

Aiming for access: a student's perspective

Aiming for access, 25 July 2003, Wesley Conference Centre, Sydney

Due to a happy combination of frequent-flyer points, a Sydney friend's sofa and the ALIA member registration discount, I was able to attend the ACOC *Aiming for access* Seminar in Sydney.

I found the seminar to be excellent for a number of reasons. Firstly, it was a real motivator, rekindling my enthusiasm for cataloguing after the end-of-semester holiday! Particularly motivating for me was the first presentation, by Joan Mitchell, executive director and editor-in-chief of *Dewey Decimal Classification* (DDC). Ms Mitchell introduced the recently-released DDC22, by explaining the main changes in the edition, and the reasons for them.

Ms Mitchell is a quietly-spoken but enthusiastic individual, and was a cataloguer in her 'past life', so she maintains a very realistic attitude regarding the impact of DDC changes on librarians 'in the field'. Ms Mitchell's enthusiasm for classification and her dedication to inclusiveness of the DDC scheme and planning mechanisms were very apparent. I was

impressed by the level of community involvement utilised by the DDC Editorial Committee, for example, liaising with members of the deaf community with regards to the most appropriate DDC classification for 'sign language' and 'finger reading', or seeking input from the DDC translators with regard to cultural differences amongst the wide variety of nations who subscribe to DDC.

This presentation was especially exciting for me, as this is the aspect of classification/cataloguing in which I am particularly interested — how do we classify the world? In what ways is this culturally-specific? Is our classification scheme practical — does it work in the 'real world'? I find these questions and challenges incredibly stimulating, and I hope that throughout my library and information science career I will be able to have some input into such matters.

The second presentation was also on a topic which interests me — web design. Judith Pearce discussed the National Library of Australia's 'One Search' website and catalogue search

function. Ms Pearce's insights into search engine usability and user interactions with the 'One Search' website definitely reminded me of the importance of a 'back-to-basics' approach with web design — who is the customer? What does s/he want or need?

After lunch, the Achieving Access Panel commenced with brief presentations from each of the panel members. While all the presentations were informative and mind-expanding, describing different approaches to the use and development of thesauri, Clayton Bolitho from La Trobe University's presentation took the cake for sheer entertainment value! Mr Bolitho's revelations that he has classified his postcard and computer wallpaper collections with DDC certainly livened up the room, overcoming the post-lunch slump! (I hope, Clayton, that you realise we were laughing *with* you, not *at* you!) Clayton then silenced our laughter with a display of his impressive endeavour to classify web resources using DDC, and giving an insight into the level of work involved in the maintenance of such a site.

Afternoon tea was followed by an update from the Australian Committee on Cataloguing (ACOC), courtesy of ACOC chair, Deirdre Kiorgaard, and then a final summing up by Anne Robertson, Australian representative to the Dewey Editorial Committee.

The lunch, morning and afternoon tea breaks provided an opportunity for many participants to catch up with old friends and colleagues, or, in my case, to meet other people new to the industry, and find out what the water's really like for the new library and information science graduate.

All in all, I found the seminar to be incredibly rewarding, providing many stimulating points for me to ponder. More than 150 delegates attended, reassuring me that 'rumours regarding the death of the cataloguer have been greatly exaggerated!' To the contrary, the cataloguing community is vibrant, enthusiastic and committed to continuing to provide the very best access to information resources.

Kim Moody, post graduate Diploma in Library and Information Systems at QUT, Brisbane

ALIA heard in bout over new library whereabouts

Following public consultations and the preparation of a functional specification and architect's brief, the ACT Government recently allocated \$2.5m for the construction of a new library to replace a twenty-five year-old demountable building in Western Canberra.

Given the competing expenditure priorities of the bushfire reconstruction program, we could hardly believe that it had happened.

We shared the government's site preference for the new library to be built directly in front of the entrance to the Kippax Shopping Centre and right next to the bus terminus. However, two local lobby groups had other ideas. They wanted the new library — plus a community centre — to be built on the site of the current temporary library, and subject to a master plan for the whole precinct.

Fearing that muddied waters might make it hard to see ahead, ALIA (ACT Group and our president Christine Mackenzie) and the Friends of the ACT Library and Information Service made our site preference known to the planning minister Simon Corbell, and urged an immediate start to construction.

Our views were not only heard, but acted upon. In August, the government announced that the new library would be built on the site that we supported. Construction tenders will soon be called.

Thanks to all concerned. We can do a lot when we act together.

Ian McCallum, Libraries Alive!