

A REGIONAL PICTURE

While in INCITE we tend to speak of the LIS profession from an Australian perspective, our vendors and library suppliers often think much bigger. The majority of vendors working in Australia are not focusing on Australia alone, but on Australia as one part of the Asia-Pacific region that they represent.

OCLC, the international library cooperative, regularly puts together statistics about the world's LIS regions. They separate the world into three sections: The Americas (North and South), EMEA (Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and India), and Asia Pacific (Asia, Australia, and Oceania). We thought it might be interesting to share some of the information and

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figures about our region – that is, Asia Pacific – particularly in comparison to the rest of the world.

First, a note on the statistics: OCLC extracts the information from a number of respected third-party sources that, in their judgment, are the most current and accurate source of data to which they have access. For the sake of uniformity, the total number of libraries are represented by administrative units, not service points. Expenditure

is reported in US\$, however accurate numbers were often difficult to determine as, in many countries, expenditures for libraries fall under the public domain and their budgets are subsumed under ministries or agencies. Further, the labels that we are familiar with (specials, school, etc) do not always coincide perfectly with those used in other countries. OCLC has gathered, analysed, and presented the data to the best of its ability. For more information on the data, please visit the website: <http://www.oclc.org/en-AU/global-library-statistics/about.html>

The Statistics for Asia Pacific in the LIS Environment:

	Australia	New Zealand	China	Japan	Singapore
LIS Workers	6753	1559	58,953	47 090	351
Users	14 523 813	1 713 829	15 160 109	60 668 547	4 937 270
Volumes	130 900 826	27 325 387	1 063 356 687	1 123 808 654	22 225 640
Total Libraries	11 013	2749	109 673	45 708	424

While Australia and NZ can't compete with China and Japan in terms of number of libraries, within the Asia Pacific region there are 24 countries with fewer than 50 libraries.

For interest's sake, let's look at how we compare with other nations around the world.

	Australia	USA	Canada	UK	Germany	South Africa
LIS Workers	6753	158 300	13765	21286	15967	2341
Users	14 523 813	228 431 131	36 283 289	38 432 469	11 371 384	N/a
Volumes	130 900 826	2 596 166 391	269 058 081	387 594 855	3 765 041 717	52 756 234
Total Libraries	11 013	103 657	17239	8437	11418	11372

Australia is a comparatively small market for vendors, but we benefit both from the innovation of international companies serving our sector, and from the special insight of our local ANZ suppliers.