

Introducing UTAS new graduate Liaison Librarians

The University of Tasmania library is fortunate to have attracted a good many new graduate librarians and we thought it would be fun to introduce some of them to readers of *inCite*.

What attracted you to the library profession?

VW: There was no one thing, more a confluence of opportunities and life decisions. I liked the idea of being immersed in teaching without being a teacher, immersed in research without being a researcher, and in a profession that actively works to make the world a better place. Libraries are political, and so am I!

RM: The usual suspect: reading. At university they made it sound more impressive by calling it research. I never tired of it. It's like detective work, like piecing together a puzzle. Library work seemed to offer an inexhaustible supply.

FW: I graduated with a Bachelor of Information Systems and found that I didn't really see myself working in a commercial environment; after looking around at various options, I discovered librarianship and it all fell together.

Do you battle with the stereotype image?

VW: If you have to worry about whether or not you're cool, then the answer is no, you're not. I think that the substance of the profession is much more important than the image; get the substance right and the image will follow. On a personal level I've only really come across "Oh, you must like to read!" which is hardly a stereotype, as I'm yet to meet a library worker who doesn't.

RM: Sometimes. Most people think that being a librarian means you are intolerant of noise, which is true, I am. Libraries now though are unrecognisable to what they were when the classic, sharp-edged stereotypes were born. Most libraries are designed to attract people and make them feel welcome, and those who work in these environments reflect this.

FW: I like the stereotypes; they're harmless really.

What do you enjoy most about your work?

VM: This varies day by day, but I think what I like best overall is the opportunity to make my own fun; in this profession the learning never stops, if you don't want it to. The borrowing privileges are also nice!

RM: Teaching students how to find information. If they don't know how to find information, they don't graduate. It's an important, on-going, simple, and rewarding goal.

FW: Helping people find information, helping them learn how to find it for themselves.

How do you keep current with what is happening in the profession?

VW: Ah, so many blogs, so little time! Also: ALIA events, e-lists and committees; conferences; journals; conversations at morning tea... The profession is all about communities, and adapting to social, economic and political change, so this justifies my habit of devouring online newspapers as well (I can stop anytime I like, I swear!).



Felix Wilson, Ruairi Murphy and Vanessa Warren

RM: RSS feeds are my main tool. There are plenty out there reporting new trends and innovative ideas in libraries throughout the world. They are often one-way communication, however, and given the opportunity I prefer talking with other professionals, and ideally face-to-face. Even with all the technology available today, nothing rivals just chatting with someone and picking their brains about what's new and successful and how you could adopt or adapt it.

FW: Visiting other libraries is always good. I always try to visit a library in a new city and I've never been disappointed by the variety and professional camaraderie among librarians. When I'm not travelling, blogs are such a good way to know about what's new, what's coming up, and what the issues of the day are, but it's important to keep up with what's happening outside the profession too, in publishing, technology, and society generally. We don't exist in a bubble.

What educational experiences are you seeking? (eg. further study, conference papers)

VM: I'm always looking for the next opportunity to learn, big or small. I love, love, love conferences: the presentations and discussions, the arguments and alliances, the networking, the travel (the food!). I even love presenting papers. One day I'll tackle a PhD... but that day has not quite come yet!

RM: Next semester I intend to make the most of the university's staff development initiative. The University of Tasmania will finance one unit of study a semester for staff. I'm yet to decide what I'll study but either way there'll be reading involved, which is fine by me.

FW: I've been very fortunate to have had some great educational experiences since I started working as a librarian, particularly at UTAS. I've been able to attend conferences in Australia and internationally, and have been involved in some really interesting projects and worked with some great people. I like to keep learning every day informally, but I'm also considering some further study next year in the fine arts, something different.

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