is something which we are aware of and which we will continue to work on. We also made what I would consider quite successful efforts to deliver the course to students in Alice Springs and country New South Wales, but sadly we are no longer players in that game, although all of the teaching staff would like to be.

We have used a number of what are really quite different terms to describe our activities. Those that would be most familiar are:
- external study
- distance education
- open learning, and
- flexible delivery.

These terms do not all mean the same thing, and they show a significant evolution in thinking among educators internationally. Two sad associations with the terms “external study” and “distance education” is that it is possible to study from one’s lounge room, and that technology can fix every educational problem. That has never been the case and never will be the case with library technician education. Because of the practical nature of such courses, there must be a “hands on” component, and students simply must view processes in large libraries which have well established procedures. It is precisely these components of the course which make it more challenging to deliver to students who for some reason or another are unable to visit central campuses regularly. While it may be difficult though, it is far from impossible. The fact that we are doing this on a regular basis is part of what makes working in this field at Adelaide TAFE so enjoyable.

WHAT IS FLEXIBLE DELIVERY?

Let’s look briefly at my description of flexible delivery. It:
- is an approach, rather than a system or technique
- gives the learners as much control as possible over what and when and where and how they learn
- commonly uses the delivery methods of distance education and the facilities of educational technology
- changes the role of a teacher from a source of knowledge to a manager of learning and a facilitator
- justifies these measures by arguments of efficiency, cost effectiveness and equity
- puts the student before the subject matter.

In summary, flexible delivery allows the learner to choose how to learn, when to learn, where to learn and what to learn as far as possible within the resource constraints of any education and training provision. For us as educators, it’s about asking students what they want, and then helping them to get it, but we cannot help learners who don’t know what they want in the way of either suitable courses or of delivery methodologies which match their preferred learning style. I must say, however, that flexible delivery is not a panacea – it is not a quick fix solution to all of the problems encountered by learners.

RESEARCH INTO FLEXIBLE DELIVERY AND LIBRARY STUDIES

How does this relate to my paper then? A number of studies in Australia and elsewhere have looked at the applications of flexible delivery methodologies as tools to make education more accessible, but none of them have addressed the issues as they relate to library technicians. During 1994 I conducted a research project among the library studies students at Adelaide Institute of TAFE. The two main objectives were:
- to identify potential barriers which had to be overcome to study
to identify some factors within the flexible delivery methodologies which helped overcome some of these barriers

This paper will discuss some aspects of that research and their implications for library technician training and hopefully, for those libraries which employ and support trainee library technicians. The main tool used to gather data was a student questionnaire which was given to students as they enrolled for the second semester.

BARRIERS TO LIBRARY TECHNICIAN STUDY

The first part of the questionnaire listed 22 possible barriers, and students were asked to place a tick alongside those which had been a problem for them. They could tick as many or as few as they liked, and they were not asked to rank them. The barriers were:

Geographical isolation
Limited access to learning
Limited choice in courses available
Teacher-centred delivery
Limited time available
Limited access to facilities (equipment and library resources)
Limited opportunities for social interaction with other students
Inflexible timetables
Lack of consideration of different learning styles
Limited access to course information

Inflexible assessment procedures
Inflexible arrangement of course components
Inflexible arrangement of course entry and exit points
Rigid course structures
High entrance requirements
Lack of child care facilities
High course costs
Lack of confidence in your study skills
Lack of pre-enrolment counselling
Slow delivery of study materials
Long turn around time for marking/assessment
Limited access to lecturer

The results were interesting to say the least. This is not the place to go through each of the 22 barriers in detail – we will just look at what were listed most often as barriers. In order, they were:

- Limited time available
- Lack of confidence in study skills
- Limited access to facilities (equipment and library resources)
- Inflexible timetables
- High course costs
- Limited opportunities for social interaction with other students
- Lack of child care facilities
- Long turn around time for marking/assessment

Fig. 1 Barriers

Challenges Faced by Library Technician Students Towards 2000
Four of the items were not listed by any of the respondents as barriers to their study. They were:
- Limited access to learning
- Inflexible assessment procedures
- Inflexible arrangement of course components
- Inflexible arrangement of course entry and exit points.

METHODOLOGIES WHICH MAY OVERCOME BARRIERS

A similar approach was adopted with regard to methodologies which may help to overcome the perceived barriers for students. The second part of the questionnaire listed 21 possible methodologies, and students were asked to place a tick alongside those which had been a help for them. They could tick as many or as few as they liked, and they were not asked to rank them. The methodologies were:

| Adequate pre-enrolment information | Television video conferencing |
| Adequate pre-enrolment counselling | Audio tapes provided |
| Study in class workshop | Individual telephone calls to lecturer |
| Self study packages used | Individual face to face with lecturer |
| Text books used | Social activities arranged |
| Use of a library or local study centre | Working with a friend |
| Local support person available | Provision of child care |
| Small study groups arranged | Availability of TAFE equipment on loan |
| Large class sessions | Helpful office staff available |
| Telephone conferencing | Regular newsletter provided |
| Video tapes provided | Adequate pre-enrolment information |

Again, this is not the place to go through each of the 21 methodologies in detail – we will just look at what were listed most often as helpful. In order, they were:
- Individual face to face with lecturer,
- Individual telephone calls to lecturer,
- Working with a friend,
- Use of a library or local study centre,
- Regular newsletter provided.

Those which were not listed by anyone as helpful were:
- Telephone conferencing,
- Television video conferencing,
- Audio tapes provided,
- Social activities arranged,
- Provision of child care.
IMPLICATIONS FOR LIBRARY TECHNICIAN TRAINING

Currently, we are a long way down the track with a project which is to develop a national, competency-based curriculum for library and information studies. This curriculum could provide a precise, systematic examination of content and skills, and it may feature pre- and post-assessments of learning, and validation of outcomes. These outcomes are in themselves laudable, but they are simply not enough to ensure that delivery will be as flexible as possible, and that it will meet the needs of students.

I want to look at just the first two of the barriers my research identified and try to discuss some of the implications from them for any course, whether it be a national library technician course, or some other. The two barriers were:
- limited time available
- lack of confidence in study skills.

I guess that most library technician students can relate to these problems, so how can they be overcome and by whom?

We all complain that there is simply not enough time in the day, but paradoxically, each of us has all that there is. We each have 24 hours, or 1,440 minutes or 86,400 seconds in each day. If that’s not enough it may well be that we are trying to fit too much in or that we’re not working efficiently, and that has serious implications for educators, especially those who may not have their students sitting in regular rows and columns in front of them. It is a common problem for us that classroom students seem to be able to handle material in shorter times than non-classroom students.

The answer could be that flexible delivery students frequently do more than is strictly necessary – they are ‘over achievers’. This could be because students are unaware of where to stop. Whatever the reason, one answer lies in providing specific information to the students about what is required of them. This includes:
- providing clear information about what has to be done, and when
- being specific about what has to be achieved in each section of the work
- indicating approximately how much time should be spent on each section
- providing an avenue of support if problems occur.

This leads me on to the second barrier, lack of confidence in study skills. I was amazed that this was a perceived problem for our students, because according to information provided on their enrolment forms:
- 28% of students have satisfactorily completed year 12
- another 21% had already attempted some education beyond year 12
- another 26% had satisfactorily completed a post secondary award.

ie 75% of our students are very well qualified to study at this level.

I would also like to comment briefly on the "non-barriers". To me it is of some concern that apparently no students were concerned about:
- Inflexible assessment procedures
- Inflexible arrangement of course components
- Inflexible arrangement of course entry and exit points.

Two possible interpretations of this are that:
(1) we are doing it perfectly, or
(2) students feel that these components of the course are non-negotiable.

THE REAL PROBLEM AND SOME POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

So, what is the real problem, and what can be done about it? It is quite a serious problem to me, because all through school these people were told, like we were, that it’s more important to know where to find information, than to know facts, and study skills are an important part of curricula everywhere. Perhaps we may not fully appreciate just how complex the tasks of finding information and interpreting it really are.
From my reading of the research, the problem is not really a lack of confidence in study skills; it is a lack of adequate individual student support system for learners. All students, both new and continuing; those living remote from the institution and those living close; those studying in a face-to-face situation and those studying using flexible delivery methodologies need a supportive environment, and this includes the environment at home, at work, and at the learning institution, and probably at some libraries somewhere.

From my point of view as an educator, the provision of an adequately staffed and qualified back up to the teaching staff, including the library and student services section is a recognition of the complex nature of support and the commitment of the college to assist students from all backgrounds to maximise their learning opportunities. Additionally, the institution should facilitate opportunities for mutual support among students. What we should aim to provide is an inclusive learning environment, one in which each student has their individuality and their needs recognised and respected. It is quite a challenge for library staff to make this assistance to the adult learner the central objective of library services. This will involve a significant paradigm shift for some library staff.

It may cause a similar shift for student support staff, especially when we consider the effects of changes in technology. Information technology now makes possible the creation of the ‘virtual classroom and library.’ This may cause a move from direct human support through tutorials and lectures to indirect support through computers and data bases. Our students will learn not only from the familiar items like lectures, tutorials, and written materials but also from some perhaps less familiar modes including educational broadcasts, interactive teleconferences, computers and ‘virtual reality.’ They, and we, will need to be prepared to not only learn about technology, but to learn from it.

There are also some serious implications here for the learners also, and I use that term deliberately, rather than students. It is not possible to provide individual support for learners if they cannot tell us what their strengths, weaknesses and preferred learning style are. Sadly, most do not know anything about learning styles, they only know of teaching styles. They are used to being passive recipients of pre-packaged past knowledge rather than being an active participant in the learning process. It’s probably true to say that most educators aim to help students to become independent, but the concept of an independent learner is not an absolute one. It is a notion that graduates should be more ‘self-sufficient’ learners than they were at their point of entry. It involves changes in personal values, attitudes and the development of new skills, especially in the areas of time management, study skills, critical and lateral thinking, research and library skills. It is a quest never completely fulfilled, but, nevertheless, it is a process central to the concepts of flexible delivery and lifelong education. This reinforces the notion that developing an adult learner’s self confidence is the first challenge for an educational institution, but especially so for one which uses flexible delivery methodologies.

Thus, we have come full circle. What I have tried to say in this paper, is that the best thing any of us can do for library technicians is to help them become self sufficient, autonomous learners, not only during their course, but throughout their lives. We want to help them to become learners capable of initiating and directing their own learning, given specific guidance and parameters. This has several key aspects. Learners need to become more autonomous personally. They need to develop self-management skills and be willing to conduct their own learning, and they need to take control of organising their own instruction in formal or informal settings.

Whether we are library technician educators, or whether we work with a trainee library technician, or whether we share a home with one, or whether we provide library facilities for one, we all have an important role to play in this very complex process.
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In 1990 the RMIT Libraries were catapulted into the arena of disability awareness. This occurred when a student required access to information and surprisingly, we found ourselves unable to deliver in a timely and efficient way. RMIT was in the process of amalgamation with Phillip Institute of Technology and shortly afterward this was followed by the status of University being awarded. Throughout these changes we understood the need to re-evaluate our policies and procedures especially in the area of service provision. The incident with the student strengthened our commitment to address the issues of access and equity with special reference to users with disabilities. At the time of amalgamation we were absorbing the process through a unique structure of committees and working parties. These were lead by senior management and held membership from all sections and sectors of the libraries (Schauder, 1993).

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A working party was convened from the Services and Networks Committee. Their brief was to write the libraries' policy on students and staff with disabilities. People with personal interest and varying degrees of
knowledge spent hours, weeks, months and what felt like years writing and re-writing policy statements, guidelines and recommendations.

The Working Party delivered a succinct and reasonable policy on students and staff with disabilities. I say reasonable because I believe the concept of having a separate policy for this particular user group is a contentious issue. Access and equity relate to every user group as do appropriate communication methods and delivery of service. The question is should one group have to rely on a document to determine an equal level of service?

The focus of this Policy directs service points, such as the loans and information desks, to treat each user's inquiry as individual and unique to the requestor by providing appropriate staff support to users at the initial point of inquiry. In effect, any user should be able to have their needs met where possible at the first point of access, except in obvious areas where a subsequent referral is necessary. A simple example of this is if a user asks a loans inquiry at the information desk, they are referred to the appropriate loans service point. Another example is where a user asks for assistance photocopying an item and the user, for whatever reason is unable to perform that task. The request is dealt with in the most expedient way possible, by-passing the traditional middle person or disability Librarian or officer. All the disadvantages associated with having one person responsible for a task which relates to access during the full opening/operating hours of the library are no longer applicable.

From this central position all other functions of the policy fall into place. We moved away from the idea that when someone presents at the loans desk with a guide dog or in a wheel chair the expectation was that they were to be treated differently. An aspect of our current training emphasizes the importance of limiting referral. It moves aside from the historical position where, ossibly through lack of contact, the person at the service point initially felt incapable of delivering service, believing the user with a disability had a greater or more defined need than any other user. This was usually before the initial interview. We were aiming at dispelling preconceived ideas. The working party drafted specific guidelines for the policy and recommendations to the library board, one of which directed the libraries to implement and maintain library staff awareness programs with regard to the special needs of users with disabilities. The Working Party approached the Libraries Client Services Group in the hope that they would consider running a program on disability awareness for RMIT staff. Members of the working party for policy were also in the CSG. It was not too difficult to persuade a few interested people to become committed to and move with the ambitious task of developing such a program. I have to say that those colleagues involved in the working party displayed an arresting enthusiasm. We started with ten in the group.

DISABILITY AWARENESS : THE CHALLENGE

The concept of creating an awareness package which enables staff to move through relative ignorance into awareness in a few short hours is a challenge. I also believe the challenge lies in our perception of "awareness". What does it mean? and how is it applied in this context? What precisely is the intention of the group and do we assume a generic ignorance of human rights or do we trust that most people we are in contact with are cognizant of the basic needs of our total user group? As Convenor, I found it stimulating to stay with the idea that we too were learning more about our users' needs as well as the limitations and levels of understanding of our staff. Such was the enthusiasm and energy in the developmental process that it did not occur to me that I was a technician directing librarians. We seemed to move smoothly into the autonomous, multiskilled, competent role accredited to library staff and stayed with it as we worked toward the development of this program. The difficulties inherent in organising meetings were exacerbated by the distance in location. For those unfamiliar with the RMIT, it has 3 campuses and several sites. At the time of the development, this program was focusing on Coburg, Bundoora, City and TAFE Carlton. Coburg and Bundoora are 8 and 20 kilometres distance from the city campus and at this time, trams, taxis or private cars were our mode of transport. Getting ten people together regularly was nearly impossible, bearing in mind most members of the group were rostered daily at service points. The Group relied heavily on the use of e-mail and intuition.

DEVELOPING THE PROGRAM:

I was fuelled by equity – I believe that the same level of service should be available to all users and where it is not, why not! Others had similar reasons for becoming involved in the developmental process. When we first met, the intention of the group was to invite the staff to initiate change, to encourage the participants to do
information services. I had attended a course run by the State Library some time before on cost-benefit analysis for special libraries run by the same speaker. It sounds like riveting stuff, I know, but in actual fact the sentiments expressed by this man were invaluable to the survival of my service. Few people when considering the closure of a library and information service think of the hidden costs associated with individuals having to retrieve their own information. For starters, they’re not always good at it – they don’t have the expertise or the contacts and networks to know where to go. Library specialists on the whole are paid a pittance whereas professional engineers and researchers are often on much higher salaries. It is far more cost-efficient to have the library trained person get the information. There are costs associated with travelling elsewhere to obtain information. Quite often if a service is outsourced the cost of the consultant’s fee is higher and there are no guarantees that they will in fact have the expertise to know the jargon etc. associated with the specific organisation. If for example the service is outsourced to a bigger library, their first commitment may be to their own users so there is no guarantee of fast service unless the desired fee is paid. Fast-track isn’t cheap... I’m sure you are getting the general idea.

**Evaluation of Service** When I first started to manage the library, a new Managing Director was appointed to Hunter Water. He was an economist who wanted to make dramatic changes which would result in instant cost savings. His first decision was to try and close the library. I asked him for the opportunity to provide him with a good argument for retaining the service and after quite a bit of effort convinced him that the service was very necessary. It was at this point that I realised the importance of the library customers who substantiated my claims and supported me in trying to retain the library service. This was a very valuable evaluation process.

As I pointed out earlier, some services provided netted little in the way of customer response and therefore the decision was made to discontinue the service or to find an alternative which is more appropriate. Time is precious and cannot be wasted. Similarly in the climate in which our library operates if the library service is poor, sections are no longer obliged to retain the service. Customer surveys have their place, providing they are designed in a way that will provide appropriate feedback.

I have never circulated a customer survey which is probably a poor admission. On the other hand I have been subjected to a number of them from a variety of sources. Excuse my cynicism, but if surveys are correctly worded they can always net a positive outcome. As far as I can see the proof is in the pudding. If the service is good, staff are committed and accommodating, customers will keep coming back. In my eleven years at Hunter Water, one of my most used phrases is “This is a really good library...” When the opportunity presents itself I use the phrase – I know it’s a really good library and it doesn’t take long for the message to travel!

**Conclusion**

Life is full of exciting challenges. In the last five years we at Hunter Water have had our share. The statistics from 1993 to 1994 indicate that we are getting more and more customers and still meeting the demands placed upon us. I have no doubts that we will reach a point where the current staffing can’t handle these demands. We have streamlined a lot of our operations in the last five years to try and make our work more efficient and to provide additional time for our customers. When the time comes it will be difficult to convince the economic rationalists that we need more people, but like I said life is full of challenges.

Library technicians today are presented with far better training in their courses than I was given several years ago. I am a strong advocate of teaching technicians skills in marketing, promotion and presentation. I am realistic and know that I am very privileged to have the opportunity to run my own library and make use of these sorts of opportunities but you will be surprised at how useful these skills are in your every day jobs in promoting your own worth. We are Library Technicians, well-trained, optimistic and have a lot to offer the information world. Don’t ever lose sight of that fact.
SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At what is now Adelaide Institute of TAFE, we have been working since the late 1970s in an attempt to make our Library Technician course available to a wider student population. Our first attempts were to make it available to country students in South Australia and that is something which we still are not entirely happy with – for some reason or another, we do not seem to attract significant numbers of country students, but it is something which we are aware of and which we will continue to work on. We also made what I would consider quite successful efforts to deliver the course to students in Alice Springs and country New South Wales, but sadly we are no longer players in that game, although all of the teaching staff would like to be.

We have used a number of what are really quite different terms to describe our activities. Those that would be most familiar are:
- external study
- distance education
- open learning, and
- flexible delivery.

These terms do not all mean the same thing, and they show a significant evolution in thinking among educators internationally. Two sad associations with the terms “external study” and “distance education” is that it is possible to study from one’s lounge room, and that technology can fix every educational problem. That has never been the case and never will be the case with library technician education. Because of the practical nature of such courses, there must be a “hands on” component, and students simply must view processes in large libraries which have well established procedures. It is precisely these components of the course which make it more challenging to deliver to students who for some reason or another are unable to visit central campuses regularly. While it may be difficult though, it is far from impossible. The fact that we are doing this on a regular basis is part of what makes working in this field at Adelaide TAFE so enjoyable.

WHAT IS FLEXIBLE DELIVERY?

Let’s look briefly at my description of flexible delivery. It:
- is an approach, rather than a system or technique
- gives the learners as much control as possible over what and when and where and how they learn
- commonly uses the delivery methods of distance education and the facilities of educational technology
- changes the role of a teacher from a source of knowledge to a manager of learning and a facilitator
- justifies these measures by arguments of efficiency, cost effectiveness and equity
- puts the student before the subject matter.

In summary, flexible delivery allows the learner to choose how to learn, when to learn, where to learn and what to learn as far as possible within the resource constraints of any education and training provision. For us as educators, it’s about asking students what they want, and then helping them to get it, but we cannot help learners who don’t know what they want in the way of either suitable courses or of delivery methodologies which match their preferred learning style. I must say, however, that flexible delivery is not a panacea – it is not a quick fix solution to all of the problems encountered by learners.

RESEARCH INTO FLEXIBLE DELIVERY AND LIBRARY STUDIES

How does this relate to my paper then? A number of studies in Australia and elsewhere have looked at the applications of flexible delivery methodologies as tools to make education more accessible, but none of them have addressed the issues as they relate to library technicians. During 1994 I conducted a research project among the library studies students at Adelaide Institute of TAFE. The two main objectives were:
- to identify potential barriers which had to be overcome to study
• to identify some factors within the flexible delivery methodologies which helped overcome some of these barriers

This paper will discuss some aspects of that research and their implications for library technician training and hopefully, for those libraries which employ and support trainee library technicians. The main tool used to gather data was a student questionnaire which was given to students as they enrolled for the second semester.

BARRIERS TO LIBRARY TECHNICIAN STUDY

The first part of the questionnaire listed 22 possible barriers, and students were asked to place a tick alongside those which had been a problem for them. They could tick as many or as few as they liked, and they were not asked to rank them. The barriers were:

- Geographical isolation
- Limited access to learning
- Limited choice in courses available
- Teacher-centred delivery
- Limited time available
- Limited access to facilities (equipment and library resources)
- Limited opportunities for social interaction with other students
- Inflexible timetables
- Lack of consideration of different learning styles
- Limited access to course information
- Inflexible assessment procedures
- Inflexible arrangement of course components
- Inflexible arrangement of course entry and exit points
- Rigid course structures
- High entrance requirements
- Lack of child care facilities
- High course costs
- Lack of confidence in your study skills
- Lack of pre-enrolment counselling
- Slow delivery of study materials
- Long turn around time for marking/assessment
- Limited access to lecturer

The results were interesting to say the least. This is not the place to go through each of the 22 barriers in detail -- we will just look at what were listed most often as barriers. In order, they were:

- Limited time available
- Lack of confidence in study skills
- Limited access to facilities (equipment and library resources)
- Inflexible timetables
- High course costs
- Limited opportunities for social interaction with other students
- Lack of child care facilities
- Long turn around time for marking/assessment

![Fig.1 Barriers](image-url)
Four of the items were not listed by any of the respondents as barriers to their study. They were:
- Limited access to learning
- Inflexible assessment procedures
- Inflexible arrangement of course components
- Inflexible arrangement of course entry and exit points.

METHODOLOGIES WHICH MAY OVERCOME BARRIERS

A similar approach was adopted with regard to methodologies which may help to overcome the perceived barriers for students. The second part of the questionnaire listed 21 possible methodologies, and students were asked to place a tick alongside those which had been a help for them. They could tick as many or as few as they liked, and they were not asked to rank them. The methodologies were:

Adequate pre-enrolment information
Adequate pre-enrolment counselling
Study in class workshop
Self study packages used
Text books used
Use of a library or local study centre
Local support person available
Small study groups arranged
Large class sessions
Telephone conferencing
Video tapes provided

Television video conferencing
Audio tapes provided
Individual telephone calls to lecturer
Individual face to face with lecturer
Social activities arranged
Working with a friend
Provision of child care
Availability of TAFE equipment on loan
Helpful office staff available
Regular newsletter provided
Adequate pre-enrolment information

Again, this is not the place to go through each of the 21 methodologies in detail – we will just look at what were listed most often as helpful. In order, they were:
- Individual face to face with lecturer,
- Individual telephone calls to lecturer,
- Working with a friend,
- Use of a library or local study centre,
- Regular newsletter provided.

Those which were not listed by anyone as helpful were:
- Telephone conferencing,
- Television video conferencing,
- Audio tapes provided,
- Social activities arranged,
- Provision of child care.

Fig. 2 Methodologies
IMPLICATIONS FOR LIBRARY TECHNICIAN TRAINING

Currently, we are a long way down the track with a project which is to develop a national, competency-based curriculum for library and information studies. This curriculum could provide a precise, systematic examination of content and skills, and it may feature pre- and post-assessments of learning, and validation of outcomes. These outcomes are in themselves laudable, but they are simply not enough to ensure that delivery will be as flexible as possible, and that it will meet the needs of students.

I want to look at just the first two of the barriers my research identified and try to discuss some of the implications from them for any course, whether it be a national library technician course, or some other. The two barriers were:

- limited time available
- lack of confidence in study skills.

I guess that most library technician students can relate to these problems, so how can they be overcome and by whom?

We all complain that there is simply not enough time in the day, but paradoxically, each of us has all that there is. We each have 24 hours, or 1,440 minutes or 86,400 seconds in each day. If that's not enough it may well be that we are trying to fit too much in or that we're not working efficiently, and that has serious implications for educators, especially those who may not have their students sitting in regular rows and columns in front of them. It is a common problem for us that classroom students seem to be able to handle material in shorter times than non-classroom students.

The answer could be that flexible delivery students frequently do more than is strictly necessary - they are 'over achievers'. This could be because students are unaware of where to stop. Whatever the reason, one answer lies in providing specific information to the students about what is required of them. This includes:

- providing clear information about what has to be done, and when
- being specific about what has to be achieved in each section of the work
- indicating approximately how much time should be spent on each section
- providing an avenue of support if problems occur.

This leads me on to the second barrier, lack of confidence in study skills. I was amazed that this was a perceived problem for our students, because according to information provided on their enrolment forms:

- 28% of students have satisfactorily completed year 12
- another 21% had already attempted some education beyond year 12
- another 26% had satisfactorily completed a post secondary award.

ie 75% of our students are very well qualified to study at this level.

I would also like to comment briefly on the "non-barriers". To me it is of some concern that apparently no students were concerned about:

- Inflexible assessment procedures
- Inflexible arrangement of course components
- Inflexible arrangement of course entry and exit points.

Two possible interpretations of this are that:

(1) we are doing it perfectly, or

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SERVICE TO USERS WITH DISABILITIES:
A DISABILITY AWARENESS PROGRAM FOR RMIT LIBRARIES

Bernadene Sward

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From this central position all other functions of the policy fall into place. We moved away from the idea that when someone presents at the loans desk with a guide dog or in a wheel chair the expectation was that they were to be treated differently. An aspect of our current training emphasizes the importance of limiting referral. It moves aside from the historical position where, possibly through lack of contact, the person at the service point initially felt incapable of delivering service, believing the user with a disability had a greater or more defined need than any other user. This was usually before the initial interview. We were aiming at dispelling preconceived ideas. The working party drafted specific guidelines for the policy and recommendations to the library board, one of which directed the libraries to implement and maintain library staff awareness programs with regard to the special needs of users with disabilities. The Working Party approached the Libraries Client Services Group in the hope that they would consider running a program on disability awareness for RMIT staff. Members of the working party for policy were also in the CSG. It was not too difficult to persuade a few interested people to become committed to and move with the ambitious task of developing such a program. I have to say that those colleagues involved in the working party displayed an arresting enthusiasm. We started with ten in the group.

DISABILITY AWARENESS : THE CHALLENGE

The concept of creating an awareness package which enables staff to move through relative ignorance into awareness in a few short hours is a challenge. I also believe the challenge lies in our perception of “awareness”. What does it mean? and how is it applied in this context? What precisely is the intention of the group and do we assume a generic ignorance of human rights or do we trust that most people we are in contact with are cognizant of the basic needs of our total user group? As Convenor, I found it stimulating to stay with the idea that we too were learning more about our users’ needs as well as the limitations and levels of understanding of our staff. Such was the enthusiasm and energy in the developmental process that it did not occur to me that I was a technician directing librarians. We seemed to move smoothly into the autonomous, multiskilled, competent role accredited to library staff and stayed with it as we worked toward the development of this program. The difficulties inherent in organising meetings were exacerbated by the distance in location. For those unfamiliar with the RMIT, it has 3 campuses and several sites. At the time of the development, this program was focusing on Coburg, Bundoora, City and TAFE Carlton. Coburg and Bundoora are 8 and 20 kilometres distance from the city campus and at this time, trams, taxis or private cars were our mode of transport. Getting ten people together regularly was nearly impossible, bearing in mind most members of the group were rostered daily at service points. The Group relied heavily on the use of e-mail and intuition.

DEVELOPING THE PROGRAM:

I was fuelled by equity – I believe that the same level of service should be available to all users and where it is not, why not? Others had similar reasons for becoming involved in the developmental process. When we first met, the intention of the group was to invite the staff to initiate change, to encourage the participants to do
their own thinking, to ask them to look at their library and services from a different angle. We wanted them to come down to the service point. This we felt would be an effective instruction and learning process for staff involved in management as well as those staffing service points regularly. We all left that first meeting fired up yet a little dubious. Research and word of mouth directed us to Swinburne University where a department had held a disability session facilitated by a lecturer from the University of Melbourne. After a few phone calls, letters, e-mail and more than 12 months since the inception of the initial policy working party, we were pleased to announce our first session.

On August 17th 1993 Janet Murray from the Division of Library and Information Studies, University of Melbourne, facilitated a workshop for 30 RMIT libraries' staff. The workshop, entitled 'Service to users with disabilities: a workshop for RMIT libraries', was developed by Jan in consultation with the Libraries Client Services Group. It ran from 9.30–2.30 with a further hour devoted to brainstorming with the core Client Services Group. The objectives were to provide insight and awareness into providing an equitable service to users with disabilities and to provide experience which would enable the Client Services Group to design and facilitate future sessions which would inspire all RMIT library staff to be committed and comfortable with people with disabilities. Underlying this session was a plan to utilise a cascade method of instruction. The twenty non CSG members were initially identified as individuals who could successfully feed the information gained from the upcoming workshop back to their colleagues. These people would be drawn upon for assistance when a subsequent workshop was run for their section. Taking 20 people from all sections of the libraries group would also enable us to have a firm foundation from which to begin our training programs.

ORGANISING AND FACILITATING THE WORKSHOP:

The Group met almost immediately. We were excited and daunted by the prospect of running our own workshop and set what appeared to be unrealistic deadlines. Members of the group had differing levels of expertise, some had never presented a workshop while others had developed structured programs. Some of the group had been involved in writing the libraries' disability policy. This soon proved to be a valuable asset. Others found themselves swamped with reading material while attempting to gain a glimmer of understanding into the needs of this user group. We began by developing our program based upon the session run by Jan Murray, yet focusing on issues raised by our library staff, relative to their environment and experience at service points. We also integrated the information gained from the evaluation sheets of the session. This, together with data gathered over the many months of work on policy, gave us a strength in background material. In October we had what we called the “dress rehearsal” and during the first two weeks of November 1993, we successfully delivered 2 x 3 hour sessions. These were held at the Coburg campus for Northern Campus staff and in February of 1994 a similar session was conducted for Library Senior Management. This group included the University and Deputy University Librarians as well as most Senior Staff. Two workshops were conducted in October and November of 1994 for staff working on information, serials, loans and audio visual service points, in both Higher Education and TAFE sectors. Of the 190 Library staff, 80 have been involved in the sessions and we are confident that these sessions will continue to be an integral part of the Libraries' Staff development process. 1995/96 sees a calendar of sessions in place.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

The objectives for the RMIT Libraries' program differ slightly from those set in the original "Train the Trainer" type session with Jan Murray. Initially, to raise the awareness of RMIT Libraries' staff in relation to the provision of an equitable service to users, more specifically the program aims at providing awareness and understanding of the effects of various types of disabilities with regard to library users. An equally important aspect is imparting knowledge of relevant legislation dealing with equal access. The Group hope to be able to provide library staff with a platform of experience which will enable them to formulate practical solutions to service provision and to enhance communication skills employed when dealing with users with disabilities.

PROGRAM OUTLINE:

The program, as it has been developed, focuses simply on awareness raising and touches on barriers, both physical and attitudinal. Terminology, objects of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and other relevant legislation and documentation are addressed, as is communication and access. It utilises group discussion, simulation exercises and questionnaires as well as follow up evaluation and library accessibility checklists. It runs at a reasonable pace for three hours with a 10 minute video segment on Deaf culture and a 15 minute
break. We emphasise difference and observe the part environment and society play in disabling or handicapping and note the concept of acceptable variations in the human condition rather than as special conditions which must be accommodated. We ask our staff to become involved, to be proactive and to open up to diversity and change.

We begin the session with an exercise which I would like to repeat here. For those of you with a piece of paper or note book I would like you to write or sign something as simple as your name and address. I would like you to do it again, but this time with your non-dominant hand while you trace a circle on the floor with your foot. This quick exercise, as simple as it is, is intended to demonstrate one of the problems people with learning difficulties experience. It is not the ability to perform the task, it just takes more concentration and generally a little longer. Imagine applying this to every action and word for one day!

We use this exercise as a spring board for the ideology behind the program, emphasising difference, diversity and variation. The program asks participants to relax and to open up to their own and shared experience. Through the use of a questionnaire we note how some staff profess to know no-one with a disability before they come to the session and on leaving sometimes find close family relatives have some of the least obvious or noticeable disabilities.

The program concludes with a debriefing session which attempts to bring out empathy and understanding of the constraints of a disability, social attitudes, awareness of practical needs and possible assistance in a library environment, as well as the importance of appropriate communication methods. It has also been designed to meet the requirements for a structured training program as provided under the Training Guarantee Act, 1990.

EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM:

The initial tool for evaluation is a questionnaire which asks simple yet direct questions relating to the content and effectiveness of different aspects of the program. This is followed up a month later by a second questionnaire relating to changes the participant has seen in the library environment, changes they have been able to make themselves, with their colleagues or their section in the delivery of service. We find these evaluation sheets very useful and have been able to identify gaps in service provision as well as picking up deficiencies in the way the program is run. The use of simulation exercises, an arguable inclusion, can not compare with reality yet these are extremely effective and most commented upon for their ability to frustrate and confine. We make the point quite often through the simulation exercises that the advantage for the participant is a psychological one. They are able to step out of the chair or remove the goggles, whereas for a person who is blind, it is the inability to leap from blindness to sightedness which is the core of blindness. Some staff find it difficult to be in a situation where not one of the presenters has an obvious disability and many staff comment on how useful it would be to have facilitators with disabilities who could share their experience. This has opened up areas where we see ongoing development, ie guest speakers and more in-depth programs with specific emphasis on the not immediately apparent disabilities such as neurological disorders (NBD), schizophrenia, anxiety and panic disorders.

Discussion of these types of disabilities could be well addressed by experts in the field and we look to inviting people working in the area of community and mental health to discuss these issues with staff, especially in relation to violent or unpredictable users. Staff involvement in the program varies, from the initial reaction of some "What do we need to do disability awareness for?" to "We don't have that much time to spare!" Yet once involved we find staff enjoying themselves, interested, eager and trusting. Their involvement in the activities is heartening and as far as I can tell, the program is a great success. However, the ongoing, inherent evaluation is in our everyday interaction, and the measurement of our effectiveness as service providers is a demonstration of our commitment to the user.

The area of communication is dealt with in our 'Difficult Customers' Package and we spend some time dealing with basic tips and techniques yet feel one or other of the packages could be further enhanced with disability specific communication techniques and etiquette. Yet, I do feel it is important to stay with the generic where dealing with the topic of communication, and perhaps it is a retrograde step to reserve different forms of communication for different groups? Whoever the user, ensure they are communicated with effectively, coherently and courteously. Part of our program involves a "Show Bag" the contents of which give tips on communication techniques, do's and don'ts, word watching as well as information on organisations and special interest groups. The program itself dictates ongoing training, it asks the participants to work together.
and to work toward change in attitude and environment and the addition of a checklist, based upon the
‘Libraries are for everyone: Library accessibility checklist’ (Bell, 1992), takes the program back into the
sections where staff can make positive steps toward altering their environment.

THE NEED FOR ONGOING TRAINING:

As I noted earlier, the diversity of our user group dictates ongoing change. As our universities/organisations
respond to the changing needs within society, at the service point we too must change, adapting and
monitoring areas such as government statutes, belief systems, cultural differences and adaptive technology. I
understand how impractical it would be to not develop the program according to these changes yet I wait for
the day when such a program is unnecessary, for a time when issues such as equity and access are history.

Realistically this program or similar can be applied in any setting, academic, public, school. It would be useful
for anyone in the industry interested in developing their understanding of the needs of this user group from a
service point of view. In the public sector there is obviously more contact with this user group. In academic
libraries we are relatively new to the area, only just embracing the idea of students and staff with disabilities.
These users are becoming increasingly aware of our willingness to provide and increase provision of specialist,
mainstream and adaptive accommodations. More importantly they are aware of their rights. Rebecca Smale,
in the results of a survey on Australian Library Services for visually impaired services, suggests library staff
should be promoting and re-iterating library services. She suggests a management stance and a commitment to
training for staff. She goes on to say "... Resource staff can act as key elements in facilitating independent
access to information, but if the targeted user population is unaware of their existence then such improvements
in service are largely invalidated" (Smale, 1992). This could include not only training, as I have discussed, but
training in areas of adaptive technology such as screen enhancement software, voice synthesis, closed circuit
television (CCTV) and simple accommodations regarding signage and space. This type of training and
information sharing is extremely valuable, interesting and when we look at basic provision of service, these
small seamless accommodations vastly improve, not only staff morale, they also add to the empowerment of
the individual user. We open our doors to information. Nothing should stand in the way of access to it.

DEVELOPING YOUR OWN PROGRAM:

The ALIA Disability Interest Group has spent considerable time working on standards for provision of service
to users with disabilities. When these are finalised I suggest you consult them carefully. I can only re-iterate
and endorse the statements in the section on staff training/awareness programs. When developing a program it
should attempt to address the following issues:

• Communication
• Communication techniques
• Attitudes
• Belief systems and cultural differences
• Relevant government acts and statutes
• Adaptive technology

The program should reflect the need for diversity and change and continue to refocus and re-evaluate staff
training in line with the users changing needs and experience. From a management perspective, staff should
be aware of relevant sections of the Disability Discrimination Act and the Equal Opportunity Act as they relate
to the provision of an equitable library service.

From a Technician’s point of view, I feel it has been a valuable exercise, not only in my personal development
and my input into the libraries’ group but as a source of inspiration and energy to others. The team work, the
hard work, the information sharing and networking. Importantly, staff from all sections and sectors working
together to improve service, to challenge the system that for so long has kept access to information limited and
to move effectively through the barriers we all so often encounter.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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the same author.
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RAPID CHANGE: CHALLENGES MET AND WON

Maureen Byrne and Jeanette Simpson

Recent changes have affected all levels and categories of staff working in the library and information industry. The rapid change in technology and workflows paralleled the emergence of Library Technicians at Edith Cowan University Western Australia. Our story of change begins in the late 1980s. Over the last seven years we have seen enormous change in the library’s use of technology. Some of these changes were forced upon us, whilst others were sought because of the need to do things in a more efficient, cost effective manner. We have taken up the challenge to present our personal view on the successful development of the role of the library technician in information services and the faculty teams.

The embryonic beginning of Edith Cowan University was the amalgamation of Claremont, Mount Lawley and Churchlands Teachers’ Colleges into the Western Australian College of Advanced Education (WACAE), culminating in 1991 with university status.

1 CHALLENGES

In 1988, WACAE consisted of one country and four metropolitan campuses. The libraries used the Browne System of charging, the Closed Reserve collection was restricted in space and was closed access. The card catalogue was still in use, our on-line catalogue (URICA) was post 1983 and incomplete. We had inherited collections from each of the teachers’ colleges and the library loaned media equipment. The library could no longer cope. It was very unwieldy. Staff levels of stress and frustration were huge. Our clients complained of long queues, delays and nonavailability of items. Reservation process was unreliable and took a lot of staff time. Over the next few years there was massive restructuring. A new campus opened and two metropolitan ones closed, with their library stock being transferred to other campuses. All library teams addressed the problems, the stress and frustration in a variety of ways.

The circulation team was forced to accept the challenge of a diminishing budget – with no allocation for increased staffing, and large crowds at the service points. To reduce staff stress and client frustration the length of desk shifts was reduced and a makeshift open access Reserve Collection was successfully trialed. A project to barcode all the books and to “go live” was begun. In close cooperation with the Cataloguing Section, some library assistants were detailed to lead teams working on this major task. Those selected had a wide variety of skills and qualifications and an in-depth knowledge of our URICA system. They had problemsolving skills and were good team people. Simultaneously, the Librarians were also faced with increased and widening demands at the information service points, restrictive budgets, and the development of a faculty team structure, along with the keenness to take up the challenge of the emergence of the new technologies – such as CD-ROM, automated on-line catalogue, Internet, Netlib (on-line catalogue of other WA universities), AARNet, and some multi-media products, including creating their own multi-media packages.

