

Christian Librarians' Network

'To encourage applying the Christian faith in librarianship and information services.'

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Multiple skills the key to success

Elizabeth Drynan and Pamela Johnstone

We are information consultants and partners in Enterprise Information Management Pty Ltd. Enterprise is a company, based in Sydney, which specialises in business information, internet training, databases, thesaurus development, indexing and editing, and DBTextWorks software. This demonstrates that it is often necessary to be multi-skilled in order to stay in practice as a consultant. Enterprise also publishes the well-known magazine for information professionals, *Online Currents*. Our partnership has been in place for ten years, although Enterprise, with Pamela as a founding member, has been operating in Sydney since the early 1980s.

We are both librarians, initially Arts graduates of Sydney University, we both have the Diploma in Librarianship from the University of New South Wales and Pamela is a registered indexer. We came to Enterprise separately after working in the National Library of Australia and the State Library of NSW (Pamela), University of New England (Elizabeth) and various corporate libraries. We both enjoyed working in the corporate world with its pressures of often working against the clock. We both came to Enterprise for the challenge of working for many clients on many varied projects. We also enjoy being self-employed. We believe that our initial training in librarianship provided the excellent basis for the work which we do today. However, we no longer call ourselves librarians because it is a much misunderstood name in the wider marketplace. We call ourselves information consultants because we work with information, especially online information and information technology; we publish a monthly magazine; we publish a legal thesaurus; we manipulate databases; we index documents; we train others how to use the internet to best advantage — all of this is done better, we think, because of the educational ground rules we received as librarians.

We each have acknowledged areas of expertise within the areas in which we work. However, *Online Currents* is a joint effort: we are joint editors and we both write for it. In order for a partnership to function to best advantage in a consulting business there must be mutual confidence in the abilities of each and a willingness to share — work, advice, and knowledge. It is important to promote the business, forget the ego. We are quite different in the

way in which we work. One of us is very organised and the other manages to function in a less-organised state — we won't be more specific than that. We are both willing to put in all the hours necessary to provide the client with the best possible result.

Working in the sort of business that we do we constantly face the following issues:

- **Quotes:** to accurately quote for a job you often have to actually do some of it in order to work out how much time it is going to take. We love the clients who will go for a more open-ended approach.
- **Fees:** the rationale for our fees is our expertise, our availability for ongoing support if needed (people like to know that help is always out there), the fact that we are always on call, the backup which our partnership provides, and the breadth of our knowledge — because we spend all of our time extending our knowledge of the information industry.
- **The erratic nature of consulting work:** the code by which most ambitious consultants work is one where you never turn down a job — assuming that it is within your area of expertise. This means that we are often faced with several projects simultaneously. We regularly work very long days, including weekends, and are also required to maintain the constant administrative functions of the production of the magazine.

We spend a lot of time going to meetings and seminars. This is time-consuming but we regard it as an essential element in our continuing professional development. Clients often forget that our time spent in this way has to be paid for. Marketing takes the form of networking and direct marketing. In addition, recommendations from clients often generates business. We will have a stand at the exhibition for the *Information Online 2001* conference in Sydney in January next year. Participation in this major event is part of our networking, marketing and professional development planning. Outside Enterprise, Pamela is the treasurer of the NSW Branch of the Indexers Society of Australia and Elizabeth is the secretary of the Information Specialists Division of ALIA. These roles can rightly be viewed as networking but they also reflect our wish to give something back to the profession. ■

The Australian Women's Weekly 1946-71 Index On-line access

We are pleased to announce that access to *The Australian Women's Weekly 1946-71 Index* is now available by visiting the following website:
<http://www.fpl.flinders.edu.au/wmindex>

The *Australian Women's Weekly 1946-71 Index* has been produced by researchers in the Women's Studies Department at Flinders University and offers a detailed index of the *Australian Women's Weekly* in the years 1946, 1951, 1956, 1961, 1966 and 1971.

Our decision to adopt a 'slice approach', to index only one year in every five for the period 1946 to 1971, was to place priority on a detailed index of six years over the twenty-five year period rather than a much less thorough index of all twenty-five years.

We hope that in its electronic format, *The Australian Women's Weekly 1946-71 Index* will be an accessible and invaluable tool for researchers and students across many academic disciplines, for libraries throughout Australia, for people working in the performing arts, and for the general public interested in local history and family history.

An accurate and most efficient use of our database will depend upon users' access to a microfilm collection of the *Australian Women's Weekly*, or a complete set of hardcopies of the magazine spanning the time period of 1946-71.

For more information on *The Australian Women's Weekly 1946-71 Index*, including access to a Thesaurus of 'Descriptors' and 'Subject Groups' used to compile the database Index, please visit the Flinders University of South Australia, Women's Studies Department home page at:
<http://www.ssn.flinders.edu.au/wmst/>