Power your mind!

Library and Information Week 2003

The United Nations has declared 2003–2012 as the decade of literacy. To coincide with the start of the decade, the Association has chosen *Information literacy: Power your mind* as the theme for Library and Information Week (LIW) 2003. The United Nations Assembly has reaffirmed that literacy is at the heart of the notion of basic education for all, and that creating literate environments is essential to eradicating poverty, achieving gender equity and ensuring sustainable development.

ALIA recognises that in an environment of rapid individual, community and workplace change, a static body of knowledge does not equip us with the capability to adapt, thrive and advance. The explosion of available information, new technologies, changing patterns of work, globalisation, family and community mobility have all contributed to the growing recognition of the importance of information literacy.

The ALIA policy statement on Information Literacy states:

> *A thriving national and global culture, economy and democracy will best be advanced by people able to recognise their need for information, and identify, locate, access, evaluate and apply the needed information.* [http://www.alia.org.au/policies/information.literacy.html]

Library and Information Week provides an opportunity to demonstrate *your* role and relevance in an information literate society. 'Power your mind: use your library and information service' is the message we want to spread. Now is the time to start planning activities and events that will promote the value of your services and skills. Let people know what you are doing for LIW 2003 by publicising activities for free in *inCite* and on ALIAnet. Send the details to events@alia.org.au. Information on all events, news and activities for LIW 2003 can be found on ALIAnet at http://www.alia.org.au/alw/.

To help spread the message for Library and Information Week 2003 order from the new promotional merchandise including posters, bookmarks, postcards, balloons and tattoos. A product catalogue with the new and previous years merchandise is included in this issue of *inCite* or visit the Library and Information Week 2003 pages on ALIAnet at http://www.alia.org.au/alw/2003/catalogue.html.

National Library Technicians Day (NLTD) will also be held as part of Library and Information Week in 2003. NLTD will be held on Tuesday 13 May 2003.

What is information literacy?

Librarianship is a profession with an understanding of the organisation of knowledge, and a passionate commitment to making knowledge accessible. In the development and increased delivery of information literacy programs in libraries, we can see this more and more — from curriculum-based information literacy in schools, colleges and universities, to workplace training in the use of information and technology, to the community-based learning programs of public libraries.

But what is information literacy? The Interim National Coalition for Information Literacy Advocacy (for background on the Coalition see report http://www.alia.org.au/advocacy/information.literacy/) has the working definition: An information literate person recognises when information is needed and can locate, access, evaluate and apply that information.

Information literacy:

- encompasses the effective use of multiple information technologies and formats;
- enables individuals to develop skills for lifelong learning life; and
- supports skills for workplace enterprise and for community participation.

In the field of information literacy there are a range of approaches and models. (see http://www.infolit.org/related_sites/ for a selection.) They focus on the key processes of:

- Recognising that to meet a need or resolve a problem requires information.
- Knowing how to identify if the needed information exists.
- Knowing how to find information (all formats and technologies).
- Knowing how to build new information into existing knowledge.
- Knowing how and when to seek help in information seeking.
- Knowing how to record or store information for future use.
- Knowing how to interpret or analyse information efficiently and ethically.
- Knowing how to communicate information to others appropriately.

The capability to respond to changing information needs is now an essential life skill.

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