2 CHANGES

The changes occurring for the circulation team included investment in the new technology and, at the same time, the team was encouraged to revise the allocation of their duties and responsibilities. Multi-skilling and Performance Management Programmes were introduced. With the upgrading of the on-line catalogue to a near complete state, library management looked at purchasing a Patron Self Check and Quick Discharge Unit to relieve congestion at the loans service points. Edith Cowan was the first library in Western Australia to introduce these two systems, renaming them “Easyloan”. After initial teething problems, the percentage of loans processed via “Easyloan” climbed rapidly, surprising even the vendors. Feedback from both staff and clients was very positive. Reservations and overdue notices were all automated, allowing the staff to concentrate on delivering a quality service to clients.

It should also be noted that the increased use of Easyloan and the Quick Discharge Units has resulted in the circulation team members losing their previous “close” contact with the collections. They no longer handle each item being borrowed. Therefore, there has been a shift in their knowledge and they are developing the
expertise to direct inquiries to the "most appropriate person" – often the FLT or Information Services Technician, with their specialised knowledge of discrete collections.

Changes also occurred in other areas of the library. The escalating use of CD-ROMs increased the usage of our serials and newspapers. Additionally, a huge increase in Inter-Library Loans and Document Delivery was additionally attributed to the increased use of CD-ROMs and the Internet. With university status came an increase in post graduate and masters students, changing the student composition. Additionally, students outside the metropolitan area, interstate and overseas now have access to the library via the Virtual Campus, which allows them to "chat" with fellow students or to discuss assignments with their lecturers. The Virtual Campus is the subject of another paper being presented at this conference.

Edith Cowan University and TAFE are the only two institutions in Western Australia offering the Library Technician courses. Edith Cowan libraries support the practicum students from these institutions. However, these students were never exposed to the Information Services desk. Consequently, it was a bold step in 1990 to employ the first Library Technician in the Reference and Information section at ECU. Other technicians were soon established in the traditional areas such as Cataloguing, Serials, Acquisitions, and Circulation supervision, followed later in our faculty teams (eg Education, Health and Business), Closed Reserve and Document Delivery. Document Delivery is another significant area that has seen rapid change with an information and technological explosion. From one workstation, staff have instant access to world wide information – ABN, WorldCat, FirstSearch, Uncover, etc – with the capacity to send requests instantly. Receipt of information goes on twenty four hours a day. We are committed to offering the best service to our clients and the challenge is to meet their expectations. As the service improves, the demand increases and the expectations go higher.

3 CHANGES AT THE INFORMATION SERVICES DESK

Pre 1990 ECU had a flat structure for their librarians. With the introduction of the faculty structure and the library technician, we moved into a multi-tiered model. This fits in with the model of many academic libraries, and is also supported by Ewing and Hauptman (1995) and Goetsch (1995) in their papers.

The information services library technician, at first, was mainly "technical", attending to photocopiers, resource cards, printers, audio visual equipment, library signage and the furniture and equipment register. This technician had some rostered information desk duties, working alongside a librarian, and a little later was assigned the supervision of the Equipment Officer and the associated responsibility for equipment supplies.

With the more sophisticated manipulation of information, coupled with a lot of support, encouragement and training, the role of the library technician in this area has changed. Although some of the "technical" responsibilities remain, a greater emphasis is in the reference area, with fifty percent of the time attending to reference enquiries at the information service desk. Management of the Australian Bureau of Statistics collection, supervision of the Reference Clerk, updating and shelving the reference collection, and verification of inter-library loans, along with user education with OPAC, Netlib and CD-ROMs makes this a varied and challenging position. With the expansion of CD-ROM databases, electronic journals, networking, and navigation of the Internet, we have empowered our clients, through our extensive user education programmes, to do their own searching.

Much of this training is moving out of the confines of the library, with subject librarians using computing and teaching laboratories, and there is a transfer from the traditional information services desk enquiries to other service points. However, we still "educate" our first year, first semester clients in the use of OPAC and the printed indexes. The management continues to monitor the information needs of our clients, setting aside "information days" to assess our services and to train our staff. We regularly survey our clients to ensure we are meeting their information needs – a great proportion of our undergraduates are more concerned with photocopying services and books on the shelves.

4 FUTURE CHALLENGES

In large academic libraries, we still need to retrieve items, shelve and keep the collections in good order. Is this the next challenge? Will we move toward the paperless society? Some academic libraries have already cancelled selected journal subscriptions, opting for a high profile use of commercial document delivery
services, eg IRIS at the University of Western Australia’s Biological Sciences Library. The scanning of items into the Reserve Collection is a very real prospect, as is electronic ordering for acquisitions.

5 THE FACULTY APPROACH OR FLYING SQUAD TO THE RESCUE

Edith Cowan University Library has a faculty base – teams of library staff across levels who work in partnership with their Faculties: Education; Business; Health and Human Sciences; Arts; Science, Technology and Engineering; as well as the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. The Senior Librarian of each team reports to both the University Librarian and the Dean of the faculty and is functionally responsible to the Dean. By the early 1990s, the typical faculty team consisted of a Faculty Librarian, two or more Librarians and one or more Faculty Service Officer.

The Faculty Service Officers worked in a variety of teams – their Library Faculty Team (across campuses), the FSO team (across Faculties), they had a time commitment to the Circulation Team (desk rosters, late shift, shelving and Reserve back-up). Special collections were their responsibilities. They were mainly concerned with ordering, via forms completed longhand, checked on-line and in bibliographic tools, then forwarded to the Acquisitions Section. These Officers also dealt with Reserve problems relating to the Faculties and, just occasionally, with more complicated problems. They were often called on to avert potential problems in a variety of areas (backlog in returns, reservations, shelving) causing one Senior Librarian to dub the FSOs “The Flying Squad”.

Once the Circulation system was fully automated, Faculty Officers began to emerge from the morass of paperwork. This was further assisted when, with the agreement of our Acquisitions Section, orders no longer had to be presented on “the form” – a variety of formats was acceptable: publishers’ catalogues, computer printouts, flyers or handwritten notes. Both Loans and Information teams began to refer specific faculty queries/problems to the appropriate FSO.

6 CHANGES

Late in 1993, with Faculty Teams facing the ever changing technology, budget restrictions and the growing demands on librarians’ time and expertise (sound familiar?), FSOs from the Faculties of Health and Human Sciences, Business and Education were approached to write Job Analysis Records (JAR). At the same time, Edith Cowan University was involved in moving to the new Higher Education Worker (HEW) Award system.

As a result of the JARs and the implementation of the new Aware, those FSO positions were upgraded to FACULTY LIBRARY TECHNICIAN status. A Faculty Library Technician (FLT):

- has comprehensive experience in/knowledge of all relevant library operations – Acquisitions, Loans service, Cataloguing, Reserve collection, Information service – with the necessary training and expertise in the “in-house” computer systems, as well as CD-ROM databases and the Internet,
- has specialist knowledge of specific discrete collection/s,
- builds a good rapport with many academic staff members, as well as with their support staff, and
- develops contacts/personal network through different sections of: i) the library, eg Acquisitions; ii) the University, eg Bookshop, Media, Reprographics, International Students Group; iii) the wider world, eg peers in other institutions, specialist bookshops, binders, suppliers.

At Edith Cowan University, there are three major roles for the Faculty Library – collection role, education role and a “bridging” role:

6.1 Collection role:
- FLT assists with ordering of new, replacement or updated stock;
- is responsible for the physical maintenance of special and faculty related collections;
- adjusts loan periods for high demand items to meet demand;
- has the specific responsibility for faculty binding budget across campuses, and ensures that the faculty’s serials are bound and in good order.

6.2 Education role. There are formal and informal education roles:
• In a formal way, FLT assists with orientation and the formal library skills program, as well as compiling directories to special collections.
• In an informal way, FLT educates other library staff, academics, their support staff and students, who identify the FLT as "their" own. These clients feel comfortable in requesting assistance in using, for example, OPACs, other libraries' catalogues, CD-ROM databases, microform reader/prinicer, etc.

6.3 "Bridging" role. FLT is a link or bridge:
• between teams, eg. Faculty and Loans, Loans and Information services, faculty and Acquisitions,
• between the library and clients, eg. in adjusting loans periods for high demand items, following up reports of missing or damaged items, expediting the arrival of urgently needed items,
• between the library and other parts of the University, eg. Media Services for signage, Repographics for information brochures,
• between the library and outside agencies, eg binders, specialist bookshops.

Time management and negotiation skills are employed continually (and conflict resolution training is also useful!). In common with library technicians in other roles, the Information Library Technician and the Faculty Library Technician is qualified, motivated, multi-skilled and resourceful.

7 CONCLUSION

Technology will undoubtedly continue to change the role of the library technician as, indeed, all library staff. But at what cost? Will we see fewer, better educated library staff? What of the clients - will this technology drive a further wedge between the information/technologically rich and poor?

We must be on our guard to ensure we use this information wisely and accept only what is appropriate. According to Allen (1994, p 6-7), “The world of information is one of great and growing complexity - not one of ever increasing simplicity” and “Information work demands top-quality special education as well as intellectual talent, professional dedication and mental labor of the highest order”.

In 1995 at Edith Cowan University, we have some 19 technicians working in all areas of the Library. We have a culture of the team approach. Library Technicians are valued members of these teams, ready to accept change and look forward to the challenges information technology will undoubtedly bring to the Library. According to Gillen (1994, p 5-6), “Support staff are finally being recognised for the professional work they do and their invaluable contribution to the mission of the library”. In the future, we see that Librarians' and Library Technicians' career paths will soar onwards in a symbiotic relationship within an ever changing information industry.

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LIBRARY TECHNICIANS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Cheryl Jordan with Dagmar Messner

SUMMARY: This paper presents the results of a survey conducted in a number of public libraries throughout Australia. The purpose was to gain some idea of the number of Library Technicians in public libraries, what they are doing, and what vision they hold for their future in this field. The responses show that public libraries are increasingly providing interesting and challenging situations for Library Technicians, and that there is a general feeling of optimism and excitement about the role that we will play in the future of public libraries.

When I first considered the idea of trying to present a picture of Library Technicians in Australian public libraries, I suspected that my final view would be of a bunch of positive, outgoing people, performing all manner of interesting and demanding tasks, in a lively, busy, sometimes exciting, sometimes frantic, environment. Those people already working in the public library field will not be surprised to hear that my expectations were correct; public libraries are buzzing all over the country, and Library Technicians are buzzing along with them!

For a large section of the community, public libraries are the only contact with the whole world of libraries and information. Most people will visit a public library at some time in their life, and very often the staff of a special or academic library are members of their own local library as well. For some of our customers, their public libraries are great places for neighbourly chats or author-swapping sessions, others are upgrading their skills to gain employment or recommence study. We have one patron who is using our word processor to write a book and another who has tattoos designed from our children's fairytale collection. All public libraries are busy places, and the people who work in them are called upon to deal with a vast range of age levels, interests and enquiries. In the space of one hour, they might help with a ready reference question, provide information for a child's school project, help someone with a CD-ROM search, find out the latest Catherine Cookson or the third title in a family saga series, fix the photocopier, direct a lost driver to the town hall, help a lost child find the appropriate mother, deal with an irate borrower, answer the telephone six times, and check out a great many books, magazines, CDs, videos and cassettes. For Library Technicians, the next hour might include conducting a library tour, attending a management meeting, telling a story, counselling a staff member, running a training session or designing a library handout.

Dagmar Messner and I work at a large public library, Noarlunga Library Service in South Australia. We are both enthusiastic about our work, and wanted to find out more about Library Technicians in other public libraries in Australia. With Dagmar's assistance, I devised a simple questionnaire and sent it to 50 public libraries throughout Australia. Some of the things we wanted to know about were the type of library and its atmosphere, the number of Library Technicians, what they did and how they fitted into the overall library structure, whether they enjoyed their work, and importantly, was there a career structure within their system and how did they see their future within public libraries.

The response was gratifying; people were generous with their time and information. The responses represented approximately 100 Library Technicians around the country. Some single responses were on behalf of large library networks like the Tasmanian state service. We received job descriptions, library information brochures, newspaper clippings and photographs, as well as many carefully considered opinions and much enthusiasm. Of course, there was then the problem of applying some order, and drawing conclusions from this small mountain of information. Dagmar and I would like to thank all of those people around Australia who responded with such warmth and openness to our questionnaire, and express our regret at being able to present only some of the wealth of information with which we were provided.

After having read all the responses, the most appropriate approach seemed to be to present you with a general view of the sort of things that Library Technicians are doing in public libraries, and describe some situations in detail to add depth to the picture. I hope you will understand that this is a small sample of public library life, and not the definitive answer to the question — What are Library Technicians doing in Australian public libraries?
My first major impression is that these people tend to know a little about everything, and a lot about something. In other words, Library Technicians in public libraries will usually know how to do just about everything in the library: circulation, interlibrary loans, overdues, fines, displays, children’s activities, publicity and promotions, adult and youth programmes, reference work, computer troubleshooting, cataloguing, on-line searching, supervising, local history, vertical file, audio visual materials, handling difficult customers and making the tea. This does not mean that they do all these things all the time, it means that they have an understanding of how the library works, and can lend a hand or take over when necessary. In most cases, they will also occupy specialist positions such as Audio-Visual, Children’s or Systems Officer. They are also often involved in Occupational Health and Safety, Award Restructuring, Equal Opportunity, Enterprise Bargaining and workplace reform generally.

The responses from Victoria provided an excellent example of the variety of situations that Library Technicians are involved in. The Braille and Talking Book Library in South Yarra is a free public service of the Association for the Blind, and is unusual because most of the borrowers never visit the library! Communication is by telephone, and via the massive amounts of mailbags coming in and going out each day. The three Library Technicians are constantly battling the 10–12 day backlog, so the job is both frustrating and rewarding.

On the other hand, Brunswick Public Library in Melbourne sees lots of people at all times, particularly on Sundays, when they are “frantic”. In a multi-cultural area, with a range of socio-economic groups, high unemployment, artists, students and new arrivals to Australia, this library is a vital link for the community. Two staff are Technicians in Training and Anne Cohen is the Audio Visual Technician. She manages all AV resources, including selection, cataloguing, processing, maintaining, publicising, circulating and storing the collection, as well as formulating policy and troubleshooting. She too loves her job, finding it constantly stimulating, though she echoes the common sentiment that there is “no hope of keeping up with the growing load”.

The East Gippsland Regional Library Service comprises four branch libraries at Bairnsdale, Orbost, Paynesville and Lakes Entrance, plus a mobile library. Irene Oxley is one of three Library Technicians, and she is Branch Librarian at Orbost Library, the other positions being Information Services Co-ordinator and Children’s Services Co-ordinator, three key roles within the service. Irene describes the borrowers as a large proportion of children and older readers, reflecting the drift of school leavers to the cities, and retirees to the country. With an Aboriginal population 5 times the state average, the library feels a special responsibility to provide relevant Aboriginal heritage and contemporary materials. She speaks of that after school rush familiar to us all in public libraries and the “cheerful, neighbourly atmosphere” that makes her job “the best in the region”!

While many of us think of Queensland’s Gold Coast as a giant holiday resort, there are thirteen Library Technicians at the Gold Coast City Council Library who probably look elsewhere for a place to relax. This library service has a central library at Southport, 5 branch libraries and a mobile library. It was recently decided that the City of the Gold Coast and the adjacent Albert Shire be amalgamated, which immediately increases the resident population from 145,000 to 330,000, and will change the face of the library service completely, according to Carmel Lawrance. The thirteen Library Technicians are placed between Level 2 and Level 4, reflecting the amount of responsibility and supervision involved in their positions. Carmel considers that the Library Technicians are well valued in the Organisation, with input into major decisions, and opportunities to extend and develop themselves. They have recently been involved in a Skills Enhancement Program, which will form part of their proposed Enterprise Agreement, and will provide a career structure for Library Technicians within their system. Carmel herself is a Relief Library Technician, the only one in our survey, and a role that would no doubt call on every aspect of her training, especially the ability to grasp concepts quickly, and a confident and flexible approach.

Broken Hill City Library has been “Serving the Silver City for 100 years”. As well as servicing a city population of 24,000, the library reaches out to surrounding areas through its Outback Letterbox Library. In what is no doubt a valuable and much appreciated service, the staff pack bags according to their reader’s choice sheets, and send them out via bus, truck or plane to outlying areas like Ivanhoe, Wilcannia, Tibooburra, Burke and White Cliffs. In addition, they run a housebound service, a branch library, and are a Regional Repository for the State Archives. Of the 8 staff members, there are 1 Librarian and 3 Library Technicians,
who are responsible for Children's and Youth Services, Technical Services and the Archives and Local History Service respectively. This reflects an apparent trend throughout this research, namely that Librarians are tending to move into management areas, and Library Technicians are increasingly taking on supervisory roles and expanding their areas of responsibility.

Kelli Turner writes that the atmosphere is friendly and relaxed, even though the staff numbers have been reduced by 25% in 5 years, so that the workload is very heavy. Gaining qualifications for these Library Technicians was especially rewarding because of the difficulties of correspondence study. Any of us who spent every spare weekend in the Reference Collection of our own State Libraries will understand the added strain of a distance of thousands of kilometres from vital information resources.

Glenise Meldrum is the Children's Librarian at Kempsey Shire Library, about 500 km north of Sydney. The library is part of a co-operative system of 5 libraries from 2 different council areas, with many volunteer branches. This is an interesting arrangement, which allows those involved to capitalise on the special strengths of each library. Glenise is a very busy lady; as well as general circulation and reference duties, she selects and catalogues all fiction and non-fiction for both children's and teens, writes articles and reviews for magazines and ABC radio, runs children's holiday programmes and library activities, speaks to schools, tells stories to groups of children and lectures on storytelling and craft activities. She also organises and sets up displays, arranges author visits, is involved in promotion and publicity, including producing in-house leaflets, and plays the guitar and sings loudly! And she does it all in 24.5 hours per week, and while still studying! You can guess that some proportion of her workload is completed out of paid working hours. A common theme throughout this research is the strong, sometimes passionate, commitment to their work exhibited by many of our respondents.

The State Library of Tasmania is, I think, unique in Australia in that the whole state is served by a network of city, branch and mobile libraries, supported by the State Reference Library in Hobart. Naturally, Library Technicians are involved in a diverse range of tasks, particularly since the introduction of their Dynix computer system, which broadens their involvement in the cataloguing area. Unfortunately, the Library Technician qualification, although considered desirable, is not yet recognised, but Margaret Hall, from Bibliographic Maintenance in the Hobart State Library, forecasts a promising future, particularly through Enterprise Bargaining negotiation.

Ann Fry is the Inter Library Loans Technician at Alice Springs Public Library. It is easy to understand that, because of isolation, it is a busy and interesting job, which involves contact with many other libraries, both intrastate and interstate. There are three other Library Technicians in charge of Children's, Reference and the Alice Springs (local history) Collection, respectively. Alice Springs Library, like many public libraries, has a Community Information Centre, and is a common port of call for tourists seeking information or a cool place to rest. Country borrowers are served in a similar way to Broken Hill Library, in that boxes of books are chosen and sent to isolated communities throughout the Northern Territory. It is obvious that such resource centres in isolated areas are extremely valuable to the communities they serve.

Howard Philpott from Katherine Community Library also knows about isolation and serving remote stations, but his situation is quite different. His library is part of a tripartite service combined with the Northern Territory Open College of TAFE and Teacher Resource Collections, as well as operating a branch at Tindal RAAF Base. Howard reports that one of the major attractions of the library is that it has the best air-conditioning in the area, but I think he underestimates the value of the friendly staff, who will often make a cup of tea or coffee for their older clients! Howard's position is one of those multifunction jobs: he has an involvement in everything from children's story times to interlibrary loans, publicity, cataloguing, supervision and training, and all things in between!

The Western Australians were extremely generous in their response, and projected an image of professionalism and enthusiasm that was striking. The Shire of Kalamunda, near Perth, is of special interest because it has four libraries, staffed by clerks on a six month rotating roster, making for a multi-skilled workforce, who are familiar with the requirements of different levels and branches. They have a special focus of Customer Service, and Marion Hogg, their sole Library Technician, sent a formidable array of publicity material that suggests a library service that is both vibrant and vital. In fact, the impressive array of publicity material that we received has prompted us to consider some way of sharing such a wonderful resource with others who are interested. Public Library Technicians are often the publicity people at their library, and are commonly
working in isolation, with no knowledge of what other libraries are doing. If anyone is interested in being involved in an ongoing sharing of material, either in their own state or nationally, Dagmar or I will be happy to help establish such a network.

Streaky Bay is a small town on the west coast of South Australia, about 750 km from Adelaide, and Carol Lydeamore is the Library Technician at the Community School Library there. She works with a Teacher/Librarian, and both have found her library studies to be invaluable, especially in the technology area, which can be a problem for small country centres with very limited access to current knowledge on computer networks and information databases. This is one of those resource centres which is almost all things to all people, serving the staff and students of the Reception to Year 12 Area School, as well as the local community and tourists. Carol’s position is one that requires detailed knowledge of both school and public library policy and procedures, which is no mean feat, and she is the Systems and Audio Visual expert and manages the library out of school hours. She supervises and assists school classes, orders new materials, sets up displays, processes Inter Library Loans, provides an outreach service to the local nursing home and hospital, amongst the multitude of tasks which we can imagine in this situation. She finds her work challenging and enjoyable, even though the South Australian Education Department does not recognise Library Technicians, (yet?)

My own Organisation, Noarlunga Library Service, has a main joint-use TAFE/community library, a mobile library, and one branch at Woodcroft, with another new branch planned for 1996. Noarlunga Centre is about 30 km south of Adelaide, in an area of high unemployment, and we serve a vast range of people from many different backgrounds. We have five Library Technicians at Noarlunga, and one, Dagmar Messner, at Woodcroft. Dagmar’s position is the sole Library Technician serving a multitude of functions, while at Noarlunga, we are assigned specialist areas, Adult Services, Serials, Systems and Circulation, Technical Services, Audio Visual and Electronic Information, and I am in Children’s and Youth Services. As well as our special responsibilities, we all staff any of the six desk positions, which are Reference, Enquiry, Checkin, Checkout, Children’s and Circulation Supervisor. We all supervise other staff, and have extra involvements, for example, I am on the Publicity Committee, am involved in the Council’s Total Quality Service program, and one of our Technicians is a member of the Library Management Team. We tend to be the “action people”, and are well supported by our management. Our ideas are welcomed and our advice valued. The atmosphere is one of constant change, strong opinion, and permanent challenge.

It was encouraging to read people’s visions for our future in public libraries. The response was uniformly positive – the Library Technician qualification has become desirable for advancement or even initial employment in this area. Because they tend to have a good understanding of the detail of the day to day running of a library, as well as familiarity with the responsibilities and concerns of management, they are seen as a valuable communication link, who can assist and advise in the formulation of policy, and then implement and interpret that policy for other staff. They can deal with people at all levels, and are most often the people who make things happen in a library. I was pleasantly surprised to see that Library Technicians form a sizable proportion of public library staff, that they are confident about their future, and that they foresee more openings for new positions at this level. As libraries are increasingly called upon to justify their staffing expenditure, Library Technicians are being seen as good value for money.

There currently appears to be little opportunity for a career path for Library Technicians in public libraries. For some Technicians the top of their level is reached relatively quickly, and there is a low likelihood of advancing. A small proportion have taken on further study in computer technology, business management or library and information fields to gain advancement. However, as the proportion of Library Technicians in public libraries increases, it may well be that a career structure is made available. Many respondents were enthusiastic about the opportunities available on the same level but in different areas, particularly within council libraries, where employees can transfer long service leave, sick leave and superannuation when they move to a different council library. There is a general feeling of stimulation and excitement generated by working in a constantly challenging and changing environment, and a recurring theme from the responses is that, for Library Technicians in public libraries, the learning doesn’t stop when the library studies end.
## APPENDIX

### Survey Respondents

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Library Technicians</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Territory</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Tasmania</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Western Australia</strong></td>
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<td>City of Stirling Public Libraries</td>
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<td>Riverton Library, City of Canning Library Services</td>
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<td>Ruth Faulkner Public Library, City of Belmont</td>
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CREDENTIALISM IN THE LIBRARY ENVIRONMENT

Christine Davies and Doug Davies

Abstract: Credentialism appears to be playing an ever-increasing role in all facets of the work environment. Whether the push to obtain paper qualifications is needed, the fact is that more organisations are asking for proof of study at the expense of experience gained on the job, preferably both. The result is an increase in enrollment at the various Technical colleges and universities, with life and work experience taking second place. More worthy of attention is the gaining of qualifications needed to achieve certain positions in supervision or management, and the resultant non-use of those qualifications once a goal is reached. A case study of the Library industry will be used to illustrate the push to credentialism, and to ascertain the worth or otherwise of gaining additional qualifications at various levels of the structure.

INTRODUCTION

There is an increasingly concerted push to the attainment of recognised qualifications, or credentials by employers, in many positions that exist within organisations and that are being advertised. Where once the school certificate was necessary to attain a trade or TAFE qualification, the higher school certificate is generally now a requirement. Where once a Higher School Certificate was sufficient, now a TAFE certificate is mandatory, while a University qualification is desirable. Is this requirement an essential component to adequately perform the duties required of the position? Or would the position be better filled by an applicant having suitable and comprehensive experience, possibly integrated with selected training and learning strategies?

There are indisputable reasons for people obtaining qualifications. Technological change can force people to learn new skills and qualifications, to ensure their employment is maintained. Some people are wanting a career change, although there is the bind that skills will then be a deciding factor over qualifications achieved at the entry level, if possible, to a new career. Other people only want a career, for example, apprenticeships and other trainee level positions.

While not denying the benefit of higher qualifications in encouraging analytical and creative thinking, is it possible that to save the effort of choosing the best person for the position that is vacant, the request for credentials is an opting out of the selection process, by assuming that the qualifications prepare the person to fill the role required? Questions must then be raised concerning the selection process, the recruitment process and methodology, the induction and training process within the organisation and the value of the job analysis and specifications.

Even in the University environment, the demand for qualifications (research or higher degree, depending on the position) can impact on staff selection and lead to the best person for a vacant position not being chosen.

Credentialism has an impact on a number of aspects of the organisation. Areas of recruitment and selection, remuneration, performance appraisal, training, industrial relations and organisational control all impinge on the field. Organisational culture can develop a requirement for credentialism. This may have a detrimental effect on the institution if controls over the training dollar are not in place.

Arnstein (Buon and Compton, in Nankervis & Compton 1994, 249) defines credentialism “as the empty pursuit of degrees or other credentials that are not necessarily related to intellectual or other achievement.” Buon and Compton (1994, 249) further consider that there could be an increase in training and the issuing of credentials, “hence entry qualifications for the occupations may be upgraded without any commensurate change in the knowledge requirements for the occupation.”

Many professions also guard their elite standing by imposing certain requirements on qualifications. The Department of Labour (1974:127) found that “entry into professional employment in Australia generally requires professional qualifications and normally these can only be obtained through universities ... or through ... specialised institutions.”
"Library technicians are paraprofessional staff capable of operating, maintaining and controlling established library systems in libraries. They perform a variety of tasks in both technical and reader services." Australian Library and Information Association.

In Australia's first national conference on training for industry and commerce, held in 1971, "there emerged a consensus that there was an urgent need for a major national co-operative effort to develop improved standards of systematic training throughout industry and commerce considered essential to the nation's future development and to the needs and aspirations of the individual." (Department of Labour: 1974, 149). Has this early push towards improving standards of training developed into a push for credentials? Is the undergraduate degree of today becoming the higher school certificate of tomorrow? To improve job prospects, many employees are finding it mandatory to undertake Masters qualifications, (much to the financial benefit of the providing institutions).

"The concept of the trained paraprofessional worker in libraries is recognised and accepted nationwide. What is arguably less well recognised and accepted is what Library Technicians should do in the library, and how they can be best employed. There are divergence of opinion within the profession about the proper division of labour between professional, paraprofessional and clerical staff." (Smeaton)

Ginzberg (Berg 1971, xiii) comments on the continuing rise in educational requirements for employment. He found that "employers are convinced that, by raising their demands, they will be more likely to recruit an ambitious, disciplined work force that will be more productive than workers who have terminated their schooling earlier." Berg's findings (1971, 16), however, found that the better-educated workers had higher turnover rates, and in one organisation, the "less-educated technicians received higher evaluations from supervisors." A criticism of this finding is that it does not indicate the potential of the higher educated worker, and other reasons, such as familiarity with the long-term employees and these employees' long-term knowledge of the job could be influencing factors in creating the perceptions of the supervising staff. Additionally, Berg (1971:91) also found that "there was ... no association between the educational attainments of these technicians and the evaluations they received from supervisory personnel, nor was there any association between education and absenteeism."

Higher educated workers tend to have a higher turnover, getting ahead by changing jobs, while the lower educated tend to stay behind, remaining with the organisation and climbing the internal career path. Due to the cost of staff turnover, in some instances 2.5 times the annual salary or more (SMH, 14/1/95) it indicates the potentially high cost of an educated work force.

Educational requirements are not necessarily bad, but they pose doubt on whether or not the benefits that accompany a highly-educated work force actually materialise. Collins (1979, 48) found that education and productivity were not necessarily associated. The requirement for credentials was more the requirement of the organisation to maintain some form of control over staffing.

SOME CRITICISMS

It is becoming increasingly apparent that there is a continuing decline in the employment opportunities for youth. The response of the Australian Government is to provide additional training opportunities for these people. In other words, a push for qualifications. There is, however, a reduction in the availability for these unemployed youth to exercise these skills, so the strategy of the government is to provide credentials for, what are generally, non-existent positions. However, it can have the desirable effect of reducing unemployment figures.

Due to the higher credentials attained by the work force, it is likely that there will be a corresponding increase in demand for recognition of those qualifications. The AMWU (interview 1990) considers that pay increases should be granted for qualifications obtained (and not necessarily used). Despite their protests about this claim, employers are still paying a higher remuneration for a degree-qualified employee, the degree not necessarily having any major relevance to the position held. This recognition would probably take the form of salary increases, promotional opportunities, and demands for a higher autonomy in the workplace. It could also lead to demands for a greater say in the operational aspects of the firm. At a conference on Collective Bargaining and Professional Responsibility (Berg 1971, 69), conducted in 1968 by the Institute for Labour and
Industrial Relations, it was agreed that "automation and computerisation are eating away at the decision-making powers of these workers ... (and) ... the uniqueness of the individual and his talents will decrease." This results in the under-utilisation of the talents of the workers, gained through training and/or education. If these areas are not satisfied by the company, depending on the labour market, a high turnover of staff could result, leading to lack of continuity in company performance and a rise in recruitment costs. Both could impose considerable financial burden on the firm.

Another criticism of credentialism is the effect on other areas of the Labour market. With the push to achieve higher qualifications that may not be a necessity of the job, it may have a damaging affect on the job prospects of people at the lower end of the labour market, through the displacement of this population.

Credentialism also promulgates a closed-shop environment, in which certain jobs have a revered status, way beyond their actual value. This results in equity problems arising, both in the areas of remuneration and in equal employment opportunity, in which entry may be restricted to certain classes of people, e.g. the old boys' network.

Another aspect of consideration is the cost of education. The money spent on training students in certain skills that may or may not be essential could obviously be given better priority. Dore (1976, 101) raises a concern on "the pressure of educational budgets on government revenues (compounded by population growth and attempts to upgrade quality standards as well as to expand educational opportunities)." The demand by a 'concerned' electorate over the surplus of applicants for available tertiary education places aggravates the funding problems, as the government increases the number of vacancies at the expense of quality of applicants.

Coyte (1985, 61) states that "industrial relations is very often a field in which a brutal pragmatism is the order of the day rather than the delicate skills of analysis and reason that may be nurtured in the cloisters of a university." This begs the question of the suitability and relevance of employment relations training in certain institutions. As many people studying industrial relations will become practitioners, are they being taught the concepts that will prepare them for life.

Collins (1979, 3) states that "American sociologists concerned with stratification have concentrated on social mobility and one main fact has emerged from their research: Education is the most important determinant yet discovered of how far one will go in today's world ... schooling has been defined as an agency for meritocratic selection." He further finds that "education determines success" (7) but "education is often irrelevant to on-the-job productivity, and is sometimes counterproductive. Specifically, vocational training seems to be derived primarily from work experience rather than from formal school training" (21).

In research carried out in a 1967 survey of Californian organisations, Collins (1979, 34) found that there were "strong normative and status reasons for organisations to keep up educational requirements, even when technical and economic pressures for doing so are absent or even contrary." Further, "education will be most important where the fit is greatest between the culture of the status groups emerging from schools and the status groups doing the hiring" (36). In other words, the reason for requiring a certain standard of educational attainment appears to rely more on maintaining the perceived status of elite groups than on employing or promoting the most suitable applicant who can best do the job required. "This indicates a caste-like separation among major occupational blocs" (42).

LIBRARY STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

To either prove or disprove the literature in a particular environment, a qualitative survey (see appendix) was distributed to library staff (via the Internet), to determine whether the training provided was valid for the particular classification. Of the 32 responses received, 30 were from Australian institutions and 2 were received from the United States. Classifications and qualifications varied (see appendix). All the respondents did not answer all of the questions.

Twenty-three of the respondents had a TAFE or equivalent qualification, 8 had a degree (with one of those being a library manager and holding a nursing qualification, while currently studying at TAFE, enrolled in an Associate Diploma of Applied Science: Library Technician). One person had no credentialled qualifications. Most had attended some form of short course/s during their career.
As to the importance of the qualifications held and their applicability to the current position, 87.5% saw them as being applicable, with the remaining 12.5% as not being necessary.

Regarding the current relevance of qualifications, 66% of the respondents considered that the qualifications were both relevant at the current time and also at the entry level for the position held. This indicates the relevance of the qualification to the position held.

A number of the people replying to the survey held supervisory roles. Additionally, some had acted in these positions. Of those who answered this question, 89% considered that a combination of qualifications and experience gave the best employee performance. Qualifications held were not the sole reason leading to high performance.

Of most concern, however, was the response to the final question in the survey, which related to future promotion in the institution. Additional qualifications were considered necessary by 69% of the survey respondents if they wished to promote internally within their current organisation. Only 9% considered that they would be promoted on experience gained within their career. One other concern was that 34% found a lack of career structure an impediment, indicating that if a higher qualification was attained, there was no guarantee of promotion. This could lead (depending on a number of demographic variables) to certain organisations losing experienced staff, causing expenditure on recruitment, selection and training costs. One other variable, of course, is that smaller institutions cannot have a career structure (e.g., one-person libraries). Strategies should be examined to maintain staff in the smaller companies, where a loss of expertise may be more damaging than in the larger concerns.

General comments sent with the replies included the following:

"Higher Education Worker (HEW) Level 6 requires a Librarianship degree. Experience is not considered in this institution (named) at this level."

"My qualifications obviously helped me to get my position but I honestly believe after a number of years' experience someone without these would be able to perform my job - it really is the know-how for problem solving that makes my position difficult. Added knowledge of the ... subject would help but I do not feel they are essential for the work I complete - experience and patience are the overriding factors in both areas."

"On paper, my qualifications let me down because I do not have a degree ... I sometimes wonder at the logic involved in the decision that base-grade librarians, fresh out of Uni with no experience are able to get a position over a library officer with years of experience but no piece of paper."

"Qualifications have no bearing on ability to do the job."

CONCLUSION

A common factor in both the study of the literature and in the survey was that the credentials obtained were essential in obtaining the position. However, in some of the comments given in the replies, the relatedness of the credentials in performing the job was questioned. Concerns for employment relations factors include recruitment and selection factors, promotion, training, staff turnover and industrial and budgetary implications.

The relevance of qualifications in recruiting and choosing the best applicant for the job are debatable. There is no direct correlation between credentials and future job success. Other factors must be considered before making an informed decision on suitability in a particular and in future promotional aspects. Also, in promotion, many jobs require certain qualifications to enter them, but once entered, the credentials needed are redundant. So the question to be asked is: why are the qualifications necessary in recruiting and selecting staff, and in considering staff for promotion? There is no disagreement that qualifications play some role, but other aspects are more important. Felton and Lamb (in Buon & Compton 1994, 254) argue for "three major criteria for predicting future success." These criteria are the ability to perform the job, the ability for the person to be motivated sufficiently to be successful in the job, and finally their organisational fit.
Industrial implications of credentialism generally lie in the area of remuneration. With the rein placed on incomes due to the accord, the emphasis given to 'collecting' qualifications to achieve a higher wage or salary has increased. As mentioned previously, the debate is over qualifications achieved and their relevance to the workplace.

Similarly, will performance standards be viewed as improved if additional qualifications are held by employees of an organisation, with a subsequent pay increase given? The issue of equity is also a concern, with the opportunity for promotion based on credentials, and limited credence given to skills learnt in the workplace. Does a double standard exist in this case?

A factor to re-enter the equation is the move to competency standards, which recognise the skills needed for a position. This has been undertaken by Arts Training Australia, the authority which covers library workers. The competency standards for library workers was ratified in March of this year and the standards are due for publication. The standards consist of seven levels showing the skills needed to progress to the next level. These skills do not have to be learnt at an educational facility they can be learnt on the job or even in volunteer work. The main drawback with them from a management point-of-view is that managers have to spend more time sifting job applications or to reword their criteria when they advertise a position. The competency standards to some extent weaken the barriers in library hierarchy between the levels a technician can rise to before having to have a degree to go higher.

Not all technicians want to rise to senior librarian level, but are more than competent to work at an equivalent level of base-grade librarians. The National Competency Standards are being used by many as a basis for job evaluation as they clearly state what it is the various levels of library workers should be capable of doing. The standards are also being used as a guide in the formation of a National Curriculum for Library Technicians, this will be transportable over the whole of Australia and bring the current state courses to an equivalent level.

"Where do library technicians fit into the structure of library staffing? Are they being employed in preference to librarians for economic reasons, or is the library technician training more applicable to libraries of today?" This is a statement that would not find favour with institutions that train librarians. Library technicians with their operational focus should not be seen as a threat to librarians’ developmental focus and should be able to work co-operatively.

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APPENDIX

Credentialism Survey Instrument.

Name (optional):

Institution:

Position held:

Number of years in the position:

Professionally recognised qualifications (Certificate, degree etc):

Short courses:

How important do you think the qualifications held by you are applicable to your current position? (Please circle)
Not applicable 1 2 3 4 5 6 Most applicable

Comments?

How relevant to your job are the professional qualifications held by you:

a) now.

b) in the past at entry level.

Were the qualifications that you needed to attain your current position still used by you once you achieved that position?

If you are in a supervisory role, do you find that greater output is achieved by:

i) staff with higher academic or technical qualifications:

ii) staff with long-term tenure in the position:

iii) a combination of qualifications and long-term experience:

Is any data or record kept regarding the performance of staff and the correlation of this performance to qualifications held by them?

If yes, what type?

Is any data kept regarding the performance of staff and in-house qualifications or short courses that they have attended?

Do you consider that possible promotion within the library is limited because of your:

i) educational qualifications

ii) lack of job experience

iii) other reasons? (Please explain)

Do you have any comments to make about your position and the relevance of your training and/or qualifications to that position?
USING THE WORLD'S INFORMATION RESOURCES IN YOUR LIBRARY

John Pavy

(Additional information and specific data prepared by Professor Allan Walters, Graeme Smith and Lionel Rudd of The Education Company Australia Pty Ltd)

INTRODUCTION
For nine months, the R&D department of The Education Company has been working at the forefront of world-wide software technological research, in direct collaboration with "Universe" and "Microsoft NT" from Seattle Washington. The principles of connectivity that emerged from this research have the potential of assisting most library sites in Australia.

The primary ideas that lead to this presentation were:

- All companies and research institutions directly or indirectly involved with library automation, have a responsibility to assist in keeping relevant professional bodies and their members up to date with modern developments that may influence their work.
- A full understanding of what is taking place in the evolution of technology will undoubtedly form a framework for the future planning of library capabilities and physical structures.
- For the sake of universal usage of these scientific advances, no matter how complex and difficult the principles involved may be, the user must perceive the functioning as routine work with user friendly equipment.
- Demonstrations of the most modern relevant technologies available will transform vague ideas of what is occurring, into a comprehensive and meaningful understanding.

