

New Directions in Special Librarianship

ALIA Symposium, Melbourne, November 3–4, 2005

It was a pleasure to join the group of about 120 library and information professionals who took part in the recent ALIA Symposium in Melbourne on 'New Directions in Special Librarianship: the role, the virtual and being indispensable'. Coming all the way from Perth, I had hoped to gain some valuable insights from the range of sessions and I was certainly not disappointed. It was well worth the trip!

The program format, a symposium rather than a conference, provided a broad focus on issues common to many special libraries. Rather than encountering sessions targeted at particular subject specialist groups, each paper was broad enough to be relevant across public and private sector libraries.

It would be difficult to single out any of the speakers as all were of an excellent standard and very entertaining — perhaps most memorable for me might be the pearls of wisdom gained from marketing guru Michael Newman in the very last session of the symposium, where he illuminated some of his '22 Irrefutable Laws of Advertising' and how they could be applied to libraries (complete with entertaining slides of successful ad campaigns). Also very interesting was the opening discussion by Dr Kate Andrews from BDO Kendalls who gave her view on the changing role of the special librarian and how we can position ourselves with IT and HR in our organisations. I particularly liked her amusing analogy about working with IT — collaborate and co-operate and

sometimes just knock them down, but don't worry, they keep getting up again like Arnold Schwarzenegger in 'The Terminator'!

Much food for thought came out of the session on 'Going Virtual', with excellent presentations by the panellists discussing what works and what doesn't and particularly the differing views on 'hardcopy' vs 'no hardcopy'. Lastly, some extremely practical tips were gained from the sessions on licensing electronic resources, information security and the T.E.A.S.E model for end user training by Maree Lipschitz.

The conference venue, on the 17th Floor of the RACV Club with panoramic views of Melbourne, was superb and the sessions were consummately introduced and chaired by the wonderful Elizabeth Swan. All in all, a great professional development opportunity: congratulations to ALIA for another enjoyable and informative event.

Joanne Marchioro, library manager, Department of Industry and Resources, WA

Indigenous collection management

<http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/thesaurus/>

The AIATSIS thesauri, previewed at the 'Deadly Directions' conference, are now available. They contain headings for language groups and people, relating to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, and for place names. The subject thesaurus will be available in several months time. The headings are used to describe all items held in Mura, the AIATSIS Collections Catalogue. The thesauri connect to the AIATSIS catalogue, allowing searches to be made from the selected heading. AIATSIS has included the 250 000 map series grid references, and hopes to develop a map interface to browse the collections.

The language thesaurus has been in use for many years, but as an in-house document. It displays the more than 250 distinct Indigenous languages in Australia, many no longer in use. AIATSIS Library staff worked for a year on the language

thesaurus to check all the variable spellings for these languages and their groupings.

The place-name thesaurus was created by importing the authority files used on the Mura catalogue (<http://mura.aiatsis.gov.au>) into the Multites software. This thesaurus uses the Indigenous place name wherever possible and the non-Indigenous place name.

AIATSIS recognises that libraries need to have appropriate headings to catalogue or index Indigenous subject material. These thesauri (language, place and subject) should also be useful for Indigenous knowledge centres and keeping places. The thesauri can be downloaded as PDF files (with delimited text and XML coming shortly) for non-commercial use. They will be updated every 1–2 months.

Rod Stroud, library director, AIATSIS Library

National Licensing: products survey

You may be aware that the issue of national licensing of electronic resources has been under discussion for the past year by the National Licensing Forum, convened by the National Library. A reference group set up by the National Licensing Forum at its most recent meeting now wants to find out more about the products already licensed and those wanted by Australian libraries. An online survey, which closes 9 December, is being undertaken (if you're quick, available now at <http://www.nla.gov.au/initiatives/meetings/sitelicence/survey.html>). The results from this survey

will inform the next meeting of the Forum in 2006.

Any questions about the project can be directed to caslconsortium@nla.gov.au, or to any of the members of the reference group listed near the end of the minutes of the October 2005 meeting (see <http://www.nla.gov.au/initiatives/meetings/sitelicence/nlmin05.html>). You can find more information about the process at <http://www.nla.gov.au/initiatives/meetings/sitelicence/slindex.html>. ■

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