

It was my great pleasure to attend the ALIA Biennial 2012 in Sydney in July. My congratulations go to the Biennial Committee and especially co-convenors Fides Datu Lawton and Janet Fletcher. They delivered an exciting, thought-provoking program. My thanks also goes to the staff of the ALIA National Office. They have been the 'well-oiled machine' behind the conference committee and have been truly tireless in their efforts.

On behalf of all attending the conference, I would like to also give thanks to all of the speakers and presenters. Contributors from our membership and from other places and industries ensured that

the program was just the right balance of ideas, innovation, and provocation. The new ways of looking at how we use technologies to engage with our clients that were proposed by Dr Tom Chatfield and the rich source of information available through data mining of our own business systems as proposed by Tom Ruthven were both highlights for me.

Of course the inspirational The Hon Michael Kirby AC CMG was also a highlight and I was especially pleased to be able to have dinner with him and the other keynote speakers

to further explore their ideas and views – what a privilege it was.

It is also important to thank our sponsors, Proquest and Business Events Sydney, for the support that they provided to the conference and to the many LIS business partners who took trade exhibitions. Without their support, conferences cannot be held and they would also be less informative for delegates and lack the flair that our corporate partners can bring to the event.

Free access to information is the key thesis upon which the LIS profession has been built. As library and information professionals, we advocate strongly that information should be accessible, freely available, and not filtered nor censored. When was the last time you had to advocate for this core tenant of our profession? Are we allowing our rights under copyright legislation to be eroded by signing up to contractual obligations that override the legislation? I think that answer is yes in some cases. ALIA is a major funder of the Australian Libraries Copyright Council and this group is advocating to governments, publishers, and authors in relation to the recently announced review in to copyright laws in Australia. Keep an eye out for progress on this issue and for any call to action that ALIA might make to its members.

ALIA has also been working on advocating for the freedom of information in the online world

through offering alternatives to censorship and filtering. 'Shock' media personalities pursue a populist view of the 'dangers' of the online world, and politicians respond. ALIA has been advocating that the best solution to ensure freedom of information and cyber safety is to educate our users on using technologies wisely. We have had quite some success with ALIA's membership of the Cyber Safety Working Group. It is essential that you are also advocating the education solution – in workplaces, communities, and with staff.

It amuses me that the media make such a big deal of the evil internet as a tool for information retrieval and reminds me of a pre-internet time when, as a rather mean teacher of reference services to library technicians in Adelaide, I set the question, "how do you make a Molotov Cocktail?" Many students worked their way through scientific sources to answer the question. In fact, the answer was (and probably still is) in the Macquarie Dictionary, the green volume that many people had on their desks or in their homes. When the media suggest to me that the internet makes inappropriate material more accessible to kids, I show them the Macquarie Dictionary under "M".

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## INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

State Library of New South Wales' \$4.2 million revitalisation now open – funded by the NSW gov't, the revitalisation produced an 'open and welcoming library' and a 'contemporary 21<sup>st</sup> century cultural destination'.

Public libraries are tapped by Senator Stephen Conroy to be among 36 communities across Australia to share in \$15.2 million to establish National Broadband Network training services and Digital hubs.

Congratulations to Margaret Allen, past ALIA Board President and CEO and WA State Librarian, who was chosen by IFLA to participate in their International Leaders Programme.

Is staying away from Facebook detrimental to your professional success? A recent article on Forbes.com reports that human resource departments are starting to become wary of young job candidates who don't use the site. To be noted: employers may ask to see your open profile, but you are under no obligation to show it to them. Get to know your privacy options.