

Making the Right Choice

For librarians in one person, solo or small libraries, the two most common barriers faced in undertaking professional development (PD) are lack of time and lack of funds. To these two barriers I would also add lack of focus; not knowing what to choose when your time and funds are limited.

In tackling the latter issue, it is worthwhile identifying what you consider to be professional development. For me, PD can be any learning activity that helps me improve my skills or knowledge in a specific area and which directly supports my career. Therefore, before undertaking any PD one has to identify (a) area of interest, (b) skills or knowledge gap and (c) learning activity that will support knowledge/skill improvement and professional growth. In this PD planning process you will probably identify several areas of interest, skills gap and supporting learning activities. The next step is to prioritise, taking into consideration your available time, commitments (both work and home) and funds (work or self funded).

Working for a not-for-profit organisation, funding has been a major issue in professional development. As my PD budget is negligible I have had to look at ways of undertaking low cost learning activities that support skill and knowledge improvement.

Following are some suggestions of soft professional development activities which incur minimal or no cost:

- An alternative to attending conferences is to read the conference papers online when they become available.

For a list of conferences go to ALIA <http://www.alia.org.au/conferences> Also visit other library association and library special interest groups around the world.

- Keep your eye out for conferences or seminars which are broadcast over the web; webcasts, webinars (voice only + powerpoint handout), or podcast.

Examples: "Digital strategy for libraries in the 21st century" State Library of QLD, 25 October 2007 <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/find/webcasts/all> Also look at seminars by Infopeople <http://www.infopeople.org/training/webcasts/list/archived>

- Join an e-list or online user group to support your new learning area.

For e-lists go to ALIA <http://www.alia.org.au/alinet/e-lists> and other industry e-lists <http://www.alia.org.au/alinet/e-lists/other.lists.html>

- Join a forum which provides both face-to-face meetings and an online discussion.
- Identify free journals in the area of interest and read relevant articles and for additional ALIA Continuing PD points do an article or book review.

Find Articles <http://www.findarticles.com>; Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) <http://www.doaj.org>

- Identify professional associations in the area of interest.
- Find relevant journal articles or books on subject of interest and do some homework
- Find a mentor. ALIA has a mentoring program <http://www.alia.org.au/education/pd/mentoring/> which can assist in finding a suitable mentor.

There comes a point when you have to pay for training courses, higher education or conferences and special events. Before deciding on what you are going to put your money into, evaluate your options carefully and ask the following:

1. Who is the trainer/presenter; what is their background?
2. Is all of the course content relevant to my area of interest?
3. Is the course content current?
4. Will I be given useful course material?
5. How much additional work will I need to do to complete this course?
6. Can I do something else which will provide the same return (improved knowledge, new skill, etc.) for less cost in terms of money, time and work life

As a final thought, evaluate your learning choices to allow you to learn to know, learn to do, learn to live [work] together and learn to be. Happy learning!

Nicky Hayward-Wright
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New FOLIOz course – starts 4th August

Registrations are now being taken for Evaluating Information Skills Training Courses (InfoSkills2).

This is an extension on the previous InfoSkills courses and there is no prerequisite required.

Information and registration forms can be found at <http://www.alia.org.au/education/pd/workshops/> or by contacting ALIA's PD Officer on 02 6215 8216 email pd@alia.org.au

Employment opportunity



THE PETROLEUM INSTITUTE ABU DHABI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Institution: The Petroleum Institute (PI) was created in 2001 with the goal of establishing itself as a world-class institution in engineering education and research in areas of significance to the oil and gas and the broader energy industries. The PI's sponsors and affiliates include Abu Dhabi National Oil Company and four major international oil companies. The campus has modern instructional laboratories and classroom facilities and is now in the planning phase of three major research centers on its campus. The PI is affiliated with the Colorado School of Mines, the University of Maryland (College Park), and Leoben and Linz Universities. PI is in the process of developing future working relationships with other major universities and research institutions around the world to capitalize on joint research areas of interest. For additional information, please refer to the PI website: www.pi.ac.ae.

LIBRARY POSITIONS

The Library of the Petroleum Institute in Abu Dhabi is seeking applications for the following positions:

Systems and Web Development Librarian:

(Must combine an ability to lead developments and operations in the library's web related activities and integrating access to digital information systems.

Applicants must have demonstrated/document evidence of successful management of web and computer systems projects and networking)

Information Services Librarian (Information Literacy and reference Librarian):

(Must combine a strong background of information literacy and reference in an automated academic environment. Applicants must have demonstrated/document evidence of successful experience and in an information literacy program in a reference department of an academic library)

Both positions report directly to the Head Librarian

Candidates are encouraged to submit applications at the earliest convenience. Review of applications begins upon receipt and positions remain open until successfully filled.

These positions are being re-advertised. Previous applicants need not apply.

Details are available on PI-web site: <http://www.pi.ac.ae/jobs>