

Librarians ... take a bow!

DELIA Nichols, writing in the March 1989 issue of *Portfolio* magazine has targeted Library Science as one of the 16 hot careers for the 1990s. Librarians are no longer perceived as pushing trolleys laden with dusty books through narrow stacks of bookshelves, but are now acknow-

ledged to be true information specialists, technologically literate, and aware of the need for continuing education in their field.

Delia quotes Alison Crook, State Librarian for the State Library of New South Wales as seeing her role as letting industry know that librarians are information brokers. 'I am trying to get

the idea across that we are not just providers of a public service, we are providers of information for basic economic development. The information we can provide is critical to the development of the country.'

Investment banks, government agencies, law offices, hospitals, accounting firms, and larger companies are also realising the importance of having their own information databases, and are finally employing librarians.

So, let's take a bow; we're finally getting the recognition we deserve.

Library Networks and Co-operatives ... from page 8.

Plans for the linking of stand-alone integrated systems have remained persistent and the attention paid to OSI at the Australian Libraries Summit clearly demonstrates where some pin their hopes for future networking activity.

But it is not the technology as much as the personal attitudes of librarians and those who employ them that will determine the future of networking. The fact that we have seen a large divergence in the way networks have developed in New South Wales and Victoria, for example, is attributable more to the personalities of those involved than to technological options that were available to them. It is probably fair to say that the options were selected in part because of different perceptions of potential costs and benefits and in part because of differing political realities which were themselves largely shaped by individuals.

There is nothing that would suggest any major change in this situation in the future. The bold will continue to be bold and the hesitant will continue to hesitate. Fear of loss of local autonomy will continue to affect some people's attitude to new networking proposals and they will always be able to point to numerous factors in the environment to demonstrate that the time is not yet ripe to take the next step.

Meanwhile we can be grateful that some librarians were prepared in the final years of the hopeful seventies to meet the challenge and that others in the leaner eighties have continued to demonstrate their willingness to carry it further. Libraries and information services have never been the same since.



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