

# WORKING FOR LIBRARIES

It's not often that we focus an issue of INCITE on those who work *with* libraries, rather than *in* them. But given the opportunity, we really wanted to pick their brains. What made you choose a career as a vendor? What opportunities have you discovered? What are some of the drawbacks? And what advice would you offer to new graduates, students, or information professionals considering a change?

We were very lucky that so many industry professionals were willing to answer our questions, share their experiences, and offer advice. Read on to find out what it's really like working in the private sector.



## Dan Hamid

**Regional Manager, Alexander Street Press**

I worked in a university library in New Zealand, then I went to a New Librarians Symposium in Adelaide in 2004 and spoke with Linda Dunne, from Elsevier. She enthused me about the career opportunities for young librarians, and told me how I would be interacting with libraries in every sector. I am dealing with people at every level, gaining an overview of the whole industry. And it's really fun.

## Andrew Hocken

**Collection HQ**

Being a librarian first was great for relationship building as a vendor. You don't need to ask those 'dumb questions' because you know the job already. I thought about going back into libraries, but haven't because I love meeting lots of librarians at work and at conferences.

## Andrea Gilbey

**Informa**

Working in libraries provides a good foundation for what the issues and challenges are. Having the experience of working in a library helps when I'm going to train in a library. I feel a connect with librarians when they know that I worked as a librarian.

## Selena Johns

**LIBERO**

I'm a big fan of Research & Development and product innovation – where new technologies are used in systems to improve on the way librarians go about their craft.

## Norma Tovey

**Maxus**

Working for Maxus means I go to work in a library every day.

## Jane Burke

**Proquest**

Working in libraries first has added a whole dimension to being on the vendor side. It's too bad there is a divide between librarians and vendors; we are supporters of the librarians. You don't work in this industry unless you really care about librarians and the value of libraries. Libraries really matter!

## Lyn Walker

**NZ Manager, Softlink**

I have worked in the Library and Information field for over 29 years and have a diverse career in school, public, corporate, and academic libraries. I was a previous client of Softlink. I project-managed implementations as part of my role as Senior Librarian at a school library and information centre. With experience in other library sectors, [a job with Softlink] was an opportunity to return to employment in the corporate sector and pass on the knowledge I had gained over the years.

Professional development and qualifications provided invaluable knowledge in current library and information field including best practices and the direction of new technologies in the information and knowledge field. I upgraded my qualifications recently and studied papers that were specific to my role working for a vendor.

I think vendors offer an opportunity for a new career path and to gain new skills that extend and use your qualifications, and enable you to apply your library experience and professional knowledge when working and consulting with clients and prospects. Working as a vendor provides the opportunity to network and work with many different library and information centres.

## Susan Gan

**Educational Consultant, Soflink**

I think I have learned a lot about the library industry and the various ways libraries are established and managed. I don't think I would have gained that insight if I hadn't moved to Soflink. I really enjoy the opportunity of getting to know our clients, as well as influencing the future product development from the various feedback I receive across the industry.

## Dion Dias

**Senior Product Analyst, Liberty Development Team, Soflink**

After completing my Graduate Diploma in Library and Information Studies I worked as a reference librarian at various UQ libraries in the late '90s before becoming the systems librarian for Bremer TAFE. I worked at Bremer for around five years. During this time, I completed my Masters in Information Technology with a focus on programming.

I think there are many opportunities for information professionals to work with vendors across the industry. My role at Soflink is very rewarding and it has enabled me to combine my library and technology interests.

I think it is also beneficial for the industry that vendors employ librarians. Without direct knowledge and input from experienced information professionals, the technology would not be as effective for the industry.

## Sue Warren

**Educational Consultant, Soflink**

When I was presented with the opportunity to work at Soflink, I recognised the valuable transferable skills that were very applicable to the position. I quickly identified that I

was able to make a change, but the career direction was the same. I was still working within a role that aligned to my philosophy towards building better school libraries and supporting teacher-librarians. This is very important to me.



Andrew Hocken



Jane Burke and Heidi Thompson



Selena Johns



Andrea Gilbey



Norma Tovey



Dan Hamid



Lyn Walker