In a speech by the Prime Minister on the 1st March 1995 entitled "Networking Australia's Future", it was indicated:

- 40% of Australian households own a personal computer, which, with the exception of the United States, is the highest rate in the world.
- The single theme he wanted to stress, by saying, "The opportunity for Australia is probably unprecedented".
- We have the chance to deliver services more equitably and efficiently than ever before.

A little earlier this year in February, the Group of Seven (G7) industrialised nations held an Information Society Summit in Brussels and among other things, they concluded that the potential of the global information society depended on governments promoting:

- the universal provision of and access to services,
- equality of opportunity,
- diversity of content, including cultural and linguistic diversity, and
- open access to networks.

"To succeed", they concluded, "governments must facilitate private initiatives and investments and ensure an appropriate framework aiming at stimulating private investment and usage for the benefit of all citizens".

Robyn Williams recently interviewed the famous 1962 Nobel prize winner Max Perutz who is recognized as the father of molecular biology. From his laboratory at Cambridge nine Nobel prizes have emanated, and yet he is considered as the supreme scientist. Perutz states that other geniuses have provided examples which he has endeavoured to follow.

Renoir painted every day of his life, and when old age made his fingers too arthritic to hold a brush, he got someone to tie the brush to his hand.

Hayden rose early each morning to compose. If ideas failed him, he clasped his rosary and prayed until Heaven sent him fresh inspiration.
Tolstoy wrote War and Peace seven times.

When Newton was asked how he arrived at his insights he answered, “By keeping the problem constantly before my mind.”

But I put it to you that none of these techniques will assist you in advancing or improving the information facilities of your library.

Today the knowledge required by an individual, to be capable of making informed decisions on the future use of technology, is beyond the average person no matter how professional or intelligent one might be. If someone does decide to research what is technologically available and relevant, the time devoted to this exercise will be excessive, very costly, and often professionally inefficient. Let me stress that you must request expert help in this area; and this does not mean that you should follow someone else who has made a recent decision on technology. You must choose your consultant wisely, and a second opinion from another source is often useful. For example, a company in Perth, Netfusion Pty Ltd, consists solely of experts whose missions are to maintain up-to-date erudition, and to support and guide those in need of technological solutions. Don’t blunder along, and possibly waste money by making an unwise decision – use the experts.

It is important that you are fully aware of the power of “Microsoft”. Eight out of ten of the world’s personal computers could not boot up (that is to start) if it were not for Microsoft’s operating system software – programs such as MS-DOS, Windows, and now the new Microsoft NT.

The library of “tomorrow” is upon us today. We have printed copy, video and audio tape sources, magnetic and optical technologies, audio and sensory developments, and more – all happening in our neighbourhood library.

What can the technical personnel of our libraries expect in the future?

Let’s examine and investigate some of the possibilities.

Sharing data

Just as libraries everywhere provide resources to share with their communities, so the era of expanding technologies has reached the library and these resources will also have to be shared. What are these new resources?

Some of them may be categorised as:
- Public Databases
- In-house Databases
- Bulletin Boards
- Personal Communications
- Broadcast Communications

[As an example, we could have the “Yellow Pages” available as an electronic resource in our library with external, 24 hour access by modem.]

Some of the considerations in respect of what data to share are:
- Cost Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Censorship

[Returning to our simplistic example of the “Yellow Pages”, we might offset the implementation of the necessary facilities (hardware, software and time) against the savings in paper, printing, distribution and currency of the data – censorship being an unlikely problem at this time. The reality is that the user (library client) receives up to date data for the cost of a local phone call, the advertiser has the opportunity to provide accurate information at all times and perhaps millions of trees have been saved.]
Now, we have a variety of new and old technologies to enable the effective distribution of these new resources. Included amongst them are:

- Co-Axial Cabling
- Unshielded Twisted Pair Cabling
- Fibre Optic Cabling
- Radio-Local Area Networking
- Microwave Short Haul Communications
- Satellite Long Haul Communications
- Modem Services
- Public Switched Telephone Networks
- Mobile – Analogue and Digital – Telephone Networking

[Co-axial cable, UTP and Radio provide an array of short distance distribution methods to cover areas within a kilometre or less using current technology. A mixture of all the other services may be used to meet distribution needs of the community, locality, country or continents.]

Library Systems of the Future are going to be implementing all/some of these facilities in your library and, therefore, you (the technical support personnel) are going to be looking at those needs and evaluating:

- Communications Needs
- Multi-Media Implementation
- User-Friendliness for the Client and Community

[“User-friendly”; “Intuitive”; are expressions used by many companies when describing their own software packages and/or hardware implementations. When the decision has been made to utilise a range of products and the appropriate communications facilities are in place, the remaining question of client/community satisfaction still has to be tested. Testing user-friendliness and building client/customer/community confidence may be more difficult. Could this mean another new role for the staff of our library? PR persons extra-ordinaire!!]

Multi-Media, the catch-cry of the nineties, will become a larger part of all things marketable (and isn’t everything!) What are these components of multi-media?

- Graphics
- Animation
- Video
- Sound
- Effects

[By mixing all these components, or combinations of them, together, a resultant product can be engineered to meet specific market needs, evoke emotional responses, provide information services, etc. Multi-media effectiveness can be seen in the worldwide commitment to DOOM, the preferred computer game of many an IBM enthusiast. Today, as in many schools, John XXIII College is teaching its students (and some staff) the how-to with multi-media tools. The revolution is in its infancy. So it should come as no surprise that many students are teaching the staff, rather than the other way round.]

User-Friendly interfaces, that we expect to be part of every facet of your life soon, will have a wide variety of characteristics defined by:

- Sight
- Sound
- Touch

[Obviously, effects ranging from simple graphics to full video or animation (similar to that seen in Terminator II and other movies) will visually attract/distract the client. Sound and sound effects will also play their part with the possibility of pure voice interfacing replacing keyboard style interaction in the near future. Additionally, other techniques involving the sense of touch as the third sensory stimulus may become more prevalent.]
Technology in the Workplace has commenced its exponential growth and soon the non-technically literate may be considered inappropriate employees. Meanwhile, the technical support personnel will be needing a little extra training to keep up with:

- Smart Cards
- Scanners
- Modems
- Local Area Networks
- Touch Terminals
- Satellite Dishes
- Video Conferencing
- "Surfing" the Internet
- Mobile Communications

The super-highway is coming to our front door and we have to be ready. Almost all existing library automated systems are built around technologies fifteen to twenty years old. Some of the new, sophisticated technologies are being integrated to the older library systems, but there are many limitations to overcome. Maybe it is time to go to new systems that bring with them the tested library facilities and allow for the immediate integration of the new technologies. The Education Company believes that their pathway with Microsoft Windows NT Server as the base system will meet the needs of today and tomorrow. What is Windows NT and what can it do?

Windows NT is an operating system for servers and workstations of the modern era. The difference between this operating system and the majority of older systems is its ability to communicate with a wide variety of other platforms and hardware types. Especially important in business and schools, the ability for Apple MacIntosh, IBM compatible, Acorn and Unix workstations to be able to communicate to one server with Windows NT on the same network makes sense. Along with this cross-platform connectivity, Windows NT can provide:

- Multi-Media Delivery from CD-ROM
- Modem Services
- Remote Access Services with Full Security
- Full Multi-Tasking of Applications
- "Defence Approved" Security for Data

Hence, with a Windows NT Server in place, delivery of multi-media, CD-ROM resources and “surfing" the Internet could start tomorrow. Install any existing Microsoft package and distribute it throughout your network to the same terminals you will use for accessing the library search facilities. Beyond the core operation of your library, provide the same network services to other departments, including the library resources, from the convenience of their own workstation.

Now, perhaps some of these ideas need further discussion and maybe there are implications for the future in your own locality. What can you do?

Seeking the Right Solution will involve:

- Concepts and Ideas
- Consultation and Planning
- Integration Limitations
- Costing and Implementation Parameters
- Training and Servicing
- Support

Good consultants with excellent solutions can be cost effective.

Techs Of The 21st Century Can Expect To:

- be Decision Makers
- have Wider Skills
- be in Demand
TECHNICIANS IN CYBERSPACE

Isis Bibaoui and Lynette Davison

Opening

Whoa! Wipe out! I was searching gopherspace with Veronica and riding an http wave through cyberspace. I telneted to a Tibetan host and used the WWW to get a gopher menu, only to discover I had to anonymous ftp.

What language are you speaking? Don’t you know where you are?

Oh sorry, I was cyberspeaking.

Shall we start now?

Gopher it!

Introduction

Imagine leaving the safety of your space ship stepping into the black void. That’s what it felt like when we first sat at the PC and logged into the wonderful world of the Internet. Hello, I’m Isis.

and I’m Lynette and we’re Library Technicians at the University of Sydney Library.

We’re here to share some of our experiences with you from when we first stepped off the “muddy track” onto the “superhighway” and began our infatuation with Internet.

Isis and I call ourselves net.citizens and we casually surf the superhighway to delve into the depths of cyberspace, communicating with other net.citizens throughout Australia and the world. Cyberspace is infinite – there are no boundaries. You are able to access information from a computer on the other side of the world in a matter of seconds. For example, you have the ability to send an email directly to the Prime Minister of Australia. Of course, you may not necessarily get a reply!!

Knowledge was being thrown at us from all different angles. But we were starting to get confused. It was then we decided that we wanted to know more about this amazing technology. It took us a few months to become more familiar with the Internet.

We also did a lot of preliminary reading. There has been an explosion of Internet literature on the market, which, of course, working in Acquisitions, we had easy access to. For example, Internet for Dummies and The Whole Internet.

We read the computer section of the Sydney Morning Herald, checked out magazine articles and basically overloaded our brains with this information. You really have to sort the riff from the raff, but it all helps.

Communication is what it’s all about.

The Beginning

Let’s start at the beginning. First there was ARPANet, a military network established in the United States in the late 60s. In 1981, 231 computers participated in the Internet. Latest figures show that there are at least 15,000 different networks supporting over 1.7 million host computers in more than 60 countries. By 1997 there are expected to be 120 million users of the Internet. One new user hooks up every two minutes.

AARNet, which is the Australian component of the Internet, upgraded in the last year. Its customer base is now estimated to be over 600,000 and still growing. And since AARNet is no longer the sole provider of the pan-
Pacific link, the total number of Australian Internet users is higher still. It’s estimated that 1 in 18 Australians are using the Internet. That’s roughly 1% of the population.

**Major services available on the Internet**

Let’s have a closer look at what Internet is really all about.

The Internet allows users to transfer files between incompatible computers, send messages across the globe, and log into databases thousands of miles away within the blink of an eye. However, there is no central agency to coordinate the Internet. The CIA is very worried about this!

The Internet is comprised of cooperating but independent computer networks. Universities frequently act as local centres to provide Internet access. We as library technicians working in acquisitions use it to email, ftp and telnet.

Electronic mail (or email) is used to send messages to other people or programs on other computers. It is the most extensively used service on the Internet. You need a mail program, such as Pop Mail or Eudora, to compose and read your messages. Some people have actually “met” through email.

Email is the first exposure many of us have to Internet, without realising we are using it. How many of you use email every day to communicate with your fellow Library Technicians, other libraries, library suppliers and publishers all around the world? As an example, two years ago we faxed our suppliers for information about publications, etc. A reply would take anything up to a week. Now, you can send an email message today and in some instances, receive a reply the day before!!

Technology, how sweet it is!!

FTP (file transfer protocol) makes it possible to transfer files between two computers easily and quickly. In other words, it’s a program on your local computer that connects to someone else’s computer, and through a series of UNIX commands can transfer and download files.

There are two kinds of FTP access, anonymous and full service. Anonymous ftp allows anyone on the Internet to access computers which contain public file archives. Full service ftp requires a login name and password and provides access to files outside the public archive section of the host computer. The main problem with using ftp is finding out where a file is located.

There are different tools designed to facilitate file searches on ftp sites, eg Archie, Veronica.

And Jughead too?

Yes, and Jughead too. While Archie handles file archives; Veronica and Jughead use information collected from all the known gopher servers to answer queries about where information might be stored. This information is searched by entering key words.

Telnet allows access to online databases, electronic library catalogues and Internet information services. To gain full access to databases and other information services available through Telnet, a password and a login name have to be obtained from the host organisation, for example, we use the Blackwell North America database for pricing information. It is not always easy to make a connection, as sometimes the lines are busy - it’s a pity they don’t have easy call.

**Navigating the Internet**

We’ve given you the basics of the Internet, but how do you navigate through it? You’ve got to catch that wave and to do that you have to pick the best board.

Well, I’ve got a 2.5 metre triple fin ballistic double thruster....
No, not that kind of board. You need a PC (or Mac), a modem and the right software. Once you’re in, there are numerous ways to move around.

Gopher is a client-server application which provides a menu driven interface to allow users to browse through the network without knowing telnet addresses and ftp sites. All gopher sites connect to one another, allowing the user to explore virtually any part of the Internet by following a simple menu system. They allow the inexperienced user to gain access to information without having to learn telnet and ftp commands. One can use a public gopher site via telnet.

WWW (World Wide Web, or The WEB) is similar to gopher, but instead of a menu driven design, it uses hypertext. MOSAIC & NETSCAPE are software programs that provide access to a wide variety of Internet information through the WWW. They use a “point and click” interface which is extremely user friendly, and they retrieve text and graphics. This type of software allows the user to retrieve information from anywhere on an Internet server by using a URL (uniform resource locator). The Internet Yellow Pages is just one directory which lists URLs, more commonly known as addresses.

WAIS (Wide Area Information Servers) allows you to search through Internet databases by using key words. We don’t have much experience with this facility yet.

We found getting into WWW easier by using the NETSCAPE software. Part of the attraction of the Internet is that using it can be fun and once you’re hooked time slips away.

Did you see my phone bill last month?

While many think that access to the Internet is free, this is not so. We have access via the University’s link, however, the independent user will need to investigate the commercial on-line providers, such as DIALOG, CompuServ or OZMail.

Is this going to overload my brain?

NO! You shouldn’t be afraid to use the Internet. It’s just a network of machines and we have the power to use it.

No Big Brother?

No, not yet.

Not worried about Microsoft, then?

Why bother with the Internet?

We’ve given you some background, the services available, and how to navigate through the Internet and you’re probably saying ‘so what’ or ‘why bother?’

As technicians we should remember that we are in the information business and should attempt to provide access to all forms of information, including those found on the Internet. Besides, we are perhaps more likely than anyone else to find ways to reduce the chaos of the Internet and make its information resources more useable.

The availability of this technology has, without a doubt, made “working” life easier for us in Acquisitions. We use email everyday for communicating with numerous library suppliers and publishers for price and availability verification, supply problems and claims.

We now telnet to many suppliers’ databases, in particular, Blackwell’s Connect for the UK, Blackwell North America’s New Title Service for the US (which we call NTO), and University Co-Op Bookshop for Australian material. Many of these suppliers offer an electronic ordering service. The use of the Co-Op database immediately led to a pilot project to investigate whether electronic ordering was viable for our needs. Within a few months the advantages outweighed any concerns we had. We began with urgently required material and
gradually increased the load to include all requests for items listed on students reading lists (high priority orders). With some items there is a 24 hour turnaround! We now order over one third of this material electronically. With the advent of a new system, the Library plans to introduce electronic ordering for overseas material in the near future. And I can hardly wait!!

Electronic ordering is fast becoming the most efficient and cost effective method of acquiring the Library's material. Access to publishers' catalogues has also become a time saver. Many are accessible on CD-ROM, but, as the technology becomes more advanced, numerous publishers are making their trade catalogues available on the Internet. They offer information on forthcoming titles and in-print publications, but, the information, at present, is limited. Companies are keen in advertising these services.

It seems everybody wants to be on the Internet.

As subscriptions to CD-ROM catalogues are costly, access to Internet would, in our opinion, save not only time but money.

At present the Internet can be easily ignored, but as we leap into the 21st century, there will come a time when we will all need to access it.

Since the industrial revolution, it is frightening, and exciting how technologically advanced we have become.

Remember a computer named Hal in the movie 2001 a space odyssey? He spoke! This is now a reality.

We can get carried away in thinking about the future and we can get paranoid about losing our jobs, but computers still need people to run them. We are the drivers, it's only our lack of imagination that can limit us. Which reminds me of a quote I once read by Charles Kettering, an American inventor, "our interest is in the future because we are going to spend the rest of our lives there."

Yes, I've always felt technicians belong in the future. Hey, we've experienced the Internet, now it's up to you! So, ... may the force be with you!
I work in the Document Supply Service of the National Library of Australia in Canberra. The area has a staff of 27 with temporary staff added in peak times and I am supervisor of one of four groups. We supply loans and copies to other libraries in Australia and overseas. Since the introduction of ABN in 1980 we have seen many technological changes for information retrieval and document delivery. In my experience the introduction of new technology rarely runs smoothly. In presenting this paper I would like to tell you our experiences of implementing and the ongoing use of three of the latest technologies: ARIEL, ADONIS and UnCover AUSTRALIA.

ARIEL is a high speed electronic document transmission service using AARNet and Internet, and is an inexpensive way of supplying high quality and instant documents. The program was devised in the United States with no support centre in Australia. We first had the DOS version of ARIEL installed in July 1992. The scanning of each page took 30 seconds and staff required some time to adjust to it as it is far more sensitive to light than a photocopier. Because of the scanning time and staff time we decided to limit the pages scanned to no more than 20 pages. At this time we were supplying to some New South Wales and Victorian universities as well as a university in Hong Kong.

In February 1994 a new 6 months trial Windows Beta version was loaded. This proved a real headache as we were running the DOS version in the mornings and the Windows version in the afternoons. As this version was 3 months late being implemented, an Australian coordinator, who had been appointed by ARIEL, was no longer available. The unenviable task was unofficially and reluctantly taken up by one of our librarians in Document Supply. This involved considerable time spent in phoning other libraries using ARIEL, discussing problems, comparing notes and trying to coordinate times for running both systems.

Articles began to queue as those using the Windows version began to experience problems and would sign off. Libraries were also switching from one version to the other at different times causing files to queue. While the National Library's workstation is dedicated to ARIEL only, I believe other libraries use other programs on their PC as well, thereby blocking transmission until ARIEL is signed back on again. We struggled through with these two versions for 4 months.

Between July and August we had so many problems that we were unable to transmit for 5 weeks. After this it was decided to run only the Windows version, which unfortunately, excluded some libraries from ARIEL transmission. This made our life a lot easier however.

In September the trial ended and the final version was loaded. One enhancement was that we were now able to also transmit to the DOS version ARIEL libraries through Windows. This has been an improvement on the trial version, although for no reason a file will believe it has already been sent, causing it to freeze the rest in the queue. The only solution is then to print the offending file and send the article in the mail.

Since early this year, the increasing popularity of the Internet has caused file transfer problems. Our current procedure is to reboot the computer morning and night and release the files again hoping to clear any problems. Problem files are printed and sent by mail. We receive worldwide mail relating to ARIEL on the Internet and it is comforting to know that the United States libraries are experiencing the same problems that we are.

We are currently transferring over 3000 files per year and expect this to increase. These files are being transferred to 1 site in South Africa, 1 in Singapore, 2 in Hong Kong, 3 in Canada, 5 in the United States, 3 in New Zealand and 9 in Australia in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania.

ADONIS is a CD-ROM document retrieval system containing the full text of over 900 biomedical and related journals. It originates from the Netherlands and is produced by several publishing companies. The index for all of the journals is on the hard drive and every month when more CD-ROMs are added this index is updated also. We first trialled an earlier version of ADONIS with 1977-1978 journal titles. As the number of CD-ROMs
grew this was quite cumbersome as each CD-ROM had to be manually inserted into the drive after finding it on
the index. After a couple of years the hardware died a natural death as it was never able to be repaired.

In November 1992, another, more improved version of ADONIS was installed, containing 480 1990 plus titles.
This had a juke box arrangement which held 100 CD-ROMs, stacked 50 each side. The use of the indexes to
find articles was somewhat better than the earlier version but still could do with improvement. As the CD-
ROMs grew we needed to add another juke box. During this time we had some down time when the system
refused to work and our long suffering Systems people would shake their heads and finally get it going.

A typical first search on ADONIS would involve typing the year, volume number, issue number and first page
of article. If this did not display the article a search on journal title is usually next. This will indicate whether
the issue wanted has been loaded and will give a list of its articles. An author or title search would normally be
the last resort. It is a peculiarly of the system that an article can be found on the index by doing one type of
search but not found doing it another way.

In June 1994 a Windows version was installed. This was much better to use, but we still had problems. Our
Systems people could not get it to queue the printing, so it meant that each article had to be searched on the
index and printed individually. As printing takes quite a while a lot of time was wasted in waiting. This
problem was finally overcome after a few months and the improvement was dramatic. Meanwhile, we had run
out of space in the two juke boxes and had to install a third one. This caused all sorts of problems, whole
chunks of indexes would be missing, or an article would only half print out. It was finally found that the cables
between the juke boxes and the PC were too long, and this was interfering with transmission. When new CD-
ROMs and indexes were added, problems could also occur.

This year the problems seem to have been ironed out by the ADONIS company and problems are fairly minor.
The advantages of having this work station as opposed to hard copy with the shelving, retrieval, photocopying
and reshelving is considerable. One CD-ROM takes up the space of approximately 86cm of shelving of
volumes which does not sound much, but over 5 years is 225 metres of shelving without taking into
consideration the need for expansion. This last year Document Supply Service retrieved over 3500 articles
from the system which is 5% of our total photocopying.

UnCover AUSTRALIA is a rapid document delivery service that supplies up to date information and the speedy
supply of faxed articles within 36 hours. The tables of contents of over 14,000 journals can be searched on the
UnCover database. UnCover is a private company operating from Denver, Colorado. UnCover AUSTRALIA
is a remote site supplying faxed tables of contents of selected Australian and South Pacific journals held in the
National Library of Australia. For convenience the UnCover AUSTRALIA remote site office is situated at the
National Library of Australia near the Document Supply Service. An UnCover person is employed for 4 1/2
hours per day from Tuesday to Saturday, to cover the United States working week. Australian libraries can
access UnCover through AARNet or a gateway from ABN/Ozline.

In November and December 1993 the last three years’ tables of contents were photocopied from over 400
selected journals by Document Supply staff. This amounted to many boxes, which were sent by courier to
Denver for inclusion on their database. We were told that the service was to start on 1 June 1994. A
workstation was set up and interviews were held in April for the needed staff member. The workstation was set
up and the software arrived before June and was loaded. We had the new employee working in our Section,
getting to know the routine for 2 weeks prior to June. A representative from Denver had arrived in the last
week in May to meet the new employee and trial the equipment.

You could not blame us for expecting there to be problems. We were amazed. It went off without a hitch.
Tables of contents from current journals are being faxed to Denver daily. Articles are being scanned and
transmitted over Internet to Denver where the article is stored on their computer. A copy is then faxed to the
requester. Should this article be requested again in the future, UnCover in Denver will supply it direct from
their database.

Earlier this year we were experiencing problems with logging onto UnCover in Denver and files would
sometimes take more than a day to transfer. New software was supplied by UnCover and loaded in April which
has corrected this problem. UnCover AUSTRALIA is currently supplying over 1500 tables of contents per year
and in excess of 1800 articles per year.

ARIEL, ADONIS, and UnCover AUSTRALIA at the National Library of Australia 109
SUMMARY

ADONIS is a technology which saves considerable shelf space, is less time consuming to use, and is far more cost effective than hard copy. However, it does not take account of the Selection Policy for serials in the National Library. The serials selected for ADONIS are done so by that company and all must be subscribed to. The National Library's current policy is to cut down on overseas serials and this is not possible with those serials on ADONIS. UnCover AUSTRALIA has encouraged international access to Australian and Pacific articles which is a benefit to our region. With the decrease in subscriptions to overseas serials Australia wide, the gateway to the UnCover database enables Australian libraries easily access a wider range of journals. ARIEL, when files transfer immediately, is far advanced to the current method of photocopying, despatching and posting. However, there is little Company backup and it relies on an external system, in this case the Internet, which, because of its popularity, is subject to influences that are beyond our control and will probably cause us increasing problems in the not too distant future.
THE VIRTUAL GO AHEAD: A LIBRARY TECHNICIAN’S EXPERIENCE WITH
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VIRTUAL CAMPUS IN A UNIVERSITY
EXTERNAL LIBRARY

Lothar Retzlaff

SUMMARY

The Virtual Campus gives students and staff the electronic equivalent of on-campus facilities. Access is gained using computer and communications technology. Both staff and students can have access. When connected, students are able to post electronic mail to each other and to the library, access the library catalogue system, explore remote data bases, and read notice boards. They can submit and receive work electronically and engage in real time on-line conversations. The Virtual Campus can be entered any time, day or night.

Through the experiences of a Library technician in charge of Virtual Campus in the External library at Edith Cowan University (ECU). This paper will present conclusions as to the impact of the new technology for users of the campus library services and the strategies required by the Library technician in delivering new service demands.

Introduction

In April 1994 I was employed as the technician in charge of the External Library at Edith Cowan University when the University gave the “virtual library” the go ahead. The External Library was located at the Claremont campus of the five campus Edith Cowan University, approximately six kilometres from the central business district of Perth in Western Australia. The External Library became a focal point of on-line access to the University Library's resources at this time through its involvement in Virtual Campus. This paper will focus on the role of the Library technician in the Virtual Campus Library and its response to the changes in demand from the traditional Library services.

At this time the Library was being devolved from the Claremont campus into a larger new library at the Joondalup campus. According to a study of the use of the External Library, by those with on-line access, the traditional loans services were low due to the “inconvenience” of borrowing materials through request forms and postage. This correlated with relatively low requests for on-line requests for items and reference services arranged by the External Library, most likely due to an increase in the use of literature services delivering a wider range of journal titles held in the Library’s general collection. It was felt therefore that users would be better served with wider Library access. Thus it seemed that the traditional library services seemed at odds with the new technology.

It was at this time that the Library established Virtual Campus mailboxes (electronic mail addresses) for all campuses and the External Library staff would be responsible for tending these mailboxes. The Virtual Campus gave local and distance education students the equivalent of on campus facilities. The mailboxes added the equivalent of on campus Library facilities. It was at this time that I was appointed as the Library technician in charge of the External Library’s day to day running.

The Virtual Campus

Access to the Virtual Campus is gained using a personal computer and modem along a standard telephone line. The software should allow VT100 emulation. As this is an industry standard, software is readily available. Telephone costs are the same as a local call and most communication costs are charged to the University Auspac account. Each student is given an allowance based on geographic location. External students using local modems on AARNet/Internet connections do not generate time and volume charges and therefore incur no costs.

Once connected to the Virtual Campus students are able to post mail to their tutors and to each other, read bulletin boards, submit assignment work and receive returned assignments, engage in real time conversations or
chat sessions and explore remote data bases through AARNet and the Internet, including direct access through the University Library to First Search and UnCover. Each student has an individual mailbox address on the system. Each user of the Virtual Campus is given an external studies package which contains information on the specific services which are available 24 hours a day. These are:

**messages:** Students can exchange electronic mail (e-mail) messages with tutors and other students. Students can also exchange e-mail with people on the Internet, as this option has full Internet mail capabilities. Everyone has their own mailbox address on the system which ensures that mail is private.

**chat:** This is an open forum for real-time interactive talk, the virtual equivalent of the on-campus coffee shop or the break out session. Particular "rooms" are designated as tutorial rooms which can be booked by lecturers and tutors for student tutorials. the General Chat area can be used for socialising at any time. Any number of chat rooms can be created to become the virtual equivalent of board rooms and common rooms.

**talk:** Private conversations between two people are possible using the talk facility. Tutors may use this facility to counsel students or to give additional private tuition. Individuals may get together to discuss a shared work assignment or simply to provide mutual support. Any number of private chats can be running simultaneously.

**library:** The Edith Cowan University library catalogue is available to enable students to search for books and materials. External students of the University will be able to reserve and request books and materials on-line. Access to other Perth universities' library catalogue systems and other libraries, for example the Library and Information Service of Western Australia and the Australian National Library, is also provided.

**notice boards:** These are established to provide a public posting area for items of general and group interests. Lecturers are able to set up notice boards for particular courses or units or topics and post notices to them for the students to read. Boards are grouped within topic areas such as general information, faculty information, course information, special interest groups, social notes and other topics as the need arises. Students also are able to post notices and, in the Social Boards area, set up notice boards.

**send files (up-load):** Students are able to send files to tutors. These files may be assignments or portions of work for which feedback or assistance is required.

**receive files (down-load):** Participants can down-load files that are stored on the system. These may be returned assignments, an article of interest, an update to a technical manual, or a sample program from a tutor.

**Internet:** Authorised users have access to the world wide resources of Internet through the AARNet link of the Virtual Campus system. These resources include Gopher, Network News and Hytelnet. These provide facilities such as database browsing and searching, document retrieval and communications with other Internet users.

**other connections:** Students with specialist needs that can be met by other computers at the university (for example access to an ADA compiler or SPSS (Software)) are able to access the relevant computers via the Virtual Campus.

At the end of 1994 there were 550 registered users of the Virtual Campus. Approximately 250 of these were External Students. These external student library users reach the External Library from around Australia and Internationally from places such as Osaka, South Africa, Seoul and Singapore. Therefore it is not unusual to receive requests from Thursday Island, on the northern tip of Cape York Peninsula, or from a student studying in London who used to get anxious about postage costs.

**Virtual Campus and the Library**

Research on the Virtual Campus began in 1990 by the Department of Computing Science at Edith Cowan University. As the Virtual Campus developed the Computing Department recognised that the Library was a major contributor to this development. The Computing Department provided technical and systems support but increasingly the Library supplied the organisational link to accessing the Library on-line in the form of menus help screens and electronic forms. Since the Virtual Campus was designed to help External students it was a natural progression that the Library increased its influence to help remote users acquire access to resources.
The Library totally developed access points to library use. The External Librarian and the Computing Department staff worked together and enhanced the understanding of each other's area of work.

It was important that the Library maintain its presence in the developments at this stage. The External Librarian had carte blanche to add to the Virtual Campus. Consequently the Library was responsible for putting in request forms, FirstSearch and UnCover. The Computing Department had previously not been aware of these facilities. In other areas of the Virtual Campus there had not been a huge response from lecturing and tutoring staff to the on-line facility to talk to students. Teaching staff it seems, are not openly enthusiastic about entering into on-line communication on the Virtual Campus. This particular point would be a paper on its own, but in brief, as tutoring staff became more accessible it was apparent that the demands for their time from on-line students meant a change in the way they would communicate. Indeed much the same could be said about us as Library Technicians and the way we will have to deal with people that in the past we knew as library users, customers, the people who had no option but to speak to, and enter our libraries in the traditional way. Our experience in the External Library showed us that the people who are our customers will drive the changes, perhaps in ways that we may find not only challenging but frankly threatening to the way in which we have traditionally operated.

There is no doubt that the services that the library offered early in 1994 enhanced the Virtual Campus. This was confirmed by a telephone survey done at the end of the first semester 1994 which revealed that the cost of a computer and modem was a major factor in accessing the Virtual Campus. At a cost of approximately three thousand dollars the addition of library access made the three thousand dollar purchase more attractive.

Take the example of a Masters student living in the remote north of Australia who allowed themselves three thousand dollars travel costs and accommodation to come to Perth and search on-line for information. In this case the purchase of a computer to access the Virtual Campus was an obvious choice.

An example of the use of Virtual Campus generally is Marion, a student in Edith Cowan’s Associate Diploma of Library and Information Science who regards highly the Virtual Campus because it allows her to “meet other people”. Marion is a regular participant of Sunday chat sessions with other students across the country. “Before I joined Virtual Campus I thought I was the only external student on the East Coast. Now I know I’m not and I have friends in Darwin, Ceduna, all over.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of students enrolled at ECU in</th>
<th>1994</th>
<th>17276</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total number of External studies students in</td>
<td>1994</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2890</td>
<td>2753</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total number of students on Virtual Campus in</td>
<td>1994</td>
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<tr>
<td>External students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students</td>
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<td>Staff</td>
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The Library Technician and the Virtual Campus

What role does the Library technician have in the commitment of the Library to the Virtual Campus? The figures above show that there are five hundred and fifty students using the Virtual Campus. These users require support in using and accessing the Library remotely and in utilising the resources offered in a similar way as users approach the reference or information desk to ask advice. However these methods of access and the requests may arrive in a language and format totally different. The Library Technician's role is, as mine was in April 1994, to be a consultant and front line representative, usually by telecommunication line.

From the initial contact, modem to network interface, I was required to understand from our campus mailboxes the problems users have with handling technology. I will labour this point as it was an inherent prerequisite, to providing the services to distance education users at the External Library, that we have patience and understanding of the way users become familiar with what we require. No longer for these people does the traditional library service exist as they knew it. At this point we ask of them to find electronic forms for copyright declarations on the boards of a Virtual Campus mailbox. After this for a while they are left in our

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hands as they ponder whether their requests will be filled as they have no confirmation. Often in the course of dealing with a request on Virtual Campus I would receive a phone call asking if their request had been received. Much in the same way as when one sends a fax with the cold hard evidence in one hand and an ethereal sense of hope in the other.

So what we need is a technical vocabulary, some background in computing or at least a good support network. Obviously referencing skills at a Library technician level is required with some knowledge of UnCover, AARNet and CD-ROM. At the Edith Cowan University Library we have a faculty based Library team. This approach deals with complex requests referred by the External Library. These requests were transferred on the phone to the various faculty librarians. The faculty librarians were given details of requirements and the contact details of the student to deal with requests.

Conclusion

Some five hundred years ago in Europe the development of the printed book began. At this moment, we as Library Technicians are witnessing our users/clients reaching past us to information that traditionally the library helped to deliver. It is now that we must embrace the service strategies to meet the demands for this network knowledge. The “virtual gateway” to information can still be centred and accessed through the library as has traditionally been done when dealing with the demands for library and information services.

Perhaps as para-professionals, as Library Technicians we can grasp the opportunity and lift our profession up a notch by meeting this challenge. Certainly in my discussions with the developers of the Virtual Campus at Edith Cowan University, Library Technicians with their background in technology and their history of handling library media are in an impressive position to advance their role in the future of libraries.

Finally, it may be of interest that a significantly large percentage of Virtual Campus students are students in the Associate Diploma of Library Technology.
THE NATIONAL LIBRARY NDIS PROJECT TO REPLACE ABN AND OZLINE

Caroline Scharrer

The National Library of Australia is planning for the future with the state-of-the-art National Document and Information Service (NDIS) Project. In a time of rapidly expanding and sometimes overwhelming choices, the ability for individuals to discover and choose among worldwide networked information resources is critical. NDIS will offer all Australians access to a world of information through one easy to use service.

In my presentation today, I will be giving an overview of how the Project will replace, extend and improve the services currently offered by the National Library of Australia, and consequently I will begin to demonstrate how the Project will change and improve your working environment.

We will look at:
- The beginnings
- The phases or timing
- Searching
- Access
- Document delivery
- Client support
- Keeping up to date

The National Document and Information Service Project is being developed for the National Library of Australia by CSC Australia, a major systems integration and software development company. The two and half year project commenced in October 1994.

NDIS is only the working title of the joint project between the national libraries of Australia and New Zealand. In the very near future we will be announcing the new name for the service. The Mission of the Project is:

To facilitate access to information in print and electronic forms held by libraries and other information providers in Australia, New Zealand and overseas.

The aim of the project is to position the two national libraries to meet their strategic objectives over the next decade. The strategic objectives recognise the trends towards an increasingly technologically based and information conscious society, the increasing amounts of information stored in electronic form, and the rapid developments in telecommunications which are providing global access to information via networks.

Therefore, to meet these strategic objectives, we will be replacing and extending a number of key online information services currently offered. These include the National Library’s Ozline service and NZ’s Kiwinet, two national databases hosting services providing access to a range of mainly Australasian citation and full text databases. It also includes the Australian and New Zealand bibliographic Networks, ABN and NZBN which provide national union catalogue and bibliographic utility services to libraries in Australia and New Zealand respectively.

To ensure that the Project’s services are delivered as soon as possible, and to assist in the smooth transition of users to the new service, the Project has been divided into a number of phases. Work commenced on Phase Zero in October 1994 and concluded in April this year. Phase Zero was the analysis and design phase. This work formed the foundation for the development of all future phases of the project. Phase Zero can be likened to the foundations of a house. The foundations are essential, but you don’t actually see anything which you can use. Some of the results of Phase Zero include:

- a more detailed definition of users’ requirements (This includes who the clients will be, for example, libraries, students, doctors, lawyers, researchers, teachers, government and members of the public. It also includes factors such as support for other languages, and support for self training on the new system.);
- a definition of the hardware which the system will run on, and how the devices interface to each other;
- a definition of which software will run on which hardware;
- a detailed definition of the data structures required to support both the hosted databases (Ozline and Kiwinet) and the national bibliographic data (ABN and NZBN);
- overall timing for the Project.

In a project as large as this, it is essential to have very clear priorities. As the first step on our journey, we have defined a product which we should be able to release to the market place in the second half of 1996.

Phase 1 commenced in April this year. The primary focus of Phase 1 is on the provision of improved search discovery tools. This literally means users will have access to a range of powerful search and retrieval tools and they will be able to place requests for documents they have identified and located.

Regardless of the level of experience or specialisation, accessing the new system will be user friendly. The system will take into account the level of experience of the user, so that novice users may be guided to the information they need step by step. In time, novice users may become expert users. Expert users, because of their understanding of the retrieval software will be able to take shortcuts. The retrieval software will guide users through the mass of information available and will assist them in finding and outputting relevant information which meets their needs as quickly, efficiently and as cost effectively as possible. The aim will be to instil all users with confidence and minimise frustration.

The searching of information on local or overseas databases will be achieved through powerful and comprehensive retrieval software which supports features such as Boolean searching of keywords, retrieval of linked documents, full text searching, proximity searching, left and right hand truncation, the ability to display and build on previous searches, the ability to browse indexes and exploit linkages between related data and relevance weighting.

The service will search across all physical forms in which information is held. For example, a key word search on 'Banjo Paterson' could provide a result that includes descriptions of books, journal articles, oral history recordings and photographs. You will then be able to obtain that information in a variety of ways including ordering a fax of the document or by placing an interlibrary loan request. If it is a full text document, you will be able to view if directly on your PC or print it out.

The powerful and sophisticated search service will also ensure the accuracy and relevance of search results for even the most inexperienced user. It will include full Boolean searching, relevance ranking, and the ability to search across multiple databases, including external databases, through transparent gateways. A range of directory services, thesauri and reference files will provide a knowledge base for controlled access to the data.

Full support will be provided in Phase 1 for extended Roman character script, diacritics and special characters. This will enable support for all languages based on the extended Roman script, including Australian Aboriginal languages, and Maori. You will be able to take advantage of NDIS from anywhere in Australia with just a personal computer and widely available software and connection devices.

The new system will be user friendly and available from a PC in the library, home, or office. If you are a frequent or regular user, a state-of-the-art Windows based graphical user interface (GUI) will optimise your access to the service. The GUI, a pictorial point and click interface, much like the Windows/Macintosh screens you are familiar with in your work place, will be simple to learn and quick to use for all levels of experience and will enable you to exploit the system to the fullest. To take advantage of the Windows GUI, a 486 PC with a speed of at least 33 MHz and memory of at least 8Mb will be needed. Another option for accessing NDIS will be by a World Wide Web browser, such as Netscape or Mosaic, which is publicly available on the Internet.

To meet the needs of the widest range of users, a number of options for connection to NDIS will be available, including Internet, dial up (Austpac) and leased line.

Once Phase 1 services are implemented, we will then focus on implementing the second stage of the Project. Some services outlined for Phase 2 include:
- full support for the whole document delivery cycle;
- full range of services supporting upline loading, online input/edit and product delivery needed to meet the business needs of information providers.
At the end of this second stage, which may be divided into several product releases, the Project as it is currently defined will be completed. In the two and a half year time frame, we will have migrated all of the libraries' existing services to the new platform, delivered major enhancements to these services and established an infrastructure to enable further development of the system.

The Project will provide an efficient and effective document delivery function for both individuals and libraries. You will have the power to order information from your desktop in a variety of forms at the cost and speed of delivery you choose. Documents will be able to be requested from a range of services, including document image databases, commercial suppliers and interlibrary loan.

