

# Nurturing a local library community

## AGLIN/ACTive ALIA Information Sharing Forums in Canberra

In Canberra, the Australian national capital and home to many libraries, there has been a very strong drive among librarians to encourage networking across all library sectors and to provide local development opportunities.

Both the Australian Government Libraries Information Network (AGLIN) and local groups of the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) have had irregular and at times ad hoc programs for informal topical meetings and library visits. From 2003 a more concerted and collaborative program started. A committee was convened to develop the concept and use it to nurture the library community.

The program of sessions for 2005 was both practical and informative, and covered a wide range of topics: library education in the Canberra; work opportunities in the Canberra job market; information policy frameworks; and the use of controlled vocabularies within agencies to organise websites and content management systems. About eight or nine of the 2005 forums focused on library specific subjects, such as the innovative services developed and exploited by the Australian Taxation Office library network; an encore series of presentations by local speakers at the 2005 Information Online conference, given for those who could not get to the conference in Sydney; and a session looking at the use of risk management as a strategic management tool in libraries. We were very privileged to hear Lynne Brindley, CEO of the British Library (BL), who was in Canberra to speak on strategic planning and new initiatives at BL.

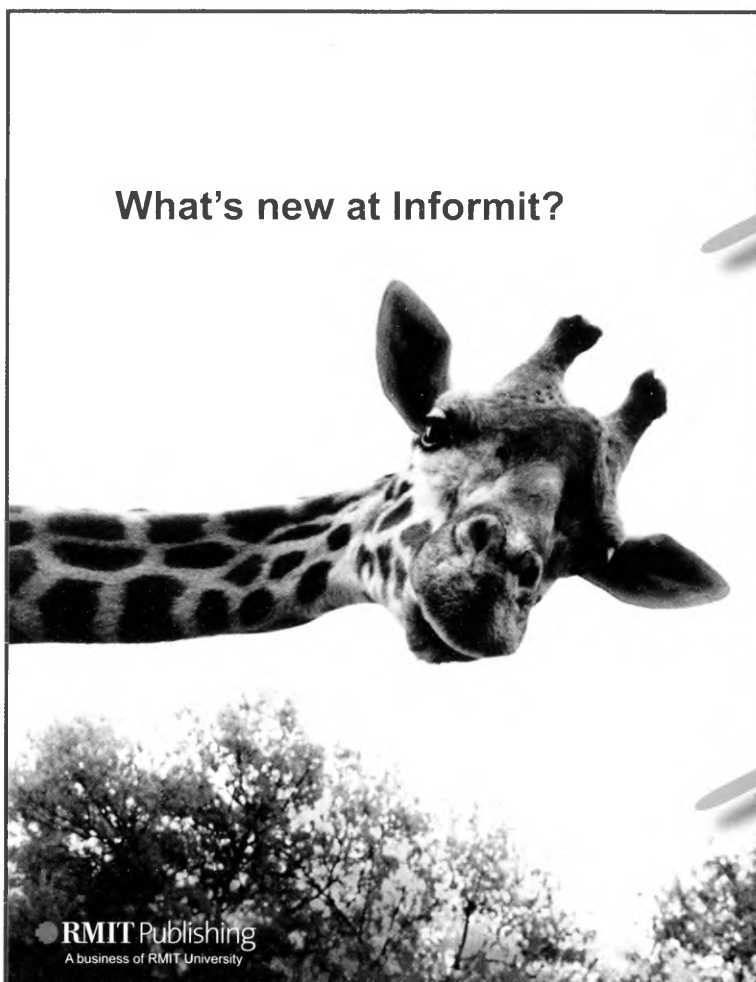
We plan a range of themes for 2006: 'Profiles of the Specials' presentations and library tours including the Australian

Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), the ACT Heritage Library and the US Information Service. Each speaker will highlight the features of their service.

The 2006 schedule will also include a range of management-oriented subjects: how to write a business case; metrics and other evaluation strategies to measure the effectiveness of library services; emerging technologies, such as wikis and blogs, and how local libraries have put them to good use; and at least one top-flight management speaker from outside libraries.

All forums will be well advertised on library-related e-lists. For those who cannot attend and those who want to get a copy of the presentations, all talks will be published on both the AGLIN <http://www.nla.gov.au/aglin/> and ACTive ALIA <http://alia.org.au/groups/active/presentations/> websites. Reports will be published in *ProACTIVE*, the newsletter of ACTive ALIA. The committee will take into account audience feedback in planning for future events so our topics remain relevant and useful. With this program of presentations and networking opportunities, we hope to nurture the library community in Canberra and everywhere else, helping them to stay up-to-date on important professional issues and to improve their skills and knowledge base.

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