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Symposium 2006

Energise>> Enthuse>> Inspire!

...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 co-ordinator, Kate Watson, k.watson@cqu.edu.au.

NLS2006: Something to talk about

You've sweated over your abstract for NLS2006, you've received notification that your abstract has been accepted, and now you have to write your paper. If it's been a while since you last wrote a paper or report, it can seem like a daunting task. Whether you're a first-timer at writing for a conference or you're a seasoned professional, the tips below will guide you in preparing your paper.

As Morgan Wilson (reviews co-ordinator and a member of the website committee) notes, writing and presenting at NLS2006 is 'a great opportunity to see if you have the skills and interest to do this, in a friendlier and less intimidating environment than some of the major conferences ...Activities that are run by and for new librarians usually have a characteristic edge.'

Variations on a theme

If you are unsure where to start use your abstract as your guide and then begin with an outline covering the following points:

- What your paper is about: research, technology, your work, study or life experiences?
- Why you are writing this paper: are you reporting findings, giving advice, or increasing awareness of a service or technology?
- What else is out there on this topic?

While you are writing, keep in mind the Symposium's themes and the audience. You can read about the themes for NLS2006, *Pathways and Possibilities*, and guidelines for formatting your paper (including length and referencing) at: <http://conferences.alia.org.au/newlibrarian2006/programme/callforpapers.php>.

Brush up your research skills

Surveys can be an great way of collecting information on your topic. These books can help you brush up your research skills if you are writing a paper that includes a survey:

Busha C H and Harter S P 1980, *Research Methods in Librarianship: Techniques and interpretation*, Academic Press, New York.

Powell R and Connaway L S 2004, *Basic Research Methods for Librarians*, 4th ed, Libraries Unlimited, Westport, CT.

Recycling

If you are using an essay, report or even blog post that you have already written for your studies, work or professional development as the basis for your paper, start by taking a look at the structure. You will probably need to add or remove parts of your work to fit the new purpose and audience, see if there are any new relevant references, and then check that it meets the NLS2006 themes.

Talk to other writers

There are many places to contact other writers in the LIS profession online. Mailing lists, such as ALIAREAP and NMRTWRITER can connect you with other researchers. The Library Writer's Blog <http://librarywriting.blogspot.com/> posts useful advice, as well as sources for publish-

ing opportunities and the Researching Librarian <http://www.researchinglibrarian.com/> has a database of useful tools and resources.

I like your style!

Whether you are looking for grammar advice or referencing tips, a style guide is your loyal friend. There are lots online, for example <http://www.economist.com/research/styleGuide/>. Published titles to look at include:

Commonwealth of Australia 2002, *Style manual for authors, editors and printers*, 6th ed, John Wiley & Sons. (The Australian 'bible' and the basis of ALIA's house style.)

Publication manual of the American Psychological Association 2001, American Psychological Association, Washington, DC.

Need more advice?

Two of the best in the field, Rachel Singer Gordon and Walt Crawford, have both written books on writing for the profession in recent years:

Gordon, Rachel Singer 2004, *The Librarian's Guide to Writing for Publication*, Scarecrow Press, Lanham, Maryland.

Crawford, Walt 2003, *First have something to say: writing for the library profession*, American Library Association, Chicago.

Write your presentation

Your presentation is different from the paper that you have submitted. You will have half an hour (including question time) to discuss your paper. You will need to summarise your paper for the presentation, and work out how you want to deliver it. You can be as creative as you like in presenting your paper – you can design an activity for delegates, play music as you begin your talk, do something really original with PowerPoint, or have no additional materials – just you. It is all up to you: just let the program committee know what you are planning!

Have fun!

Most of all, writing and presenting your paper should be enjoyable. You have the opportunity to write about issues that interest and affect you, and to engage and inspire your peers at NLS2006. Once you have delivered your paper, you will have the chance to discuss your work and answer questions both during your session and throughout NLS2006.

Your paper can continue to benefit you after you have attended the symposium – you gain points towards the PD scheme and you may also want to write a report on your paper and the experience of presenting at a conference for your supervisor and your portfolio to demonstrate your involvement in the profession.

The program committee is here to help you, please feel free to contact me at any time to ask questions about your paper or presentation.

Stay tuned to our website <http://conferences.alia.org.au/newlibrarian2006/> for contact details, announcements, updates, competitions and more. ■