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The name of the game

I wonder daily at the permutations found for the change of the name of the profession from 'librarianship', and ask myself whether any single title will ever satisfy all interested parties.

One problem seems to be that the word 'librarian' is derived from the Latin word for a book, and that our role, skills, and training are no longer solely centred round the book. But that is only part of the story.

The other part, more subtle and pervasive, is that some of us are taking advantage of obsolescent terminology to try to upgrade our image in the community. Hence we frequently see the titles 'information manager', 'information scientist', 'information broker' and 'information professional', all of which aim (partly) to give status to the way we handle the lowly, everyday fact.

Information seems a sensible word to work on: it has a comparable lineage to librarian, deriving from Latin, and most people understand what it means. But it seems pretentious to me to always tack on borrowed, partly-applicable descriptors.

Some United States writers have invented 'informaticist', by which they mean a person trained in information science, or 'informatics'.

It may be that we no longer need a generic term because there are so many different fingers in the information pie. If we do need one my choice is for 'informationist', a word which is easy to say and understand, although it may be too long.

Whatever is used, let it be for the sake of plain English and not to hide an identity crisis.

Graeme Johnson

Images

Concerning 'That Harper's Bazaar Ad!' (*InCite*, 25 October 1985) I am of the opinion that my female colleagues are lacking in a sense of humour. Whilst I agree that the ad is slightly in bad taste, I still find it slightly amusing. Oh, by the way, I don't read *Harper's Bazaar!*

Timothy James Byron

Libraries and censorship

As the Officer-In-Charge of the library of the Department of Science, Canberra, I would like to respond to M. Bridgstock's letter (*InCite*, 25 October).

However, first of all I would like to congratulate V.L. Williams (*InCite*, 30 August) on a brilliant letter and I would like to encourage you to keep up the good work.

In his letter M. Bridgstock makes an emotive attack upon the creationist magazine, *Ex Nihilo*. Bridgstock's letter is unbelievably prejudiced against *Ex Nihilo* and it is totally divorced from facts. I challenge M. Bridgstock to substantiate his claims. Firstly, Bridgstock claims that *Ex Nihilo* 'is riddled with errors, misquotations and misrepresentations'. I challenge M. Bridgstock to verify this. Further, 'in *Ex Nihilo* the error rate appears to be about 90%!' An incredible statement. What blatant prejudice! It is a pity that M. Bridgstock could accuse *Ex Nihilo* of only 'appearing' to have an error rate of 90%. He is very unsure of himself here. Then he makes the amazing statement: 'Declining to hold such a magazine is hardly "bias": it is simply keeping up standards'. I ask, what standards? As V.L. Williams showed in his letter, those librarians that have refused to hold *Ex Nihilo* clearly demonstrated intolerable prejudice and censorship. In fact these librarians violated the 'Australian School Library Bill of Rights'. The particular provisions of the Bill that were violated were:

'To provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may develop under guidance the practice of critical reading and thinking;

'To provide materials representative of the many religions, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions to our heritage; and

'To place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate to the users of the library'

(Promulgated and endorsed by the Australian School Library Association, 69 Sutherland Road, Armadale, Victoria 3143.)

V.L. Williams hit the nail right on the head when he described *Ex Nihilo* as 'non-sectarian'. I would like to challenge M. Bridgstock to substantiate his claim that *Ex Nihilo* 'is an ultra-fundamentalist publication with views condemned by all the major churches'. This

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statement is absolute rubbish and does no justice whatsoever to M. Bridgstock who claims to be a doctor (PhD?).

Again, V.L. Williams was spot on when he said that evolution was an unproven theory.

'Some leading scientists have now discarded evolution for a creation hypothesis'. (Williams, *InCite*, 30 August, p. 7). Again, spot on. In fact, the evolution theory is an insult to any thinking person's intelligence. Evolution is a pseudo-science. In fact, it is not even a science. It is every inch a religion, in the true sense of the word. I should know. I have a Science Degree from the Australian National University, in Canberra. I majored in Biochemistry and Genetics. Throughout the course of my Degree (and also in high school), I was constantly bombarded with the idea that evolution is fact. Unfortunately for evolution, there is not one scrap of evidence to support it. This is why I call it a religion — because its adherents cling to it with religious faith and zeal, despite its total lack of evidence.

I can vouch for V.L. Williams' claim that 'censorship is certainly taking place in libraries'. My personal observations and experience have been among university and academic libraries in Victoria and the ACT. V.L. Williams' revelation that censorship is also taking place in university libraries in NSW, Queensland and SA, and CAE libraries in NSW, as well as public libraries in northern NSW does not surprise me for one moment.

I beseech all my professional colleagues to not violate the Australian School Library Bill of Rights or to allow their prejudice to get in the way of their professional judgement when selecting library materials. The persecution of magazines such as *Ex Nihilo*, and other creationist literature, should be beneath the professional dignity of anyone worthy of the profession of Librarian.

T.J. Byron

BSc (ANU), Grad Dip. Lib (RMIT)

Ex Nihilo

Thank you for printing my letter (*InCite*, October 25) indicating that the creationist magazine *Ex Nihilo* is not reliable.

My address was omitted from the letter. People seeking details are welcome to write to me: School of Science, Griffith University, Nathan 4111, Queensland.

(Dr) Martin Bridgstock

CLANN destiny

The CLANN Reciprocal Borrowing scheme for libraries in NSW was launched in March 1982. Most of the participating institutions are colleges but two government departments and a public library are also in the scheme.

Everything seems to have gone so much better than we ever could have imagined and we believe that a maximum of goodwill and a minimum of records and statistics keeping have contributed to this happy state of affairs.

Even though we wanted to avoid as much record keeping as possible we did want to see if our preconceived notions of activity were reasonably accurate. We speculated that NSWIT & Kuring-gai would have the greatest number of externals because of their stock and location; City Art and Sydney College of the Arts would enjoy even reciprocity; institutes in the same locality such as TAFE's St George Technical College and Sydney CAE's St George Institute would register each other's students; that many users would be from non-CLANN libraries.

We registered each borrower over a six-month period and the result verified our predictions. The big surprise was the extent of the activity. No fewer than 10% of CLANN users are registered at libraries other than their home library. Unfortunately the libraries without an automated loan system were unable to distinguish between the patrons who were active or even permanent users and those who used the host library once or for one assignment only. However, Barb McLean has been able to report on the growth and development of *External Borrowers at Kuring-gai CAE* in such a way that we believe we are all following the same pattern but in smaller numbers.

Mitchell CAE *appears* to enjoy the greatest mutual reciprocity of all the CLANN libraries. Mitchell is host to 335 users and 337 of their users go elsewhere. There is a nice national and international touch here which is tremendously gratifying. Mitchell's non-CLANN external borrowers are from the Universities of New England (21), Macquarie (7), Sydney (5), NSW (3), Deakin (1), Trinity College London (1), California Coast University (1) and

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there are many more from institutes throughout Australia.

Kuring-gai with 482 externals and NSWIT with 716 do certainly carry the burden of the scheme and the CLANN librarians are immensely grateful to them for the cooperation and involvement with our users.

The purpose of this brief report is to share our happy experience of Reciprocal Borrowing with other librarians especially those who are keen to see nationwide Reciprocal Borrowing develop from a dream to a reality.

Frances Love



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Ralph Reid

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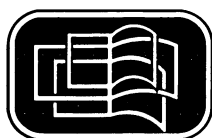
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