

# Interview with a librarian...

## Mel Martin

Geraldine Barkworth talks with Melissa Martin aged 34, director of secondary research for the Queensland office of the international research firm Gartner. Melissa is also the editor of *OPALessence*, the e-newsletter for One Person Libraries (OPALS). Mel provides an example of the changing face of library professionals. Mel works from home and lives by the beach. Contact her at: [melissa.martin@gartner.com](mailto:melissa.martin@gartner.com).

### **D**escribe your organisation and your specific role:

Gartner conducts technology and telecommunications market research. We sell the results of this research to information technology users like the top 500 companies in the world, banks and government departments who want to know about IT trends, e-government, e-solutions and how to use IT smarter and cost-effectively. I manage the Secondary Research Centre for all of Gartner in Asia-Pacific, as well as producing a weekly newsletter for Sales, an AP monthly newsletter for *Clients* (<http://www.gartnervoice.com>), and am involved in developing a new research product for AP on IT trends. I manage a staff of three and they are all based in India — so I only see them three days a year! Busy, interesting and fun!

### **What do you enjoy most about your job?**

I love working for such a large, global company — I get to talk to people from all over Asia-Pacific everyday, and travel overseas at least once a year to exotic Asian locations for our annual research meeting. I love the dynamic IT&T industry, and the fact that Gartner does such cutting-edge research. It is always interesting, and I thrive on stress. Also I am fortunate enough to telecommute, so can even do all this fun research whilst wearing my slippers and pyjama's at home!

### **What do you enjoy least?**

The fact that I only get to see my staff three days a year. Remote management is a tricky thing, especially across time zones and cultures! But my team and I e-mail and instant message daily, and talk at least once a week — so we have developed good working methods and interesting friendships — in fact I probably know them better than my next-door neighbours!

### **Where were you before your current position with Gartner?**

I started off in Sydney in stockbroking and banking libraries. The birth of a child brought on a 'sea change' and we impulsively moved to Hobart. From there I was lucky and got offered a lot of part-time and short-term contracts; everything from the Tasmanian Parliamentary Library to the local public library and nearly every government department in-between. I was also offered the role of creating a whole of government research and information service for the newly-created Information Strategy Unit in the Premier's Department. This was when I started IT research, and actually became a client of Gartner. I did this for three years before I moved to sunny Queensland. Here I started working for the Queensland Government's Info

Industries Board — which provides IT market research to up-and-coming IT companies, and was once more a Gartner client. Eventually I asked so many client questions, Gartner must have decided it would be easier to have me on 'their side' and they offered me a job!

### **Look into your crystal ball Mel: what future for the library and information profession what would you like to see?**

I would like to see more value being placed on librarians, researchers and knowledge workers. A recent study demonstrated the high value of information and concluded that a large company can lose up to \$15 million annually by reworking or recreating information because it has not been located. Our profession needs to speak up and show our extraordinary skills and value!

### **What advice could you offer to people wanting to go into a research role?**

Use the NOW method — No Opportunity Wasted! Be proactive, make yourself heard, be passionate, and add value wherever you can. Network to make friends and share resources. And enjoy the excitement of the research chase! (And backup your files at least once a week!)

### **What enthuses, delights and energises you?**

A large, juicy research request that stimulates the mind; learning new things; working beyond the boundaries; chocolates and champagne; good friends; reading and shopping.

### **Is 'making a difference' important to you?**

Information is power — use the power to help people — whether it be writing an informative newsletter article to share information with your colleagues, or doing research to help a company make a million-dollar decision — do it well and make a difference.

### **If you won the lottery tomorrow, what choices would you make?**

I would travel the world to see, eat and drink everything! Visit beautiful old libraries, read lots of books. Then after a rest, I would start a charity/lend a hand to help out children of domestic violence and save the black rhinos!

### **Please describe your bedroom slippers to us:**

They are fluffy, leopard print. Thank you for asking!

*Geraldine Barkworth, BOLD WOMEN...Big Ideas, offers career and personal phone-coaching programs to library professionals and loves talking with fascinating people in fascinating jobs. You can contact her at [vision@norex.com.au](mailto:vision@norex.com.au) or 02 6685 1917.*

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