

Switching tracks: new roles for library and information workers

2nd ALIA Top End Symposium, 8–9 October 2004, Darwin

Following on from its successful inaugural symposium in 2003, ALIA Top End hosted its second symposium with the theme *Switching tracks: new roles for library and information workers*. The symposium was held at main lecture theatre at the Palmerston Campus of Charles Darwin University in the Northern Territory. Once again, it was held over a Friday afternoon and a Saturday morning, 8–9 October, thus ensuring maximum attendance. The Symposium also coincided with the PLNT (Public Libraries Northern Territory) group biannual meeting in Darwin. This time, more than seventy library and information workers from a range of libraries throughout the Territory — Darwin, Palmerston, Alice Springs and Nhulunbuy — came together to find out how to expand their roles, explore new ideas, and develop new and innovative programs by thinking ‘outside the square’.

Georgina Dale, manager, member services and groups liaison at ALIA, presented the keynote address entitled, ‘CPD — your ticket to ride’ which detailed the ALIA CPD Scheme, an appropriate start to the symposium. Reflecting the diverse roles librarians are undertak-

ing, presentations ranged from a paper by Ana Govan (Power and Water Corporation) ‘The Chameleon librarian’, to ‘Is image important? A case study: Darwin City Council Libraries revitalised’ by Viki Chmielewski. In the paper ‘Showing the value of your service to the people who count’, Karen Vitullo and Kim Farley-Larmour of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, showed how important it is for the library to be seen to be pursuing the organisation’s objectives.

The completion of the Adelaide to Darwin railway encouraged many presenters to get onboard, from ‘The information management express: One accidental librarian’s journey on a parallel line’ to ‘Super-fast train heading for derailment: strengths and weaknesses of converged service models in libraries’.

A number of sponsors made the symposium possible. Of particular note are: EBSCO, Charles Darwin University, James Bennett, VITeLs, Peter Walton & Associates, and Queensland Library Supplies who donated an ergonomic chair which was raffled at the symposium



The 2004 organising committee (l-r): Dianne Wilcox, Di Sinclair, Jayshree Mamtara and Jill Heffernan

and was donated by the winner (Kim Farley-Larmour) to Darwin City Council Libraries.

Given the increase in numbers attending and comments made by delegates, it is clear that these symposia are fulfilling a need. A committee is being formed to plan a third symposium for 2005.

The symposium was a great learning experience as much for delegates as well as for the 2004 organising committee: Jill Heffernan, Jayshree Mamtara, Di Sinclair and Dianne Wilcox.

Jayshree Mamtara, organising committee, 2nd ALIA Top End Symposium

The challenge of sustainability

APSIG seminar: *Digital heritage preservation and the challenge of sustainability*

Three leading experts and practitioners spoke on the latest national and international developments in the field of digital preservation — how to preserve items ‘born digital’, such as websites, electronic documents, images and sound — at an APSIG lunchtime seminar on Tuesday 12 October at the National Library of Australia in Canberra. Proving that there is a keen interest in the topic, more than 100 delegates attended the event, and there have been numerous requests for information since.

Professor Amareswar Galla is director of studies, Graduate Programs in Sustainable Heritage Development, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the the Australian National University. He reported on the International Council of Museums Congress in Seoul, which he had attended as a senior office-bearer. His comments related particularly to museums and art galleries. Many gallery directors are reporting that, due to corporate pressures and lack of accepted policies on website retention, they are experiencing difficulties in maintaining their exhibition websites, and that important displays and adjuncts to exhibitions are being lost. At the congress, there was acknowledgement that digital-born items have not yet been fully-accepted and defined as intangible heritage, despite the development of standards. Unfortunately, there seems to be so much emphasis upon digital displays in museums and art galleries that the primary focus of these

institutions as long-term repositories and cultural centres seems to be almost ignored. Professor Galla emphasised that Australia had a unique role in relation to the small Pacific countries in helping them in this difficult area where change is so rapid.

Kevin Bradley is sustainability advisor to the Australian Partnership for Sustainable Repositories (APSR). He is president of the Australasian Sound Recording Association and a Technical Committee member of the International Association of Sound Archives. Kevin reported on issues of sustainability of websites currently being addressed internationally and in Australia, including the recently established APSR project. Further information is at <http://www.apsr.edu.au>. The aim of the centre is to develop best practice in Australia and to be involved in the development of international planning strategies. Kevin reported that Australia is on the forefront of this work.

Paul Koerbin is senior librarian in the National Library’s PANDORA Digital Archive (<http://pandora.nla.gov.au/index.html>). Pandora preserves Australian websites selected for their long-term interest. Paul has recently attended a number of conferences and workshops overseas and his paper presented to a conference at Bath in the United Kingdom is at <http://www.nla.gov.au/nla/staffpaper/2004/koerbin2.html>.

Marie Sexton, APSIG