When you search a database such as Dialog or Ozline, and found a useful citation, it is no longer acceptable that you then have to search a different database to find the bibliographic and holdings information. Database services of the future must be designed to link citations to bibliographic records. The design of the system will take account of this requirement, both for the Ozline databases and for the additional overseas databases which NDIS will ultimately host. Every citation stored on the system, will be linked precisely to the corresponding serial record (or conference proceeding record) and, through those records, to the holdings. When a link has been made from an article citation to an item description, the next requirement is for a locating or directory mechanism which points from the item description to the actual document resources, be they printed, multimedia or electronic.

Currently there are several ways of discovering the location of printed and electronic documents, including library catalogues, union catalogue databases, individual commercial document supplier databases and Internet indexing systems.

The Project will incorporate features that exploit all of the above approaches in one easy service. It will incorporate a massive national union catalogue database.

High quality support from the National Library of Australia, including help desk services, documentation and training, will complement the range of online help and tutorials provided by the new service. Quality management information, including online usage reports, will assist libraries in the cost effective management of system use. To further assist management, you will receive a single itemised statement for all services utilised through the service. There will also be a range of payment options to suit a variety of customer needs including credit card access and billing, subscription billing and site licences.

The Project will provide access to a rich array of national and international information by a single set of commands. Australian heritage information, for example, will be cost effectively preserved and made widely available on the system through the latest digital storage techniques. This means that the entire pictorial, photographic and map collection will be scanned into the system. At a click of a mouse button, you will be able to look at the image of a rare book, map or photo.

The National Library of Australia's existing databases will be moved to the new system along with a suite of new databases which will be announced shortly. The 12 million bibliographic records currently on ABN and the 35 comprehensive Australian databases now on Ozline will be moved to NDIS over the next three years. This will greatly improve the accessibility of these records and databases which cover a range of topics from science to sport, social sciences and law. Enchanted access will also be provided to UnCover Australia, the rapid document delivery service containing table of contents for more than 17,000 national and international journals.

With the rapid pace of the project, it is vital that you keep up to date with current developments. There is a variety of means open for you to access the latest developments. ABN news with Ozline news is published every two months and is distributed to all ABN customers. This is to date, the most comprehensive avenue giving full explanations of all the developments. It is also useful to serve as a retrospective document, outlining the progress from the start of the NDIS project. NDIS-L is an email discussion list. Everyone is encouraged to join this list. It provides a way for you to air your comments, ideas and suggestions about the developments of the new service.

Check out the National Library's home page on the World Wide Web. As well as information about the Project, you can read the latest issue of ABN news, see what exhibitions we are planning and find out more.
about the National Library of Australia's services. User meetings such as the Annual ABN User Meeting and regular state based user meetings are other avenues where information can be found.

The Marketing team of the National Library travel to most library and related conferences and seminars. Late last year and early this year, we travelled to all the capital cities and Townsville and gave NDIS Presentations. There was an open invitation for all to attend. We are planning a second round of similar presentation later on this year. Read ABN news or subscribe to NDIS-L to find out when these will be taking place.

The National Library of Australia is planning for the future with the state-of-the-art NDIS Project. Using leading edge technology and accessible from a personal computer in the library, home, or office, the new service will provide an outstanding solution for the future. As a one-stop-shop, it will facilitate the efficient search, location, request and delivery of information of all kinds including books, journal articles, multimedia and electronic documents. Whether you are a first time user or a skilled researcher, a range of sophisticated tools will maximise your ability to discover, choose and obtain information.
TECHS AND THE NET: HOW INTERNET IS CHANGING THE ROLE OF TECHNICIANS

Patricia Wilson

SUMMARY: The Northern Territory Department of Mines and Energy (DME) has been an AARNet subscriber for three years, and now connects to the Internet via the NT Government AARNet link. The Department is in the process of setting up a World Wide Web Server as well as an internal network interface utilising Mosaic. The library has been given responsibility for content and structure and is also a major player at the level of document capture and document presentation style.

The goal of the Department is to make all of its public information (reports, legislation, statistics, etc.) available worldwide at no cost to users of the Internet. DME’s library technicians are closely involved with these technological developments. Technicians markup ASCII documents using Hypertext Markup Language (HTML), digitise text and graphic documents, photographs and slides; and are also involved in database loading and cataloguing.

NOTATION

Gif: Graphical Interchange Format. Gif is a format type for image documents.
Home page: A document coded in HTML which acts as a home ("top level") document for an organisation or a general topic. It typically has pointers to other related documents.
HTML Hypertext Markup Language is a specific markup language defined within the context of Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML) for documents on the World Wide Web.
Hyperlink A method to provide access to other information from within a (hypertext) document. Hyperlinks are implemented on the World Wide Web (WWW) with "anchors." Each anchor defines two things - a location or "hot spot" within the current document and a reference to an item which will be retrieved when the hot spot is activated, usually with a click. The referenced item may be another section within the current document, or another document stored anywhere on the Web.
Hypertext A document with hyperlinks.
Mosaic A "point and click" graphical interface (client software) used on the Internet to browse (search) for an access information. It was developed by the National Center for Super-Computing Applications (NCSA) at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and released to the public in 1993. The program will run under most windowing types of systems such as Windows PC and Macintosh client software as well as UNIX.
OCR Optical Character Recognition is a program that scans a document and recognizes individual characters. The scanned document can be saved as an editable document.
Public server A local computer that controls public access to local information.
Raster Image files may be saved as raster. This format of image has a display set up by pixels being turned either off or on.
SGML Standard Generalized Markup Language is a standard for defining a markup language to structure information in a document or set of documents.
Telnet Internet protocol providing connection ("remote login") to a remote computer. Also, generally the name of the program implementing the protocol.
Tiff Targa Interchange File Format. TIFF is a 24 bit format type of image document.
WWW World Wide Web of information was invented by Tim Berners-Lee and colleagues at CERN’s Laboratory for Particle Physics in Geneva, Switzerland. It allows any part of a document to be joined to any part of any other document which conforms to the hypertext protocol, thus creating a "web." Documents may include graphics, video and sound.

1 NT DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND ENERGY LIBRARY

The Department of Mines and Energy mission statement is to facilitate and administer the responsible exploration, development and management of mineral and energy for the benefit of Territorians. Information
Services Branch (ISB) is a recently formed amalgamation of traditional library services with Registry and Geoscience Resource Sections. ISB seeks to supply all clients with quality information from whatever source in whatever format at minimal cost without compromising speed. There are two library branches within the department, the main library in Darwin and a smaller library branch that supports the Alice Springs office. The libraries provide information and research support to departmental staff, mining companies, students and the general public.

The Darwin branch library staffing consists of one Branch Librarian, one Senior Library technician, and two Library Technicians (one dealing with "traditional" library duties, the other working on the "electronic projects"). The library’s collection consists of approximately 10000 monographs/reports in the general and reference collections; 600 journal titles; 1500 Australian Geological Survey Organisation reports; 6,500 company reports and 1200 petroleum reports.

A Branch Librarian is the sole staff member of the Alice Springs branch library, with a collection comprising approximately 1100 monographs, 70 journal titles, 3000 pamphlets and a small collection of company and petroleum reports.

2 INTERNET

DME joined the information super highway in 1991, and since then the library has become more involved with the department’s commitment to make available on the World Wide Web (WWW) all its public information. DME’s home page can be found at “http://www.dme.nt.gov.au”. From here, among other information, the library’s OPAC catalogue is available. The Department also maintains a second web server with a greater range of access points for internal use.

DME uses Mosaic as its internal interface for accessing all databases, online legislation, statistical information and general departmental information. Part of the library’s involvement with Mosaic is that the Chief Librarian and Technicians are responsible for the creation and maintenance of the alphabetical index, listing all databases, other resources and documents on Mosaic. The library is also responsible for the appearance of textual and graphical documentation, and ensuring that the content on Mosaic is in the correct format and position. A sample of the documents the library is responsible for maintaining are Legislation; Legal Opinions on the Mining Act, which are available only to DME employees; DME Organisational Structure chart; Index of departmental services; Information Services Branch Procedures; Public Information Sheets on each mine; and biographical details of our Minister and Departmental Secretary.

3 LIBRARY TASKS ENHANCED BY INTERNET

Some of the more general library tasks that now involve using Internet are inter library loans, acquisitions and reference work. Library Technicians are involved with all three tasks, though the Darwin Branch Librarian often deals with reference queries.

3:1 Inter Library Loans

DME’s Inter Library Loans Officer, now receives inter library loan requests via email, as well as by the more traditional means of AACOBS forms and ABN ILL Subsystem. This email option is available to international libraries as well as interstate libraries. Inter Library Loan requests have been made to international libraries via email, though to date not all requests have been successful. The ILL officer also may search interstate or international library catalogues via the Web. This is done if the traditional methods of searching are unsuccessful as it can become a hit and miss procedure, if the officer must “guess” which library might hold the item. UnCover and UnCover S.O.S are both available via Internet. Due to the speed of search and delivery, this option is being used more often for obscure journal articles.

3:2 Acquisitions

Due to NT Government regulations, all purchases must be made within the NT if at all possible, but at times we are given permission to purchase items from interstate or overseas. When this permission is granted, the Acquisition Officer will telnet to DA Books and search if the item is in stock. If it is, an electronic order can be placed immediately. If an item must be purchased from an overseas supplier, more often than not an email address is printed on the publisher’s blurb, the Acquisitions Officer emails the publisher with the order.
3:3 Reference Work
Even though the Librarian handles the majority of reference queries, library technicians also become involved with surfing and searching the Net for information relevant to the clients. This information may be a particular home page on the Web, an email discussion group address or a new group available through Internet News. Technicians are encouraged to search Internet for approximately 30 minutes a day looking for any information that may be of use to any departmental officer. This has produced useful information for many divisions within the department; officers agree that it is a worthwhile service.

4 IMAGING

Many of the documents appearing on Mosaic and the Web have a graphical content. These graphical images are often produced in digital format by image scanning, or by saving textual information as a digital image. DME's library has three scanners, a Hewlett Packard ScanJet IIc - used for "flatbed" image scanning; a Fujitsu image scanner, using the form feed attachments to scan multiple page documents and a Canon Film Adaptor, which enables the scanning of 35mm slides and larger transparencies.

4:1 Scanning of Company Reports
A Geolimage database, comprising scanned images of non-confidential company reports written and lodged by mining and exploration companies, is controlled by the library. A library technician has been employed to scan the company exploration report collection and attach basic reference information. As at January 1995 a total of 100,000 pages of data had been scanned and saved. This database of digital images will be linked to a comprehensive catalogue of the company reports as well as an interactive map of the NT. All of this information will become available over the Web. This will enable mining companies worldwide free access to information regarding mining and exploration within the Northern Territory. The scanner used for this application is the Fujitsu Image Scanner. Using the form feed attachment the technician is able to scan up to 15 complete reports a day. This includes unbinding, photocopying of poor quality pages and reducing A3 plans to A4 and then rebinding the report. The library holds a collection of approximately 10 000 company reports and receive approximately 1000 new reports per year. On completion of the retrospective scanning it has been estimated that there will be in excess of one and a quarter million pages digitised. The library is keen to see changes to the Mining Act allowing companies to lodge their reports in electronic format.

4:2 Slide Imaging
This is another type of scanning techniques have become involved in. DME has a comprehensive collection of 35mm and 70mm colour and black and white photographic slides and photographs, which are being scanned into a Photographic collection database. This database will eventually be available on the Web. While entries are still being added, the database is available only to departmental staff. At present 1375 slides/photographs have been digitised using the Hewlett Packard ScanJet IIc image scanner and the Canon Film Adaptor. On completion of this project a total of 10 000 slides and photographs will have been digitised. Each image is given a short catalogue entry: Title, Photographer, Date item photographed, whether item is black & white or colour, positive or negative, and a short descriptive entry describing the photograph. The database can be searched by Keyword in the descriptor field; Record number, Film, Style, Colour, and size. This provides the option for very precise search strategies. Some of the uses of materials from the database are for inclusion in departmental publications and for departmental displays.

4:3 Image Scanning
General Image scanning is done on the Hewlett Packard ScanJet IIc scanner, using Pixel software. The quality of image using this scanner is usually very high. If the original picture/image is of poor quality, the technician is generally able to enhance it, by varying the contrast and intensity of the image. The images are saved as gif files. These are images of the document that can not be edited. The gif file may be included within a HTML document appearing as a graphic within a textual file, or it can be added to Mosaic as a gif file by itself. An example of a gif file can be found at: http://www/major.html and a image within a HTML document can be found at: http://www/secretary.html. Technicians also scan images for departmental professional staff. These are usually used within publications being produced. The source of images can be wide and varied; photographs, photocopies and figures within other documents.

4:4 Legislation
Every piece of legislation for which the Minister of Mines & Energy is responsible (and all other relevant acts) are acquired as "consolidated working copies" from the NT Parliamentary Counsel, and added to the Mosaic
4:5 Optical Character Recognition (OCR)
The department is currently adding legal opinion on the Mining Act to its departmental server. Due to the confidentiality of this information, these opinions will not become available on the Web. The opinions appear within correspondence between DME and the NT Department of Law. Each sheet of correspondence in the Mining Opinions files have previously been scanned in as raster files using the Fujitsu image scanner. The reason for the bulk scanning of files is that eventually the department wants to have each file in existence digitised. When each piece of correspondence is to be OCRd, the raster file is converted to a tiff file using the image viewing software XV. Using Pixel software, the tiff file is opened and OCR is performed. Unfortunately the OCR program is not always able to recognize characters and a substantial amount of manual editing is required. Once the document has been OCRd and edited, the legal opinion is saved as an ASCII text file and marked up using HTML, linking the opinion to the relevant Acts. The HTML documents are saved on the departments internal server.

5 HYPERTEXT MARKUP LANGUAGE (HTML) AND HYPERLINKING

Each document on Mosaic is saved as an ASCII text document, and then must be marked up using HTML. This mark up language formats the text by giving the elements of text different levels of hierarchy, fonts, levels of boldness, italicizing, listing by number or bullet point, etc. As a document is being marked up, hyperlinks are also created. These hyperlinks anchor a phrase or line and link them to a completely new document, the "anchored" line appears as underlined text on Mosaic. An example of a document after markup is shown in figure 1. The information shown in the <*> angular brackets within figure 1 are the HTML formats. Each time a format is opened, i.e. </HTML> it must be closed at the end of the relevant text, i.e. </HTML>. These html formats do not appear when the document is loaded on the Web. Figure 2 shows how the document would appear on Mosaic.

```html
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE>
DME ISB Procedures
</TITLE>
</HEAD>
<BODY>
<HI> DME Information Services Branch Procedures</HI>
<HR>
<UL>
<LI><A HREF = "library.html">Library Services Procedures</A>
</LI>
<LI><A HREF = "records.html">Records Section procedures</A>
</LI>
<LI><A HREF = "grs.html">Geoscience Resource Section procedures</A>
</LI>
</UL>
</BODY>
<HTML>
```

figure 1. An example of an ASCII text document after markup using HTML

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DME Information Services Branch Procedures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Library Services Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Records Section Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Geoscience Resource Section Procedures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

figure 2. An example of a HTML document as it appears on Mosaic
Technicians working in DME libraries are all competent working with HTML and hyperlinking. As mentioned in section 3:4 the library has full responsibility for placing all legislation relevant to the Department onto Mosaic. The legislation is acquired on 3.5" disc in WordPerfect 5.1 format. The disc is loaded onto the DME Unix system and converted from WordPerfect 5.1 to ASCII text, then saved into a directory on the department’s public server. Each Act is then divided into separate files, split by parts within the Act. The Heading and Table of Provisions are kept in the original file, each file being saved within the same directory. The text is then marked up using HTML and hyperlinks are created from each content listing to the corresponding section within the part files. When creating links within the legislation, from one file to another, two “anchors” are required: one in the original file at the content listing to “hot spot” and assign a “name” to the corresponding section within the part file. The other, in the corresponding part file would be the assigned “name”. See figures 3a, 3b and 4. The “name anchor” must be a unique word or set of characters. It is this “name” that connects the two sets of data. Hyperlinking is used to connect databases and textual and or graphical documents to the home pages on Mosaic. DME library technicians have created and formatted a variety of documents which appear on Mosaic. An example of this is the Index to departmental services, which is an alphabetic listing of every document and database attached to Mosaic, each alpha character has its own home page and the documents/databases are listed alphabetically.

```
NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA
MINERAL ROYALTY ACT
As in force at 14 December 1992
TABLE OF PROVISIONS
Section
PART I - <A HREF="mining_royal.html#part1">PRELIMINARY</A>
1. <a href="minroyal1.html#SHO">Short title</a>
2. <a href="minroyal1.html#COM">Commencement</a>
3. <a href="minroyal1.html#APP">Application</a>
```

figure 3a. An example of a hyperlink within an original legislation file.

```
PART 1 - PRELIMINARY

I. SHORT TITLE
   This Act may be cited as the Mineral Royalty Act...
   
II. COMMENCEMENT
   This Act shall come into operation on 1 July 1982.

III. APPLICATION
   (1) Except as provided by this section, this Act...
```

figure 3b. An example of the corresponding “anchor” within the part file for the hyperlink.

```
NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA
MINERAL ROYALTY ACT
As in force at 14 December 1994
TABLE OF PROVISIONS
Section
PART I - PRELIMINARY
1. Short title
2. Commencement
3. Application
```

Figure 4. Example of how figure 3a would appear on Mosaic.
CONCLUSION

During my employment as a Library Technician with the Department of Mines and Energy library, my duties have changed a great deal. When I first joined DME in 1991 my duties were general special library paraprofessional tasks, including such work as Serials Management, Cataloguing, Acquisitions, Inter-Library Loans and supervision of staff. Since the library has become more involved with accessing and making use of Internet, my tasks have changed dramatically. I still supervise library staff, and handle Acquisitions, but these are the only "traditional" library duties I perform. The rest of my time is spent dealing with HTML, Imaging, OCRing and maintaining DME's Mosaic interface.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE LIBRARY TECHNICIAN IN COLLECTION MAINTENANCE AND RETRIEVAL: THE NATIONAL COLLECTION

Dianne Dahlietz and Eddie Smidmore

Introduction

The Stack Services Section of the National Library of Australia is responsible for retrieving material from the collections at readers' requests and for the day to day maintenance of the collections. The section has a staff of about thirty Administrative Service Officers who undertake a wide range of duties from moving books to searching databases or repairing bindings.

The Library holds on site a collection of approximately 5 million items. In addition to this a further 1 million items are held in a warehouse located 15 kilometres away from the main building. As the caretaker of Australia's national collection the Library has called on new technology, tools and methods in all areas to ensure effective control of, and efficient access to, a growing national collection.

In the past much of this work was performed by staff who did not have technical qualifications. The work was considered to be more manual than technical and the skills needed similar to those of factory storemen. Many of the staff, although not qualified library technicians, built up a great deal of expertise in classification and bibliographic skills. However, the demand for improved technology has created a need for staff with greater technical knowledge and skills to cope with a changing work environment – and the ideal person for the position is proving to be the library technician.

The skills that the library technician brings to an area like the Stacks have helped to change the working culture of the past and make this area a place where the library technician can positively contribute to the running of a very large library. The new technology not only creates a need for skilled workers, but also supports the work of the library technician, and in particular women, by reducing the requirement for highly physical, manual procedures and providing a greater diversity of tasks.

1. ISSUES AFFECTING LIBRARY TECHNICIANS EMPLOYED IN STACKS

1:1 Housing
A growing collection and its housing are issues that have dictated the need for complex collection arrangement. Splitting material by size or format in order to save space or moving material onsite have resulted in a further challenge to providing quick and accurate retrieval of material.

1:2 Client service
The Library faces a future of increased client focus. Effective and efficient servicing of client needs will be produced by a confident, flexible and knowledgeable approach to the work performed in the area. The library technician has a great deal to offer in developing work methods to best meet a growing user demand for access to the collection.

1:3 Binding
Financial restraints have lead to changes of policy regarding the binding of journals. A very high rate of photocopying of journal articles (through Document Supply service and Reading Room clientele) has also resulted in a need for greater access to individual issues (without the restrictions of bound volumes). This has created a demand for alternative methods of storing, preserving and maintaining collection items. The library technician has had to apply skills and knowledge, be innovative, and introduce practices and procedures to deal with changed conditions.

1:4 Electronic media
Non-print media, especially electronic, is increasingly having an impact on the collection. Issues of preservation, handling and access are creating a need for informed input from staff.
1:5 Occupational Health and Safety Issues.

2. HOW TECHNOLOGY, TOOLS AND METHODS AND THE LIBRARY TECHNICIAN HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE ADDRESSING OF THESE ISSUES

The splitting of runs and the isolation of special collections (e.g. rare books, strong room material, pooled material) and the segregation of the Australian collection from the overseas (octavo, quarto, folio and elephant folio, pamphlet) collections have over the years resulted in many location peculiarities and complexities.

As well as the need to develop methods and tools to assist with control, technology has been utilised to help technicians in the stacks cope with the physical implications associated with such a large and complex collection.

The National Library as a government body must remain in line with Australian Government policies and Occupational Health and Safety has increasingly become the subject of new policy. A safe and healthy workplace has become essential to all areas of the National Library. In particular, library technicians employed in the Stack areas have needed to introduce new technology to meet demands for a healthier workplace.

The nature of the job of technicians in the Stacks often involves many hours and kilometres of walking on hard floors. (One person was clocked at 15 kilometres in one day!) Lifting and moving material is also a component of the work in stacks. One of the major concerns is to reduce the effects of these physically demanding tasks, while maintaining an efficient delivery time to the Main Reading Room. These technologies include:

2:1 Transcar
The transcar travels from the western stack to the central stack, (a distance of approximately 500 metres) retrieving books for use in the Main Reading Room and returning them to the stacks. Transcar is computer driven, and library technicians in the stacks must understand commands to start up and shut down the system, and recognise the reasons for malfunctions. The introduction of the transcar to the stacks has also addressed OH & S concerns regarding people pushing heavy trolleys full of books.

2:2 Improved book lift
The Library has recently replaced an old, and due to breakdowns, inefficient book bucket lift. The new lift travels the height of the building in seconds, stopping at selected floors. Material coming from the stack areas is intended for use in the MRR. This new lift replaces previous procedures of manual retrieval of returned items from the MRR to the stack. As well as being able to provide a fast, more efficient delivery time to our readers, the new lift addresses OH & S issues surrounding the old one. The mechanics of this aged lift were "highly questionable", to the point of being a danger. OH & S requirements had recently put a stop to the "traditional" practice of the library technician (OIC) entering the lift well to correct faults, remove jammed buckets and retrieve books damaged in the process. This meant that every time a breakdown occurred a lift technician had to be called in to the building. Often this resulted in lengthy delays in delivery of material to readers.

In conjunction with staff from the building management section, library technicians working in stacks were asked to contribute to decisions regarding the selection of a new lift system. This involved looking at available systems taking into account the Library's own special requirements and budgetary constraints. The lift system was installed in the quiet period of December and January, minimising disruption to services.

2:3 Motorised scooters
Motorised scooters have been introduced into two stack areas: Lakeside stack, the largest, and Lower Ground 1 where material is retrieved from the Rare Books, Ephemera and Special Collection stacks as well as the main stack area on that floor. The use of scooters in the stacks has resulted in a reduction in the amount of time stack attendants spend on their feet in the working day. The National Library continues to look to technological advances in other industries which may be transferred to library work.

2:4 OPAC, cataloguing and circulation modules

2:4:1 Opac
The opening of the refurbished and expanded Main Reading Room in 1992 and the introduction of OPAC provided the public with far greater knowledge of what the Library holds. Due to the complexities of the different collections and their housing, technicians in the stacks also need to have access to the database. As the Library is closed access all retrieval of requested items is performed by stack staff. On a busy day the MRR processes approximately 2,000 requests for retrieval of items.

At this stage automated call slip printing has not been introduced, therefore all requests are hand written by readers. This in itself can contribute to the failure of stack staff to successfully locate the requested item. Poorly written call numbers, titles, etc., incorrectly transposed or incomplete call numbers all make it difficult to retrieve the correct item. Library technicians in the stacks have greatly reduced the statistics for unlocated material by competent use of the automated systems, ILMS and ABN. The percentage of items not successfully retrieved for readers has been reduced from 25.90% in 1992 to 6.50% in 1994.

Checking for correct call numbers, title information, publication details, location and holding information, and the many complexities of journal records (issues, title changes) calls for sound bibliographic skills. Library technicians can apply and develop their skills and knowledge to facilitate more efficient access to the collection.

2:4:2 Circulation module
The Library has not installed an automated circulation system. The nature of our client base is highly transitory, many people use the Library on a one-off basis – or simply to satisfy an interest in “how” the National Library works. Also, material can only be lent out of the building through interlibrary loan. However, the heavy demand placed upon certain areas of the collection, e.g. high use overseas monographs; and material in 300s has brought about a need for better control of these areas.

A high number of requests come for material on University reading lists. This often results in the same item being requested many times in one day. This can mean returning to the shelf to check whether the book has been returned every time it is requested. To avoid this inefficient practice, a form of automated circulation control has been installed into the stacks.

All items requested from designated “high use” parts of the collection are checked out from the stacks on the automated system. The reader in the MRR can see from the OPAC record that the material is already on loan and does not request it at that particular time.

Before an item can be checked out the barcode on the item has to be attached to the correct record on the database. This requires sound bibliographic searching skills – skills that the library technician can and does bring to the job.

2:4:3 Cataloguing module
In performing their duties the library technician often comes across discrepancies between the bibliographic information of an item and what is on the database. This could involve call numbers, or sizing information, rendering the item difficult to locate.

Previously these items would have to be returned to the Cataloguing Unit for correction. This often meant that an item would not be on the shelves for a lengthy period and the process for catalogue revisions became cumbersome.

The library technician can, right there in the stack, quickly make the necessary alterations so that the information correlates. The ability to “clean up” the database assists greatly with access and control of the collection.

2:5 Preservation and maintenance
As with other libraries in these days of budget restraint, the National Library has needed to carefully examine the way it spends its funds. The increasing cost of binding has meant a reduction in the amount of material that is preserved in this manner. However, the large number of serial titles collected, the age of some items and the high use of others has resulted in an increase in maintenance required. Increasingly these maintenance demands have been met by the skills of the library technician.
Skills possessed by the library technician enable them to undertake repairs to material, including re-sewing, re-casing and shrink wrapping.

Alternative methods of preservation and storage have been introduced, in particular, the polypropylene boxes and folders. The library technician in the stacks has applied skills and knowledge in working with Preservation staff on the design and selection of the most suitable and cost effective methods.

An emerging issue of importance is the preservation and housing of electronic media. As more material in this format is received into the Library the library technician will be called on to apply their skills and knowledge to provide handling methods suitable to this format. This will include housing and maintenance procedures as well as access methods.

CONCLUSION

When I first commenced work in the National Library only 4 years ago, the Stack was considered a place to avoid – as far as working goes. Work there was heavy, manual and requiring none of the skills I had acquired as a library technician.

However, the introduction of new technology, changed work practices and methods have created a need for these skills.

The stack is now an area that offers challenges and job satisfaction to library technicians. It is an area of the Library where the library technician can utilise a variety of technical service skills, enhance supervision skills, apply an understanding of technology and acquire skills in the preservation and maintenance of collections.
SUMMARY

One of the most interesting features of information provision in the 1990s is the changing role of the library service from storehouse to literature access agency. Of course, the Inter Library Loan has been an established feature for many years but with improved technology access to information resources such as the British Library, UnCover, ADONIS, Current Citations or First Search (OCLC) has become an apparently cost effective and relatively simple procedure.

Traditionally, the subscription agent's main role has been to act as a facilitator for the library's procurement of serials and to provide a range of value added services to assist in management of the serials collection. It would be foolish indeed for us to ignore the global advancement in communications and major subscription agencies have been involved for some years in the development of procedures and facilities to provide a wider range of methods of access to the literature. These include traditional services data base licensing and document delivery in both electronic and printed forms. (Our objective is to develop and enhance information services composed of subscription service, database publishing and online usage services, document delivery services and appropriate mixes of these, with the repetitious keyword being service). This outline will focus on the agent's role in current awareness and document delivery, and, quoting from Lee Olvey, from OCLC: "the right choice is a matter of perspective".

INTRODUCTION

In 1889 a dictionary published in New York gave the following definitions:

Document  "generally, any writing or publication that may be used as a source of evidence or information ... anything bearing a legible or significant inscription ... anything that may be read as communicating an idea (including thus a tombstone, a seal, a coin, etc., as well as paper writings)."

Delivery  "... freeing from bondage, danger or evil or any kind; release ... a giving or passing from one to another; the act of transferring or handing over to another ... the act of sending or putting forth."

I am indebted to my colleague Randall Marcinko for these colourful definitions. Randy is truly one of the pioneers of document delivery services (also known for today's talk as individual article supply) having commenced his own business Dynamic Information more than 15 years ago and becoming part of the EBSCO Information Services group of companies when Dynamic Information merged with EBSCO and became EBSCO Document Services. This background is not meant to be in the nature of an "infomercial" but to introduce the topic and to allow me to offer some personal comments on where we are today as well as what the future might hold. However the subject is enormous and there is limited time available this afternoon, so this must necessarily be an overview only.

Because the availability of literature has been essential for research and education, not to mention relaxation and enjoyment, the library's role as storehouse and access point has been paramount. These two factors remain and will do so, I believe, for a long time to come despite the ideas of the "virtual library" and the increasing availability of the "information superhighway" to end users. (Along with advances in technology which are, indeed, stunning we seem to have an almost parallel advance in the number of trendy buzz words and catch phrases!)

In the provision of services to libraries the traditional role of the subscription agent has been as a facilitator in the procurement and acquisition of serials literature to its clients and to provide value-added services to assist in the management of the serials collection. Until relatively recently this collection was always in printed form.

"Freeing from Bondage, Danger or Evil of any Kind..." 129
Libraries subscribed to the titles they needed and used inter-library loans to augment the collection when their patrons required material not held on site. Then some years ago came microform versions of printed material, followed by CD-ROM indexing and abstracting services which later often included some full text material, and more recently online current awareness services many of which are linked to document delivery via electronic means. This can be by direct online to the service provider, by database licensing or access to the electronic publisher itself, or an expanding range of other means.

Subscription agents have faced the erosion of their traditional market as funding has remained stationary or declined and cancellation of less frequently used titles became the norm. Those of us with an eye to the future and the will not only to survive but to continue to grow perceived the opportunity to expand in our service industry by investing in the technology to provide access to the same range of material in a wider range of formats. Some, like EBSCO, developed a group of indexing and abstracting services on CD-ROM enhancing these with full text for the most often used titles, where this could be licensed from the original publishers, then expanded the access by providing direct online host networks and also licensing databases to third parties (such as DYNIX or ODA) to enable libraries using a preferred integrated library system to use the files. Others chose to negotiate agreements with such organisations as OCLC or the BLDSC to enable access and Blackwells invested in the UnCover Company which has more recently entered into an agreement with the National Library of Australia. Swets has SwetScan and Swetsdoc linked to PICA (a consortium of 19 Dutch university libraries).

We more recently expanded the service options with the establishment of EBSCO Document Services. Some further information on some of these services will be given later in this paper. My own company's objective is to develop and enhance information services comprising regular subscription services, database publishing and online user services, document delivery services and appropriate combinations of these. The main feature remains service to the client base in the manner they desire. Another view from Colin Baker, University Librarian at the University of Technology of Papua New Guinea and a consultant to ISA is: "We do not see our core business changing. We see a long life ahead for the printed journal. We are aware, however, that we must be involved across the whole spectrum of electronic publishing. The key to success for both agents and librarians will be the way in which they can integrate their operations across what were previously boundaries".

This paper was included in a special issue of Acquisitions Vol 10 No 2 December 1993 which presented papers from the National Acquisitions Seminar held in Adelaide in August 1993. I would also recommend reading (or re-reading) papers included in "Changes in Scholarly Communication Patterns: Australia and the Electronic Library" (Australian Academy of the Humanities, Occasional Paper No. 15, 1994).

1. HOW TO CHOOSE AND EVALUATE

You as our clients have the responsibility of deciding what is the best method for you to fulfil your obligation to your patrons. You and they will decide on what methods of information delivery you will use and the methods will undoubtedly vary. If you are in a position where your management has resolved that electronic information resources are the only way to go, you might elect to use a commercial document delivery service. Before signing up with a service provider you will need to assess your needs and requirements, look at your existing inhouse systems and resources, gather information about the various commercially available products and services, evaluate your requirements against these services investigating their scope and coverage, pricing, and the hardware and software needed. More detailed suggestions on this process are given in an article entitled "Commercial document delivery: vendor selection criteria" by S Walters, in Computers In Libraries V.14 No. 9 pp.14-16.

The next step is to request a trial period to test the services of selected providers and use that test period to confirm the delivery time, the fulfilment rate and the total cost together with the level of customer support. Knowing when a document will be shipped, or if it will be delayed is very important. Status reports should confirm when an order was placed, when it will be delivered and whether the cost and date parameters meet the client's requested limits. (In my own experience of testing document delivery services the fastest response time has been 4½ hours from online request to receipt by facsimile transmission with an average of 24 hours, and delivery by airmail has taken 1-2 weeks.) Reporting services also should assist the library to manage effectively expenditure and resources and to avoid costly duplication. You should be able to review the reports to determine when a regular subscription to a particular journal makes better economic sense. Questions relating to copyright responsibilities are too wide an area to canvass at this time but you need to know whether all material is copyright paid – most reputable document delivery services clearly state their policy and procedure.
2. WHAT IS AVAILABLE

Several of the many services currently available are:

2:1 British Library Document Supply Centre This is probably the largest, handling (in 1993) about 3.5 million requests from some 14,000 clients worldwide. The resources comprise 236,000 journal titles (49,000 of which are current) plus 3 million books, 4 million reports plus thousands of theses and conference proceedings. The BLDSC is accessible directly or through a variety of other providers including EBSCOdoc.

2:2 EBSCOdoc Materials not available in the collections are retrieved and delivered from alternative sources. Primary and secondary publishers with which we have service agreements include ADONIS, AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS, ANNUAL REVIEWS INC., BIOSIS, IEEE and IEE, and, of course, EBSCO Publishing, as well as many other current and retrospective collections. It is accessible directly, via EBSCONET through the Internet, online via Dialog and similar services and, shortly, EBSCOhost. EBSCOhost will be an online service providing access to databases such as CURRENT CITATIONS, ACADEMIC ABSTRACTS, SOCIAL SCIENCE SOURCE, ERIC and many more. This service has 30,000 titles in house for immediate reproduction and supply.

2:3 INIST This is the French scientific and technical document delivery service supplying over 600,000 articles per year to 6000 clients worldwide. Its collections include 27,000 STM titles of which 19,000 titles are current and 40% are in the English language. Access is via various online hosts, by fax or telex or telephone.

2:4 OCLC The service comprises ArticleFirst and ContentsFirst and allows you to search and order documents online. These databases give access to article full text. These databases give access to table of contents (TOC) to almost 16000 titles. Documents are supplied by third parties such as ISI's Genuine Article, UMI and EBSCOdoc. OCLC has also joined Elsevier's TULIP project to investigate network delivery and use of journals. The project will determine the feasibility of distributing full page images of scientific journals to the university community over the Internet.

2:5 UnCover Commencing in 1989, this is a joint venture between Blackwells and the library systems supplier CARL Corporation. It is an online service providing access to more than 17,000 titles subscribed to by 19 libraries in the USA and Australia.

As mentioned previously, a recent agreement between UnCover and the NLA has allowed for local access and for inclusion of Australian material, with a "bonus" of special rates for users of UnCover Australia. The database is updated daily to allow for articles to appear on UnCover shortly after publication. UnCover Reveal is a component allowing users to create tailored lists of journal titles for review.

These outlines are not recommendations nor do they include the only reputable document delivery services available but time constraints do not allow for a complete discussion of the many options available. Some of the detail in the review comes from INFORMATION WORLD REVIEW No. 89, Feb. 1994 pp. 14-16.

3. WHO USES DOCUMENT DELIVERY?

For a large number of libraries, using a document delivery service is cheaper and faster than ILL, more cost effective than maintaining a collection of journals of peripheral interest to their users, and easier to justify in a budget than additional staff. Some users include:

3:1 Corporate Libraries Any large corporation with an emphasis on research and development is likely to have its own library. Industries that use document delivery services most frequently include pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, electronics, chemical, engineering, and medical R and D. Document delivery is used where library collections are inadequate or to replace Interlibrary Loan (ILL). It provides rapid access to information with complete confidentiality.

3:2 Academic Libraries Many are still dependent on ILL, often by choice. It is their system, it has been working for years, and until recently most have seemed reluctant to evaluate the real cost. There is sometimes little or no direct charge, so budgets rarely reflect it. Recently, academic libraries have started to use document delivery to provide specific articles from journal titles they no longer have on their subscription list because of
budget cuts. Also, at academic institutions where research is being conducted, faculty members and postgraduate students use the Internet and other methods to search databases and order articles online. There are some very active University Librarians in document delivery in Australia (e.g. Macquarie University, Australian National University, University of Western Australia).

3:3 Government Research Facilities These primarily use document delivery for titles not held in their collections, and to provide speedy delivery for articles that are crucial to ongoing research.

3:4 Law Libraries These often use document delivery to provide technical support for patent infringement cases, medical malpractice, etc. Document delivery can supply actual patents and of course technical information for legal personnel.

3:5 Teaching/Research Medical Centres These use document delivery services as a supplemental source and as a replacement for ILL. These clients often need less well known journals and narrowly circulated publications of societies, associations, etc. with a particular focus. The libraries cannot justify full subscriptions to these journals, so they bring in only what is specifically requested.

3:6 Private Research Facilities Document delivery provides scientific/medical/technical information from a wide variety of journals. When in their start-up phase, companies often do not have the budget to support a library, but have urgent and specific needs to keep up with the literature.

Document delivery service users are paying to get the information they need, for having people available to obtain it, and for getting it to them quickly and efficiently. They are paying for the large in-house collections maintained as a result of service partnerships with many primary and secondary publishers whose reputations are pre-eminent in their specific fields. In EBSCOdoc's case our collections, currently totalling over 30,000 titles, vary in depth and purpose, but they give EBSCOdoc an extraordinary base for fast turnaround. In some cases, we hold a publisher's complete or archival collection (Annual Reviews, AIAA, IEEE etc.) We also hold the working collections of several major database producers (BIOSIS, INSPEC, PsycINFO, etc.) allowing us to supply virtually any document cited in their databases.

For a concise overview of the philosophy of the growing use of document delivery in libraries in Australia and New Zealand and some of the technological changes affecting information's brave new world I recommend Carolyne Cohn's article in the (now defunct) Australian and New Zealand Journal of Serials Librarianship V.A No. 2 pp. 99-107. Her article focuses on document delivery as applied to journal articles as it is her belief that "this is the area in which the most significant changes are occurring". She talks about full text databases, some commercial document delivery services (included are a couple of different ones from those I've mentioned) and touches on technology and work station needs. Her comments are worth reading.

4. CONCLUSION

We are all in the business of document delivery – in fact, we have been in that role for all of the time we have been working in library services or as booksellers or subscription agents. We have more facilities and different methods available to us now and greater opportunities to enhance and expand our services by providing information in whatever forms our clients want. We do not know what the next five years will bring except more changes and I am excited by the possibilities ahead. A recent issue of WIRED (often known as the official journal of the digital generation but, quaintly, published in paper) called printed text the "hot new medium" and while the author of that article sees the end of printed publications by early next century, he is at present still appearing in good old fashioned print to expound his ideas. Such is life!

A final remark is paraphrased from an unpublished talk given by Lee Olvey, Vice President of OCLC's Electronic Publishing division, to an international group of STM publishers: "Call it threat or opportunity, Information technology is offering what no one involved with information can ignore. Information services are more than ever based on the very technologies which are causing all the trouble – computers and telecommunications. You can take your choice but recognise that the most interesting choices might not be the most obvious and that the right choice is a matter of perspective."

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“Freeing from Bondage, Danger or Evil of any Kind...” 133
TOWARDS A PAPERLESS ACQUISITIONS

Dot Fisher

1. INTRODUCTION

The Australian Defence Force Academy is a joint service establishment which incorporates the University College of the University of New South Wales. It provides undergraduate education for officers, officer cadets and midshipmen from the three services as well as postgraduate courses open to all across a range of disciplines within the Arts, Sciences and Engineering.

