

Professional development in Far North Queensland (FNQ)

James Cook University (JCU) Library Cairns campus, hosted its third biannual Professional Development Day last November.

Titled *iLibrarian-iTools for the Future*, the program focused on online social networking applications and the possibilities they offer for reaching library users. Over 30 local librarians gathered for an instructive and positive day.

Heather Gordon, Director, Information Services & University Librarian JCU, opened the day with a presentation on the importance of online social networking applications highlighting the vast range of possibilities and opportunities that now exists for libraries. JCU Information Librarians



Participants of the Professional Development Day in FNQ

Alan Cockerill, Bronwen Forster and Nicole Johnston followed, demonstrating social networking applications such as iGoogle, blogs, wikis, Library Thing, and Second Life to name a few.

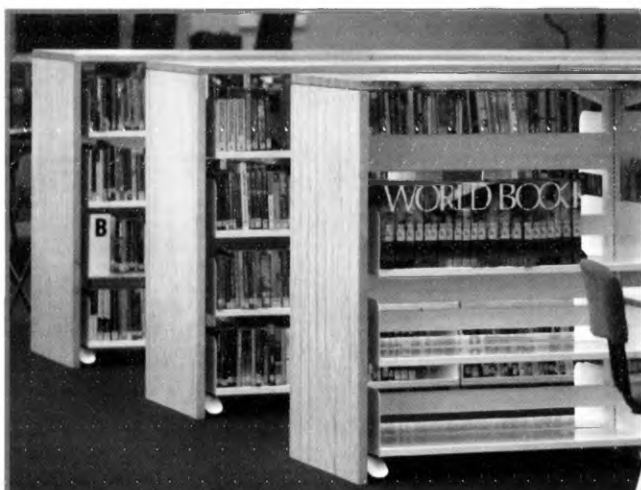
Most of the workshop attendees had limited experience with these applications, and many admitted not understanding the attraction of an online social life. However the advantages for libraries in using such tools was obvious. It will be interesting to see what online applications are picked up by respective libraries over 2008.

The PD day would not have gone ahead without the support of the local library community - presenters, organising committee members, helpers, and everyone who came along and supported the event. JCU Library undertook most of the organisation for the day and deserve a special mention. A FNQ librarians' blog has been set up and is used by local librarians as a means of keeping in touch while practising newly-required skills. Visit <http://www.fnqlibrarians.blogspot.com/>

Prior to organising the PD day, local librarians expressed an interest in finding out about ALIA's Professional Development Scheme. Consequently, I took the opportunity to promote ALIA's PD Scheme with the help of a presentation supplied by Karen Mills (ALIA PD Officer). It is important to remember that being remote librarians doesn't mean we can't make or find opportunities to expand our skills.

Postscript: In 2008 we hope to set up an after-hours informal learning workshop to be held every two months. Each workshop will focus on one Web 2.0 tool. Not only will we benefit by learning and practising something new but most importantly, these sessions will regularly bring us together as a group.

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