QUT Teaching Awards

Congratulations to Gillian Hallam and Helen Partridge, Sylvia Edwards, and Christine Bruce of the Queensland University of Technology on winning Vice-Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Awards: Christine and Sylvia for 2004, Gillian and Helen for 2005. The awards are given for sustained excellence in university teaching, with appropriate evidence from peers, students, industry colleagues and nominators. The presentations for 2004 and 2005 were held on 15 November 2005. ■

Gillian Hallam   Helen Partridge

Access to Learning Award

An annual award of up to US$1 million is given by the Gates Foundation to a public library or similar organisation outside the USA for an innovative program offering free public access to information technology.

The 2005 Access to Learning Award was won by Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha, a non-government organisation in Bangladesh, for its pioneering approach to bridging the digital divide and its commitment to providing free public access to computers and the internet. The organisation has converted indigenous boats into mobile libraries, which anchor at remote villages, using generators/solar energy to power mobile phones for internet access. The award was announced at the IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) conference in Oslo.

The Access to Learning Award is given annually to recognise the innovative efforts of libraries, organisations or library agencies outside the United States in providing free public access to information technology. Information and application instructions for the Access to Learning Award can be found on the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR)'s website at http://www.clir.org. CLIR welcomes applications for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Access to Learning Award for 2006. The deadline for the 2006 award is 28 February 2006.

See also http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Libraries/InternationalLibraryInitiatives/AccessLearningAward/default.htm. ■

At neXt 2005, last September, there was a story-based activity (for want of a better term) built around the trade exhibition. So many people have asked how 'Follows and Leeds' came to be written that we thought we'd put the answer into inCite.

Evolution of an Idea

Rob Thomson

So, Follows and Leeds — what's the story, Morning Glory? Where did you get the idea? Well to answer that question, here's the Evolution of an Idea to explain it all.

Once upon a time, in a galaxy far, far away, it was a dark and stormy night... hang on, that sounds a bit too familiar! It all began because my wife enjoys watching all those *CSI, Cold Case* types of TV programs. With the rise of these *CSI*-style programs, forensics courses at universities had become very popular, and I thought if only they did something similar for libraries then maybe librarianship courses would have a similar sort of rise in popularity. So I thought a *Cold Book Case* program would be it, where book detectives would go hunting for long-lost overdue books from libraries.

In planning the neXt 2005 Conference, the program committee asked for abstracts, but back in December 2004 they didn't know who was going to be submitting and were thinking of contingency plans should they not get enough. So, intending it to be an amusing joke for the Programming Committee, I wrote a one page — well, half-page — synopsis of a fictional TV program that I had supposedly sold to the BBC, in which these two book detectives would go around the UK finding long lost books and returning them to their libraries. I was going to

submit it anonymously pretending that an LT had written the series and the BBC had taken it up. I figured if I was going to tell a story I might as well make it a big story! As I said, it was supposed to be a sort of lighthearted moment for them as they were sorting through the submissions. In the end I didn't send it and they had plenty of submissions anyway.

After they had started sorting through the submissions we had another meeting and I thought I'd send it along as a 'what I was going to do but didn't' thing: I guess to see what other people thought of the idea. Trouble was, they all thought it brilliant and that we should incorporate it into the conference. We talked about how we could do this, or rather, how I was going to do this! In the end we decided that a sort of treasure hunt through the exhibitors would be a good way to encourage delegates to get involved with the trade. I said that if that was to happen then there needed to be some sort of reason why people would do it. There needed to be a story, a reason for the treasure hunt.

So on the way home from the meeting — the meetings were in Sydney and I had to get home to Wollongong — I 'composed' the basic back-story for the game. I wrote it out and fine-tuned it and it became the story delegates read in their satchels and the game they played while at the conference.

Follow and Leeds, Agents of LiBRA

I also felt there should be a picture of our heroes, so I ended up drawing them. In my original hypothetical BBC TV series, they were based above an antique shop in Worcester. Once I'd dragged them back to Sydney for the conference, Worcester became Ultimo. Shop 2/21B Kirk Street (because there isn't a Baker Street in Ultimo), to be exact.

In the early incarnations of the story I said that if anyone wanted to help me turn this into a real TV series I was quite prepared to accept large amounts of money and a trip to the UK to work on it. The offer still stands!

So that's the story behind the story: how I came up with and developed the Follows and Leeds, agents of the Library Book Recovery Agency. It amuses me that some people not only thought the whole thing was real, but also that a company in the US really does the sort of work the LiBRA do. It is plausible, possible and presumably profitable! I trust you have enjoyed the story of the story — and who knows, one day, maybe, you'll get to see it on TV!!

Rob can be contacted at windang@tpg.com.au. To read the Follow and Leads back story, go to: http://conferences.alia.org.au/libtec2005/hintsandtips.html.