With the march of technology into all areas of college life, acquisitions has not escaped. It was first suggested in 1990 that some academic departments would prefer to send their non-serial orders online to the library. Implications of this method were then examined by the library. To achieve on-line ordering required the systems staff to set up a modified version of the Monograph Acquisitions System New Order Title entry in UIRICA, the Library's integrated library management system. Also at this time not all departments had LAN access to the library. Another consideration was the amount of time required for departmental staff training.

Although the systems staff were very busy with other tasks they modified the New Title Entry, and the LAN network has been upgraded. This improved network is now accessible by all departments within the College.

Acquisitions staff in collaboration with the System staff then produced a procedures manual. The training of departmental staff began with Acquisitions staff visiting the three departments which had volunteered to be guinea pigs. Bugs were then ironed out and the final procedure manual produced. All departments are now successfully sending their non-serial orders on-line to the library.

2. SUMMARY

The University College Library at the Australian Defence Force Academy has now successfully implemented on-line ordering of all non-serial material by academic departments.

The benefits are:

a) Less keying by acquisitions staff.
b) Details of all order recommendations are available on OPAC and enquiry via the LAN.
c) Financial details of each department's library budget are available on-line.
d) Order numbers are assigned at time of input.
e) Records are input in MARC format.
f) Duplicate orders are identified at input stage.

The on-line ordering procedure has been well received and implemented by the departments.

3. HISTORY

On-line ordering of non-serial items by the academic departments was first discussed in 1990. One of our departmental secretaries expressed an interest as she was already storing the data on a PC. At this time all recommendations were either handwritten or typed. Although the library asked that it was preferable to type, there was no consistency. Here are two examples which are thankfully a thing of the past:

It was found that there were two major problems that had to be solved: technology and operator training:

4.1 Technology The departments required LAN access to a modified acquisitions ordering module. A menu was set up to allow departments to access the modified acquisitions module:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADFA Library *** Departmental Online Ordering Facility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Place an order request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Library Catalogue Enquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. List of existing pre-orders for my Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. List of currency codes used when ordering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Display book vote summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. Return to Enquiry screen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following changes had to be made to the existing New Title Order entry:

a) After being set up on the cataloguing staff file the department input a three letter code plus a password to access the Library ordering system.

b) Any records input by departments default to a dummy supplier, coded Z.

c) The word PRE-ORDER appears at the Branch Allocation stage which then causes a display of PRE-ORDER on the on-order statement on the OPAC.

d) There is an automatic suppression of order printing for the supplier Z.

e) The system suppresses the input prompts that are likely to cause confusion such as corporate author, ABN control number, country of publication, code GMD etc.

4.2 Operator Training The procedures were written with the collaboration of the Systems staff, Technical Services Librarian and the Orders Supervisor. These procedures had to be very clear as none of the departments had staff with library/cataloguing experience.
Option No 1, "Place an order request" allows the inputting of a pre-order. For example, this is the procedure to follow when inserting a title and author, taken directly from the procedures manual:

**TITLE**

Title and subtitle (or added title information) are entered in lower case except for the first letter of each word in proper nouns. Subtitles are entered as follows:

Literary studies at the Australian Defence Force Academy: a position paper by members of the English Department (ensure there is a space before and after the colon).

If the catalogue holds similar title(s) these will now be listed with the message:

Select TITLE, EXIT if same work, NEW if unique title.

If one of the titles listed is identical to the title you are entering, you should type EXIT, and check in the catalogue in case the exact item is already there. If the similar title in the catalogue was a different edition of the same work, or a different work with a similar title, recommence keying the order, and when you get the message again after entering the title, enter the number in the list if the words in the title are exactly the same, type 'NEW' if slightly different.

You are now given a chance to make corrections if required. You are prompted with this:

NEW TITLE, String to replace or <return>

To make corrections you first re input the mistake; making sure that the string entered occurs only once in the data:

- e.g. Australian <return>
- You then input the correction
- e.g. Australian <return>
- If you want to delete the whole line, input a *
- Once all corrections have been made <return>

**AUTHOR**

Enter the name of one person only, surname first. No corporate author, or second person associated with the work can be entered.

Enter first author or editor name, surname first, as follows, according to the form of name shown in your 'blurb'. Punctuation and spacing is very important.

- e.g. Ford, Stephen J.
- Devan, J. L. D.
- Greene, M.
- Christie, Lyn

Do not include titles (Dr. Miss. etc.)
Do not add 'et al' if there is more than one author

If the catalogue holds works by author(s) with a similar name, these will now be listed, with the message:

Select author or <return>

You should not <return> unless none of the listed authors could be the one you need. Enter the number in the list for the most likely name.

**Figure 3**

**Figure 4**

The departments have found these instructions easy to follow.

After a year of departmental on-line ordering the problems can be placed in two categories:

i) Input errors where the manual has not been followed:
   a) Space colon space between the title and subtitle - computer reads as one and therefore duplicates not identified.
b) Only proper nouns need capitals not every word in title.
c) Typing errors.

ii) No formal library training and therefore a failure to identify duplicates:
a) Monograph in series, where the library has a standing order to series.
b) Reprints mistaken for new editions.
c) Order input for each volume in a multi-volume work.

Benefits by departmental staff have been:

1. The ability to access the department’s library budget and free balance.
2. The listing of titles already a pre-order.
3. Typing the orders on-line preferred to typing order stationery with a typewriter or even handwriting.
4. The knowledge who to contact for help with library ordering.

Further options on the modified ordering facility Option No 2 takes the operator back to the main OPAC Menu for enquiry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Menu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Library Catalogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. New Items Received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Audio Visual Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Short Loan Enquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Databases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. View Your Library Record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Other ACT Library Catalogues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. View CAB Lists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. Log off</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please enter your choice:

Figure 5

Option 3 of the other facilities of the main menu of Departmental Online ordering facility gives the department the option of listing all existing pre-orders for example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dept Ordered</th>
<th>Title and Author</th>
<th>ADFAL Order no.</th>
<th>O/s ctt</th>
<th>Requester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 EN 21 FEB 94</td>
<td>The annotated Alice / by Lewis Carroll illustrated by John Tenniel with an introduction and notes by Martin Gardner</td>
<td>DLO86821</td>
<td>$28.12</td>
<td>BM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 EN 22 FEB 94</td>
<td>George Orwell, the age’s adversary, by Reilly, Patrick</td>
<td>DLO86866</td>
<td>$38.66</td>
<td>BM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 EN 23 FEB 94</td>
<td>Playing in the dark : whiteness and the literary imagination, by Morrison, Toni</td>
<td>DLO86895</td>
<td>$12.65</td>
<td>BM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 EN 23 FEB 94</td>
<td>Six Characters in Search of an Author, by Pirandello, Luigi</td>
<td>DLO86897</td>
<td>$6.22</td>
<td>BM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 EN 23 FEB 94</td>
<td>The strange case of Dr Jekyll</td>
<td>DLO86900</td>
<td>$5.51</td>
<td>BM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6

At Option 4 a list of currencies have been included to standardise all the financial summaries:

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At **Option 5** a book vote summary. This summary allows the departments to view their financial statement at anytime.

![Currency Description Table]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currency</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUD</td>
<td>Australian $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATS</td>
<td>Austrian Schilling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEF</td>
<td>Belgian franc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAD</td>
<td>Canadian $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XEU</td>
<td>European Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRF</td>
<td>French franc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>German Deutschmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INR</td>
<td>Indian rupee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITL</td>
<td>Italian lira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JPY</td>
<td>Japanese yen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MYR</td>
<td>Malaysian ringgitt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 7**

The average book price for your Department is $46.59

**Figure 8**

### 5. CONCLUSION

"Towards a paperless acquisitions or heading for a dinosaur" perhaps should have been the title of this paper. Acquisitions as we have known the beast, with the rapid advance of technology, has now changed for ever or maybe is heading for extinction.

Departments inputting their orders on-line is only the first link in an electronic chain. All orders once verified, a full MARC record obtained, and vendor assigned would travel the next short step of electronic ordering.

At present on-line ordering is available with many vendors such as University Co-op, DA Direct via AARNEt, BH Blackwell and Blackwell North America via CONNECT. This means of electronic ordering could be achieved covering a wide range of subjects as well as the major publishing areas.

I am no visionary but Technical Services in libraries could also be heading for extinction. Acquisition, cataloguing and the preparation for shelves of all items, both serial and monograph, could be provided by the vendor. Responsibility for full MARC record added to library catalogue and ABN holdings maintenance could also be done electronically. Verification of material would also be done in-house by vendor. Material prepared ready for the shelves is already a reality in both monograph and serials areas.
Although this would mean less employment in libraries for the library technician the increased activity in outsourcing would ensure a continuing demand for the qualified library technician.

Acknowledgements
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Introduction

This paper is about Project Dragonfly, what it is, why it was needed, and what we have learnt from the project. The paper is presented from the perspective of two library technicians who assisted in the administrative tasks of Project Dragonfly.

Project Dragonfly: A Sign of Change for Territory Libraries was initiated by Northern Territory Library (NTL) to identify a replacement software system for LINNET (Libraries in the Northern Territory Network). The current software (DOBIS/LIBIS) no longer serves the needs of LINNET libraries.

LINNET (Libraries in the Northern Territory Network) comprises Northern Territory Library (joint use State and Parliamentary Library), Public and Community Libraries, secondary schools and college libraries and three government department libraries. LINNET was founded with the aim of fostering resource sharing between Territory Libraries and providing a cost effective library service.

With official recognition that the current software no longer met the needs of LINNET libraries, two library automation consultants were appointed by Northern Territory Library. Project Dragonfly was officially launched (late July 1994) with a technology briefing on emerging trends in library automation in which an audience of a hundred and twenty people in Darwin participated.

Just as the dragonfly symbolises the change to dry season weather in the Territory, from the beginning, Dragonfly also heralded change and ideas for LINNET libraries. LINNET people, having worked for years on a library automation mainframe system, suddenly heard about client/server technology and access to distributed resources. Project Dragonfly had begun its process of change.

This paper explains the need to upgrade LINNET. The network and hardware of a mainframe system has a limited life span and, rather than wait for the inevitable, we needed to start investigating the more sophisticated products library vendors have to offer. The paper follows a chronological order by beginning with the present and the past ten years of active service from LINNET. The aims of Project Dragonfly, and its methodology are discussed and assessed.

We will also consider how we as library technicians have developed from this project and our increasing competency in the uses of technology. Just as LINNET needs to remain competitive as a library service provider, so we have to think also about our future as library technicians. To keep ourselves and our libraries dynamic it is important to focus on the 'big picture'. Libraries have a fundamental information delivery role in society; library technicians can develop information technology skills that will contribute to the delivery of that vision.

One of the themes in this paper is that the past cannot be used as a model for the future. Electronic information presents the library with new collection development, cataloguing and reference challenges. The traditional place of libraries in society can no longer be taken for granted; libraries are held accountable to their business plans and must make every effort to maintain a good public image. Marketing is now an integral part of library planning. Libraries reflect the current technological landscape of local and wide area networks, the integration of computers and telecommunications and the electronic distribution of information. Opportunities like Project Dragonfly give us a new mandate to use the tools of technology to promote access and learning.

Library staff inevitably have to identify with technology to meet the demands of our workplace. The concept of an information age is commonplace. Computer mediated learning is now part of the education system. The Internet is having a dramatic effect on how libraries operate. New models like VICNET (Victorian network) and the Global Information Links (GILs) are promoting electronic information being as accessible as possible to local communities. The message here is the library's role in delivering information in new formats. VICNET,
GILS, and the National Library of Australia’s Home Page are examples of technological progress for libraries in the information age and demonstrate how libraries are establishing a significant presence on the Internet.

Project Dragonfly instigated our thinking on the broader issues facing libraries and the people who work in them. With the framework and philosophy of LINNET already in place, Project Dragonfly is working towards the outcome of identifying an integrated library management system which we need very much to perform the practical day to day operations of the library. While the centrality of the bibliographic record is the core component of library automation, the new distributed environment is shaping to be just as important (Barry, Jeff et al., 1995).

This paper is divided into four parts:
- LINNET (Libraries in the Northern Territory Network)
- Project Dragonfly
- The Impact of the Internet
- Staff Development

LINNET (Libraries in the Northern Territory Network)

Libraries in the Northern Territory Network ‘LINNET’ is a diverse network of libraries including Northern Territory Library (joint use State and Parliamentary library), Public and Community libraries, Secondary School and College libraries, and three government department special libraries.

The agency responsible for mainframe operations in the Northern Territory is NCOM (Northern Territory Government Communications Services). NCOM provides a network infrastructure throughout the Northern Territory based on SNA (System Network Architecture) protocol.

LINNET uses the SNA networks to deliver its library application throughout the Territory. The computer network covers the major centres of the NT and includes Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Jabiru, Nhulunbuy and Taminmin (Rural Darwin). It is possible for those communities without direct access to the mainframe to dialup.

LINNET has used version 1.4 of DOBIS/LIBIS software since 1982/83. When DOBIS/LIBIS was first installed it was advanced, there were no similar statewide library networks in Australia. The software is mounted on the NT Government mainframe computer and it was fortunate that LINNET was able to take advantage of the existing network to deliver the library application throughout the NT.
LINNET is managed by the Electronic Information Access (EIA) branch of Northern Territory Library. We are a division of the NT Government Department of Lands, Housing and Local Government. EIA is responsible for the delivery, maintenance and client service for LINNET. Technical support and maintenance is provided by NCOM.

Electronic Information Access is a team of a Manager/Librarian, Technical Officer and two Library Technicians. Our roles in supporting the system are:

- To manage, oversee and fund the system
- Provide a Help Desk facility
- Provide reports and barcodes
- Load records from ABN (Australian Bibliographic Network)
- Provide training and update documentation
- Hold User Group Meetings and publish a Newsletter
- Promote the CD-ROM version of the LINNET catalogue CD-LINNET
- Provide advice about hardware and other mainframe applications
- Maintain access and security
- Test changes, oversee file maintenance and supervise stocktakes

The original purpose of LINNET to facilitate resource sharing among member libraries has not changed. Unnecessary duplication of titles does not occur and centralised collection management of the Public and Community library collections is efficient and cost effective. The pool of items for members to choose from contains nearly 2 million items and 435,000 bibliographic records.

The network has grown and changed since the early days but LINNET is now limited by its software and its capabilities. Some of the changes in culture have necessitated a change in the needs of member libraries. Accountability in terms of productivity and service delivery means the kind of support they need from a library system is for detailed and complex reports, combined with the ability to change/tailor system parameters.

The responsibility for reports, exporting of data and generation of notices still rests with EIA as system administrators, and all requests must be directed to the branch where mainframe jobs are run to produce the information.

Some of the needs expressed by LINNET libraries are for features like:

- Searching at the branch library level (a result of shared searching files)
- Keyword searching
- Statistical reports on library usage
- Reports on the collection and circulation details for branch libraries
- Autonomy with circulation policy
- Ability to easily change wording of notices
- Export bibliographic details to manipulate in other applications
- Security of data

Searching at the branch library level was seen as one of the most important requirements for branch libraries and after 18 months of research and investigation a CD-ROM version of the LINNET catalogue called CD-LINNET was launched. It uses keyword searching and patrons can search all of LINNET or select individual libraries. Unfortunately not all the needs of users can be met with an old system. Some modifications have been made to meet requirements where possible:

- Monthly statistical reports are generated providing circulation analysis
- Importation of records from ABN has been refined so it is tailored and relevant
- Some libraries have been moved out of the branch level to their own system
- Bulk deletions of weeded copy records

We cannot get around the fact that branch libraries grouped together in the same system, share borrower, circulation and document files. However, User Group meetings discuss and implement system wide changes to policy and notices and, after ten years of operation, most of the problems have a workable solution.

It is to the credit of system administrators at Northern Territory Library and system support staff at NCOM that DOBIS/LIBIS has remained a viable product for as long as it has. We use the system to its fullest. Developing
a Librarian’s Guide to LINNET provided client libraries with useful documentation not only on using system modules, it has also helped maintain database integrity. It is a useful tool to manage the remoteness of some locations and train staff when there is a high staff turnover.

Not all member libraries find the system inadequate. To many users LINNET is a reliable and stable product; they are familiar, comfortable and uncomplaining about the system.

The time for change has come. The vendors of DOBIS/LIBIS, Elias, based in Belgium no longer support version 1.4. Some of the problems we could be facing at a major level have been highlighted by a mini disaster in a single library location with data corruption, which all efforts to rectify have been unsuccessful. Plans to upgrade the operating platform that DOBIS/LIBIS runs on by December 1996 will have an impact on further support of the system. For Northern Territory Library the monetary costs in maintaining an aging mainframe system are high.

The many requirements expressed by LINNET members have given us a strong foundation to go looking for a system to meet all our needs. Project Dragonfly is the agenda for all we want on our new system. It involves a cross section of all users of the system and, consequently, the requests for functionality in the widely used modules are well developed and researched.

Project Dragonfly

When client libraries identified the shortcomings of DOBIS/LIBIS one of the principal factors was the PAC (Public Access Catalogue). Catalogue searches cannot be limited to local branch libraries. There is no option for keyword searching. The catalogue is the traditional essential product of the library. We need to be confident that users can locate the materials they require. As the library catalogue resides on the NTG mainframe it can be searched by NT government employees at their workstations. We regularly meet these users over the phone. If people have come this far in their virtual visit to the library, we would like to feel their visit was successful. The current PAC is cumbersome to use. Project Dragonfly aimed to solve this fundamental limitation of the DOBIS/LIBIS software.

Chiefly, the aims of Project Dragonfly were to identify an integrated library management system that:
• could be implemented with the NTG Computing environment
• best met the functional requirement identified by LINNET stakeholders
• best met the business requirements of NTL and its client libraries
• explored the possibilities of meeting the requirements of other NT cultural institutions and information providers.

The organising structure of Project Dragonfly was as follows:
• library automation consultants who would lead, facilitate and clarify system details to assist the Project Administrator prepare a Request for Information/Request for Tender
• the Project Administrator who oversaw the whole project and was the primary liaison with the library automation consultants and a Review Group. The Project Administrator administered and coordinated the activities of eight functional Task Forces
• the Review Group represented the technical, policy, and operational concerns of the Project. The review group would short-list vendors
• Task Forces were formed from various Territory libraries and divided into the principal areas of library operations: Circulation, Reference/PAC, Database Access, Document Delivery, Multi-media, Incoming Materials (Acquisitions and Serials), and Cataloguing/LOTE (Languages other than English). The Communications Task force included departmental and NCOM systems representatives. A Specials Library task force was formed to include another perspective. The role of these groups was to work on defining the new system requirements. The knowledge these users had of LINNET would be a framework on which to build ideas for a new system.

A Technology Briefing looking at issues and trends in emerging technologies was held to launch the project. This seminar saw the convergence of a hundred and twenty information professionals: library staff from public, primary and high schools, and computer system staff from NCOM.
A prototype Request for Information (RFI) was examined by the individual task forces. This document would form the basis of a new system. The scale and size of the project was daunting and the RFI an imposing document, but now was the time to conceptually analyse our exact priorities of a new system.

What developments were occurring in library systems since DOBIS/LIBIS was implemented ten years ago? The basic applications and modules remained the same so the RFI comprised of essential requirements and the wish lists of task forces. What sort of system could meet the diverse needs of school, community/public libraries, and departmental libraries? Libraries wanted a shared resource but more control over the management of their own library location's system.

Task Forces soon found that a replacement system meant not merely substituting what we currently have, it required thinking laterally about the way we carry out library functions. The cooperative LINNET style interlibrary loans could be carried out in electronic mail/circulation or would a separate module be preferable, how could the steps in the process be more efficient? Users from different libraries highlighted what was important to them. Project Dragonfly was stimulating discourse between LINNET participating libraries about the type of library system we envisaged for the future. In the examining, learning and identification process of specifications, groups had definite ideas of what they did not want in the new system. Users had until now, little exposure to change, and there were no nearby models like the Territory for comparisons.

The RFI went into considerable detail on system specifications. Background, statistics and data on the current LINNET system were included. The Project Administrator drove Project Dragonfly. The mood was of a proactive project; schools, computer staff, department personnel, public libraries were updated via newsletters, task forces, and the LINNET User Help Desk. Commitment to updating the RFI was willingly forthcoming with task forces warming to the project and raising more issues and concerns on specifications. With a last minute rush the RFI dispatched on time to vendors.

As groups examined the software, the limitations of the current mainframe hardware became more explicit. Libraries were working from dumb mainframe character based terminals; a move to client server computing would mean that processing could be shared between the server and the client. Client workstations would provide a GUI (Graphical User Interface) that can be customised to individual users. In a PC environment a greater variety of software can be installed unlike previous proprietary systems. Library vendors now stress 'open systems' and their compliance to standards.

The benefit of the task force approach was that different libraries had specific needs that could be voiced. Task force teleconferences were held between Darwin, Tennant Creek, Jabiru, Alice Springs, Katherine and Nhulunbuy. A critical success factor of the project was this Territory wide consultation.

The strategy that was used was:
- Issue a Request for Information to interested vendors,
- Wait for vendors' responses; the time span was short, and vendors had to reply to the detailed questions raised in the RFI. Any queries raised by vendors were responded to and distributed to all vendors,
- Evaluate vendors' responses to determine which systems would be short-listed for tender.

Tender is the next process. Although the project has been approved in principal by the Northern Territory Government, the funds for the project have not been available in the 1994/95 financial year. This means that the Dragonfly submission will be ongoing, and that Northern Territory Library continues its work on examining a replacement for LINNET.

The Impact of the Internet

This paper is not digressing, when you next sit down at the computer in your local library or visit virtually from your own home/office PC, it will might well be to a World Wide Web Home page. New models of connecting people and information are being formulated. Library Home Pages have the potential to publish information about the library and provide access to public information. Governments are seeing the value of public networked information to extend learning and education. Libraries have the infrastructure and are well placed to disseminate public information.

The Internet has become hip. This is problematic to libraries who don't have access to the Internet. Libraries see themselves as key players in the information cycle. LINNET's brief was to provide access to shared
information resources throughout the Territory. Project Dragonfly was aiming to provide the same local access but also provide gateways to national and global networked resources.

Throughout the period of Project Dragonfly, the Internet’s profile seemed to be rising daily in the media, it was becoming the new networking ideal for libraries.

We all imagine limitless potential for libraries with new communication mediums. Virtual libraries mean access to information, any time, any place. The Internet as a publishing tool enhances library services, by placing the library in a web of electronic connections with other libraries, government organisations, commercial and electronic publishing companies. Until recently interlibrary loans were the principal methods of resource sharing, access to the Internet for libraries means the concept of access to distributed resources is really possible.

Libraries cannot ignore competition from other information providers. Networked resources mean that more people can have independent access to journal articles, electronic publishing and can circumvent libraries. We are stressing here that the Internet can be an innovative application in libraries because libraries provide equitable access to information; that the Internet is both a publishing and information retrieval tool that will keep us ahead and improve our public profile.

**Staff Development**

From the personal perspective being involved in Project Dragonfly has been very rewarding for both of us. Not only have we benefited as individuals but our organisation has gained valuable staff resources from our increased competencies.

We had support roles in the Project from the beginning. Assistant Project Manager (Phil Yorke-Barber) and members of the Inter Library Loan and Multimedia Task Forces.

The project identified two major areas for staff development:

1. **The Management skills**: client focus – collaboration and participation; marketing the project – advertising and communicating information; group planning and decision making – managing conflict, negotiating skills and meeting deadlines for documentation; political knowledge – growing awareness of the processes of government.

2. **The Technology skills**: mastering the client/server model; networking and communications protocols; using Internet and understanding its future implications.

A cross section of library staff from all levels were encouraged to play their part, in some cases this was the first time that staff were exposed to group initiatives and asked to contribute their ideas. Articles, books and knowledge were exchanged and we immersed ourselves in computer jargon. Out of all this, deadlines were met and the excitement and the enthusiasm was transferred into long hours of work towards the final system requirement details.

Project dragonfly increased our exposure to new technologies. We had access to the Internet and used it wherever possible to gain knowledge and communicate. It is disappointing realising that other technicians do not have the same opportunities because of geography, work practices, and lack of funds and as such are effectively held back from developing their computer networking skills.

The Internet has a role for libraries not only in providing enhanced access to information for our users but in increasing staff development. On the Internet we can share resources, communicate and learn what’s happening in other libraries. For example, through discussion groups like LIBTEC we can share ideas or encourage job exchanges. Electronic mail and Internet tools are new forums where we as library staff can examine the future benefits, challenges and threats of changing technologies. Paul Evans Peters writes that libraries are willing to experiment with technology and are bringing their communities into the future, we are therefore ‘Information Age vanguards’ (1995, p.32). In all of these learning outcomes the most recurring theme was the realisation that our ability to adapt and use technology will influence the success of libraries as information providers.

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Conclusion

Project Dragonfly was a rare opportunity for all of us to be involved in the design and development of a new software package for LINNET. For us, Project Dragonfly has altered the LINNET culture, it has created a period of transition and helped us develop a more critical and analytical attitude to how we perform our jobs. Library technicians are technology oriented, they have attended courses that are designed to perform the day to day key tasks of the library's system automation tasks. We are learning more skills daily, e.g. preparing HTML (hypertext markup language) documents for electronic publishing.

We are disappointed that the process of replacing LINNET has not advanced further. We realise that the cost of replacing a system like LINNET is large and that a business like government must prioritise its funding of large projects. With regards to the future, the LINNET model of a collaborative centralised shared bibliographic database remains the most cost effective outcome for the Territory. To retain its presence as information leaders LINNET needs a generation change both in software and hardware. Northern Territory Library will continue to work on LINNET's future. Current projects such as Internet are a subsystem of the overall goals of Project Dragonfly.

The Internet momentum increased in the Dragonfly period and libraries not having access felt they were missing out on an essential electronic tool. A distributed view to information is now included in a library's philosophy. this is where the Internet fits in; it can overcome barriers of geography and delivery time for Territory libraries. We are some way from the rest of Australia. Project Dragonfly's bottom line is identifying an integrated library management system for LINNET libraries, as it will improve access to information for Territorians.

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EDUCATION FOR TECHNICIANS: THE CHALLENGE OF MAKING A CHANGE

Judy Clayden

Summary

Education for library technicians must be flexible if it is to cope with rapidly evolving technologies and related changes in the workplace. New technology does, however, permit alternative means of course delivery. Qualified technicians face an almost constant pressure to update their knowledge and skills. This paper will consider the positive and negative effects of technological change on education for technicians. Edith Cowan University's utilisation of alternative technologies for course delivery and its progress towards introducing a further qualification for experienced technicians will also be described.

Technological change in general

Change is part of daily life. Technological change affects us all, even in the most common ways. Perhaps the way we receive news about current events is a good way to illustrate how things have changed. Since I started school, the delivery of the news has speeded up. In those days, local stories were telephoned to newspapers who printed them. Overseas news came by cable. News reels from overseas took up to a fortnight to arrive and then we had to persuade our parents to let us go to "the pictures". The introduction of television speeded up the process and increasingly improved telecommunications now mean that we can see, in all too vivid colour, via networks like CNN, who is battling, killing or defeating whom, both politically and on the sports fields. When disasters like the Kobe earthquake disrupt the news services, the Internet and WWW pages take over to keep us informed. Similar changes have occurred in all areas of modern life.

But has life become any easier? The 1970s prophesied that the Lucky Country would become a huge kind of holiday camp with the technology doing most of the work and Australians drifting into the office or factory occasionally to make sure everything was working properly. Automated systems would handle the drudgery (Powell, 1995, p.1). However, many Australians are now working harder than ever before. "There has been a creep toward a longer working week for many of Australia's white-collar workers, from corporate CEOs to public service clerks. While some ... relish the competition, the unending work hours and the intense pressure, a lot of more ordinary Australians are exhausted by it" (Powell, 1995, p.1).

Change in library services

Library work has also seen significant change since my youth. "The variety of services and formats provided, increased professionalism and the automation of many processes have affected the daily lives of library and information workers. ... Improvement in world-wide communication and publishing, and the development of large databases, have evoked international interest in the gathering and dissemination of information. The global information network creates a complex environment unknown the past. The amount, diversity, and speed of information available through state of the art technology continually offer new directions and opportunities. Managing change in even the smallest library or agency often seems an insurmountable task" (Curzon, 1989, p.13).

Technology and course delivery

Education has had to change to keep in touch with both social change and change in the library workplace. The changes have necessarily been an ongoing process of development of course content and a parallel change in the technology used to deliver education. It is that technology that I wish to focus upon. It is not so very long ago that the primary means of instruction were the use of chalk, a blackboard or whiteboard and a lecturer who insisted that students read books. This required students to be able to attend classes and visit the library. Since the 1970s, increasing attention has been paid to those students unable to attend classes because of their location, family responsibilities or time constraints. Distance education materials were initially only available in print form and students were required to submit written assignments for assessment (Tinkler et al., 1994, p.11). Video and audiotapes were frequently made available as supplements to the printed materials. Advances in communications technology have meant the possibility of teleconferencing and videoconferencing, enabling students to gather at a central location distant from the educational institution and to confer with their lecturers and tutors. Open learning agencies such as the Open Learning Australia Agency and the Professional and
Graduate Education consortium offer the possibility of studying for formal awards at your own pace while at home, at work or on holiday. Radio National has open learning programs, so one can even learn while driving one's car. Will that have a positive effect on the road toll, I wonder? More recently, increasing numbers of distance education students with access to personal computers have used them as a link to the various campuses in which they are enrolled (Tinkler et al., 1994, p.12) and to the wider information universe through the Internet. Most of those personal computers also incorporate CD drives, offering another vehicle for multimedia study materials to be supplied to students.

Challenges due to increased flexibility
Improvements in the technology underpinning education have made a changed approach to education possible. Increased access to education and open learning are both concerned with providing much more flexibility in the time, place and format of learning than is offered by traditional classroom learning (Tinkler et al., 1994, p. 13). People previously disadvantaged by distance from an educational institution or other factors, now have a much wider range of options to consider. Providing those varied options present educational institutions and their academic and support staff with a range of challenges.

Deciding which technology, or which mixture of technologies, to introduce can be a problem. It is hard to predict what technologies will be used in education in the future because "the technology is changing every 18 months" (Rossman, 1992, quoting Lewis, 1991). Introducing appropriate new technology at a time when federal funding is not likely to increase may cause educational institutions some financial concern. CD-based programs, for example, which permit students to interact with a broad range of information about a particular topic, are very expensive to produce and will not necessarily suit the entire range of students in a particular discipline.

Institutions need also to maintain the levels of equity they have already achieved by ensuring that the decisions they make about technology do not further disadvantage the already disadvantaged.

Lecturers, course coordinators, tutors and academics in general also face problems associated with educational technology. In common with everyone else, they are likely to have problems in keeping up with the pace at which the technology itself changes. They need also to ensure that educational material is well designed and the technology used is appropriate to the content. "Instructional design for lecture-based delivery is (or should be) incredibly different from that based on multimedia-based exploration of the same content... Lectures and books fit well together because they are both linear media. While humans have learned to adapt to this format, ... most of the research on learning styles and the functioning of the brain seems to indicate we naturally operate in a more holistic fashion" (Thornburg, 1989, p.79-80). Lectures normally progress in linear fashion from start to finish, while student interaction with computer-based materials can be far more open-ended. There is a personal challenge for the academic in moving from a fairly controlled process related to books and printed materials to becoming a facilitator for students who then employ their own methods of dealing with a range of information about a particular topic.

Increased flexibility of delivery is likely to mean that future classes may end up being a mixture of on campus and distance education students or possibly that on campus students use electronic materials from off campus (Rossman, 1992, p.8-9). The use of a single technology, rather than a mixture of technologies, seems to work well only where student motivation is extremely high. The novelty of new technologies does wear off. To be educationally effective the delivery technology needs to provide a certain amount of interactivity (Caladine, 1993, p.4-5). Increased time will need to be spent in counselling students and assisting them to choose an appropriate mixture from the smorgasbord of courses and technologies on offer.

The overwork I mentioned in the introduction applies even in the "cloistered" world of higher education. "The shakeout ... which began in the late 80s has seen commercial pressures descend on universities. Increased class sizes, shrinking budgets and the introduction of summer schools have pumped up workloads ... Dr Craig McInnes from Melbourne University's Centre for the Study of Higher Education has found that the average academic's working week has increased by between two and three hours a week since the late 70s. ... A national survey McInnes conducted 18 months ago found that 45 percent of academics said their working hours had substantially increased. 'They don't have time to sit around and think about things any more, which is what academics should be doing,' McInnes said" (Powell, 1995, p.1).
Academic staff development in the areas of selection of media and instructional design are necessary to educational effectiveness. The need to develop new, well designed, instructional materials is one factor which has added to academic levels of stress. The Committee for the Advancement of University Teaching has provided funding and encouragement through its National Teaching Development Grants scheme. It is not, however, just to develop new materials. Some form of human or social contact is necessary to remove the feeling of isolation experienced by distance education students using the new technologies (Caladine, 1993, p. 27).

Students also face some challenges, including gaining access to the new technologies, adapting to their use and choosing a worthwhile study path. Some may feel that the old ways of instruction were 'safer'.

Course changes
With those instructional and technological challenges in mind, I am faced with the re-design of Edith Cowan University’s course for library technicians. The current objective is three-fold. There is always a need to revamp the existing course. Even if we cannot get ahead of changes in the technology used in the workplace, we certainly cannot allow ourselves to fall too far behind. Secondly, experienced technicians have expressed a wish for continuing education activities to be more readily available. That was the over-riding impression taken back to Perth from the Adelaide Conference. Finally, although ECU must take the results of the Library Competencies Project and the National Curriculum Project into account, there is also a wish to retain a separate and distinctive identity for its course.

Edith Cowan’s existing course for library technicians is an Associate Diploma available to internal and distance education students. The University has decided that Associate Diplomas should become two year Associate Degrees by 1997. At the simplest level, the change could be purely one of nomenclature, without any changes to the actual content of the course. However, Associate Degrees may also be associated with a full three year degree, so that at the end of two years a student completing an Associate Degree could decide to stay for one more year and ultimately graduate with a Bachelor’s degree. The challenge is thus to re-design the existing course to take the maximum advantage of the possibilities of articulation with Bachelor’s degree courses, to offer more choice in the continuing education market and to avoid minimising the unique role of the library technician. Advice on options for change is available from the academic programmes sections of the University, the Library Technology course Consultative Committee and the technician community.

Delivery of the course will also continue to utilise the University’s existing expertise in distance education, particularly its Virtual Campus. The Virtual Campus was first created as part of a 1992 study which targeted women from rural and isolated areas of Australia studying the Associate Diploma of Science (Library Technology) externally. The project established a communications network via personal computers to a host computer running a bulletin board system located at the University. The aim was to provide a mutual support system for the students where they were able to contact each other and university staff through the use of messaging and online ‘chatting’. Course materials may be downloaded to the student’s computer and and students may upload assignments or other materials for immediate comment and assistance from university staff.

For external students, access to the Virtual Campus is via a modem and communications software on a personal computer. Both IBM and Apple Mac computers are supported and on-campus students are able to use the Virtual Campus from laboratories. “Many of the students in the initial study reported that one of the most positive aspects was the reduction of isolation, both from the University and each other. The other highly reported advantage was the quick turnaround of requests for help and information related to course work” (WADEC Annual Report 1992, p.26). Improved access to the library was another advantage described elsewhere at this Conference.

More recently students have also been encouraged to use the World Wide Web and to take advantage of its capabilities for the delivery and use of graphics. The Department now has its own World Wide Web site, the infobaTn, which may be accessed through the Edith Cowan home page at http://www.cowan.edu.au. It is moving towards making all its units available through the Web and CD technology is likely to be utilised more fully in future. The Department of Library and Information Science offers a stimulating and supporting environment to its students and to its academics, who have a wide range of content expertise and instructional skills. For some of us, the learning curve associated with increased use of instructional technology has been
relatively steep but the results have been very rewarding. I am confident the positive experiences will continue with the revamped Library Technology course.

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1 INTRODUCTION

As of 1992 there were an estimated 352,815 people employed in academic, public and school libraries within the United States. Of those, 219,734 are considered to be in the ranks of paraprofessionals (Lynch, 1995). Library paraprofessionals have historically performed functions in support of the professional staff. They hold many types of positions within libraries and play many roles. What those positions and roles are, depends entirely on the library or library system for which the individual works. Job titles for the same work vary from library to library. There has been little consistency in education or training for those positions; most libraries depend on in-house training of staff. The arrival of automation has brought about major changes in the library community and these changes have had an affect on the work and professional lives of library support staff. In recent years many paraprofessionals have been encouraged to participate in activities that advance their knowledge and professional development. The library paraprofessional today is an educated, informed member of the library team supporting the mission of the library.

2 NOTATION


3 A MICRO COSM OF THE UNITED STATES LIBRARY COMMUNITY

The area around Charles Town, West Virginia presents a microcosm of the library community at large in the United States. In a 10–15 mile radius around the town can be found a tiny public library, a state college library, a large central public library service centre and a privately endowed city library. Staffing profiles of these libraries reflect the realities, pro and con, of support staff in United States libraries. Each library is doing more with less. Each has highly motivated staff who are actively participating in programs to enrich their career status. Each has different titles for staff who do the same work. They also reflect the ambiguity of the word professional within the library community.

The Shepherdstown Public Library is a tiny building ensconced in the middle of the main street of this small town of 1,400 people. The 15,000 volumes housed in the library are overseen by two librarians. One is a part-time Children’s Librarian and the other is the Library Director. In winter 1995, each was in her final semester of the degree program for Master in Library Science (MLS) from the University of South Carolina offered at a remote site in nearby Martinsburg. The Children’s Librarian identified herself as a paraprofessional with the title and responsibilities of a librarian, while the library director stated emphatically that there were no paraprofessionals working in her library. It is not unusual for librarian positions in smaller libraries to be filled by one who would be considered a paraprofessional in a larger library or library system. Actually only 41.1% of the public library librarians in the United States hold an MLS from an American Library Association (ALA) accredited school (Lynch and Lance, 1993). Library size has much to do with this phenomena. “Only a few of the libraries serving populations of less than 10,000 have MLS librarians, while all libraries serving populations of 100,000 or more employ them” (Lynch and Lance, 1993).

The Shepherdstown Library was bustling with activity on the cold February day that I visited. Children’s story time and crafts hour enveloped the second floor children’s room. In a bright, informal setting the children’s librarian helped the youngsters as they checked out their selections. The children were adamant in insisting they could use the scanner to swipe the barcodes. Computers were not a mystery to them. Downstairs, patrons made selections from the best seller book display, while a volunteer helped barcode the adult collection. The library relies on volunteers to process material and assist with programs. Centrally located, the library serves as a communications hub for the community. When offered the choice of building a new library or renovating the old, the patrons voted on the latter. They preferred their unique little library to a modern facility.
Two blocks away sits the more substantial Ruth Scarborough Library serving the students of Shepherds College. This library reflects the conditions common to many U.S. libraries. It is understaffed and overcrowded (one book in, one book out), yet still provides quality service to the community. The library holds over 323,000 items in a variety of formats. The staff of fourteen consists of five MLS Librarians, five Library Associates and four additional staff with titles ranging from Library Technician to Clerk. There are also several part-time student workers from the college’s Library Technical Assistant education program. The Library Associate positions, created as a result of a recent reclassification study by the state, are based on the level of work being done and the expertise required. The West Virginia classification does not require a higher educational degree, but some of the Scarborough Associates have Master’s degrees in subjects other than Library Science. At the Scarborough Library almost all cataloging at all levels is done by Library Associates. The Circulation Supervisor and the Administrative Assistant are also Associates. The title of Associate, though recognized by ALA, is infrequently used by American libraries for paraprofessional staff.

A third area library is located in Charles Town. This privately endowed library contains 60,000 volumes and has an operating budget of $250,000 and a book budget of $30,000. The healthy endowment fund is managed by a thirteen-member board of trustees. Contrary to the libraries in the surrounding communities (including the tiny Shepherdstown Library), the Charles Town Library is not automated and will not become so in the foreseeable future. The elderly Board of Trustees sees no reason to automate. The animosity to automation even extends to such innocuous machines as microfilm readers. A microfilm reader was donated to the library. Upon its receipt the librarian purchased the entire census records for the area, a natural addition to the library’s excellent local history collection. The census and the reader were ordered removed by the Board of Trustees and are now a part of the nearby Harpers Ferry Library collection. The lack of automation means there is no access to bibliographic utilities so all cataloging is done as original and the backlog is growing. There is no networking or interlibrary loan. The library staff includes the MLS librarian, four full-time paraprofessionals, two permanent part-time staff and three temporary part-time pages. The paraprofessional positions are Children’s Librarian, Adult Services Coordinator, Circulation Librarian and Assistant Librarian. The Children’s Librarian is enrolled in the University of South Carolina MLS program.

