



Kim Moody

Queensland University of Technology

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...gives a voice to the new generation of library and information professionals. If you have any suggestions or topics for this column, please contact the column coordinator, Kate Watson, k.watson@cqu.edu.au.

University made me an achievement junkie!

Newsflash! At the relatively young age of 33 years, newly graduated librarian Kim Moody confesses to our roving reporter that she is in fact an achievement junkie.

'Yes, I'm afraid it's true — you see I have spent 17 out of my 33 years studying within formal educational institutions. That's just over half my life! I'm afraid that if I don't have the deadline of an 8000 word assignment hanging over my head, I just don't know what to do with myself!'

But it seems keeping busy is not Kim's only problem — apparently, receiving constant feedback in the form of assignment grades every few weeks has also resulted in another habit — Kim has an insatiable need for constant recognition of her work, something which does not always happen in the workplace.

'Don't get me wrong, my work colleagues and managers are great, and they do commend me on my work where appropriate, but it's just not enough! I want them to tell me how good it is — do I get 90 per cent, or only 75 per cent? How am I going in relation to my colleagues? I mean, I know life is not meant to be a competition, but formal study certainly is, and I'm having trouble breaking the habit. Can I get patches for this addiction?'

Kim is not alone — many of the people that she graduated with are having similar difficulties adjusting to the workplace after the fast-paced world of university. It seems constant high-level intellectual stimulation, pressing deadlines and the short-term goals of assignments and 14-week semesters cannot be effectively replicated by entry-level jobs. So what can the graduate do to ease the transition from university to work?

'To be honest, I have been lucky in a way. As part of my university course, I conducted a research project on censorship in libraries. My supervisor on the project suggested I submit my paper to the ALIA 2004 conference. She even suggested that I elect to have it peer reviewed. That really frightened me at first! But I figured that if she thought I could do it, I probably could. And I'm so glad that I did it.'

'My paper was accepted, which gave me a focus for all the intellectual energy I had left at the end of my studies. I had to finalise the paper, incorporate the changes suggested by the reviewers and prepare the presentation for the conference. But that was just the beginning.'

'Presenting at the conference opened up many more doors for me, both in terms of career development and intellectual stimulation. After my presentation I was approached to run workplace training workshops, assist in the creation of professional development materials, have my paper published, and write articles for Quill and inCite.'

Whilst rifling through Kim's desk for added dirt, this reporter also uncovered a long 'to do' list written on an ALIA2004 Conference notepad. The list appeared to consist of ideas for future projects. When confronted with this list, Kim responded,

'I can't believe you went through my desk! Are you sure you work for inCite? But yes, the presentations I attended at the conference were very stimulating — I found I was jotting down ideas for future research projects and professional development activities all the time. And hand back my pocket calculator!'

So it seems this addiction can at least be mitigated in some way by professional development activities. Keeping busy with such projects has a threefold impact: they help the graduate to further develop his or her professional skills, they make meaningful contributions to the profession, and they ease the transition from university to the entry-level workplace.

So what are the long-term prospects for recovering achievement junkies like Kim?

'Well, I have to say the future is looking bright. I have learnt over time that being a librarian does in fact contain many challenges, just in different ways to those I faced as a student. I literally learn something new every day. Meanwhile my external professional activities, such as article writing and researching, help to keep my professional knowledge fresh and broaden my perspective. Each activity also results in feedback of some kind or another, whether it be in having an article accepted for publication, a pat on the back after a successful presentation, or whether it be as simple as my own personal reflection on what has been achieved.'

And so, with another insightful report filed, this reporter is signing off. Damn shame about the pocket calculator, though...

When Kim isn't conducting imaginary interviews with herself, she is a reference librarian at Queensland University of Technology, Gardens Point. Kim's professional portfolio is available online at <http://homepage.powerup.com.au/~jayjay/>.