

'E-volving education': 5th ALIA Top End Symposium

On Friday 5th of October, a suspicious crowd of around eighty people were seen entering the Darwin Skycity complex. However, unlike the usual unruly mobs seen entering this veritable den of sin, these were library and information professionals. Their destination: the 5th ALIA Top End Symposium.

The annual symposium is the calendar highlight for the ALIA Top End group, and this year's theme was 'e-volving education'. This theme followed on from the 2006 Education Forum which focused on the future of professional education. This year the theme was broadened to include topics such as the educating nature of the information profession, technological innovations in which professionals need to keep educating themselves, and new trends for information professionals in the education industry.

The symposium commenced with a very entertaining address by former NT Administrator, Austin Asche, who was very eloquent in stressing the important role that librarians, and books, play in the community. Our first keynote speaker, and ALIA President, Roxanne Missingham, talked about the evolving nature of the library and information profession, and the way that changing trends in technology and society are shifting the demands and expectations of those working in the information industry.

The rest of the afternoon covered a range of topics, including the importance of promoting information literacy in public libraries, changing trends in school libraries, moving toward Library 2.0, and developing staff through the Learning 2.0 program.

The major social event for the symposium, the dinner, was held at Ten Litchfield in the Darwin CBD. It was a great opportunity for local professionals to mix socially, and get to know some of their interstate ALIA colleagues. At one point, we were interrupted by

a belly dancer but, true to librarian form, some of our more spirited delegates got up and joined in!

The next morning started with breakfast at Skycity — another opportunity for some social interaction and professional networking. Gillian Hallam, from the QUT School of Information Systems, gave the morning's keynote presentation, providing the latest findings of the Nexus census, with particular emphasis on the implications for the Northern Territory, and how the Top End compares with the rest of Australia in its workforce trends.

The remainder of the symposium covered a variety of topics, including promoting Libraries Australia to library users, continuous professional development, online tutorials for information literacy, and a live demonstration of how simple it can be to create a podcast and deliver it to library users.

Overall, the symposium provided a diverse program, designed to stimulate discussion and innovation across the local profession. It was also a fantastic opportunity for professionals to share their knowledge across all sectors of the Top End library and information industry, with delegates and speakers from each of the major bodies and organisations. This symposium has been hailed as a success, and yet another indication that, whilst the Top End may be far away from the rest of Australia, we're far from being behind the times when it comes to library and information trends.



(Left to right) Valerie Asche, Helen Edney, Sarah Manning, Frieda Evans, Austin Asche

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Library Technicians 10 years on: still InterACTing in 2007

The conference committee, along with a couple of supporters, of the 9th National Library Technicians Conference held in Canberra in 1997 recently had a reunion in Canberra to celebrate 10 years of friendship and to reminisce about the good times they had organising the conference.

We laughed a lot, looked at photos, brought out the conference dinner menu and enjoyed the ambience of the venue. We remembered the Governor-General and the 'welcome to country'. We introduced the use of data projectors and we encouraged more technicians to give papers. And those purple conference bags and shirts, the committee suffragette outfits and the bluebell pins!

This technicians conference was the first to reach 500 delegates and don't forget the dog. Some delegates even took the opportunity for an after dark scenic tour of Canberra's more notorious nightlife, an impromptu extra!

Working together as a team 10 years ago, we developed a bond of friendship, which has continued with dinners, brunches and coffee even though we have traveled along different paths in our work and in retirement.

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