

**"Why I choose to enter the library and information profession" — responses from students from UNSW School of Library and Information Studies:**

*'The Internet is here. Fly-by-night gurus declare: 'Information on any topic from anywhere in the world!' But who is going to help sort the few valuable items from the multitude of irrelevant, biased, incorrect, distracting documents? That's why I chose to enter the librarianship profession.'*

**Simon Handfield**

*'After years of practicing law, I was ready for a change from the unpredictable work hours and travel demands. I'm hopeful that study in library and information science will prepare me for a career that combines the rewarding side of practicing law, that is, its service-minded philosophy, with an improved lifestyle.'*

**Laura Sutton**

## New approach to professional education

**Patricia Willard, University of New South Wales**

The professional attachment is a major component of the new Master of Information Management program at the University of New South Wales School of Information, Library and Archive Studies.

Last year a fully revised professional education program was introduced by the school. In addition to revising structure and content it extended the first professional course to enable students to gain a Master of Information Management after the equivalent of three full-time sessions of course work and the completion of a professional attachment. (The Graduate Diploma in Information Management is completed after the first two session's work.)

The professional attachment can be in either a library or another information management environment and involves the student undertaking a project under the supervision of a professional information manager.

Project areas are negotiated between the host agency, the student and the School and when a mutually satisfactory position is reached a contract is agreed upon between the parties. The work-load negotiated is that the project should take the equivalent of six to eight weeks of full-time employment.

Unlike a job placement the attachment involves a single focused piece of work. Feedback from students and their information manager 'supervisors' was very favourable for the initial year with student comment being enthusiastic about both the learning experience coming from the project content, the opportunity to gain insights into the workplace of their attachment and the opportunity to interact closely with their information manager 'supervisor'.

The attachment also provides the opportunity to demonstrate personal value and perhaps pick up a job at its completion

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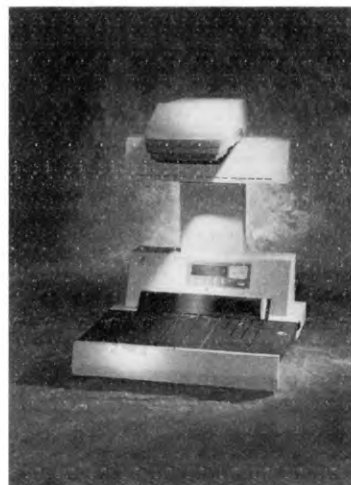
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— the experience of one student who continues six months later to say that she has picked up one of the most interesting jobs in the world!

#### Professional attachment topics

Some of the topics which the students undertook during 1995/6 were:

**Archive** — develop and conduct a survey of agency record keeping, records management practices and records management programs.

**Council archive** — to process a series of photographs to locate images at risk, identify and apply preventative conservation measures and ensure they are fully accessible for public access.

**University library** — to conduct an investigation into the use of the Postgraduate Computer Room. (The perception being that it is under-used or that it has not been promoted well enough).

**Television station** — to conduct an investigation into the costs and benefits of converting 40 000 paper based clippings and 130 000 fiche based clippings into an electronic format.

**University library** — cataloguing the Gray Pamphlets. This is a collection of pamphlets of local historical significance. They are to be housed together as a Special Collection.

**Library** — to examine the library's role and services in the areas of ESL and literacy.

**Library** — to devise and produce a document using Hypercard to be run on a local computer workstation giving location and details of various items and services in the library.

**Library** — to find the most effective way to manage the library's pamphlet collection and to provide full-text 'pamphlets access' to the public library network. ■

*'As an avid 'net junkie I have found over the years that using a network designed by a bunch of computer programmers has become increasingly chaotic. I felt what was needed was some way to organise the information and make it accessible to the non-computer person.'*

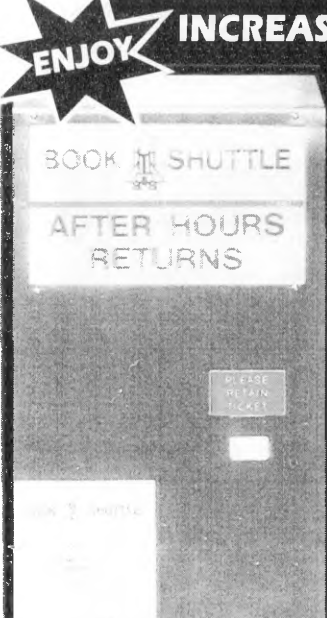
Sean Volke

*'Why librarianship? Because I'm fascinated by the organisation of information. Because I love books. Because teaching English as a second language wasn't for me. Because there is scope. I'm all for the future!'*

Peter Moloney

*'I look forward to being in a profession that is so incredibly fast-paced. The constant stimulus reassures me that it will never become stagnant. I believe our specialist knowledge is becoming even more necessary in today's world of exponentially growing information.'*

Yvette Salem



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