In this small area of West Virginia there are a number of ways for library paraprofessionals to acquire education or training. The state college in Shepherdstown has a Library Technical Assistant certificate/degree program, while the Martinsburg Library Service Center serves as a remote site for the University of South Carolina’s MLS. There are also in-house on-the-job training programs, and motivated staff attend regional conferences and workshops. As in most areas of the United States, completion of academic or continuing education programs does not automatically equate to position advancement.

4 PARAPROFESSIONALS: WHO THEY ARE AND WHAT THEY DO

Sixty-two per cent of the people employed in academic, public and school libraries within the United States are considered to be support staff. Uncounted are many more who work in special and corporate libraries. That figure is growing. Staffing patterns in academic libraries in the United States and Canada reveal that the ratio of paraprofessionals to professional staff has increased. One-fourth of the libraries claim to have “more paraprofessionals and fewer librarians on their staffs today than in the past. In some cases it is reported to be the result of the librarian staff positions shrinking, while in others it is because the paraprofessional staff positions have increased” (Oberg, 1992).

4:1 ALA Library Personnel Categories

The American Library Association has established guidelines for broad categories of library personnel based on education and job responsibility. The Associate classification recognizes that library paraprofessionals often do high-level work within libraries. The Ruth Scarborough Library uses the term Library Associate for personnel the ALA classification would categorize as Library Specialists. The position categories as described by ALA allow the top paraprofessional categories to overlap the lower professional categories. Noting that locally assigned job titles do not always reflect required qualifications or responsibilities entailed, ALA suggests adding the ALA category title in parentheses. In reality, this is seldom done. There continues to be no consistency of job titles for the positions people hold. Each library or library system establishes its own job titles and descriptions. Frequently higher level support staff positions actually do overlap lower level professional positions as described by the ALA recommendations. In some libraries, paraprofessionals manage work teams in which support staff work side by side with professionals.
The variety of positions held by support staff seems infinite. The Council on Library/Media Technicians' Job Descriptions for Library Support Personnel lists over 150 job titles and descriptions, including Systems Circulation Coordinator, Library Clerk, Acquisitions/Cataloging Assistant, Principal Audiovisual Technician, Electronics Technician and Assistant to Director of Young People's Services (Taylor & Roney, 1985). The advent of automation has added new titles such as OCLC Coordinator and Program Analyst.

4:2 Division of Labor: Public Services/Technical Services
Large libraries in the United States traditionally split their functions between two major divisions, Technical Services and Public Services. Technical Services includes Acquisitions, Cataloging and Bibliographic Maintenance, and Processing. Public Services includes Circulation, Reference and Inter-Library Loan. Collection Development can be found in Public Services or Technical Services, but may stand alone depending on the individual library. Administration is a separate function. In small libraries there is more overlap between the divisions in staffing and governance.

Public services paraprofessionals frequently work directly with the patron, checking out materials, processing inter-library loans, answering questions and responding to complaints. The once sacrosanct Reference Desk is now often manned by paraprofessionals. Eighty-eight per cent of Academic Research Libraries (ARL libraries) assign support staff to the reference desk. They conduct online database searches, answer reference questions and assist in teaching patrons how to use the library. Paraprofessionals in Public Services also work behind the scenes, maintaining automated circulation systems, managing reserve collections, processing overdue bills and managing the stacks. Technical Services relies on the decision-making abilities of the paraprofessional. In the Acquisitions department there is often only one librarian who serves as the head of the department. Paraprofessionals handle the bibliographic verification, ordering and receiving, and accounting responsibilities. They are often the people talking to vendors and resolving problems. In Cataloging departments paraprofessionals have expanded their areas of competency. While cataloging was once performed by professional staff only, it is now common for paraprofessionals to be involved in cataloging at all levels: copy, variant, and original. In 90% of academic libraries support staff perform copy cataloging. In 51% they do original work and in another 36% they conduct subject analysis and assign classifications. The liaison with the bibliographic utility is, in many cases, a paraprofessional. Collection Development departments of one-fifth of the academic libraries report book selection and collection development responsibilities are assigned to paraprofessionals.

4:3 Computers and Change
In many libraries, the computer has been seen as a tool similar to the typewriter or word processor and its management turned over to the paraprofessional staff. Paraprofessionals now find themselves choosing and implementing online systems and maintaining bibliographic and authority control. Library Assistant Wendee Eyler serves as the OCLC Coordinator and Online Cataloging Supervisor at the University of California at Riverside, Rivera Library. She is responsible for the operation, coordination, planning, development, budget allocation and use of OCLC. This includes supervising and managing the Online Cataloging Unit. In yet another library, a paraprofessional Systems Manager makes recommendations on new technology and keeps abreast of changes in the field of library automation (Kalnin, Eyler & Ryan, 1994).

The recognition of the paraprofessional as a reservoir of computer expertise has extended into the corporate library service industry. The OCLC Pacific Network chose a library technical assistant to fill a position previously held by a librarian. Her responsibilities include acting as liaison with library OCLC coordinators, explaining new emulations of the systems programs, and training new users.

5 PART-TIME WORKERS
While paraprofessionals across the United States are taking on additional responsibilities because of expanding library needs, the harsh realities of budget cuts and downsizing require many to wear more than one cap. Linda Peele holds three positions in three libraries. First, she is the Families Literacy Coordinator for the Butte County [California] Library. This program expands on the Adult Literacy program by encouraging the whole family to use the library and engage in family reading projects. Second, Peele is the Library Assistant at the Willows Public Library, working in circulation and reference. Third, she is the Branch Supervisor of the Bayliss Branch Library. This is the last truly rural Carnegie Library left in the United States. Built in 1917, the library sits alone by the roadside with no town in sight (Peele, 1992). Linda holds these three positions because
budget cuts have decimated the county libraries. Others report similar stories. At Vermont's Middlebury College restructuring has cut the full time staff in the Government Documents Department to one paraprofessional Government Documents Associate. Her supervisor is part time, as is the Assistant Librarian (Saunders, 1995).

The numbers of part-time workers in professional and paraprofessional positions is growing. In their discussion of part-time librarians, Elizabeth Hogue and Lorene Sisson make observations that are also true for paraprofessionals. The advantages of part-time work are greatest for those who choose this option voluntarily. They include increased flexibility with more personal time off, less job stress and less involvement in office politics. The disadvantages are lack of benefits, lower salaries, an inaccurate image of part-time workers, lack of communication and limited professional development and career advancement opportunities. The increased number of part-time workers will require new approaches to managing library needs, approaches that have yet to be explored (Hogue & Sisson, 1995).

6 SALARIES

The salaries earned by library support staff in the United States vary considerably and are influenced by the type and geographic location of the library. The 1993 library support staff salary survey conducted by Library Mosaics indicates that there has been little change in salaries since a previous survey conducted in 1990. Broken down geographically, positions in the Western United States draw the highest salaries. The median salaries of all levels of support staff workers in the Western states exceed $21,525 per year with a median high of $32,568. In the South the median salaries range from $14,423 for clerks to a median high of $23,950 for jobs identified as “other” (Martinez & Roney, 1994). “Other” includes position titles of Systems Analyst and Electronics Technician. The salaries in the South showed some growth over the three-year period between surveys, while those in the West, Northeast and Midwest remained static. Those employed by public libraries earn the highest pay. In the 1990 survey those in four-year academic libraries earned more (Martinez & Roney, 1994). The salary overlap suggested by the American Library Association is a reality. In 91% of ARL libraries the top paraprofessional salaries overlap the lower level professional salaries.

7 LIBRARY TECHNICAL ASSISTANT EDUCATION

While there are over forty-seven Library Technical Assistant (LTA) training or degree programs in the United States, the majority of paraprofessionals are not graduates of these programs. In public library systems the library job applicants usually undergo Civil Service testing and are then placed on a list from which they are interviewed and hired. High performance on the exam does not always require specialized library training. In the academic and corporate setting, the individual institutions establish the job requirements and hiring standards. Until recently, most paraprofessionals entered at the lowest level without previous library training or experience, received on the job training and then moved up within the individual institution. With the advent of computers and automated systems, that scenario is changing. Job descriptions for entry level positions frequently call for experience with computers, integrated systems and online databases. Over 90% of academic libraries require computer and supervisory skills. As one paraprofessional asks, “Where are all of the entry level positions going? Support Staff, in doing their everyday jobs have to be proficient in OCLC, the local automated system, WordPerfect, email/Internet, various data bases, etc.” (Greenhagen, 1995). Unless one has prior library experience, this can only be acquired through some type of formal education. In large metropolitan areas, corporate libraries are beginning to ask for LTA education in their job announcements and are offering such applicants higher starting pay.

Library Technical Assistant education comes in two forms: certificate and two year Associate’s degree programs. Both require a core set of five or six library technology courses. The Associate’s degree then calls for additional general breadth liberal arts courses. Often the programs have work-study components linked to the parent institution’s library. This was true at Shepherds College and the Ruth Scarborough Library. There are but a handful of Bachelor’s degree programs in Library Science. They usually target those needing credentials to work in public school libraries. The Bachelor in Library Science does not transfer in any way to the Master in Library Science.

Previously, most Library Technical Assistant programs were aimed at the novice. Recently the programs have begun to design innovative methods to reach the experienced person in the field. The College of Du Page in
Illinois has reached out via satellite to beam its interactive "Soaring With Excellence" series to paraprofessionals throughout the nation. Over 4000 sites are participating.

8 CONTINUING EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Official recognition of continuing education is the norm for librarians. It is expected and rewarded. This is not the case for support staff personnel. Professional development is not normally required for career advancement. However, individual paraprofessionals frequently make a decision to seek out and participate in professional growth opportunities such as academic course work, conferences, workshops and membership in professional associations. Participation in in-house and local or regional programs receives backing in almost all academic libraries. Both release time and some financial support is normally provided. The story is different for participation in national events such as ALA and the Council on Library/Media Technicians (COLT) conferences. Here, larger ARL libraries remain supportive while the smaller academic libraries drop off significantly. Sixty-eight percent of ARL libraries vs. 32% of the smaller libraries give release time and 61% vs. 24% assist monetarily. Significantly, this means that there are many libraries in which little or no support is given to encourage the professional development of support staff, yet at the same time more is expected of the staff. As more libraries recognize the value of encouraging all staff to reach their fullest potential the level of assistance should improve.

8.1 Conferences Organized by Paraprofessionals
Support staff in many areas plan, organize, and conduct workshops and conferences. Some, such as the Virginia Library Association Paraprofessional Forum and the Wisconsin Paraprofessional Conference, are held under the auspices of the state library associations. Others are conducted by independent paraprofessional organizations. The Council on Library/Media Technicians national and regional conferences and workshops fall in this category. COLT conducts an annual national conference. Local area chapters hold regional workshops and membership meetings with guest speakers. Originally, many of the support staff conferences drew speakers only from the professional library community. This is no longer the case. Paraprofessionals are now formally sharing their expertise with others outside of their own libraries. Additionally, motivational speakers like Tinker Massey, from the University of Florida, are gaining a national voice.

8.2 Membership in Professional Associations
Paraprofessional associations exist on the national and state levels. Nationally there is one independent association that is dedicated to library support staff issues. It is the Council on Library/Media Technicians, Inc. (COLT). For over twenty-five years, COLT, an affiliate of the American Library Association, has addressed issues such as Library Technical Assistant education, certification, job description uniformity, and the more elusive goals of gaining recognition and respect for the very professional work accomplished by library support staff personnel. COLT has an open membership policy. All library, information center and media center personnel and any others within the library community who are interested in support staff issues may join as full participating members. COLT works with other like-minded groups to further support staff interests. A consultant from COLT served on the ALA Association for Library Collections & Technical Services Division (ALCTS) Task Force on Meeting the Continuing Education Needs of Paraprofessionals. COLT also supported the formation of the ALA Support Staff Interests Round Table (SSIRT). SSIRT was formed in 1994 and has a focus similar to COLT's. However, SSIRT works within the framework of the parent organization. To join the round table one must also join ALA. COLT and SSIRT work together to sponsor continuing-education programs for support staff. At the state level there are a number of round tables and sections affiliated with their respective state library associations. These groups are becoming quite active in promoting paraprofessional issues and as previously noted, often conduct regional workshops and conferences. The tie to the state associations allows paraprofessionals to have input in the decisions being made that affect the libraries in which they work and those in the communities in which they live.

9 PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE, PRINT AND ELECTRONIC

Within the past five years the opportunities for library support staff to communicate with others outside of their immediate library have grown. In addition to the networking potential of expanding professional opportunities, there are now two publications aimed at the paraprofessional market, as well as, an Internet discussion list. Both publications have a healthy international circulation. Library Mosaics was the first to venture into the field of professional literature. Publisher Raymond Roney, one of the early members of the Council on Library/Media Technicians, established the magazine in 1989 to provide a forum in which support staff issues
could be examined and discussed, because professional library journals hesitated to include articles by or about library paraprofessionals. Associates, the Electronic journal for Support Staff, is a new entry into the field. First published in July 1994, Associates is available via e-mail. Each issue contains articles of interest to support staff, editorials, program announcements and fiction pieces.

Originating from the University of Washington in Seattle, the electronic discussion group for library support staff, LIBSUP-L, went online in 1993. With over 1,600 subscribers, the List provides a forum through which questions can be posed and instantly answered. The topics range from the practical consideration of vendor products to the esoteric discussion on ethical values for paraprofessionals. The list owner is Mary Kalnin, a paraprofessional.

10 JOB SATISFACTION

LIBSUP-L was recently the site of a series of messages summarizing a survey on library support staff. It covered their backgrounds, the type of work they do and their level of job satisfaction. The answers varied greatly. The positions ranged across the established spectrum as did the possibilities for advancement and job satisfaction. Those persons who held jobs that allowed for responsibility and growth in institutions where the worker was respected and rewarded, were highly satisfied. Those who were in positions where their potential was limited and their efforts not recognized, were not so content (Kentfield & Hulbert, 1994). These responses are similar to findings in other surveys. As early as 1985, Norman Russell surveyed support staff in libraries in England and Northern Ireland and came to a similar conclusion. He found "many nonprofessional library staff do not want to become professional librarians, but they do want a fulfilling job and one that offers some opportunity for promotion" (Russell, 1985). In 1990 yet another survey, this time in the United States, concluded job "dissatisfactions stem not only from inequity in pay, but also in promotional procedures, job development and general status" (Kreitz & Ogden, 1990). One might conduct a similar survey five years from now and the answers would be the same. They would reflect the myriad of roles played by paraprofessionals throughout the United States and the conditions under which they work.

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A LIBRARY TECHNICIAN IN THE BUSH

Beth Moloney

SUMMARY

This paper gives a brief account of my experience living in remote areas of the Northern Territory and working in Pirlangimpi Community Library on Melville Island, and in Jabiru Public Library in Kakadu National Park. Pirlangimpi is an Aboriginal community where the library is a joint use school and public facility which caters to a community with a unique Aboriginal cultural heritage. Jabiru Public Library is equally unique being the only public library in an Australian National Park and World Heritage Area. The paper briefly outlines some of the issues, challenges and highlights of my work in these libraries.

INTRODUCTION

One of the reasons I chose to be a Library Technician was because it is a portable career – there are libraries everywhere. Back then, I did not realise just how true that is, especially in the Territory. Not only that, but the skills of a Library Technician are appropriate and transferable to an increasing range of employment opportunities that present themselves in all kinds of places and environments, even in the most remote of bush localities.

PIRLANGIMPI COMMUNITY LIBRARY

After working for some years as a Library Technician in Darwin, I moved to Pirlangimpi (or Pularumpi as it was then known, or Garden Point as it is also known), Melville Island in 1988, where I almost immediately found part-time work in the Pirlangimpi Community Library. (As well as several other jobs, including weather observation for the Bureau of Meteorology, Airline ticketing, work on a remote tourist camp and becoming the Avon Lady!)

Bathurst and Melville Islands, sometimes called the “Tiwi Islands”, are islands of Aboriginal land about eighty kilometres north of Darwin, in the Northern Territory. Melville Island, the second largest island off the coast of Australia (Tasmania being the largest) is some 5,697 sq kms, and home to approximately 600 Aboriginal people in four communities, while Bathurst Island, 2,071 sq kms, is home to around 1200 Aboriginal and 100 non-Aboriginal people in one community. Pularumpi, where I lived from 1988 to 1991, is a community of about 250 Aboriginal people and about 20 non-Aboriginal people and is situated near the northern end of the Apsley Strait.

Pirlangimpi Community Library is an integral part of Pularumpi School, which shares the library with the local community. The school uses the library during the hours of the school day, starting at 8.00 am when preschoolers watch ABC morning programs such as Playschool. Older children participate in research for projects, and use the library much as children might anywhere else. When I was working there, the library was open to the public for ten hours a week. I was employed by the Pirlangimpi Community Government Council in a position funded by the Northern Territory Library Service. Pirlangimpi Library is a part of the Northern Territory Library Service and participates in the Libraries in the Northern Territory network (LINNET). While the library itself is not computerised, using a card system for loans, the library stock appears on the DOBIS LIBIS automated library system and the library participates in inter-library loans.

Opening hours for the public were flexible, most commonly being from 9 am to 11 am daily, to coincide with “smoko” as morning tea was termed in both the school and the community, the arrival of the morning plane from Darwin bringing the daily mail, and with the opening of the bank and the shop, which then opened at 10 am and closed at 11 am each day. (Since then, a new and bigger shop has been built and is open for longer.) Occasionally, I borrowed a film from the NT Film Library (The Man from Snowy River drew a crowd of thirty one night) or the library opened to enable the local football team (the famous Imalu Tigers) to watch videos of inspirational games. It was very much a community facility.
The library sometimes closed in response to locally significant events, such as ceremonies. The people of Bathurst and Melville Islands maintain a strong traditional aspect to their lifestyle and observe a number of important ceremonies including "Kurlama", an annual ceremony which lays to rest the events of the past year and expresses optimism for the coming year, and "Pukamani", funeral ceremonies. An understanding of the attention to traditional laws and customs as well as an understanding of kinship and social structure, was an important part of working in the community. For example, Tiwi people address one another by their relationship (aunty, mother etc according to blood or "skin group" relationship) and to address a person by name may be considered offensive. Therefore, anyone living in such a community will be fitted into a "skin group" to enable that person to inter-relate with others in the community. Also, the names of people who have died cannot be spoken for the duration (sometimes more than a year) of the funeral or "Pukamani" ceremonies. In the same way, photographs, video images, or sound recordings of those who have died cannot be viewed.

The library collection comprises some 1899 volumes, including books, videos, magazines, photographs and, from time to time, small collections of items found locally in the bush, on the beach and elsewhere and left in the library for all to see. In the time I worked there, such items included a collection of assorted seed pods, a very long snake skin, a live baby possum, a number of crab claw pipes and various pieces of local art and craft including paintings, pottery, fabric and sewing. One of the visual features of the library is the curtains made from locally designed and screen printed fabric, sewn by local women. The library book stock is refreshed every three months by the library services exchange program. The collection was weeded and some 200 "tired" items returned to extension services and replaced by 200 items newly selected from the exchange collection. In this way the library keeps pace with changing local interests and trends.

Like a public or community library anywhere, the Pirlangimpi library was used as a place to relax with a book or magazine, but the unique culture of the place was always evident. The Women's Weekly and Modern Fishing sat alongside Aboriginal Video Magazine. Reference enquiries covered a diverse range of interests. I discovered that a number of the older members of the community spoke Indonesian, and had a keen interest in Asia since having met with Macassan trepang hunters and fishermen visiting and trading with the islands over many years. Works on the art of Africa and other indigenous people were sought by some of the many artists in the community, some of whom travelled to Paris to exhibit their own art in 1991.

There was enormous interest in Aboriginal history, and a keen interest in preserving the history of the islands. However, much of this is oral history, passed on from generation to generation. There lies a challenge in providing appropriate library facilities to address the needs of communities such as this, while maintaining attention to the observation of cultural considerations in regard to information gathering and recording, and special considerations regarding access to culturally sensitive material. For example, a local photographic collection would require careful monitoring at Pirlangimpi to ensure that photographs of people who have died are not held or displayed inappropriately. Clearly, maintaining a library collection appropriate to an Aboriginal community like Pirlangimpi is not a simple task. The concept of free and equitable access to information must be viewed with extreme care in the light of social and cultural considerations such as those I have mentioned. In addition, libraries continue to use terminologies in subject headings, indexes and elsewhere which are ethnocentric and frequently offensive (Williams, Williams & Moorcroft, 1993, p 81). The employment of Aboriginal people in their own community libraries may be the only way to ensure a real understanding of locally appropriate library services to such communities. On a broader scale, the employment of and liaison with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in all facets of the information profession must be sought in order to address the wider issues of appropriate terminologies and methodologies in managing information generally, and particularly in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues.

I worked in Pirlangimpi Library for 12 months on my own, and then spent six months training several local Aboriginal people to work in the library, including some on the Community Development Employment Project and some on Department of Employment, Education and Training schemes, one of whom went on to take over the running of the library when I left to have my first baby, Conal.

JABIRU PUBLIC LIBRARY

Relocating to Jabiru in 1991, I again found work in the local library.

The town of Jabiru is situated on a 13 sq km lease within Kakadu National Park and World Heritage Area, and was built to house the workers, and their families, of three uranium mines – Ranger, Jabiluka and Koongarra.
Political considerations meant that only the Ranger mine reached production stage, and the town now has a population of around 1500 which comprises not only miners, but also scientists and environmental specialists from the Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist and the Australian Nature Conservation Agency, support service people including police, health, education and emergency services, and also features a number of small businesses including tourist operations and facilities. Around 300 Aboriginal people from a number of clan groups live in communities and outstations in the region. There are three main Aboriginal languages actively spoken today: Kun-winjku, Gun-djeihmi and Jawoyn, where once there were over ten languages actively spoken in the Park.

Jabiru Public Library is a very busy small library with a very diverse clientele. The library is jointly funded by the Northern Territory Library and Jabiru Town Council. Jabiru Town Council employs a full-time Librarian and a part-time Library Assistant, a position which is shared by three people on a casual basis. Located in the town centre, the library serves not only the people of the town, but also tourists, staff and visitors to outlying places such as Cooinda, the South Alligator, several stations, and a number of Aboriginal communities in the region. The library currently has around 1100 registered borrowers, approximately 70% of the town population.

Again, this library is a part of Libraries in the Northern Territory network (LINNET) and uses DOBIS LIBIS library automation system for its catalogue, circulation, inter-library loans and electronic mail. The library also has public access catalogues on-line and on CD-ROM (CD-LINNET), and ABN on-line. In addition, the library has available for public use an Osborne IBM compatible computer with a range of applications including word processing, spreadsheet and CD-ROM.

Jabiru Public Library offers a general collection of around 10,000 volumes, including books, videos, spoken word and sound recordings on cassette, as well as a special collection of materials on Kakadu National Park and the surrounding region. The library also administers the operation of a toy library owned by the Jabiru Children's Services Association. Like Pirlangimpi, Jabiru Public Library participates in the exchanges program which enables a turnover of book stock, but the Librarian at Jabiru also buys new books through monthly orders and by choosing off-the-shelf in Darwin book shops.

I began working at Jabiru Public Library doing weekly Friday morning storytelling sessions, taking with me my four month old second son, Ross. This progressed to ten hours a week on a regular basis as well as relieving for the Librarian when she was on trips to Darwin, on leave, or between Librarians. I continued working this way with occasional extra relieving work until my third baby, Eilish, arrived when I had three weeks off and then went back to work, again taking the baby with me.

Loans at Jabiru Public Library average around 1200 items per month and the library also records the visits of around 1200 “browsers” per month. Aboriginal people using the library are rarely registered borrowers, since they do not often take any material out of the library, but fall mainly into the “browser” statistics. One of the challenges facing Jabiru Public Library as the town moves towards normalisation (away from dependence on the mine, with the development of a broader base of commercial enterprise including tourism and other industries), and its own community government, is to find ways of making the library service more appropriate to the Aboriginal people of the region. The use of non-book formats such as videos, sound recordings, newspapers and magazines is popular with Aboriginal library clients. The library has a screening room which is heavily used by Aboriginal people for the viewing of videos, of which the library has around 180, including the Aboriginal Video Magazine, a large number of ABC videos, and several videos on Kakadu and the Top End. An increase in the collection of and availability of non-book materials, including computerised and even “virtual” materials may be appropriate for this library.

Jabiru Public Library has a relaxed, friendly atmosphere and, along with all its other functions, serves as a social meeting place. However, as Agius (1992, p 162-163) asserts, the public library building itself, including its ambience and layout, may represent a barrier to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's use of libraries. A large proportion of the Aboriginal people of the Jabiru region maintain a bush oriented lifestyle with minimal dependence on buildings and structures. I believe that the ability to use library materials in a less formal environment, perhaps a verandah or pergola attached to the library, might be an appropriate and popular addition to the library service.
One of the highlights of my work at Jabiru Public Library was co-writing, with Kate Boyd, a friend and Librarian, a successful application of an Innovative Libraries Grant in 1992, to start the Kakadu Collection. The intention of the collection was to bring together as much information as possible on the local area and to make it available to the people of the region, especially to the local Aboriginal people who seldom have the opportunity to view what is published about them and their country. The collection is enormously popular with local people and tourists alike.

CONCLUSION

My current employment is not in a library. Instead, I have transferred the skills I gained as a Library Technician to the administrative area, working with Jabiru Town Council. I still see myself as a part of the information profession, just on a slightly different tack. I plan to return to work in libraries when circumstances allow. What makes my future as a Library Technician appealing are the possibilities for building on the skills base and the unique experiences I have enjoyed, to take advantage of the increasingly diverse opportunities in the information profession, no matter what or where those opportunities might be.

Acknowledgements

Jacqui and Steve Millett, for the slides of Melville Island

References and bibliography


I would like to thank you for coming to this session this afternoon to hear about my experiences establishing the first Toy Library in Eastern Europe.

I thought I should start with a little of my background and how I as a library technician came to have the opportunity to carry out this project in Eastern Europe. I worked in a private primary school in South Australia for 11 years as a school assistant and in that time worked 8 of them in the library while at the same time studied part-time for my Library Technician Certificate. Having completed my studies I moved on to further my career as Manager of the Resource Centre and Toy Library at the Spastic Centres of South Australia. This was a challenge as I knew nothing about the disability field there let alone Toy Libraries. I was in this position for 6 years and in that time my knowledge broadened quite considerably. For 2 of those years I was President of the Toy Libraries Association of S.A. and in that time instigated along with Richard Williams from Library Studies at Adelaide College TAFE to include subjects in the Library Technician Course for Toy Librarians. A committee was formed which included Toy Librarians and TAFE Library Studies Lecturers and from this the new external subject Cataloguing in Toy Libraries & Resource Centres is under way this year and hopefully more to follow in the future.

I wrote a submission to the Variety Club to donate a bus to operate a Mobile Service to children, staff and parents at the Spastic Centres of S.A. That way everyone in all regions were able to use the service. I was fortunate enough to have this service approved and it was highly successful.

I have since moved on to the State Government and work for two departments in their libraries: The Early Childhood Resource Centre and The Intellectual Disability Services Council where I still have involvement with children and the disability field. One of my many duties at the ECRC is to co-ordinate the Special Needs Equipment Pool for all the children with disabilities attending kindergartens, child care centres and junior primary schools.

Having had this background I was fortunate to meet a young speech pathologist Dana Baltutis in May last year who approached me about going to Lithuania for 6 weeks with her to establish the first Toy Library in Eastern Europe at The Living Skills Centre for Children with Disabilities. She herself set this centre up since they regained their independence from the Soviet Union in 1990. Until this time little was known about the state of health, social, educational and voluntary services for people with disabilities. The communist government often proclaimed that Lithuania did not have people with disabilities.

Since 1990 many new services and organisations have formed for people with disabilities and their families in Lithuania. However it is still early days and the new democracy has a long way to go.

The people who live in Eastern Europe are just like you and me. The only difference is that they have had the misfortune to experience a system which was never equipped and permitted to meet the needs of its community. It is these people who have been starved of information that has been easily accessible to us.

At first I declined the offer due to the cost as it was to be humanitarian aid work, but when I learnt of their needs and realised the experience I would gain and the very strong feeling that I had to go even though I had no idea how I would finance the project, somehow I knew it would work out.

Toys (especially for children with disabilities) were very hard to purchase in Lithuania. The only well made toys came from Germany and were extremely expensive. I decided that the only way I could get the Toy Library established was by donated second hand toys.

I approached some primary schools and advertised in their school newsletters. Within 4 weeks I was travelling around Adelaide collecting toys from various schools as my plea reached out to other schools. I placed an article in the Australian Library and Information (SA) Newsletter and many Librarians and Technicians were
able to contribute by donating library stationery such as catalogue cards, borrowers cards and even catalogue drawers. Also in addition to this my family and friends were fantastic in helping to spread the word.

My next task was how to get them to Lithuania. I approached Singapore Airlines and they were very helpful in giving me a lower cost per kilo for cartage. We also had a large amount of children's and professional books with which we were able to set up a Special Education Resource Unit for the staff and parents. All these resources cost $4,000 to send over so I set out to fund raise by having a film night and asking various organisations and companies for donations. Through this I raised enough to cover all costs and was able to buy extra resources for the Living Skills Centre.

The work was very hard. The days were long 12 – 14 hours a day 6 days a week. During this time I held training seminars with Dana interpreting as I did not know one word of Lithuanian. They covered many areas such as:

- **TOYS: THE TOOLS OF A CHILD'S LIFE**
- **SELECTING TOYS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**
- **TOY LIBRARIES: A NEW INITIATIVE IN OUR COMMUNITY**
- **CREATING A SENSORY ENVIRONMENT**
- **FUNDRAISING: IT'S NOT THAT EASY**
- **PLAYGROUNDS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: A PLACE FOR INTEGRATION**

We doubled up on some of these seminars in other large regional towns. In all we held 10 sessions but they gave me much satisfaction because I was able to give a wide range of information to Special Education Teachers, Directors, staff and parent groups from various schools and kindergartens.

**CONCLUSION**

I will conclude by saying that if anyone of you has the opportunity to set up a library or Resource Centre in another country all I can say is GO FOR IT you will not regret it but make sure that all the background and preparations for the centre have been followed through before you travel to your destination. You must have full support of the staff, resources readily available, have a good sense of humour, lots of patience, good sound knowledge of their customs and preferably their language.

My experiences in Lithuania are a part of my life I will always cherish. I have wonderful memories of the beautiful country and the people who live there and I thank God that I was the chosen one to establish the first Toy Library in Eastern Europe.
USING SPECIALISED COLLECTIONS AS RESEARCH TOOLS

Pearl Ogden

Introduction

This discussion is on the use of specialised collections, held in institutions around Australia, and their use for the researching of four Northern Territory local history works.

Historical Research

An historian friend once told me that she goes to newspapers first when embarking on a new historical project, but she has a journalistic background. I go to old Territorians first, then the archives and finally newspapers. I have many old Territorian contacts living interstate, and depending on the subject and time frame I find it much easier to get started on a project if I contact them very early in the work. My use of special collections for research is ongoing.

Research material on the Northern Territory is scattered around Australia, because of earlier administrative arrangements. Originally the Northern Territory was administered by South Australia and so records up to the 1911 period are likely to be located in the South Australian Archives. From 1911 onwards we were under the control of the Commonwealth and a significant amount of material is at the Australian Archives in Canberra. At one time the Post Master General’s Department (PMG) headquarters were in Melbourne and so extensive material on the Territory was housed there. The Australian War Memorial holds a considerable amount of Territory material relative to the World War II period. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) in Canberra has a wonderful collection of Aboriginal material.

The collection used, when studying Northern Territory history, varies according to the subject being researched. I always use the local specialised collections first, before looking at the material on the Northern Territory housed in repositories interstate. To get there, and use the material, takes advanced planning. My one and only trip to the SA Archives was a total failure, due partly to my inexperience and lack of planning, and partly to the fact that the staff were simply too busy to help me.

I have several books and articles in print, but for the purpose of this talk I will concentrate on the collections used when researching my four books.

1. My first book was a family history and so was based on family interviews. I had been working on it for a number of years and after moving to Darwin from Katherine in 1979 I commenced research at the Australian Archives. At that time all governmental records were housed at one repository and I used the archives extensively for that work. I also found, and used, the Special Collections, housed within the then Darwin Community College, now the Northern Territory University. The photographic collections within that collection are excellent. I used photographs from the Australian Investment Agency (Vestey) Collection and they proved to be invaluable in assisting my research.

2. I then decided to write the history of Bradshaw’s Run and Coolibah station, for I had located an enormous amount of research material on both properties while writing my family history. Finding the earlier material on Bradshaw’s Run was very difficult, as it was scattered all around Australia and in some instances no longer existed. I located Bradshaw’s log books through the Australian Archives. The original is housed in the National Library, with a copy in the Australian Archives, Canberra. Arrangements were made to have a further copy made and sent to Darwin. The date range of the log books was from 1894 to 1906, although a deterioration of pages indicated that it had once gone further. The first chapter of the book reached the calibre that it did because of those log books.

I used newspapers on microfilm and government reports held in the Special Collections here at the University, and travelled to Canberra to research at the Australian Archives.
At the beginning of the work I used the Australian Archives in Darwin to locate the earlier pastoral lease information. As the time frame moved on, I used pastoral lease records held at the Lands Department, as some of the files were considered current at that time. I also used the files held by the Department of Primary Production, which dealt with brands, for there were numerous references to cattle stealing in the work.

Apart from cattle stealing there were several stories about long chases for Aborigines accused of murder. The documentation for these stories came from the Australian Archives here and in Canberra, and from private collections, held by the families of some of the ex-Northern Territory Mounted Constables involved in those long chases.

After deciding an opening and closing date, it was easy in the sense that there was a set number of chapters and subjects within those chapters. Field trips for all work are very important, even if you do know the area, as it gives you a ‘feel’ for the story.

3. Around 1988, when employed by the National Trust as an Assessment Officer, I commenced work on a manuscript about the women of Katherine, with an emphasis on their lifestyle and housing. At that time I used the National Trust’s files extensively. In January 1991 I approached a Mr Peter Sing for an interview, the details to be included in the book. As a result of that interview, he asked me to write his biography, and I accepted. That project took me two years to complete and was a totally different work for me. I was working with someone from a different culture and someone who was alive!

I used the Australian Archives in Darwin to locate reports done by Patrol Officers and staff of the then Native Affairs Branch (now ATSIC), for Peter Sing was a man of mixed race and Aboriginal descent. I also needed material from their collection in relation to WWII, the Army and the Katherine region, all of which was available in Darwin.

I used the Northern Australia Collection housed within the then State Library, now the Northern Territory Library. It was there, in their photographic collection, that I discovered photographs of Peter as a child. These and other photographs from their collection were used in the book. I also used their vast collection of rare and out of print books to research Peter Sing’s family, the Wardaman people.

I included photographs from the very extensive collection held by the Historical Society of the Northern Territory. The Collection has now been included in the Special Collections at the University.

We undertook field trips to Manbulloo, Willeroo, Delamere, Innesvale, and Wave Hill stations. On these trips we always took maps which had been copied from pastoral lease files, or maps held by Lands department. I also travelled regularly to Hodgson Downs station, where Peter Sing was managing, to work with him on his biography.

A bonus at Hodgson Downs, early in 1991, was being able to talk to several of the old Aboriginal men who had worked on the station during the War. The notes from those talks complimented WWII material, located at the Australian Archives in Darwin, and were used in projects in which I was involved during the 50th Anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin in 1992.

4. Early in 1993, I re-commenced work on my Katherine manuscript, Women of the Kath-rine. With the exception of the first chapter there is a heavy emphasis on oral interviews. In many instances they were interviews done by myself, but I did use the Oral History Unit housed within the Northern Territory Archives Service.

As this book was about women, I located and quoted from the minutes of the Country Women’s Association, Katherine Branch. I also used the excellent collection of photographs, documents, papers, journals and interviews held by the Katherine Historical Society in the Katherine Museum. Copies of the early Census records and Birth, Death and Marriage records are held by the Genealogical Society, here in Darwin. Their collection covers many areas and I think is well worth using.

I researched material held in the Australian Archives in Darwin and Canberra. I used a lot of material from the National Library in Canberra, including the Australian Inland Mission collection. In fact the Electoral Rolls held at the National Library provided Christian names for many of the women about whom I was writing, some
of which had previously proved to be elusive. I also found invaluable the Mitchell Library in Sydney with its card index system using subject headings and newspaper collection on microfilm.

It was in the Fryer Library at the University of Queensland, that I located the Ernestine Hill Collection of photographs, diaries and papers. I used newspapers and magazines, on microfilm and in hard copy, in the Northern Australia Collection of the State Library, probably more for this project than any of the others.

As the reproduction costs for photographs has gone up dramatically in many resource centres over the past few years very few were used in this work. I found the cost too prohibitive and so borrowed photos from the families involved with the book.

I should be honest and admit that, when researching, one often finds material which can be used at a later date in a different project. For example, I have used the information from the Birth, Deaths and Marriage records held by the Genealogical Society in many projects. The early Electoral Rolls held by the National Library have provided me with information for many projects yet to come. As long as there are ‘Specialised Collections’, housing research material for local historians like myself, we will continue to use them as very valuable ‘research tools’.

References

THE "ABORIGINALISATION" OF ABORIGINAL EDUCATION IN THE NT AND ITS IMPACT ON LITERATURE AND LIBRARIES

Michael Christie

INTRODUCTION: ABORIGINALISATION AND EDUCATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Aboriginalisation comes about where Aboriginal people in local areas work towards a reconceptualization of the nature and function of education in terms of their own Aboriginal ways of seeing, being and doing: changing Aboriginal education to suit Aboriginal agendas. This push for Aboriginalisation is not new – Aboriginal people have often used resistance to the colonising forms of western education as a celebration of their Aboriginality, and have often sought to insert their celebration of the survival of Aboriginality into the curriculum. In some places the opportunity has been seized to move beyond resistance and persistence and to take over the institution of remote area schooling as an instrument of traditional Aboriginal philosophies and processes of education. My experience is confined to north-east Arnhem Land, where a successful tradition of bilingual education has left teams of Aboriginal educators beginning to articulate a "both ways" education – traditional Aboriginal education, and formal ("western") schooling. Aboriginal educators work as teams in the development of, say, maths and literacy curricula, which employ both the technologies of the west, and the philosophies of this part of Aboriginal Australia. This integration has progressed to the point where the notion of literature and literacy is changing, and changing with it, the forms and functions of the printed text.

Aboriginal literature (paralleling Aboriginal education) divides into three phases which I will call the original, the colonial, and the Aboriginal phases.

1. History of Aboriginal Literature and Education: Original

Some time ago I was working in an Aboriginal teacher education workshop trying to develop a definition of literature. The north-east Arnhem Land students were determined not to be tied down to a western definition involving the printed text. After some discussion, they came up with two criteria for the identification of literature: that it is made of language, and that it can be read. This definition being difficult to disagree with, the students were triumphant in pointing out that virtually everything in our experience – the clouds for example, the landscape – can fit into this definition. It was after all by singing and talking together that the ancestral creators formed the land. They made it out of language, and languages are still around today to tell us of the critical differences between estates, and the people who belong to them. Not everyone can read the ancestral dreamings from the landscape – it always takes some training to learn to read – but any territory is always readable to anyone versed in its history and its language.

Aboriginal education flourished for many thousands of years without the benefit of the printed text. Of that time we cannot say that text and literacy was nowhere, but rather that it was everywhere. The advent of the printed text with the missionaries, instead of opening up the possibilities of literacy, actually confined them. From the whole world being readable, now only books were readable. With the arrival of books, the world itself fell from being the signifier to be read, to the signified to be read about.

