



When it comes to the crunch, a library service and a records service both have the same objective: to provide access to information when a user requests it. It doesn't matter if the information is via books, videos, press clippings, letters, telex or electronic mail. The name of the game is to retrieve information. It makes no difference if the client is a member of the public, a multinational organisation or a public servant.

Both the LAA and the RMAA have expertise in their separate fields however they also share other areas of expertise. Both services rely on sound indexing and classification practices to retrieve information and I firmly believe that both organisations need to recognise this as well as recognising their differences.

The recent changes to Librarianship courses in Queensland and Melbourne are steps in the right direction, however, it troubled me that the recent review of the LAA failed to consider the growing profession of Records Management.

I am not advocating the merger of these two organisations, I am advocating that the two professions call on each others expertise to provide efficient and accurate information management.

Mary Ann Rosenthal

Is it too late?

I'm depressed, maybe it's just the time of the year, or age catching up, but Roy Stall's article hit a raw nerve. (I've ordered a copy of the WAIT study — Information Use by WA Business and Industry, 1986).

I am employed by a city council, to operate a small inhouse library and information service for staff and from my observations over the few years I have been involved I would say that the report quoted would be substantially correct. One of the largest consulting firms in North Queensland has no organised in-house library. On-line searches are not the be all and end all in information gathering, in many instances the content is often seen as too academic for practical application. Data bases are only as good as the information available to them. The Australian scene is very bereft of good local technological information, one of the notable exceptions being ARRB.

Perhaps Roy Stall is too late in realising that the profession needs to move with the times so that it will not be left behind and be more aggressive in its thinking. Being a very female oriented profession in a very male

world almost every librarian has had to 'sell really hard'. This becomes very wearing when some senior management are not impressed and will not be 'converted to the cause'.

When an organisation employs an engineer, town planner or any other professional they are expected to get on with their jobs in a professional manner, why are librarians any different? Why do we still hear the cry for the library profession to sell itself. I really think, if this is the stage we are still at, it is too late.

The recent media publicity for CLIRS shows three male professionals each before a screen waxing lyrical over the benefits of the base. There is no mention of the place a library or information centre could have in the dissemination of this information, it presented, at least to me a very telling picture.

Roy Stall's response may not be zero this time, I'm sorry I can't be more positive in my comments.

Pat C. Kirkman

and CLIRS comments . . .

I would like to respond to Pat Kirkman's comments.

On page 7 of the same issue of *InCite* in which Roy Stall's article was published (No. 18 October 24, 1986) a CLIRS advertisement featured Jennie Lloyd, Database Manager, who is one of four qualified librarians on our staff.

Recent issues of *Australian Law News* included an advertisement demonstrating how the (female) librarians of a large law firm are using CLIRS to help find answers to research questions. Further examples of CLIRS' recognition in its advertising and publications of the vital role of librarians in gathering, organising and disseminating information can be provided.

In our experience librarians, in turn, recognise that online services can be efficient, cost effective tools in helping them meet the information needs of their organisations.

Melanie Brodie
Marketing Services Manager, CLIRS Ltd.

The state of our status

I applaud Russ Elwin's support (*InCite*, 5.12.86, 7(21)p.6) for Roy Stall's comments on the status of librarianship. Let us hope that a similar reaction will generate effective external pressure from whatever promotional forces exist within the profession itself.

My own experience of the matter dates from a log of claims submitted on behalf of the staff of the State Library of Victoria in 1974. There followed many years of exasperating negotiations on behalf of the staff of the University of Melbourne Library in the 1950s and 1960s. (Ref. 'The funding of wisdom' by K.A.L.)

We are now in the 1980s and articles by Geoffrey Allen, Toby Burrows, Marlene Hall, Jeffrey Scrivener and Roy Stall sadly reflect the still unresolved confusion which prevails in ascribing status to our profession. My own briefly worded attempts at resolution by letter in *ALJ*, February 1985 and *AARL*, June 1986, appear to have fallen on stony ground.

We do not overrate ourselves by claiming to be the only profession qualified to organise the sum of recorded knowledge for all the purposes and for the unlimited benefit of practically every constructive human activity. It is ridiculous that nothing more than a caricaturist's fictional image of a 'librarian' should still prevent recognition by the community of its debt to our profession.

K.A.Lodewycks,
formerly University Librarian,
University of Melbourne.

Interlibrary loans

The recent decision of the Standing Committee of AACOBS to impose a \$6 charge for interlibrary loans from March 1987 must be opposed with all possible vigor.

The decision is not only contrary to the resolutions passed at the 1986 National Council meeting, but has been taken without any evidence as to the average cost of an ILL, without any evidence as to the increase in photocopying costs, and most important of all, it is placing a charge on monograph loans for the first time.

ALIC, in conjunction with the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission is currently undertaking the SAIL project to provide a first ever detailed measure of interlibrary loan traffic in Australia. The results of this study will be available in February 1987 and will give us the indicators needed to begin to address interlibrary loan problems. To take such a decision without this evidence defies all reason.

Let's collect the evidence first, then make the decision.

Euan M. Miller
State Librarian

Sharing expertise

I am a member of the Library Association of Australia and through my present position I receive the publications of the Records Management Association of Australia. My work experience covers only six years, however, during that time I have developed classification and indexing systems for four different information services none of which are in the traditional library setting.

It seems to me that the two organisations, which are both involved in information management, are distancing themselves when they should be working more closely.

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