

# Virtual librarianship

We're running a new series in the E>E>I column, which will profile different areas of librarianship. In this first column, we take a look at virtual librarianship, and explore some of the tools and tricks that this virtual librarian uses to manage her work and professional development.

## What exactly is a virtual librarian?

A virtual librarian mediates between users and information in the online environment. This mediation can be one-on-one: a virtual librarian can assist a single user with their information need via chat, instant messaging or email. It can also be one-to-many: a virtual librarian might compile FAQs for knowledgebases, develop subject guides to finding information, build and maintain websites, compile metadata ... or many other things.

Doing a job that is focussed on online service delivery means the virtual librarian spends a significant amount of time online ... It follows that you need a full swag of online tools to manage your work and professional development.

## The Virtual Librarian's Survival Kit

### 'Biblioblogosphere' must-reads

Blog reading keeps the virtual librarian up to date with developments in virtual reference service provision as well as Web 2.0 technologies. I sift through a hefty 'blogroll' daily (more than 65 library and technology blogs on a regular basis), but some of the essential reads are:

- LibrarianInBlack  
<http://librarianinblack.typepad.com>
- Information Wants To Be Free  
<http://meredith.wolfwater.com/wordpress/>
- Walking Paper — <http://www.walkingpaper.org/>
- Tame The Web — <http://tametheweb.com/>
- Libraryman — <http://www.libraryman.com/blog/>
- L-net: Oregon libraries network blog — <http://www.oregonlibraries.net/blog>
- Are you 2.0 yet? — <http://briangray.alablog.org/blog>
- Lorcan Dempsey's weblog  
<http://orweblog.oclc.org/>

### Manage your blog reading the easy way

Managing a hefty blog reading list is a whole lot easier with the help of an RSS aggregator. To get on top of your blog reading:

- set up a Bloglines account — <http://www.bloglines.com>

## Energise>> Enthuse>> Inspire!

... gives a voice to the new generation of library and information professionals.

If you have any suggestions or topics, or want to share your insights into your niche of librarianship, email Kate Davis at <[kdavis@nla.gov.au](mailto:kdavis@nla.gov.au)>, or Naomi Doessel at <[nomesd@yahoo.com.au](mailto:nomesd@yahoo.com.au)>.

- try out Google Reader  
<http://www.google.com/reader>
- use Netvibes to manage your
- RSS feeds and a whole lot more  
<http://www.netvibes.com>

### Getting things done – online 'to do' lists

Task management just got a whole lot easier!

- Remember the Milk — <http://www.rememberthemilk.com>
- Ta-da Lists — <http://www.tadalists.com>

### Instant Messaging (IM) tools

IM is the virtual librarian's number one techno tool.

- Use meebo to access all your IM accounts from inside a web browser — <http://www.meebo.com>
- Embed IM in your library's website using meebo me — <http://www.meebome.com>
- Download an open source aggregator like Pidgin (formerly Gaim) — <http://pidgin.im> or Trillian — <http://www.ceruleanstudios.com/>

### Bookmark, the social way

Bookmark your favourite web pages, cool new 2.0 tools, or things to read, then share your bookmarks with the world with:

- del.icio.us — <http://del.icio.us/> or explore the alternatives: check out the Wikipedia article on social bookmarking at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_bookmarking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_bookmarking)

### Build your own wiki for free

Collaborate and build community online using wikis. Try one of these free wiki tools:

- pbwiki — <http://pbwiki.com/>
- seedwiki — <http://www.seedwiki.com>

### Catalogue your personal library

Catalogue, tag and review your favourite books with LibraryThing — <http://www.librarything.com>

Kate Davis

## Study recordkeeping at your own pace

### Enrol through the Flexible and Distance Learning Centre

- Study modules in records and archives at times to suit you
- Choose from Statement of Attainment, Certificate 3, Certificate 4 and the Diploma of Business (Recordkeeping)
- TRIM is now available through the Short Course Centre on 9217 5430
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- Work with teachers by phone, fax and email

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**Esther Aarons**  
phone: 9217 3442 fax: 9217 4034

For relevant training in a convenient location, call 1300 360 601.



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