



ROB MILLER AND HIS CRANKY BEAR – CHECK OUT SEPTEMBER'S INCITE FOR AN NSS AND LIW SPECIAL

At the risk of incurring the considerable wrath of the Editor (ED: Considerable indeed!), I decided to delay this Directline to be able to include some sense of Biennial 2012.

The program indicated that technology would be high on the agenda and we weren't disappointed:

technology to the left of us and technology to the right of us – so much so that an old Lone Ranger joke got recycled.

Technology and its impact on the profession and society were hot topics in the keynotes, the papers and workshops, and discussions around cups of coffee and glasses of wine.

There seemed to be an obvious split among delegates between the threat that technology poses and the opportunities that it will deliver. The fact that this is a hot issue was evidenced by the fact that I did not have a conversation with a delegate or exhibitor/sponsor who was ambivalent on the issue.

The changes reach deep into the profession.

They impact the core skills and knowledge and study units that new entrants to the profession must learn.

They reach across boundaries that previously existed between information and IT professionals. Mitchell Whitelaw developed an argument for 'generous interfaces' that offer the user the experience of telling us what our collections have to offer rather than having the user needing to know what they seek. The development of these interfaces blurs boundaries between information managers and graphical user interface designers.

They impact the architecture of libraries and their function: technology displaces the need for so much physical content, but offers the opportunity to provide better learning, collaboration, and community spaces.

As always these days Google featured in many conversations. Is it friend or is it foe? That argument seems to be irrelevant today because it is here. We all know that it offers a blinding array of often useless information and that not everything on the internet is true. But it has ubiquity and credibility among

users. Maybe as many as 80% of people today use it as the entry point to find information, so we need to find a means of embracing it better.

If as one comment I heard recently is true, that Google does not index 80% of the content that can be found via the internet, there is still plenty for the profession to deal with to deliver valuable service to our users.

Perhaps the final word should belong to the self-confessed eternally optimistic State Librarian of NSW, Dr. Alex Byrne. In the final keynote address of the conference he reminded us of many great things the profession does, but significantly he has the view that "finding information is at the core of our society."

LIS professionals have been the trusted custodians and deliverers of this information for centuries and embracing technology and what it offers will be key to our retention of that role.

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ALIA SNAPSHOT

Appointments: ALIA welcomes Sue McKerracher into the Executive Director role and Janice Taylor as Director: Professional Services. Please go to page 6 for more information.

Congratulations! ALIA congratulates and commends those who have shown deep commitment to their professional development and successfully completed their first year with the PD Scheme. These professionals are now able to use the post-nominals CP (certified practitioner). For more information, please visit www.alia.org.au/education/pd

Call for proposals: both ALIA Information Online 2013 and New Librarians' Symposium 6 are seeking proposal submissions. Information can be found on their websites: www.information-online.com.au/proposals.html and newlibrarians.symposium.com/call-for-proposals/ respectively.