

Your voice

A rosy future?

I write, yet again, to express my dismay that the Association that supposedly represents my profession is so out of touch with reality. To suggest, as the November cover states, that there is 'a rosy future for the library and information profession' and that there are 'tremendous opportunities available in the sector' (Directline p4) seems to be seriously out of step with what is happening in the marketplace.

While the ABS study might be taken as reassuring, there is also the work of Rifkin which is anything but reassuring.

According to Rifkin, 'Many jobs are never coming back. Blue-collar workers, secretaries, receptionists, clerical workers, sales clerks, bank tellers, telephone operators, librarians, wholesalers and middle managers are just a few of the occupations destined for virtual extinction.'

Why do I worry? I worry that unsuspecting students are being

lured into a profession which may not deliver the healthy employment prospects that they have been assured of.

Why can't the association commission some independent research about the trends, based on advertised vacancies? Where are the jobs? What are the skills that employers are asking for? Is it the skills that new graduates offer?

My observation is that there are next to no opportunities for new graduates but I would like to hear about the success stories. We would all, I'm sure, like to hear about the success stories! Where is the 'rosy future'?

While I do not wish to denigrate the work of my colleagues involved in mentoring programs, it seems to me more than a co-incidence that the huge interest in mentoring comes at exactly the same time that jobs, at all levels, have evaporated.

**Dennis Warren,
Box Hill North**

Roses among the thorns

I had the privilege through staff development funds to attend some of the sessions on two days of the 1996 ALIA biennial conference in Melbourne 6-11 October. Full credit must go to the organising committee for producing a professional conference, venue, and making the whole thing happen. However my personal view and the view expressed by a number of my colleagues at a staff forum at my Institution was an overall disappointment in the conference as a whole.

There were a few roses among the thorns in sessions, but the conference lacked continuity of theme, had few relevant gutsy papers presented (I might add that the conference printed proceedings lacked an exorbitant amount of 'presented' papers), and a number of speakers missed the mark in their announced theme of presentation versus what they actually presented. I hope that ALIA as

an association might learn from the past, lift its game, and that future conferences will have papers and presentations that are relevant and on the cutting edge for our professional development. It is my desire, and I presume a desire of most professionals who attend a conference, to come away inspired with new ideas to implement, current ideas to work with and grapple with and at the bare minimum at least come away from a conference with a good feeling about our choice of career!

**Graeme Oke
Victoria University**

Your voice

Your letters on any issue of relevance to the library and information sector are welcomed.

All letters should be addressed to the inCite editor and may be e-mailed to incite@alia.org.au, or faxed to 06 282 2249, or posted to: Your voice, ALIA, PO Box E441, Kingston ACT 2604. Please include your name and postal address with your letter or e-mail.



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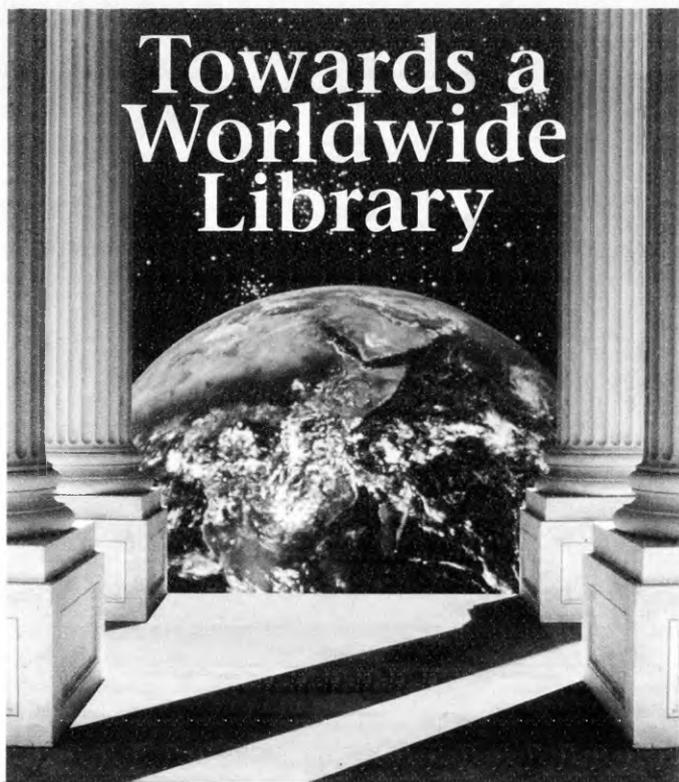
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