



Emma Taylor

A Love Letter

Dear Water Corporation Library

We've been together over three years now, but it's important to let you know how much you mean to me. I never planned to be with a corporate or special library. In fact before I started my Grad Dip in Library Studies I was hardly even aware of your existence – my only library experiences had been with my school library and the several public libraries of which I was a member. For my future career path, I had some hazy picture in my mind of having a quality relationship with a public library, helping the community and running Story Time with a circle of adoring tots sitting quietly at my feet. Even after starting my qualification I didn't have any big desire to end up with a corporate library; if I'm honest I thought you were the geeky kid of the library world, a bit dry and boring.

And I didn't end up with you straight away. My first serious relationship with a library after graduating was with the Robertson Library at the Curtin University of Technology. It was great and we had some wonderful times together. But I wanted something more permanent and the uni library just wasn't ready to commit, so I started looking around for someone else. That's when I met you.

You advertised for the position of E-Services Librarian and I applied. I never expected to get the job. I'd been working as a Reference Librarian at Curtin, and I didn't have any experience "evaluating, providing, or maintaining electronic services by ensuring the effective use, integrity, and business alignment of library policies, standards and processes". But you chose me, and we've been together ever since.

It hasn't always been easy. I wasn't quite sure what to make of you at first. You were so different from anything I'd ever experienced before. You only serve Water Corporation employees, you have journals ranging from World Pumps to Dam Engineering to Marie Claire, and half your regular customers only visit you to read the newspaper while they eat their lunch.

Because of your corporate background you were more restrictive with IT than I was used to. I'd want to do something cool and exciting, and while my past libraries might have just let me get on with it, you wanted justifications and business cases. But trust needs to be earned, and there are compromises in most relationships. Over time you came to trust me and give me a bit more leeway with new technologies and I came to understand the importance of a sound business case.

Also you are more into occupational health and safety than any other library I've ever met! But that's a good thing, really, and I know all your frequent fire drills are just your way of showing how much you care.

Despite some of our early differences it didn't take long before I started to fall in love with you. There are so many things to cherish:

- You let me work with a wonderful and very close-knit team of staff. There's only four of us working for you, so while you're not small by corporate library standards (I heard somewhere that you're the largest water library in Australia), it was still a big change for me coming from a uni library with over 100 staff.
- You let me do a bit of everything. Over the course of a day I might spend time looking for news articles, answer questions at the enquiry desk, shelve books, run a training session for staff, catalogue an e-book, create a graphic promoting a new service for the library webpage, and investigate a new database that we might like to subscribe to. While not everyone would like this about you, this has been perfect for me as a new graduate to develop my skills in a variety of different areas.

- You let me get to know our customers really well. I guess most librarians would say this about their libraries, but I think what we have with our customers is something special, something different.

- You have taught me more about water, desalination, and sewerage than I ever thought I would want to know.
- Finally, if we ever separate, you've offered me some alternative career paths for the future. Not only have you given me valuable library experience, but some of your past staff have gone on to work in other fields such as Knowledge Management, Web Services, and Research.

We've done some great things together you and I. Together we've run training sessions on everything from Safari to social networking. With your encouragement I've created podcasts and screencasts, quizzes and 'virtual treasure hunts', and many, many web pages. And I will never forget how we built up the library's news monitoring and dissemination service ('Water News') into a bustling and successful blog with over 200 subscribers. Through you I have learned the server-side scripting language ColdFusion and I'm learning CSS. You've honed my cataloguing skills and even taught me the wonders of Interlibrary Loans and Document Delivery.

So thank you Water Corporation Library for introducing me to the world of corporate libraries; you are very special to me.

With love,

Emma Taylor

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Emma Taylor is the E-Services Librarian at the Water Corporation of Western Australia (or 'Electronic Librarian' as it says on her business card). She has worked there for over three years and now has opinions on everything from wastewater recycling to social media in the workplace. Prior to working at the Water Corporation, Emma spent a number of years at Curtin University of Technology, first as an undergraduate studying Computer Science, then as a postgraduate in the Library Studies grad dip program and finally working as a Reference Librarian at the Robertson Library. Emma's other loves include travel, reading, eating chocolate, her husband, and her pet rats: Poppy and Petal.