

MORE THAN ONE WAY TO MOOC

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have definitely come of age – and there's more than one successful library response to their arrival. The recent *Libraries, MOOCs and Online Learning Summit* organised and sponsored by ALIA, the State Library of Queensland, OCLC and the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) held in March highlighted the potential as well as the challenges.

The Summit program overflowed with excellent presentations (you can find out more about these on the ALIA website) and the feedback session clearly highlighted the important contribution made by our speakers to increasing awareness of the numerous possibilities for the library and information sector to be front and centre of this new phenomenon.

After the welcome by Janette Wright, CEO and State Librarian State Library of Queensland, CAUL President Heather Gordon and Damian Lodge, Vice President and President elect of ALIA, the summit started with videos of leading Australian academics to set the scene.

The revelation of the truly massive numbers of participants in MOOCs was brought home to participants in a discussion of the use of analytics by Professor Philip Long. MOOC analytics can provide excellent opportunities for libraries to improve performance and have a significant role in synthesising MOOC data.

Merrilee Proffitt from OCLC reported on her research into the impact of MOOCs on libraries and new initiatives, while the recent CAUL MOOCs survey provided an important base for understanding where Australian and New Zealand libraries are heading in the MOOC space.

Roxanne Missingham highlighted (with some pretty cute images) that the pace of change effected by MOOCs and the accompanying technology changes they bring with them enhances the possibility of building better and stronger partnerships for libraries within their academic organisations.

Libraries need to be ahead of the game, not waiting to follow.

Of course there are questions about resourcing, funding and budgets and the need for academic libraries to think creatively around these challenges. Despite the free access principle, there are costs behind the scenes. These can be

cross-subsidised by certification; one example is Coursera which is already returning a revenue profit.

Dr Cathy Stone from Open Universities Australia provided some 'out of the box' ideas on partnership that have worked and how they may apply in the MOOC arena, especially the role of public libraries. This led to a panel discussion around the role of skill development of digital literacy for library staff, academics, students and the wider community, and the role of academic, school and public libraries in reinforcing that MOOCs are not only about the technology but also about new opportunities for learning.

A panel of three practitioners emphasised the impact of copyright and the role libraries can play in providing access, including the opportunity to increase the uses of their own special collections with the added benefit of avoiding copyright dramas. This discussion also examined the role of libraries as digital publishers and identifiers, and providers of open access materials.

Finally, Philip Kent orchestrated the feedback session, bringing together the issues for libraries, the 'end game' and the strategic action needed by libraries. All in all, it was an amazing day dealing with an amazing subject in a great venue. Bring on the next one!

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