

The invisible footprint of PD

ALIA Sydney's green library event, *Think Big: Act Small: Sustainability in the Library in February* featured expert guest speakers on sustainability and a flurry of environmental brainstorming. Sonja Barfoed attended the event to represent the ALIA Sustainable Libraries Group (SLG).

Even though I travelled to the event from Canberra, this was a shorter distance than would have been travelled by my SLG group colleagues Katie Hannan from Adelaide and Matthias Liffers from Townsville.

During my three and half hour bus journey, I realised the sweet irony of generating a carbon footprint to attend an environmentally focused event. What was the carbon cost of having an interstate SLG representative at the event?

My travel spanned local and interstate buses, cars, and a plane trip. I paid the carbon offset charge for the flight (240km), and settled the remaining bus and car carbon debt (321.5km) with other charges and tree-planting. From a financial and environmental perspective, it also made me realise the barriers that exist for those living in regional and remote areas.

Considering the impact of the event itself, ALIA Sydney embodied the *Think Big: Act Small* ideology. Event reminder emails encouraged BYO drinking mugs and thoughtful instructions and maps for public transport – just think of the positive impact of transport options multiplied for larger events. Another opportunity highlighted by presenter Peter Vun (Corporate Sustainability Co-ordinator from Ku-ring-gai Council) is the green event checklist which can be used at individual and organisational levels.

While I have paid the carbon offset charge for many flights, I haven't previously considered the adverse environmental impact of my professional development. The demarcation between personal and professional travel footprints also prompts the question of personal or employer environmental contributions. It also highlights the importance of local events, selective travel and making events accessible and interactive from a distance. Sharing events with Twitter hashtags and creating blog posts afterwards also adds value and ensures that the event footprint is worthwhile.

It was a fantastic event, totally worth travelling 561.5 kilometres and the ensuing carbon impact and offset costs. It's difficult to adequately cost the personal, professional and organisational ongoing benefits of training (for example, I still use learning from presentations at the fourth New Librarians Symposium in 2008). There would be a much greater

cost to the profession if we didn't continually adapt, improve and learn, and this would adversely impact the sustainability of library professionals and the industry as a whole. As presenter Mal Booth (Acting University Librarian from University of Technology, Sydney Library) said, organisations need to be sustainable and understand the importance of relationships. At the very least, there is a great opportunity for individuals, organisations and event

organisers to consider the environmental cost of training events, and provide tools and options to reduce or offset the impact.

You can get more details on the *Think Big: Act Small: Sustainability*

in the *Library* presentations, and information about upcoming library PD events in the Sydney area through the ALIA Sydney blog or Twitter @ALIASyd.

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"...I HAVEN'T PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED THE ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF MY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT."

Digital developments

OverDrive has announced an exclusive distribution agreement with author JK Rowling for the Harry Potter series. Previously only available through the Pottermore website, the Harry Potter eBooks and audiobooks will be available for digital book lending in a variety of formats including PC, Mac, eReaders, tablets and smartphones. OverDrive partnered with Softlink in 2011 to make the digital lending platform available to school libraries in Australia.

The first 50 years of the *Australian Women's Weekly* were digitised and made available through Trove at the National Library a while back – a project that was truly an exercise in creating a sustainable version of a fragile resource that is also an Australian icon. The company that partnered the NLA to complete the task, DatacomIT, is now working on bringing that landmark title *Damn Whores and God's Police* by Dr Anne Summers to life as an eBook.

In a much sadder sign of the times, a new terrorism research centre has been launched aimed at gathering together information scattered around the internet about almost 4000 groups known to aid and abet terrorism activities. The Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium (TRAC) is the result of eight years work by reference publishers Beacham Group (formerly Beacham Publishing). TRAC provides a current intelligence repository with a consortium of 2800 specialists and real-time news feed.