2. History of Aboriginal Literature and Education: Colonial

The promise of material and spiritual wealth brought by the missionaries to Arnhem Land came at some considerable cost. Very few Yolngu then or now resented the methods or message of the missionaries (though old people tell me they only went for clothes and tobacco), and yet there is always a yearning for the time before "mission", before money, wages, school, hospital and church. Gaining access to formal education always meant to some extent the diminishment of ancient Aboriginal ways of teaching, learning and knowing. In the old days it was possible to know where you came from, and where you were going by reading the land through the ancestral texts – clan songs, paintings, ceremonies, dances etc. Decisions were made and young people educated through formal negotiations where the authority of individuals was validated by an appeal to their ancestral territories.
When the missionaries arrived they brought with them a competing discourse. Truth was to be found hidden inside texts. Truth was something which could be caught, taken out of context, put into a book, and left on a shelf waiting for someone else to come along, pick up the book, and make meaning out of it. The possibility of truth being extracted from the context where it was made was important for both the evangelical thrust (where God’s truth was especially available in the Bible) and the educational thrust (where the enlightenment of the modern world could be transported into remote settlements and stored in libraries).

When bilingual education was introduced in the early seventies, nearly every school was set up with a literature production centre, staffed by a teacher/linguist (I was one), a printer, and Aboriginal literacy workers. The goal was to produce literature in the vernacular which would enable schools to provide Aboriginal children with initial literacy in their mothers’ tongue.

At first we spent considerable time writing hundreds of syllabic readers for teaching young children (and adults) a phonic approach to reading. Then we translated favourite English stories (Billy Goats Gruff etc) into Aboriginal languages. Increasingly we went to community elders and recorded their stories on to tape, transcribed and edited them and produced books out of them. Our aim was to stock the classrooms with vernacular texts: readers, magazines, posters, text books, picture books, big books, dictionaries, games, flash cards. Programs for infants would be entirely in the vernacular with a half an hour of oral English daily, and the balance of English would change as the students progressed through the grades until post primary education which would be mostly in English.

Bilingual education acknowledged the importance of the mother tongue in infant education. Its use was a means to an end. The end was to provide a good quality western education through which Aboriginal students could learn to take their place in the modern world.

3. History of Aboriginal Literature and Education: Aboriginal

First, there was a twenty year history of bilingual education starting in the early seventies which spawned the explosion of vernacular literature and a community acknowledgement that traditional languages can be committed to printed text, and the possibilities that traditional knowledges could be similarly committed. Then, there was the strong thrust by the departmental authorities for intensive training of large numbers of Aboriginal teachers. These teachers slowly changed the balance of authority in many classrooms and schools from white to black. Then there was a general move to increase Aboriginal decision making in education at both the local and the national level. And there was also a crisis of confidence among the white teachers, linguists, researchers, and administrators that we could be sure any longer that we could have the last word on Aboriginal languages, literacy and education.

The notion of “two way” or “both ways” education is a good example. Educational authorities embraced this new notion of education which implied two things (among others): first, that Aboriginal students had to learn a lot of important Aboriginal knowledges (as well as the much vaunted western knowledge) before their education was complete, (and that schools should be available to contribute to this work), and second, that non-Aboriginal people had a lot to learn from Aborigines, and any equitable cross-cultural education enterprise must address this demand for a two way flow.

Some schools today have an Aboriginal principal, Aboriginal teachers in the classrooms, and Aboriginal consultants (community elders) in the development of educational philosophy and curriculum. Aboriginal teachers and curriculum developers, in their ongoing work in the staff room and the classroom, have redefined the role of literature and begun a new tradition of literature production whose distinctive features can be detected if we consider how they are already beginning to provide a dilemma for libraries. I will briefly trace these changes.

First of all there is a de-emphasis on the decoding of text in initial literacy, and an emphasis on its production. In other words, children alone in the classroom with Aboriginal teachers, are presented with literacy as writing much more intensively than as reading. This in itself represents something of a humiliation to people like myself, because the hundreds of introductory readers in various languages which I spent ten years researching, writing, illustrating, printing and distributing continue to lie almost untouched on the shelf. Meanwhile, Aboriginal youngsters are being introduced to literacy through writing by their Aboriginal teachers. In the colonial era, the printed text was considered to be the starting point of education. To learn about biology, one
started with a biology text book. That was the rationale which kept us producing books for many years. Now it
seems, with the Aboriginalisation of pedagogy, the printed text has become the end point of the educational
experience: learning producing the text, rather than texts producing learning.

At Yirrkala where I was working, Yolngu elders work with educators to develop a workshop based curriculum
in Yolngu culture and mathematics in which the lived experience of contemporary Aboriginal life, and the open
negotiation of knowledges were the main input. While books are not ruled out of place in this Aboriginalised
education, they are made use of only as texts among many (mostly unwritten) texts. At the end of every
workshop, students would appear in the Literature Production Centre with armfuls of work they had produced –
wall charts, journal writings, diagrams, maps, photos, tape recordings, videos, specimens of plants, feathered
strings, bark paintings, scraps of paper with lists of important names, pages torn from books, art work... My
new job was to take these and to make a record of the workshop. Not a book which contained the truth about
the subject under study, but merely a reflection and memento of the work which had been done together. The
information in these books is not dead, though. It can be used. The lists, the transcriptions of ancestral songs or
stories, the diagrams and maps etc are easily looked up, referred to, modified or discarded in subsequent
teaching episodes.

There is an important difference between the books which we produced in the seventies (on, say, who owns
such and such a piece of land) and the workshop books of the nineties. In the more recent publications,
information is presented in context: not simply Who owns this bit of land? but rather, What so and so said about
this land at such and such a place and time in the context of such and such a discussion ... and here is his photo,
and here are the other people who were there at the time, and this is how they also put forward their point of
view, and this is the way we kids feel about it, and here are our drawings of what it all means... Material for the
books kept coming in from all directions. My task was to help fit it all into a single document which would be
something the staff and students could take home and use as a text in their ongoing out-of-school traditional
Aboriginal educational practices, as well as a booklet which educational authorities would accept as a
curriculum outline.

It could not be argued of course that this new style of literature has revolutionised literacy or education for
Aboriginal communities. On the contrary, it has in a sense domesticated it, it has put it in its place. It is
difficult to tell at this stage, what is the future of literacy in Aboriginal education under Aboriginal control, but
it does seem clear, that the written or printed text may lose its short-lived privilege as a repository of
knowledge. At present it seems from the way Aboriginal students and teachers both treat the printed text, it is
not read as a container of hidden meanings to be decoded, but more as a material record of an episode of
collective meaning making in which we all shared. The knowledge produced in that setting was in a sense only
true in the context of its production. The record of that activity is not a record of objective knowledge, but it is
a resource for the ever ongoing business of making knowledge in context.

IMPLICATIONS FOR LIBRARIES

Last year I left Arnhem Land for Darwin. I am employed part time coordinating the implementation of teaching
Yolngu languages and cultures at the NTU. As part of that work I have collected several hundred books in
about sixteen Yolngu languages to be kept in the NTU library.

Before I make some general conclusions about a wider perspective on what is happening here, I'll point out a
few of the problems with which the library may be confronted in making these books available to the students:

(a) With the introduction to libraries of locally produced literature in Aboriginal languages, the issues of
ownership and control emerge again. With respect to the Yolngu materials I am working with, we have
guaranteed that nothing secret/sacred will be given into the library. This raises the issue of the vetting material
which is already in the library. Some of the most offensive publications are the oldest ones, so a search of
existing documents must precede the establishment of any ongoing relationship between an Aboriginal
community and a library. For an Aboriginal community to be happy with a library, there must be provision for
respected community elders to inspect new acquisitions before they are put on public display. Elders are
concerned that when strangers publish, say, photographs of sacred sites, libraries do not do the required work
to make sure that the land owners are consulted and agree to these books being made available. This is further
complicated when the "owners" are prepared to allow access to some and not others – women's business for
example. Libraries need to develop active policies on how these complications are to be taken on board.
(b) When new materials, with permission, are catalogued, a host of new problems arise. First, there are the orthographic problems. Aboriginal languages, as much as possible use Roman alphabets. But if a language, like the Yolngu languages, has, say five different “n” sounds, special conventions need to be employed (in our case the use of an “n” and a “v”) to make the language spellable. For a number of reasons — accuracy, accessibility, respect — those conventions need to be encoded within the library cataloguing system. This also involves making screen versions for Aboriginal orthographies, adapting keyboards, and rewriting alphabetising software for the system.

(c) In Yolngu scholarship the language in which a text is produced is quite crucial to its interpretation and to assessments of its credibility. (People and language both are produced by land. The validation of truth claims is based on an appeal to the territory and language of the speaker.) The accurate encoding of exactly which languages were employed to produce a text is quite crucial to its accessibility (and credibility) to Aboriginal scholars, and increasingly to non-Aboriginal scholars of living Aboriginal cultures and languages. Worse, the ways in which non-Aboriginal linguists have tried to categorise Aboriginal languages (not to mention the hundreds of different ways they have spelt those language names) doesn’t always do justice to the ways Aboriginal people themselves classify their languages. The difference between a dialect, and language, and a language family, for example, is difficult and controversial in the world of western linguistics, and operates on quite different criteria from a Yolngu analysis (i.e., little to do with the structures of the languages, and much to do with the territories from which they issue). Work is already ongoing preparing lists of Aboriginal languages with agreed spellings. How these language forms are split and grouped by both Aboriginal and academic specialists also needs to be accounted for before books can be catalogued in a way which reflects Aboriginal taxonomies, and allows Aboriginal students to find what they are looking for.

(d) Similar challenges arise in the cataloguing of authors. Some books have multiple authors, most authors have multiple names, some of which are unusable from time to time (they can still appear in text, though, they just mustn’t be spoken).

(e) Subject headings: The most loved, cherished, and respected texts in Aboriginal life are those in which knowledges are integrated — history, mythology, ecology, demography, geography, philosophy, you name it, all as crucial components of say, a creation story. Many of the disciplines, or categories whereby a work could be catalogued are not available in English, let alone in English tables of descriptors. Some of the existing descriptors (“primitive”, “legends”, “magic” etc) are no longer appropriate.

(f) All these problems are exacerbated by the fact that many of the most important and valuable documents to come out of Aboriginal community publishing enterprises are, from a librarian’s point of view, very poorly documented. Some have no date, some no recognisable author, some not even a recognisable title. Most do not tell you what language they are in. Yet in my work observing the rehabilitation of Aboriginal knowledges in a post colonial age, I find increasingly that apparently marginal, apparently poorly produced, apparently irrelevant little documents will in time become crucial landmarks in the retelling of Aboriginal history. These documents only find a place in libraries (a place which can be located by the library user) if the people at acquisitions and cataloguing have a commitment to the importance of what they contain.

This brings me to my concluding point. There is something in the story of the reassertion of Aboriginal knowledges through the production of Aboriginal literature which points to a wider relevance. As mentioned above, the renaissance of Aboriginal knowledges in NT education may have been enabled in part by a sort of default of the insistence of non-Aboriginal knowledges on Aboriginal life. It is almost as if the white educators had to cry themselves hoarse and fall silent before older voices could be heard again. This silence can be read as a sign of the crisis of confidence in the west — a crisis of confidence in western academics, and scientific objectivity. Progress and enlightenment are nowhere near as obvious in the so-called post modern era as they were thirty years ago. The amount of literature available to libraries is exploding. The truth criteria upon which we felt we could once evaluate our selection of books for inclusion into the library are eroding. More and more books are selected for libraries on the basis of how much power or funding their disciplines will generate for the university or the state. In this situation, libraries can no longer afford to see themselves simply as repositories for books: they are the sites of struggle for a stake in the definition of contemporary reality. Like teachers caught in the crossfire between Aboriginal and western knowledge systems, libraries need to accept the fact that their stacks are also a battle ground, and instead of passively accepting some sort of performativity principle in ongoing collection development, must create their libraries as sites where different contesting knowledges can

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be found, where ways of processing and presenting information are constantly organised and reorganised in order to create spaces for marginal voices, and where the library reflects, not the monolithic positivist notions of truth and knowledge, but the multiple, often conflicting, always politically, charged modes of representing the different possibilities for knowing and learning.

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LIBRARIES AND THE LIBRARY PROFESSION IN CHINA IN 1994

Lyn Graves

1 INTRODUCTION

From the 4th to the 17th October, 1994 I took part in a delegation of librarians, library technicians and library assistants to the People's Republic of China. The delegation was organised by the Citizen Ambassador Program of People to People an American based cultural exchange program and the China International Cultural Exchange Centre. The delegation was led by Ms Jennifer Cram, Manager, Library Services Branch, Department of Education, Queensland. Delegates from all over Australia participated and represented a wide spectrum of libraries and academic institutions from university, TAFE and special libraries with the majority from school and community libraries. The primary purpose of the delegation was to establish relationships with Chinese educators and library staff and to exchange information about the state of libraries in both Australia and the People’s Republic of China.

My impressions of Chinese libraries were formed during this 2 week visit and in this paper I will attempt to describe the state of libraries and the library profession as I experienced them whilst in China. It is important to state that my understanding of the libraries visited was constrained by several factors including: language barriers; time constraints which meant that we were not always able to view the libraries which were discussed in the various meetings; and also by the program which was very structured.

Importantly, the libraries we visited were selected as exemplary examples of academic and community libraries in China. This raises important questions as to the 'state' of lesser libraries in China.

2 THE DELEGATION IN CHINA

China is a vast country and the professional and cultural program was varied and the pace hectic. We travelled to Beijing, Kunming and Shanghai. Each city was quite different, from the historical, culturally rich and politically correct Beijing to the ethnically diverse and relaxed city of eternal spring, Kunming and finally to the cosmopolitan Shanghai. Cultural highlights of the trip included The Great Wall and the Forbidden City in Beijing, the ethnic dances in Kunming and the beautiful gardens of Suzhou, which we visited after a most interesting train ride from Shanghai. Whilst the delegation was in Beijing the Chinese were celebrating the 45th Anniversary of Communism in China and the mostly barren and concrete landscape was festooned with potted floral arrangements everywhere we went, which softened the concrete structures and continual construction work which was a feature of the Chinese cities we visited.

The delegation visited selected library sites, and generally two to three libraries were visited each week day. Sites included the National Library of China, Beijing and Yunnan Universities, Beijing Normal University – Primary and High School, the Children's Library of the Shijingshan District and Yunnan Provincial Library. At each site the delegation were introduced to key staff and given an official facts and figures presentation. One tended to get lost in the maze of figures continually presented. A question and answer session usually took place, followed by a tour of the library.

At times there was inadequate discussion of broader library issues or services, and it was difficult to determine the level of service offered. The language barrier and the time limitations made it very difficult to get an accurate picture of library provision.

3 GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF CHINESE LIBRARIES

Chinese libraries originated around 700 AD in ancient collections where preserving the books to hand down to subsequent generations was more important than using them (Cram 1995, p.116).

This historical fact combined with the demands of a communist state for control of information has resulted in a traditional approach to library development. Most libraries appeared to be more concerned with managing book
stocks than making the resources accessible. Importantly many librarians see the library as a supporter of the communist state and take on the role of moral educators. They also support state education systems which demand the provision of static information resources in support of rote learning methodologies. Consequently the Chinese appeared to equate ‘good libraries’ with the size of the building and the number of books held in the collection rather than the quality of service or active use of the collection.

Given that the Chinese developed the art of paper making and printing and have a recorded history of over 3,500 years they do not have well developed libraries.

Many libraries, particularly the school libraries were housed in old buildings with poor storage facilities. Much of the stock was held in badly ventilated rooms on dusty shelves. The space allocated to the library was generally small with basic wooden furniture provided for readers. Book stocks were not large, and were often outdated and inaccessible. Many appeared to be opened especially for our visit.

Only the largest academic research libraries tended to be in the early stages of automation and there was little if any computer technology such as CD-ROM evident. Use of the Internet was being investigated and only a select few had limited access.

The Chinese Book Classification system is used by approximately 95% of libraries and is in its third edition. This system appeared to be very complex and the use of Chinese characters makes it difficult to convert to electronic forms for automation purposes. An abridged version suitable for school and children’s libraries was published in 1991.

Co-operative links between libraries appeared to be weak in China, with little evidence of inter-library-loan provision. Networking between libraries was not well organised and there was little if any involvement of the wider community in library provision.

4 PROVISION OF LIBRARY SERVICES IN CHINA

The Ministry of Culture is responsible for the administration of all libraries and the provision of funding is supplied either from the central or local government. Some exceptions included union libraries which were developed, financed and run by factories, businesses and unions.

Since 1981 basic standards for libraries have been established and funding has increased 8 fold over the last ten years. However the libraries are still inadequately funded and poorly resourced. Funding was often dependent on book stocks which did not always reflect needs. There does not appear to be uniform development of libraries across China and many depended on their reputation or ability to attract students for their funding. We were told that rural schools in particular were poorly resourced, if they existed at all.

5 LIBRARIES IN CHINA

There are approximately 400,000 libraries in China today, including university, schools, vocational and union (these included workplace libraries), public and special. The delegation visited the National library, selected university, school and public libraries plus a children’s publishing house.

5:1 National Library

The National Library of the People’s Republic of China has had a checkered history and was established as a National Library in 1916 and has acted as a national repository from that time. The library has been formally open to the public only since 1987 and school children are not permitted to use the collection.

It is the largest library in China and is second only in size to the Library of Congress in the United States of America. It covers an area of 7.4 hectares and according to the literature receives 7000–8000 readers per day. It has over 18 million volumes with 60% foreign language materials.

The National Library is considered to be a comprehensive research and bibliographic centre and its stated aim is to serve the people and the socialist direction. The Rare Book Collection is a valuable resource and holds over 260,000 volumes. A highlight of our visit to the National Library was viewing the display of rare books which included a 3,000 year old bamboo book. At that moment I felt a deep sense of the long and at times illustrious
The Library is currently developing software for the full text storage and retrieval of the Rare Book Collection.

The Library is also in the process of automating with over 200,000 records on the computer database, however this is still not considered useful for research purposes and users access the collection via card catalogues. Due to the extensive size of the collection the Library uses a sophisticated automated stack system for storage.

I experienced a deep sense of history and scholarship at this library. We viewed students who were watching the latest western movies, and scholars from other countries who were using the collection for research. It must be a great honour and achievement for scholars who have attained this level of access.

5:2 University libraries
There are approximately 1,100 university libraries in China. Like their Australian counterparts they are experiencing funding difficulties and are trying to identify innovative methods of meeting their budgetary needs. We visited the Beijing University Library and held discussions with library staff who we found to be proactive and informative. Unfortunately we were not able to view the Beijing University Library but were shown around the grounds instead. We were also told that Mao Zedong had once worked there as a librarian!

Our next visit to a university library was in Kunming. Kunming is a culturally diverse region and there were 6 research universities and twelve standard universities located here. We were warmly welcomed at the Yunnan University Library and found it to be an exemplary example of an academic library. Given the relative poverty in Kunming we were very surprised to visit such a well equipped modern facility and found the library to be a progressive and proactive organisation. In particular the University had a real commitment to preserving the unique character of the region which is home to over 26 different nationalities. The University is an important research centre for minority nationalities and economic development.

The Yunnan University Library was established 70 years ago and was partly funded by a Hong Kong millionaire. The library has over 1 million volumes and holds many rare books. It has a sophisticated rare book storage and maintenance program. A computer system was installed in 1989 and is currently being upgraded at a cost of $2 million. There are plans to network the 14 departments in the near future and to join an international electronic network next year. The library has 9 departments with a staff of 78. The library is keen to establish relationships with other institutions world wide and has already developed networks with over 30 countries.

User education programs tend to be provided at this level rather than primary or secondary, however from discussions it was decided that generally speaking they were basic instruction programs with little 'information literacy' content.

5:3 School libraries
There are over 1.5 billion children in compulsory education in China and there are approximately 100,000 primary school libraries and 200,000 middle or secondary schools. However not all schools have libraries – only the better funded ones, and these tend to be located in the coastal urban areas. The National Education Commission in 1992 stated that approximately 50% of higher schools and 15% of primary schools have their own libraries (Dong 1984, p.5).

We visited the primary and middle school libraries attached to the Beijing Normal University and the reading room of the No 1 Primary School, New Chao Yang Housing Estate in Shanghai. These libraries were considered 'first class' or 'key' examples of library provision, and were well above the standard set by the National Education Commission. These schools have been visited by many foreign delegations over the past 10 years and are considered exemplary models, however they were well below any accepted standard in Australia.

The national guidelines which were published in 1991 are very descriptive and recommend minimum book stocks, equipment, physical facilities such as reading rooms, staffing and funding according to the number of students enrolled at the school. Although the guidelines are a genuine attempt at establishing minimum levels of library provision they do not encourage libraries to concentrate on providing quality resources and services.

All libraries in China attempt to morally educate the population. School and children's public libraries in particular take this role very seriously. If you add to this the rote style of learning encouraged in Chinese...
schools it is easy to see why libraries have not moved forward from mere repositories of books to disseminators of information as has occurred in the West. Indeed, many libraries were only open to students at particular times and much of the collection was not open access.

5:3:1 University entrance examinations
There has been a great deal of pressure placed on Chinese students to pass the university entrance examination conducted each year. Their future as party officials often depended on it, and this has significantly influenced the reading and study habits of students. There is little emphasis placed on students' information literacy skills but rather a concentration on rote learning for the examinations.

There was little evidence of titles designed to excite the imagination of the reader, however with the 'opening of China to the West' and the growth of the market economy in China there may be a subtle shift in the type of literature made available in libraries. This shift I believe is already occurring and was evident in the character of the newer titles which we saw on the shelves of all three libraries. We saw an array of classic fairy tales illustrated with Walt Disney characters and magazines with glossy, girly covers. Unfortunately the Chinese have embraced those aspects of western capitalism which are popular but of dubious literary value.

To the Western eye many of the schools appeared to be grey institutionalized edifices, but it was encouraging to see the cheeky, playful and inquisitive, brightly dressed children playing in the playground. In class however they appeared to be well behaved and restrained, one hopes that some of the play and humanity evident in the playground will one day spill over into the library which should be a place for fun and exploration as well as study.

5:4 Public libraries
There are around 2600 public libraries in China and approximately 100 are children's libraries, however all public libraries can be used by children. Public libraries have increased from 55 in 1949 to 2600 in 1994 with an eight fold increase in funding since 1980.

If schools did not have a library service then the local public library often provided a service, one such example was the Children's Library of the Shijingshan District. This library had a book stock of 80,000 volumes, 13 staff, 18,000 registered borrowers and approximately 300 borrowers each day. This public library in Beijing, was an exemplary model of library service, one of the best we saw, and had won many awards. The library published catalogues, and a readers' journal, and had a varied program with activities conducted at the library and nearby schools.

5:4:1 Libraries as moral educators
Most of the programs were designed to enhance the moral development and integrity of young people, and were obviously used as an ideological tool, consequently our visit was well publicised. The library staff at this library were dedicated professionals, and were enthusiastic and committed to the development of the socialist state. We were told that children who have been disciplined for misbehaviour had to serve in the library and whilst there were encouraged to behave more appropriately.

We were scheduled to visit two other public libraries in China including the Yunnan Provincial Library in Kunming and the Shanghai Public Library. There were many similarities between libraries in Kunming and Australia because of the remoteness of the region and the multicultural society.

The Shanghai Public Library is the second largest in China, and was established in 1952. The collection of 10 million includes 1.75 million rare books and 150,000 sound recordings many from classical Chinese plays. They have a staff of 700 and many branches throughout the city. We were invited to view the construction site of the new Shanghai public library, but were not able to visit the existing library.

6 LIBRARY PROFESSION IN CHINA

There are over 1.5 million library personnel including professional and ancillary staff working in libraries in China and very few have formal academic qualifications in librarianship. Many were working in libraries because of ill health, age or in a vocational role. For instance only 30-40% of school librarians have received some form of professional education and training.
6:1 Courses in Library Studies
Courses in library studies over the past 45 years in China have been slow to develop and their growth and adaptation to changing information needs has been reflected in the lack of professional development of librarians. There are 47 universities that have departments of library science, 10 offer post graduate courses and 2 offer doctorates. The Beijing University offers library science by correspondence with 1,000 students currently enrolled in this course.

6:2 Chinese Library Association
We were briefed by the Library Association in each city and found them to be very enthusiastic and keen to participate in discussions. These discussions were illuminating and we found that our Chinese colleagues shared many of the same concerns and issues of their Australian counterparts. In particular the Yunnan and Shanghai chapters appeared to be very proactive in promoting libraries and the development of library science education in China. Many spoke of the low standing of library staff; the slow development of the library profession; and inadequate funding.

7 OPPORTUNITIES FOR CULTURAL EXCHANGE
Our Chinese colleagues often spoke of their desire to participate in professional and cultural exchanges and were keen to develop networks between China and Australia. We met some librarians who had participated in exchanges and many who were keen to do so. The desire and commitment to develop co-operative links with foreign countries was particularly evident at the Yunnan University in Kunming. The director of the Yunnan University Library Professor Li Zi Xian expressed a hope that with the current 'open door policy' in China, more library staff would participate in professional exchanges and given their current activities in this area the potential for exchange is good. However one needs to keep in mind the limited ability of our Chinese colleagues to fund such activities. Nonetheless participation in professional exchanges and delegations can only promote the provision of library services in China and deepen our understanding of and commitment to libraries throughout the globe. We were also told of the 'Hope Project' which seeks donations from overseas publishers and organisations and presents as another opportunity to develop networks between libraries in both countries.

The 1996 IFLA Conference is to be held in Beijing, and if you are interested in travelling to China or participating in cultural exchanges then I would encourage you to attend.

8 CONCLUSION
Libraries and the library profession in China have a long way to go before they reach the level of library provision experienced in many western countries and one wonders how far they will be able to move down the "information superhighway" of library provision currently developing in the West.

It is difficult to predict the future of libraries in China and it may be overly optimistic at this stage to suggest that any significant growth will occur in the near future. There is a growing awareness of library provision amongst key professional staff and this is encouraging, but given the low standing of the profession, their ability to engender change may be limited. Finally the effects of China's moves into a market economy and its impact on education and libraries has yet to be seen.

REFERENCES

THE COOPERATION COMMITTEE FOR CAMBODIA AND CCCNET:
A LIBRARIAN'S ROLE IN THE COORDINATION OF
INTERNATIONAL AID PROGRAMS IN CAMBODIA

Rosemary Harbridge

SUMMARY: The paper describes the role of the Resource Centre of the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC), and the establishment of CCCnet, the Phnom Penh Hub on the Pactok Network. As Librarian for the CCC (the "umbrella" coordinating body for the international aid agencies), the author was in a position to observe many of the problems encountered by aid agencies in developing their programs. The importance of "on-the-ground, grass roots" contact with the local community, and ways that the author sought to achieve this are described. The paper concludes with some suggestions for ways that Library Technicians could become involved in assistance to libraries and library staff in developing countries.

INTRODUCTION

In October, 1991, the signing of the Paris Peace Agreement on Cambodia heralded what everyone hoped would be the end to over 20 years of war, and the possibility of peace and stability for Cambodia. The implementation of the Peace Agreement was to be the responsibility of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), which became operational in March 1992. In addition to UNTAC's peacekeeping role, the focus of the international aid community in Cambodia at that time included the massive project to resettle some 500,000 refugees and internally displaced persons, education and planning for the UN supervised election, the demobilisation and re-training of soldiers, and human rights education for democracy. It was obvious that much of the land needed to resettle and provide work for the returning refugees was not viable due to the presence of land mines, so de-mining and training of local de-miners was also a priority.

It was to this situation of rapid change, increasing foreign influence, insecurity, fear, and lots of hope that I arrived, in October 1992, to set up a Resource Centre for the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (known to everyone locally as "The CCC"). The CCC was established in 1991 as a membership organisation for Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) involved in the international rehabilitation and reconstruction effort in Cambodia. The initial brief of the CCC was to facilitate the coordination of aid programs and provide information and support to member agencies and others involved in, or wanting to become involved in, the international aid effort in Cambodia.

REHABILITATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF CAMBODIA: NGOS, THE UN, AND THE NEED FOR COORDINATION

Initially, NGOs working in Cambodia after the destruction and brutality of the Pol Pot regime were involved in emergency relief programs. Many also conducted support and training programs based in the refugee camps on the Thai-Cambodian border. After the emergency phase, most organisations stayed on to implement longer-term projects of reconstruction and rehabilitation. Many of these became founding members of the CCC. The CCC membership included some 60 NGOs from Europe, North America, Australasia and Japan. Aid programs in progress were varied, but were mostly in the agriculture, education and health sectors. After the signing of the Peace Agreement, there was a further, larger influx of aid agencies. In addition, the people and paraphernalia which would form the "travelling roadshow" of UNTAC had begun to arrive. (This "invasion" was to change the face of Phnom Penh almost overnight.)

By late 1991 the need for a local information bureau was becoming obvious to the members of the CCC. An increasing number of in-country agency and visiting consultants' reports were being produced, and the need actively to collect and provide access to them became a priority. There were many sectoral groups which met regularly at the CCC. These provided one way of disseminating information and coordinating activity, but the need for a more formal approach to information gathering was recognised. When I arrived, in late 1992, I was greeted with cries of "Oh, the librarian, at last! We are so pleased you are here. We desperately need you."
THE CCC

My brief at the CCC was to set up a resource centre, establish a library data-base, select and train a local counterpart librarian to take over my role, liaise with our member agencies and sectoral groups with regards to information resources, and come up with ideas for further development of services and resources. All this was to happen within the context of a very limited budget, extremely poor electricity supply and telecommunications, and in the absence of the traditionally strong support of the local librarians group which I had become accustomed to back home. I found that a lot of begging, borrowing, innovative thinking and “making it up as I went along” was the order of the day. So, after allowing myself a few moments to bask in the nice, warm glow of feeling truly needed, there was plenty of work to be done.

Information Dissemination

The collection and dissemination of information was an extremely important part of the CCC’s role in facilitating aid coordination. The sort of information required by our clientele was mostly to do with issues of working in-country. Practical information such as how to apply for registration as an NGO, how to obtain visas, where to get a driver’s licence, whether or not one needed a driver’s licence, security matters, local staff employment contracts and salary levels, and (at least 20 times a day) telephone numbers or addresses were common questions. Project and sectoral information was also important. Where, and in what sector should we direct our efforts? Is anybody else doing the same thing in the same place? Can you put us in touch with any orphanages? (Anyone and everyone seemed to want to “do” orphanages.) Do you have a list of official public holidays, or (worse) is today a public holiday and should we send the staff home? was a regular “stumper” question which we were usually unable to answer with any authority. Other clientele were looking for directional information, jobs, tourist information, goods and services of all kinds, and local contacts. Notice boards were provided for display of information on training courses, positions vacant, jobs wanted, and accommodation.

In order to facilitate the collection and dissemination of information, the CCC had two major programs: Publications and the Resource Centre.

Publications

- Humanitarian Aid in Cambodia, an annual directory of agencies and projects
- CCC Newsletter. Monthly news and information about the aid effort in Cambodia
- Agency Address and Personnel Listing
- Phnom Penh Agency Location Map
- Weekly Security Bulletin
- Surveys of salaries and working conditions for local staff

CCC also acted as a point of sale for some locally produced reports.

Resource Centre

The Resource Centre started out with a small collection of approximately 100 documents, and grew to over 2000 items in 2 years. The majority of the items in the collection were locally produced reports, supplied gratis. The collection developed with the assistance and cooperation of our member agencies and visiting research workers. My faith in human nature was regularly boosted with the arrival, many months after a visit from a consultant or an academic, of the completed research document or article, and a “thank you” note.

Software used for the data-base catalogue was Micro-CDS/ISIS. The OECD “Macro Thesaurus: a basic list of economic and social development terms” was used for subject indexing. Classification was by Dewey abridged version.

CCCnet

One of the big problems for our members was communication. Most of the time, the telephone service was barely adequate. The old copper wires were letting us down every wet season, and the “why and wherefore” of how to get work done promptly by the Department of Post and Telecommunications was a mystery to us. It
was not unusual for agencies to be without a phone or fax for months on end. Telephone wire was a valuable commodity and easily sold at the market, so the line from the street pole to the office regularly went missing overnight. To deal with these problems, many offices had installed alternative phones. Radio phones and cellular phones were common, but did not reduce the frustration level to a great degree, as they were frequently out of range, had flat batteries, or could not handle the number of users. The electricity supply was no better. It usually went on and off regularly all day long, although it was also not unusual for some areas to be without power for months. All organisations had back-up generators, and computers were equipped with uninterrupted power supply units (UPSs). These were wonderful and essential, but (like modems) if you had one with a mind of its own, finding someone who could explain what the problem might be, was almost impossible. Frequency and voltage were quite irregular, so voltage regulators were also part of the accessories. (I believe the voltage ranged from 90 to 290 v.) We often had to pull the plug on everything which was not essential in an effort to get enough power to run the computers. Checking the fans to gauge whether we thought we had enough power coming through to get a decent photocopy for a client was also a common trick.

If you can picture the hottest part of the year, with the industrial-level noise of the generators, the regular, maddening beeping of the UPSs and clicking of voltage monitors, as the power went on and off, and the voltage went up and down, and the occasional “mad scramble” to turn down the fans and secure pieces of paper if the power came back on with a little too much gusto, you will have an idea of the daily frustration of working in a Phnom Penh office. Our days were punctuated with frequent moments of uproar and hilarity. Indeed, a considerable amount of skill, a keen sense of humour, much patience and a high frustration tolerance level was needed in order to get the best from our equipment.

In addition to the frustration of not being able to contact an office just down the street, there was the problem of the cost of international telecommunications. With the need for regular contact with head-office, and the increasing involvement of NGOs in discussions on regional and international issues, the cost of telecommunications for most NGOs was extremely high. Needless to say, the media hype about the Information Superhighway did not bypass Cambodia. There was, therefore, an increasing awareness amongst the international community that the rest of the world was participating, and that perhaps something could be done to facilitate access from Cambodia.

In this midst of all this extremely limiting and frustrating technology, there were those who thought that somehow, the CCC, with its equally limited funds and resources, could do something about providing electronic mail to its members. While it had been very nice to know that so many people thought librarians were awfully useful, the pleasure of this was somewhat tempered by the fact that some people seemed to have the idea that I, as a librarian, would be able to advise them what to do about access to on-line data-bases, electronic mail and the Internet. Perhaps I could, but surely they did not think I could achieve anything in conditions like these?

When I departed for Cambodia in September 1992 the late Jennifer Jones (who, at the time, was the editor of On-line Currents) sent me a copy of an article about the Pactok Network (Jones 1992). At the time it sounded wonderful. On arrival in Phnom Penh, and having experienced the adverse technological conditions at first hand, I filed the article away for consideration at a later date. With the Resource Centre up and running, and a librarian and library assistant trained to take over my role, it seemed that that “later date” had arrived. And so it was, with a great deal of scepticism on my part, that the idea of CCCnet started to develop. “It will work just as well as our telephone, electricity and water supply” was my catch cry.

**Low-cost computer communications for developing countries: APC, Pegasus, PACTOK and CCCnet**

Some organisations had already tried using modems to dial Compuserve nodes in the US or Thailand, but the cost of this was exorbitant, as it still involved an expensive international phone call, and the line quality was very poor. It was obvious that using one of the networks specifically set-up to facilitate low-cost computer communications in developing countries was the way to go. We chose to join the Pactok network which operates out of Sydney. Pactok is an associate of the Pegasus Network, which in turn is a member of the APC (Association for Progressive Communications).

APC is an international partnership of electronic networks involved in the provision of low cost communications services for individuals and NGOs working for social and economic development, human rights and the environment. NGOs are currently using the APC services for preparation and planning for the Fourth World Conference on Women which is to be held in Beijing this September. Some member networks
which may be familiar are GlasNet (Russia), GreenNet (UK), IGC (USA), and AlterNex (Brazil). The major APC sites are UNIX systems with TCP/IP connections to the Internet. These sites run a Bulletin Board system which users interact with to read and write mail and conference messages, transfer files and chat to other users. Other sites, and the associated networks such as Pactok, use UUCP dial-up connections to Internet sites. Other sites in this category include networks in developing countries where, like Cambodia, the telecommunications service is expensive and unreliable. The Email Centre in the Philippines, Colnodo in Columbia, IndiaLink, and Zango in Zambia are some of the larger APC associated networks.

Basically, the UUCP connection is a store and forward service, where the user reads and prepares his/her messages off-line, and only goes on-line briefly to call the host and exchange incoming and outgoing mail. Mail is compressed and sent at high speed, so that the communications bill is low compared to connecting with a remote computer and reading/writing and/or up-loading and down-loading messages while on-line.

In the case of Pactok, users can be single nodes on the network, (where their host computer would be the Pactok hub in Sydney), or they may be users of a local subnet (such as CCCnet), where their host is a local computer. In our case our users would make a local call only to the Phnom Penh host to send and collect their mail. Sydney Pactok hub would call us twice a day, and in turn they would call the Pegasus network every three hours to send and collect our mail from the rest of the world. Turn around time for mail was between 8 and 18 hours, depending, of course, on what time a user called the CCCnet host. A range of development, human rights, environment and other conferences, are subscribed to by Pactok and in turn by country hosts. Subnets are able to set-up their own user groups (eg at CCCnet we set-up Cafe Cambodia (a local “chat show” available on the Internet), a read-only Administrators bulletin board, and a discussion group for CCC members only. The most popular Internet conferences subscribed to were Soc.Culture.Cambodia, BITLSEASIA and Human Rights SEASIA. The most important document distributed over the network was probably the weekly CCC Security Bulletin.

From the outset, it was planned that CCCnet should be self-funding, and that it would be left in the hands of a Cambodian administrator. So far, everything has gone to plan, and CCCnet, with 50 members, is now the largest sub-net on the Pactok network.

LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS

It will be obvious to you by now that in my work with the CCC, I was dealing with the staff of foreign agencies, and that we were working very much to a “western” work pattern. The operational language of the CCC was English, so this meant we spoke in English most of the time. As I was a volunteer under the Australian Volunteers Abroad program, I had been expecting to experience working alongside local colleagues in a local institution, and within the local infrastructure. In a sense, I felt I was missing out on some of this closer contact, so I set about finding ways that I could become more involved with Cambodian libraries and library staff. (Some might like to call it interfering.) It was through these “extra curricula” activities that I gained some insight into the specific needs of the Cambodian library world.

An embryo professional association

One of these activities was the meetings of the librarians group. Since my arrival at the CCC, I had had frequent requests to do something about coordinating aid and assistance to libraries in Cambodia. I also had many requests for assistance in the training of staff in our member agencies, some of whom had much larger and more specialised collections of material than the CCC. In an attempt to meet this demand and involve Cambodian librarians in the discussion, I convened the first meeting of an Information Resources Sectoral Group in February 1993. Our first meeting consisted of the few foreign librarians/documentalists working on projects in Cambodia, and one or two Cambodian information officers working for aid agencies. As I had hoped, it eventually developed into a larger group of over 30 Cambodian library staff from all types of libraries. It provided a forum for discussion of topics of concern, and sharing of ideas and problems. In late 1993 discussions on the formation of a professional association had commenced.

The group was assisted by funds from the International Relations Branch of the National Library of Australia. These funds were used to produce (and distribute free to Cambodian libraries), 2 editions of a “Directory of Libraries and Documentation Centres in Cambodia”, (in English and Khmer).
Needs and priorities

In the process of compiling information for the Directory, I discovered that the entire "normal" infrastructure of libraries did exist. All tertiary and technical institutions (including the School of Nursing, Dental School, School of Fine Arts) had libraries, as did most public institutions such as the Museum, the Royal Palace and the Buddhist Institute. Many Government Departments had libraries, and the new National Assembly established a library (staff and accommodation only, there was no money for stock) in 1994. Schools, and some provincial cities, also had libraries, but the few I saw were without stock, and therefore under-utilised. What was lacking was trained staff, stock, equipment, and, of course, money for all of these. In meeting and talking with Cambodian librarians, I was able to get a picture of the needs and concerns of library staff in a range of libraries.

Overall, the entire workforce for the public sector was in need of some of the most basic facilities, all of which we take for granted. The most urgent were: electricity, water supply, telephones, and salaries. Many workers were unable to attend for more than a few hours a day, due to the need to have other sources of income. This, of course, could affect the success of a development project. In order to deal with this problem many agencies found it necessary to supplement the incomes of the people working on their project. Apart from the common problems of lack of resources and facilities, the more specific needs expressed by the librarians in our group were for training, especially in English language, computer skills (CDS/ISIS in particular), meeting procedure, and the role and function of a professional association.

