A library's role in Pacific twinning

The Twinning Program provides legal texts, librarian assistance and training to Pacific law and justice sector agencies. In 2006 the Australian Law Librarians' Association requested that the Australian Attorney-General's Department coordinate the twinning of law libraries in Australia and New Zealand with law and justice sector agencies in the Pacific Island nations. Consequently the position of *Administrative Coordinator (Pacific)* was created within the Lionel Murphy Library and will remain there as long as funding through AusAid's Pacific Governance Support Program (PGSP) is available.

A team from the Australian Attorney-General's Department travelled to Tonga and Samoa and trained 200 Pacific staff in hands-on, basic computer, Internet and legal research skills. Attendees ranged from magistrates to clerks and private law firm personel. While the demand for training was so high some staff had to be turned away and manuals were left for further training and all attendees received quick reference guides.

The training sessions highlighted the diverse skill levels of users, ranging from those who had never used a computer before to those who were observers, and feedback indicated a need for more workshop-style legal research, Microsoft Word and Excel training.

The sessions revealed the difficult circumstances that some agencies work under in regards to computer and Internet access. The team also looked at information management systems, highlighting again the divergence of available technology across the region. There is now a greater appreciation of the difficulties faced by library staff in the Pacific and thus a better understanding of how we can help them improve to the sustainability of the law and justice sector in the region.

The visit also provided opportunity to promote the PacLII site. This will be a one-click entry point to many free legal research sites, relevant in the Pacific, allowing access to some commercial legal databases for users in the judicial and legal sector. This will be of enormous benefit to the Twinning Program, as it will supplement the hard copy texts already supplied.

The two most important factors for the future are to encourage new partners to join while nurturing the ongoing willingness, support and cooperation of the many Australian and New Zealand law and justice agencies that contribute to the Twinning Program.

Information on the program as available from Australian Attorney-General's Department, Information Services Branch, Lionel Murphy Library at **pacifictwinning@ag.gov.au**

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Book review

Introduction to Health Sciences Librarianship,

edited by M. Sandra Wood, New York: Haworth Press, 2008

Introduction to Health Sciences Librarianship is a comprehensive overview of the theory and practice of health librarianship. Editor M. Sandra Wood, Librarian Emerita, Pennsylvania State University, has written or edited numerous publications and is editor of *Medical Reference Services Quarterly, Journal of Consumer Health on the Internet*, co-editor of the *Journal of Electronic Resources in Medical Libraries* and has over thirty-five years' experience in medical libraries.

The book, aimed at both beginning and experienced health sciences librarians, consists of eighteen chapters organized into five sections: Introduction/Overview; Technical Services; Public Services; Administration; and Special Topics. The twenty-four contributing authors possess a combined wealth of experience in the teaching and practice of health science librarianship. They and the editor should be congratulated for the relatively short production timeframe for this book – six months for writing the chapters and eighteen months overall for production – resulting in current and relevant content. There are extensive references at the end of each chapter for those wishing to read further, as well as a useful index and invaluable glossary. There are numerous checklists, comparative tables, selected examples and sample forms, all of which can be studied, borrowed and adapted, resulting in an excellent balance of theory and practice.

Introduction to Health Sciences Librarianship is very US-centric, with some of its content of little relevance to Australia. For example, chapter two, 'The Health Care Environment' contains detail about the history of health care in the United States, including detail on administration and legislation. However the majority of content is widely applicable and health sciences librarians worldwide will derive benefit from it. For example, the guide to selecting journals for subscription in Chapter 3 and the principles of selecting and evaluating digital resources in Chapter 4 are useful for any health librarian. Chapter 11 on 'Evidence-Based Practice' provides an overview of evidence-based practice in health and librarianship which is valid in any healthcare information service. Some readers may lament the lack of content applicable to health libraries in developing countries.

At nearly 500 pages, *Introduction to Health Sciences Librarianship* is a comprehensive overview of this area of information practice. The detailed table of contents facilitates dipping into specific chapters as need arises. Librarianship students and beginning health librarians will find all they need to know about the field in this book, while experienced health librarians will find valuable updates to enhance their practice.

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