

Online professional development

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There are a growing number of useful and creative ways to meet, manage, and promote your PD requirements online.

Meeting PD requirements

The growth of open access publishing models and institutional repositories means that there is more research than ever available online. Even if you don't have access to subscription databases, you can keep up with sites like E-LIS (<http://eprints.rclis.org/>), and libraryresearch.com (Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts, <http://www.libraryresearch.com>).

There are hundreds of social bookmarking sites on the web that can help you track your reading. Connotea (<http://www.connotea.org/>) and CiteULike (<http://www.citeulike.org/>) are academically focused, and allow you to bookmark websites and import citations from some databases automatically. You can then rate articles, add tags to describe them. Other users can see and share those citations. At the end of the year, when you want to list the professional reading you've done for your PD records, just export the citation list from CiteULike, with the notes you already wrote, and you're done!

Are you a blog person? If you write a library-related blog you can claim points under the professional reading or personal study project category in ALIA's PD scheme (<http://alia.org.au/education/pd/>).

Do you want help to set and meet your career goals and accumulate PD points at the same time? Work through the 'ALIA career development kit' (<http://alia.org.au/education/pd/career.kit.html>) to analyse your professional development needs or join a mentoring program. You can be accommodated in a mentoring program whether you live in a city, rural, regional or remote area or just can't get to meetings. NSW Mentoring, for example, actively encourages protégés and mentors from outside the Sydney metropolitan area to join. Find out about ALIA's mentoring program in your State (<http://alia.org.au/education/pd/mentoring/alia.programs.html>).

Managing PD requirements

ALIA provides record sheets online you can use to track your progress in meeting your PD requirements, but you can extend your PD management by using some of the many free Personal Information Management and Project Management tools online. Whether you want to keep track of the articles you've read throughout the year, or plan a new service, there's a tool online that can help.

PBWiki (<http://pbwiki.com/>) allows you to create a free wiki (a wiki is a collection of pages that can be dynamically created and edited). You could use it in PD to track your learning, make notes about articles you have read, and work on personal study projects.

Need a to-do-list? There are hundreds online. Start with Ta Da List (<http://www.tadalist.com/>) Or a calendar? RSSCalendar (<http://www.rsscalendar.com/rss/>) offers RSS feeds and can be integrated with your blog or shared with others.

For organisation and planning tips, the 43 Folders wiki (<http://wiki.43folders.com/>) covers just about every work and personal organisation topic, also known online as 'life-hacks'.

Try 43 Things if you need encouragement towards your goals (<http://www.43things.com/> NB: this is not associated with 43 Folders). You can share your goals, talk about your progress, and receive encouragement.

Promote your PD achievements

Don't keep your achievements to yourself! Use your certified practitioner 'CP' post nominal! If you have met your PD requirements in an interesting way (say, writing a blog or implementing a new service) share what you've learnt beyond ALIA's record sheets.

You could write about your achievements at Library Success, a best practices wiki (<http://www.libsuccess.org/>), or write an article for an online publication like LisCareer (<http://www.liscareer.com>). Follow Kim Moody's advice by adding your PD achievements to an online portfolio (Moody, Kim (2004) 'Online Portfolios, or "WOW! Look at Everything I've Done!"'. LisCareer.com, June 2004, http://www.liscareer.com/moody_onlineportfolios.htm). Send a report or an article to *inCite*, or *ALJ*: the editors are very encouraging to new writers.

Upload photos of events and projects to ALIANet or even Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com>, look at <http://flickr.com/photos/thomasfordmemoriallibrary/> for examples of what can be done).

There are many ways to take part in PD. This article covers just a few of the many creative and fun ways to meet and manage PD requirements. ■

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