DOING GOOD

"If I knew for a certainty that a man was coming to my house with the conscious design of doing me good, I should run for my life, for fear that I should get some of his good done to me." (Thoreau 1977)

There is no doubt that I found myself in a perfect position for observing the behaviour of all kinds of people and organisations, and the affects of foreign influences on the local community. In the course of my daily work, I met with people from a variety of national, organisational, and professional backgrounds. In addition to the international aid workers, with the arrival of UNTAC came large numbers of UN military personnel, the Civilian Police forces (CIVPOL), UN electoral volunteers, observers, journalists, academics, job seekers, fortune seekers, and, believe it or not, lots of sightseers. (One wit was heard to say, "It seems the backpackers' circuit has heard there is a war on in Cambodia, and it's free"). In their search for information about the current situation, many of these people found their way to the CCC.

It was immediately obvious that each person was there for a different reason, and with a different personal motivation, but one assumed that, somewhere along the line, we were all there in the belief that we were in some way helping the Cambodian nation and people. Needless to say, my faith in this assumption was frequently under review. My initial reaction was to cry "What are all these people doing here? Don't they have homes to go to?" After that initial response of abject despair and cynicism, I found myself thinking about the issues of international aid and appropriate development. (That is, of course, in addition to thinking about the usefulness of the UN presence in Cambodia, the UN peacekeeping process in general, the end result of the election, and what the future might hold for Cambodia.)

DOING IT RIGHT

Time and space do not allow me to talk about the broader, moral and political issues of foreign aid. There are, however, a few points which I would like to touch on briefly before I go on to discuss the possible role of Library Technicians in aid programs.

When thinking of individual participation, we should be sure to examine our motives, and our own needs, if we are to effectively analyse the needs of others and decide what assistance should be given. Assistance should, of course, be appropriate to the local situation, and in response to the defined needs of the local community. Questioning the usefulness of our "western" library model in the context of a situation such as that existing in Cambodia, is crucial. We must ask ourselves what use can be made of the systems and services which we might see as essential and top priority, in a country with an adult illiteracy rate of 30-35% (World Bank, 1994); where most of the library materials available are written in languages which cannot be understood by the majority of the population; where the major priorities of government do not necessarily include libraries; where survival in
terms of income, health, and security are still major issues in the daily lives of most of the people; where the basic education standard is poor, and technical expertise is limited; and where the utilities required to make it all work are either unreliable, or non-existent?

In discussing IFLA’s involvement in the development of libraries in the “third world” Bergitta Bergdahl (1993) goes so far as to suggest that “the foreign library ethos is largely bankrupt” in Africa. Whether this might also apply to a “developing” nation in South East Asia could be a topic for another paper, but it is something which we must always keep in mind when setting out to share our expertise and knowledge with colleagues who have a very different culture and history. This may seem obvious to you, but I can assure you that the “development” literature (not to mention my own personal repertoire) is full of alarming examples of projects where even the most basic issues of suitability and sustainability were not taken into consideration.

A ROLE FOR LIBRARY TECHNICIANS?

There are two ways in which Library Technicians can play a role in assistance to library staff in developing countries. These are:

1. Maintain an interest and contacts, through participation in conferences, special interest groups, visits and exchanges.

2. Work in-country, either as a participant in a consultancy or project, on exchange or as a volunteer.

In Cambodia, many library staff have undertaken short courses, others have travelled to exotic places to attend conferences, and some have even undertaken longer university courses. These efforts at training, however, were largely uncoordinated, and there were many staff who simply missed out. Imagine, if you can, having been exposed to a whole new range of skills and knowledge, and an image of what the modern library is and does, but being without the money, equipment or trained support staff to put any of it into practice. Where would you make a start? Could you achieve very much without a team of trained support staff?

In many developing countries, the main focus of Government and funding agencies is not on libraries, or training of library staff. Aid agencies and individuals will no doubt continue to provide support and training, but the lack of a proper scenario for training will ensure that the real effectiveness of this assistance is lost. In order for training to be effective, it is essential that appropriate follow-up is available. There should be an opportunity for staff to put what they have learnt into practice, preferably under supervision. This is where the work of an “on the job trainer” can be invaluable, and I would suggest that you, as library technicians, could certainly contemplate undertaking this role.

Working in-country can give you an insight into the culture, history and people which cannot be obtained during a short visit. You have the time and patience to absorb much, and, hopefully, to gain the confidence and respect of your colleagues. Of course, one of the delights of this is that you can learn from each other. This is, in fact, the essence of the AVA experience.

I will leave you with a quotation about the Australian Volunteers Abroad Program, from the Overseas Service Bureau’s Future Directions:

“...there are two dimensions to this process. One is to provide assistance to developing communities through providing people with professional or trade skills in response to requests from those communities to meet specific needs ... The other dimension ... is the opportunity for Australians to experience everyday life and work in a developing community. By sharing life at the local level they are both challenged and changed. This first-hand experience enables participants to return to Australia with new perspectives on issues of development, aid and international relations, and indeed on Australian society itself.”

My experience certainly challenged and changed me, and I would recommend it to any of you should you wish to take up the challenge.

REFERENCES


TRIBES AND TRIBULATIONS: A PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF LIBRARIES FROM AN ABORIGINAL/ASIAN PERSPECTIVE

Joanne Flanagan

This paper gives a brief account of the author’s personal perspective of libraries from the point of view of an Aboriginal/Asian worker in the Northern Territory library network.

When I was asked to present this paper, my first reaction was one of excitement and enthusiasm, as time started to run out and I needed to start working on the document, I realised that I wasn’t at all sure about what I was supposed to talk to you about. I asked around and was given the following advice, write about who I am and from my perspective about libraries and library services to Aboriginal people. So here goes!

Firstly a little about who I am.

I’m sure many of you who saw my name as being a presenter here today thought, how on earth does a person with the name of Flanagan pass as an Aboriginal and now that you’re here and you’ve seen me, you’re probably still wondering “how does she fit into this session?” I bet you’re all asking yourselves. Well I am part Aboriginal, my roots go back to my grandmother on my mother’s side of the family. Her family name is Fejo and she is a Larakia woman. My grandfather, again on my mother’s side came from Canton in China, I’m not exactly sure when, but needless to say, he and his family are also long time residence of the Darwin area. My natural father also came from Canton. His influence on my life ceased with my conception. The man I call my dad came to the Territory in 1957 from Melbourne. He along with my mother have had the most influence on my life, in my attitudes and how I see myself in today’s society.

Being Aboriginal or black had never been an issue for me, until I went on holidays to Adelaide with my boyfriend and then again later, when I began my degree course in Adelaide.

As a child I grew up with mixed racial relationships being common place. No one was referred to as being black or being Aboriginal or being white and to be quite honest I thought all other families were like mine. The reason I thought this, was because not only were my mum and dad in a racially mixed relationship, but all my uncles and aunts were in similar family groups. So it seemed quite natural for me that families who had both white or both black parents were out of the norm. As I indicated earlier my mum and dad had the greatest influence on my thoughts and how I perceived myself in society. My dad has never treated my brother or me any differently to his other children and as far as I can work out he gave both my brother and me the best possible opportunity for a good education. My dad being Catholic, insisted that we attend both Catholic primary and secondary schools. Throughout most of my education I do not recall being treated any differently by either fellow students or teachers. My group of friends at school were all from very varied backgrounds, some were Aboriginal, white Australian, Greek, Italian and so forth. So again my experience of racial differences was not a significant factor in my life.

I guess I must have been fairly lucky with my first job and subsequent positions. My first position as a trainee library technician was with Museums and Art Galleries of the Northern Territory and at no stage can I recall ever being treated differently or given special treatment because I was Aboriginal. The staff at the museum treated me like any other member of staff and I was always treated fairly and equally. My subsequent positions with the former Northern Territory Library Service (NTLS) now Northern Territory Library (NTL) have not differed from this path. It was with the support of NTLS that I received approval to undertake and complete my BA in Library and Information Management at the University of South Australia.

I currently hold a position as a cataloguing librarian with the Northern Territory Library, Collection Management Branch. My previous positions have included positions in the Northern Territory Film Library, State Reference Library and Central Library Service. In all cases, I was not treated any differently because of my birth or colour, and at no time do I recall clients of any of these services being treated in a prejudicial or discriminatory way. In the position I held as librarian with Central Library Service, now the Departmental Library Service, I have had the opportunity to demonstrate a fair amount of initiative; on occasion I have had the responsibility for promoting the services and facilities of the library. This was undertaken in two ways: one
was by developing information leaflets and the second was by visiting the work places of the various other divisions of our department and major client group.

I have however experienced some difficulty when it comes to obtaining material for our clients. In many cases when I held the position as librarian in Central Library Service special considerations were always given to the educational needs of Aboriginal children. These needs were taken into consideration because much of the material available is targeted towards a European audience. There are very few publishing or production companies that provide material for Aboriginal people, especially children. Considerations have to be made for the level of literacy and the way in which children are portrayed. If the illustrations or characters are all white, then this tends not to hold the Aboriginal children's interest. The level of literacy becomes an issue, not only for Aboriginal children, but also the adults of the communities, as the language spoken is predominantly English and not the Aboriginal language of the community group.

I have not experienced discrimination from clients at the various reference desks I have worked on within the division.

As I stated earlier, my time interstate was an eye opener where racial differences are concerned. It became very obvious to me during this time that "southerners" are definitely not used to seeing racially mixed couples together, one of my worst experiences was an evening when Darren and I went out together and the girls at the bar we went to, demonstrated this by trying to separate us; they did not like the idea of a coloured girl and a white boy.

I found my time at the university a fairly unsettling time as it seemed that because I was Aboriginal I had privileges that my fellow students in the Library and Information Management School did not have. These included free photocopying, access to a closed library collection and more access to personal computers and so forth. These privileges were provided by the School of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and because I identified myself as an Aboriginal I was allowed to use these facilities. These experiences showed me how much is being done for Aboriginals and highlighted the differences in individual backgrounds.

So that wraps up my background and general experiences in libraries in the Northern Territory. As I stated at the start, I wasn't at all sure what I was supposed to write about for this paper. I have outlined some of my experiences and am happy to discuss them further in question time, if you have any questions you want ask. I must state at this stage that although I personally have not had too many difficulties being Aboriginal or black, that in no way means that there aren't others in the wider community who have not had problems.
Today I will talk about the events that took place leading to my job at the Northern Territory University. Firstly however, I will explain a little about myself – then I will give a brief overview about a couple of aspects of the library from an Aboriginal perspective.

I am from Katanning, Western Australia – a country town located in the central great southern wheatbelt area. I left school at the age of fifteen and went to work as a domestic on the farm of the then Lord Mayor of Perth, Sir Ernest Lee-Steere. When I was old enough I took up nursing in WA and there was a time when I worked at the Royal Darwin Hospital. Then there came marriage and family. When my children grew up and one by one left the nest, I realised it was time to do something else with my life, hence the following course of events.

In 1993, I happened to be walking past the office of Elizabeth Desailly who is the Senior Lecturer of the Associate Diploma in Library Practice; and I thought to myself ‘why not?’ I had just finished the AITOP course through CAIS (better known these days as the Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies). I wanted to choose an educational direction that would ultimately lead to secure employment.

Fortunately, that decision to knock on Elizabeth’s door proved to be one of the better decisions I have made in my life. To this day, I often wonder just what went through Elizabeth’s mind when I waltzed into her office and asked if I would be suitable to enrol in the course. (Here, she was facing an Aborigine, and a mature age one at that!)

I enrolled in the course, and was handling things quite well, until I had to withdraw, due to illness. Fortunately, this was only a minor set back, as I resumed the course the following year. At present I am studying part time and feel confident that I am doing quite well. Since my involvement in the library technician course I have learned there is more to a library than just borrowing books. I must point out that since I have been working in the library my knowledge and understanding has improved greatly.

In early 1994, I heard that the Northern Territory University Library was in the process of negotiations with hierarchy to employ an Aboriginal person. This came about through the persistence of Reference Librarian Heather Moorcroft and the support of Chief Librarian Alex Byrne. They both saw the necessity to employ an Aboriginal person in the Library. For me, this was the perfect opportunity to fulfil my aim of employment within the realms of a library environment. As things turned out I had to wait until later in the year before the position actually came into fruition. (I guess that was due to red tape.)

In my position as reference officer it is necessary to deal with people from all walks of life; this I find interesting and stimulating and sometimes quite an experience. The NTU has a substantial intake of overseas students and there is often quite a language barrier. This can be a little frustrating at times. One instance comes to mind: I was on duty at the Information desk when I noticed a fellow ambling towards me, he looked embarrassed and hesitant to approach me. Once he did however, I realised he just did not know how to explain to me what he wanted to know. I told him that I was very sorry but I did not understand. In the end, I asked him to write his request down and I was then able to assist him. It was easier for me to understand by reading his request.

This problem occurs quite regularly in any type of library, and is a very real problem Aboriginal people face. Aboriginal people are in awe of libraries. They see a library as being ‘Whiteman’s’ territory and everything within the library is scary to them. The library scene is not like the way in which Aborigines record data and information. They have always had their own method of keeping information. Aboriginal people have used abstract symbols as a way of encoding meaning such as so-called dot paintings.

Aboriginal people did not refer to any type of alphabet and were simply dismissed as being illiterate. As Stephen Muecke said, it would be better to use the French word analphabetic, which means without an alphabet.
Aboriginal people read much more than just writing, they read the land, they read the weather, they read complex symbols painted as part of ceremonies. There are no right ways or wrong ways, just different ways. I refer to Aboriginal art and story telling by the elders. These methods all have significant meaning but, are very different to the system used by the Whiteman.

Most Aboriginal people have very limited knowledge or use of any type of library therefore an establishment such as the University Library is rather intimidating and alienating. Aboriginal students generally like to contact someone they know. Often people hear about someone through the network or by 'word of mouth' and they then come in to see that person. They probably would not have come if they did not know someone.

Fortunately, the university is considering cross-cultural workshops. This means that in the future all staff will have a better understanding of the various cultures that use the library, thus establishing a greater understanding of the way that different people communicate. This is particularly important in regard to Aboriginal students because the Aboriginal culture is by far the least understood in today's society.

When other cultures do not understand or have trouble getting their message across, the problem is accepted and treated accordingly. This is not always the case when it comes to Aboriginal students. Aborigines are often typecast and stigmatised by today's society as being ignorant and illiterate. Sometimes a little understanding and patience by the person in charge would result in the realisation that the issue is really one related to communication.
LIBRARIES ON THE EQUATOR: A SINGAPORE PERSPECTIVE

Oliver Mann

Singapore is a compact, affluent, high-rise and high-tech nation – an ideal environment in which to operate a dynamic library service. The Library 2000: investing in a learning nation report of 1994 heralds fundamental change for the library scene in Singapore, change which will capitalise on the republic’s capacity to effect sweeping reforms, maintain its competitive edge in the region, and position itself as an “international knowledge hub”.

The author spent ten months as a library user in Singapore in 1994, and from this perspective offers a glimpse of current issues affecting its libraries, library users and Library Technicians. Actually, when I was asked to speak at this conference a different title was suggested – “the joys and heartaches of travelling the Asian continent in pursuit of a paper” – an alternative title obviously coined by someone who was left behind, someone who perceived that last year I was on to a good thing! So if I explain what I was doing last year you will understand why I presume to stand before you and talk about libraries in Singapore. But I do ask you to bear in mind that what follows are the observations of a ten month visitor to that vibrant island republic – this is not a definitive study of the topic.

Over the last three years I have been developing the INTAN MAS database for the Northern Territory University Library. INTAN MAS contains references to the literature on the provinces of Eastern Indonesia from Lombok to Irian Jaya, and on Australia’s relations with Indonesia.

In 1994 I was awarded a Research Fellowship in Australian/Southeast Asian Relations, at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore. INTAN MAS is accessible through the Internet, and the purpose of the Fellowship was to further develop INTAN MAS from Singapore, via the Internet. I was to use the resources of libraries in Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia to expand the core of INTAN MAS on Eastern Indonesia, and to broaden its coverage from Australia’s relations with Indonesia to Australia’s relations with ASEAN and its member nations of Singapore, The Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia. For ten months then, I was a library user, on the other side of the desk you might say, in Singapore, which leads me to share with you this glimpse of libraries in Singapore. It is of course a selective glimpse as my endeavours centred upon two academic libraries and the National Library.

Singapore, as we all know, attracts many superlative accolades: the finest cuisine in the region, the best shopping this side of Paris, a superb holiday destination (last year Singapore had six million visitors, which is twice the number of its own population), the most spectacular bank collapses in the world, and one would have to add the best libraries on the Equator – well – if you follow the track of the Equator or very close to it (Singapore is just two degrees north of the Equator) there is not a lot of competition, but that does not belie the fact that Singapore does have a number of very good libraries, and a strong commitment to library development.

Singapore is about one-quarter the size of the Australian Capital Territory. Its population consists of three main ethnic groups of 78% Chinese, 14% Malay and 7% Indian. The official languages of Singapore are Malay, Chinese, Tamil and English. Malay is the national language, and English the language of administration. Mandarin is being increasingly used among the majority Chinese population, replacing Chinese dialects such as Hokkien and Cantonese. The general literacy rate is estimated at 92%.

There are some 550 libraries and information centres in Singapore. Complementing the National Library system there are 6 key academic libraries, 350 school libraries and 180 special libraries. The National Library performs a dual role: it serves as a national library and as a public library.

The Singapore library scene then is one which in outline has elements that have a universality about them – a national library complemented by public, academic, school and special libraries. And the libraries are well networked – with examples such as SILAS – the Singapore Integrated Library Automation Service. SILAS started in 1987, and has built up a network of libraries in Singapore which share access to seven million
bibliographic records. National efforts such as SILAS are complemented by more specialised networks such as LAWNET which offers a full-text database of legal statutes.

All this is set against a backdrop of a small, well infrastructured land mass with an affluent, highly literate population, and three distinct ethnic groups. I think you would agree it all sounds pretty healthy. But Singapore is no place for complacency and just last year the government released its *Library 2000: investing in a learning nation* report. The report takes a critical look at the present situation and charts the course for quite fundamental change and development of libraries in Singapore, particularly public libraries.

We will return shortly to the *Library 2000* report, but first we should take note of some representative libraries — starting with the National Library in Stamford Road. It has had a long and varied history, beginning as a school library in The Singapore Institution founded by Sir Stamford Raffles in 1823. For the next 20 years the library was available for use to "all subscribers and donors to the Institution, and the teachers and scholars therein, as well as any other person upon a monthly payment to the Librarian of 25 cents". Then followed stages when it was a proprietary library (a type of library which was widespread in the British colonies), and then as a government library associated with the Museum, to finally emerge as the Raffles National Library in 1958. Described by architects as "neither aggressively contemporary nor imposingly classical in detail", the building has been strongly criticized for its architectural design and severe red-brick exterior. It is a fairly drab 1950s style building both inside and out, and rather cramped for size, but it does boast a particularly fine historical collection on Singapore and South-East Asia.

As noted earlier, the National Library combines reference and lending functions. As a national library its main objectives are to provide information to meet the needs of Singaporeans and to preserve and promote the literary heritage of Singapore. The Central Lending Library (which is in the same building as the National Library) and its nine branch libraries — the public libraries around the island — provide collections to meet the cultural, educational and leisure needs of the general public. The National Library has a registered membership of about 900,000 members. Annual loans total nine million items — 75% for books in English, 20% for those in Chinese, and the remaining 5% in Malay and Tamil.

Moving on to two branch libraries within the National Library’s public library network: they are both on the eastern side of the island, and good examples of the traditional and the very new. The Marine Parade Branch Library in Katong, one of the older suburbs of Singapore, is well located in the local shopping centre, and offers the basic range of public library services — adequate, but no frills; while further out in the newer suburbs there is the Tampines Regional Library — "the library like no other" as the banner over its entrance boldly proclaims. Tampines opened at the end of 1994, and it is indeed like no other public library in Singapore. It is the forerunner of the sweeping changes that are going to transform public libraries in Singapore as a consequence of the *Library 2000* report. The new Tampines Library fits into the larger perspective of developing Singapore into a nation of learning, and the belief that Singapore’s public libraries must keep pace with the information technology revolution so that the Republic will not be left behind in a global economy emphasising information, technology and knowledge.

Tampines boasts features not seen before in public libraries in Singapore:

- Library directories which are located on touchscreen personal computers throughout the Library. These offer a tour of the Library’s services and how the collections are arranged.
- Apart from opacs to identify books and other materials available in the National Library system, there is an online Chinese catalogue, a multimedia database about the new suburb of Tampines, the *Singapore Resource Database* (which is aimed at school projects and includes pictures and videoclips), and access to CD-ROM databases and the Internet. There are also computer-based tutorial packages which give instruction in mastering selected popular computer software such as Windows, Wordperfect and Lotus.
- A wireless LAN (Local Area Network) which enables users to bring in their laptop computers and access the Library’s CD-ROM databases and computer-based tutorial packages.
- Thirty video-on-demand terminals which allow users to browse audiovisual catalogues and choose from 3000 videotapes of feature films and documentaries.
- Double the bookstock in other National Library branches.
- No separate reference section, but uses “inter-shelving” so that books for loan and reference material can be found on the same shelves.
In addition to the general collection, a number of special collections on specific areas of interest, such as information technology, management, parenting, travel and sport.

- Self-check kiosks which allow members to borrow and return books by doing the scanning themselves.
- A commercially-run bookshop in the Library foyer.

Overall, Tampines Regional Library heralds a major reform of the popular image of public libraries in Singapore.

The Library 2000 report, the blueprint for the changes, warrants closer attention, for it is the recommendations of this report which will help recreate the public library system in Singapore. It makes for fairly blunt reading, describing the present system as stagnant and inadequate, and identifying two key areas which have to be addressed by libraries: making information more accessible, and exploiting information technology. The report stresses that if Singapore does not keep up with the information technology revolution it will be left behind in a global economy where information, technology and knowledge are keys to success. Singapore’s competitiveness depends on the people’s lifelong ability to learn and libraries are seen as playing a pivotal part in the process.

The present national and public library systems, have not measured up to public expectations, and they are deemed to have inadequate collections and services. The public libraries lag far behind other developed cities. Glasgow, for instance, has one public library for 65,000 people, while in Singapore one public library serves more than 200,000 people. The present library system does not encourage Singaporeans to be library users, nor to be avid readers. Only 12% of the population visited a public library at least once in the past year, and surveys indicate user disaffection with the collections, services, staff attitudes, and the actual state of the library buildings and their furnishings. Singaporeans read only 16.5 books a year, as compared to their American counterparts who read three times as many. And there is an uneven distribution in the composition of readership, with the reading habit being fairly ingrained among the young but not sustained as they grow older or leave school.

Thus, the public library system is regarded as being outdated, under-resourced and over-stretched—hence the call for a revitalised, technologically advanced system, as exemplified by the Tampines Library.

The national implications of these findings have a number of highlights. Indeed, how is the public library system going to rise to the challenge of enticing the 88% of the population who are not active library users to use it more?

Firstly, to extend library usage and appeal, and increase accessibility, a new configuration of libraries will be established. The proposed new tiered configuration will comprise a new National Reference Library, 5 regional, 18 community, and 100 neighbourhood libraries. The National Reference Library will be supported by the Library at the National University of Singapore. Regional libraries will cater to the general population and businesses. Community libraries will function as township libraries in population centres of about 100,000 people, and neighbourhood libraries in the actual government housing estates will cater mainly for children. The plan, then, is to inculcate good reading and lifelong learning habits from an early age, and to make all libraries more numerous and more readily accessible. Thus, a major shift in attitude is being signalled—of the purpose of libraries and how it can be achieved.

Various special libraries will either be established (or augmented if they already exist) to cater for specific specialisations. Thus there will be a Business Library and an Arts Library, while the Institute of SouthEast Asian Studies Library and the Singapore Collection at the National Library will concentrate on South-East Asian collections and services.

Capitalising on the concept of borderless libraries, it is envisaged that all the libraries in Singapore will be linked with each other and to information systems throughout the world. The borderless plan will be feasible by 1998 when Singapore Telecom completes the laying of the island-wide optical fibre network, linking all high-rise residential and commercial buildings. A recent survey revealed that 70% of the Malay population of Singapore did not belong to the National Library. Understandably then, the Library 2000 report focusses on the need to expand, develop, and make relevant collections in Chinese, Malay, and the Indian languages, and to foster and sustain library usage by these ethnic groups.
The report gives due consideration as to how this grand plan will be achieved – one area I'd like to consider is the human resource – the likes of us! The report calls for a "new breed of Librarian" who are adept with new technology. We'll come back to the new breed in a moment, but it's interesting to note that the report calls for a revision of the salaries of library staff, noting that Librarians with a basic degree are amongst the lowest paid employees in the civil service, with small annual increments and poor promotion prospects. Consequently, the calibre of library staff needs to be lifted in order to match the new vision for libraries in Singapore.

Where do Library Technicians fit into this picture? Only since 1992 have the Temasek Polytechnic and the National Book Development Council of Singapore been jointly conducting the Certificate in Library and Information Studies. The course is based on the syllabus of the City and Guilds of London Library and Information Assistant's Certificate course. It is a six month part-time course, so you can see that the training requirements for Library Technicians in Singapore and Australia differ quite markedly. Anyway, the report signals a review of course content and structure for the library profession in Singapore. And well it might, for at present there are only two grades for Library Technicians, and while it takes about ten years to be promoted from Grade II to Grade I, Library Technicians at the higher grade have no further promotion prospects under the present scheme.

So, there we have the public library system in Singapore. As it stands it has an essentially solid core but rather mediocre delivery. I predict it will be radically different within the next 10 years – in structure, style, delivery and appeal. One should bear in mind that in all fields Singapore is vitally aware of its need to maintain the competitive edge in the region. It is also a wealthy nation with a strong and resolute government which has a reputation for acting on its plans. Great changes are afoot in the library system in Singapore, particularly for public libraries.

Moving on to the two libraries where I spent most of my time – the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, and the National University of Singapore. The Institute is a regional research centre for scholars and other specialists concerned with modern South-East Asia and the Asia-Pacific region. The Library reflects its academic leanings and proved to be an ideal resource for the further development of the INTAN MAS database. The Library is automated, and as a participant in SILAS (Singapore Integrated Library Automated Services) has access to the holdings of over 30 local members in the scheme. As envisaged in the Library 2000 report, the Institute's Library will be expanded to serve as a regional information hub for contemporary South-East Asian information.

I might digress for a moment, and speak about working on a database via the Internet, the super highway which currently attracts a good deal of attention. In fact it is prey to many variables – usage, distance, links, public holidays, and NASA satellites being on track. The variables combined are known as "satellite lag", that is, the time which elapses for all manner of reason (some of which I've just mentioned) between a keystroke and the response appearing on the personal computer's monitor. Communication on the Internet between Singapore and Darwin travels Singapore to the U.S. to Melbourne to Darwin – and return – a long distance even as the satellite flies. As the response time is most affected by the number of other users currently on the Internet I found the best time to work on the database was between dusk and dawn in Singapore, at the weekends, and when there was a public holiday – preferably in Singapore, the U.S. and Australia all at the same time!

Very close by to the Institute are the vast resources of the National University Library, the largest academic library in Singapore, consisting of a Central Library and five branch libraries – two million volumes strong, with more than 100 CD-ROM databases.

My perspective of libraries in Singapore essentially encompassed the Institute, the National University, and the Southeast Asia Collection of the National Library. All three libraries will be affected by the Library 2000 report, most particularly the National Library in its public lending role, but the other two libraries will also become more accessible to the general public as key resources in Singapore's scheme of an adaptive library system with liberalised access. And in a wealthy nation like Singapore there will few qualms about introducing fees for service for everything above a basic public library service.

Bibliography

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SPEAKERS

Isis Bibaoui  
University of Sydney Library,  
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Isis has worked in the Acquisitions Department, University of Sydney Library since 1985, beginning as a Library Assistant, and now in her current position as a Senior Library Technician. Isis has had experience in school, academic and state libraries. During this time Isis has completed Supervision and Middle Management Courses. Interests and activities include cooking, travelling and the Internet. The Library Technicians Section (NSW Group) has benefited from Isis being an office bearer and committee member for many years.

Maureen Byrne,  
Edith Cowan University  
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Maureen completed the Associate Diploma of Applied Science-Library Technology in 1990 at the Edith Cowan University. She has worked in technical services, closed reserve, Faculty of Education circulation and is currently working in the Information Services area. Maureen spent one year working as a library technician at the city of Stirling Public Libraries - Dianella.

Jilleen Chambers  
Cataloguing,  
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Jilleen, a library technician from Brisbane, has been involved in the area of library technician education for a number of years and is currently the Queensland representative on the National Library Technician Course Development Project and a member of the ALIA Board of Education. She is also a part-time teacher for the Gold Coast TAFE library technician course. Jilleen holds a train-the-trainer certificate and is currently undertaking a Bachelor of Adult and Vocational Teaching at Griffith University.

Carolyn Cherrett  
Deakin University,  
Canberra, A.C.T.

Carolyn is ALIA's Membership Services Manager. Prior to this appointment she was Manager of Co-op Subscriptions, a specialist division of the University Cooperative Bookshop Ltd. She started her career as a library technician at the Electricity Commission of NSW (Pacific Power) in 1982. In 1993 Carolyn was vice-president of NSW Branch, resigned as President in 1994 to take up her present appointment with ALIA. In 1991 she was the President of the ALIA Library Technician Section (NSW) and a member of the organising committee for the 6th National Library Technicians Conference. Carolyn was also a member of the NSW Branch Western Regional Chapter committee 1984–1986. Carolyn is currently undertaking a BA (Asian Studies) through Murdoch University. Carolyn has published several papers; in 1991 her paper to the 6th National Library Conference "Library Technician Skills Transfer", republished in the Australian Library Journal; and a chapter "Effective services versus underutilisation: the library technician potential in serials" in Sharing the Challenges: Library Technicians in the 1990s, edited by Jean Bailey, Auslib Press, 1993.

Michael Christie  
Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies,  
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Michael came from New Zealand to Arnhem Land in 1972. Since then he has worked as teacher and teacher linguist in bilingual schools. His research interests include Aboriginal philosophies of knowledge and education, Aboriginal theories of language, and traditional "literacies". He is now lecturer in Yolngu (North East Arnhem Land) languages and culture at the Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, NTU.

Judy Clayden  
Department of Library and Information Science,  
Edith Cowan University,  
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Judy (BA(Hons) MAppSci(InfLibSt) ALIA) has been coordinator of the Associate Diploma of Applied Science (Library Technology) and lecturer in cataloguing in the Department of Library and Information Science of Edith Cowan University in Perth since 1989. Her professional library experience has been mainly in the technical services areas of monograph and serials acquisitions and cataloguing. Other professional interests include indexing, records and archives management, and the history of librarianship. Judy is currently Secretary/Treasurer of ELISS in WA, a member of the Cataloguers' Section committee for WA and a member of the Australian Society of Archivists (WA Branch) committee.
This is Fay's first position in a library of any type. Her position as Reference Officer came about because other library staff and management saw a need for an Aboriginal person to be employed in the NTU Library. With the advent of an Aboriginal faculty at the NTU it was a general consensus that Aboriginal students would be more comfortable when using the library's facilities if they could approach someone of the same race and culture. Fay is currently studying part-time at University, doing the Associate Diploma in Library Practice.

Dianne completed her Associate Diploma of Arts (Library Studies) in 1987. She spent 4 years at Daramalan College Library performing library technician duties. She then had four years at the National Library working in different areas: processing of serials intake, cataloguing overseas monographs on to ABN, was OIC of the circulation desk in the Main Reading Room, and Supervisor in the Stacks. Dianne is now studying for a Bachelor of Arts (Library Studies) at the University of Canberra.

Christine completed the Library Practice Certificate in 1979 after working for the Newcastle Regional Library for four years. On re-entering the work force in 1987 she worked at the Boral Research Library before attaining her current position as a cataloguer. She is the current President, New South Wales Group of Library Technicians.

Doug is an Associate Lecturer in Employment Relations. His employment background includes many years with the State Rail Authority of NSW, where he gained experience in Industrial Relations and Management. Doug's academic qualifications, Bachelor of Business and Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) support his current position.

Lynette began her library career in 1979 at the Sutherland Shire Council Library and Information Service. After extensive experience in all sections of the public library she worked for a short stint with Telecom directory services. Lynette is currently working in the acquisitions department, co-ordinating the work-flow for undergraduate order requests and implementing and coordinating electronic ordering procedures for undergraduate orders.

Lorraine is Staff Development Officer at the University of Wollongong Library. She coordinates training and development within the library, and has conducted courses in customer service, communication skills and team building workshops. Her qualifications include a Certificate of Library Practice, a Bachelor of Arts and more recently an Associate Diploma of Business (Human Resources Development). Lorraine also keeps in touch with library work by working on the information desk.

Fina has a broad library experience in special, school, academic and public libraries. She has occupied a number of varied and challenging positions encompassing all areas of Library Customer Service and Document Delivery.

Dot Fisher migrated from England with her family in 1978. In 1985 she completed the Library Technician's Certificate in Canberra. Dot worked in the ACT Schools Authority in primary and senior school libraries from 1980-1985 and has worked at the Australian Defence Force Academy Library in the acquisitions area since 1985, for the last nine years as Monograph Acquisitions Supervisor.

After completing the Associate Diploma of Library Practice Joanne obtained her Bachelor of Library and Information Management of the University of South Australia. She had previously held positions as a library technician with the Museums and Art Galleries of the Northern Territory and the former State Reference Library of the Northern Territory in the Music Collection and as the interlibrary loans officer. Since then she has held librarian positions in the former Northern Territory Film Library, State Reference Library and Central Library Service.
Isla Gillespie  
Nunawading Library, and  
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City of Whitehorse, Victoria.

In 1984 Isla commenced work as a Library Assistant at Oakleigh Public Library and qualified as a library technician in 1987. Isla was a recipient of the Anne Stewart Memorial Project award for women stewards in the Australian Services Union. Her current library supervisory role includes rostering of staff on the circulation desk and storytime sessions. Isla performs a variety of library duties including input and check data for the community information database and computer support duties, and is involved in consultative committees which address contemporary library issues and resolve disputes using conflict resolution principles and alternatives.

Lyn Graves  
South East Institute of TAFE,  
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Lyn is currently employed as a library technician chiefly responsible for cataloguing, writing and compiling the procedure manual, orientations and user education programs. Lyn's early library experience was as a Library Officer in Penola High School/Community Library. Lyn participated in a delegation of librarians to the People's Republic of China in 1994.

Rosemary Harbridge  
Northern Territory Library,  
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Rosemary is currently a reference librarian at the Northern Territory Library. Before that she was an Australian volunteer on the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia where she spent two years setting up the Resource Centre in Phnom Penh. In her early working life Rosemary spent a short time nursing before realising that the information industry was really her niche. Most of her library experience has been with government departments.

Leonie Hayes-Proudley  
LINNET Support Officer,  
Electronic Information Access,  
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Leonie completed her Associate Diploma in Library Practice in 1992. She worked in the Dept. of Primary Industry and Fisheries Library until 1993. Leonie's current position includes responsibility for the Help Desk and System Support/Maintenance which combines library and computing skills. Leonie assisted the Project Dragonfly Administrator with the organisation of tasks and was a member of the Multimedia Task Force looking at futuristic developments in library applications.

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Cheryl Jordan  
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Cheryl is a relative newcomer to the library field, having spent most of her working life in a variety of jobs, including running a tea-room, serving behind a bar and slicing salami in a continental deli (the only vegetarian on the staff!) She has worked in a bank, an insurance office, an employment agency, and for the Commonwealth public service. Cheryl discovered libraries in her thirties and gained her Associate Diploma in 1994. She gained experience in the local school library, and her first library position was at Flinders University of South Australian, where she stayed for one year before commencing at Noarlunga Library Service where she has been for five years (by her own admission, a record for Cheryl!).

Barbara Keogh,  
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Prior to commencing work as Campus Supervisor at Myilly Point Barbara worked in the Document Delivery Unit and Circulation at the Casuarina Campus. Since completion of the Associate Diploma, however, she has also worked as a Law Assistant technician, Circulation Technician and Interlibrary Loan Assistant at the Myilly Point Campus and is now working towards a BA in Politics and a Bachelor of Library and Information Management. Prior to commencing with the Northern Territory University Barbara worked in a volunteer capacity at the Palmerston Christian School establishing library services and reading programs.

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Kathy has extensive customer service experience in a variety of libraries. Her current position as Loans Coordinator includes responsibility for closed reserve, AV and shelving.
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Oliver is Acting Manager of the Information Services Branch of the NT University Library. He has held several positions in the University Library since 1989, prior to which he was Coordinator of the Council of Adult Education Library in Melbourne. He has a particular interest in South-East Asian librarianship and in 1994 was awarded the annual Research Fellowship in Australian-Southeast Asian Relations at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore.

Helen is currently the Lending Services Supervisor at Mount Gravatt Campus Library at Griffith University. She has worked for a number of years in a variety of libraries. She has been an active member of the Queensland Library Technician Section and has been a representative on many library task forces within her work sphere. She is the 1993 recipient of the ALIA Dunn & Wilson Scholarship.

Judi completed the Library Technician’s Certificate in 1984 gaining the NSW State Medal for the Highest Honours Grade Pass for the course. She has worked in several different libraries. Judi worked for the Hunter Water Corporation for 11 years and became Manager of Library & Information Services in 1989 and is currently Relieving Public Affairs Coordinator for the Corporation and expects to return to the library in December 1995. She is the immediate Past President of the Hunter Regional Group of ALIA, found the experience “fantastic” during her time as president and was the first technician in the Hunter to have had the honour of this position.

Sharyn’s career began with the National Library as a typist in the Australian National Social Sciences library. From this position she moved to the General Reference Section, and then on to a searcher in the Loan and Locations Sections, now known as Document Supply Service. Sharyn has now become the Supervisor in charge of one of the four work groups in this area. Sharyn has been working at the National Library for many years and during this time has been involved in the many technological changes which have taken place.

Pearl is a Northern Territory historian. She has lived in the Top End on and off since her childhood, and is highly committed to researching Top End history. She is a foundation member of the Historical Society of Katherine Inc. and a member of the Heritage Advisory Council of the Northern Territory.

Linda began her library career as a Circulation Clerk at a US military library in Japan. She earned her Bachelor’s degree in Vocational Education from Southern Illinois University and is currently studying a Graduate Degree Program at the University of Arizona School of Library Science. She is the current President of the Council on Library/Media Technicians (COLT). As an active member of the California Library Association, she serves on the Membership Committee and is Past-President of the Support Staff Round Table. Within the American Library Association, she sits on the Support Staff Interest Round Table Steering Committee and acts as a consultant from COLT to the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services Division (ALCTS) Task Force on Meeting the Continuing Education Needs of Library Paraprofessionals. Linda coauthored an article describing the aftermath of the Lander’s Earthquake as it affected the UCR library and staff. Linda writes a regular column for Library Mosaics, a magazine for library support staff.
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Phil works as the Project Officer in the EIA branch of the Northern Territory Library. She is a qualified library technician and completed the Bachelor of Library and Information Management at the Northern Territory university. Phil's current role involves familiarising herself and staff with the Internet, including training, and preparing user documentation.

Sarah was Chief Librarian at the Hasanuddin University until April 1995 when she resigned to take on an educator's role at the University.

Serious problems in education and training, motivation and knowledge of technology.

Robyn Young
Northern Territory University,
Darwin, N.T.

Robin Young (BA Qld, GdipFE SAust CAE, MEd NE, PhD Toronto) began her career as Acquisitions Librarian at Darwin Community College (now the Northern Territory University) and became Head, Users Services Division in 1977. In 1981 Robyn was acting Associate Head of the Library. She was instrumental in setting up the Certificate in Library Practice at the institution and was course co-ordinator from 1982-1984 when she left the library scene and became the coordinator of academic development. In 1986 Robyn received a Letter of Recognition from the LAA. She is currently Dean of the Faculty of Education at the Northern Territory University. In 1994 Robyn was guest speaker of the 10th Anniversary of the first graduates from the Library Practice Course.
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Northern Territory Library
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Health & Community Services
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The information contained in this delegates list was taken from individual registration forms. Any inaccuracies are regretted.