

Your voice

Access to proceedings

It is good to hear from Kerry Webb (*inCite* September) that the non-production of printed proceedings of ALIA2000 will be reconsidered. Costing for at least cost-recovery, based on reproduction by fast photocopiers rather than conventional printing, is easy to arrive at and could be specified in an order form available to all delegates.

However, I am intrigued by Kerry's observation that he envies the access I have to the proceedings of the 1900 and 1998 conferences. Because libraries have copies of those proceedings, they are available to anyone on interlibrary loan — and still will be in 2100. Let's hope as much can be said of the proceedings of ALIA2000

Alan Bundy, Hawthorndene SA

People, not buildings

After sitting on the sidelines for too long I feel galvanised to respond to Craig Anderson's *Frontline* column 'Build, renovate or denote — adapt, grow and thrive'. I just have a few simple questions for

Craig: When has a building ever recognised the impact of the digital revolution? When has a building ever invested 'heavily in digital technology'? When has a building ever embraced anything? The answer is of course never.

It is time to stop referring to librarians and library staff as buildings. Our professional literature needs to start giving the kudos where it belongs — to the people who make decisions. I suggest that the editors of the various ALIA publications return to authors any stories where 'libraries' are used in place of the *people* who really are the decision-makers/workers.

This is not the first time this concern has been raised and alas I am also sure it will not be the last... but it is time for the authors who write about the profession, or contribute articles to our journals, to take notice.

Margaret Krikorian, Canberra

Intellectual freedom...

John Levett and Jan Gaebler (*inCite* September) would readily agree, I surmise, that proper time to discuss significant issues like intellectual freedom is very hard to find.

As professionals they continue to have strong views on defending free access to unbiased knowledge and information. This is clear from their reaction to my own memories (*inCite* August) of the respectful nod in the direction of a few of the core values of librarians and libraries last December.

Defence of intellectual freedom by librarians should not be treated in isolation. Think of the importance of privacy and security of interactions on-line, whether via a library or not; of the power of dominant cultural paradigms of homogeneous entertainment and leisure, which disregard the library walls altogether; of the increasing pervasiveness of a Western 'entrepreneurial' ethic in every social and political activity, in the library 'sector' and every 'service enterprise'; and even of attitudes to learning (is it actually 'training?') created by global educational techniques which rely not on physical libraries or lecture theatres but on integrated information and communication technologies.

Let us not act as isolated martyrs. It may seem heroic, strong and noble to imagine that librarians are in some way ethically purer

than the myriad of grubby daily immersions required in response to the above universal changes. But eventually a head in the sand will atrophy unacknowledged.

With experience of a plethora of ethical dilemmas in professional contexts over thirty years, I agree with Jan that real work situations are rich for the pedagogical picking. For any with the time or interest, an earlier version of my stance on censorship and its cousins can be found in 'Mentors and moral menaces', in *Australasian public libraries and information services*, 4(2), December 1989, pp 201–207, an article which described my excitement about hypotheticals as a teaching tool for postgraduates at RMIT.

Graeme Johanson, Brunswick Vic

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 02 6282 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.

Letters will be accepted for publication until the 18th of the month.

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