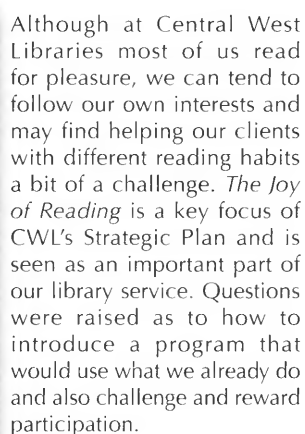


Forget the draughty halls and cardigans, *Reading Bingo!* is a professional development activity that is fun and easy to do.



of our fulltime, part-time, and casual staff at their own pace over six months. The bingo grid contains a range of activities and questions covering the essential elements of cultural awareness, marketing, communication, team work, training, technology, personal development, fun, readers' advisory, innovation, and motivation. Quite a list, but it serves to steer one's reading in different directions. In this way, *Reading Bingo!* incorporates the philosophy of advocates such as Nancy Pearl.

Reading Bingo! encouraged us to think about the process and benefits of reading as well as the diversity of interests that emerged as we talked about what was read. As the activity progressed, more comments and ideas about promoting the joy of reading were added to the *Reading Bingo!* board. Here's an idea: a bookmark that talks to you, glows in the dark, and "has a light to attract attention"!

E-portfolios: personal learning, professional development

The self-directed learning has proved to be the most valuable aspect of the e-portfolio for me. While I began using an online portfolio to help with the annual PDR (Planning, Development, and Review) process at the University of Adelaide – sessions where

Perhaps I can explain this most clearly with an example. As I was writing an assessment of my year's 'Research Skills' sessions for English undergraduates, I included information that was useful for my manager: the number of students I taught, the resources that I used, the feedback that I received from students and lecturers. In the process of writing, I found myself reflecting on other, wider teaching and learning issues: *why* did I teach X and not Y, *how* did I motivate the students and help them to learn, *when* were the library sessions most (and least) successful?

I also use my e-portfolio for another important area of my work as a librarian: mentoring one of the new graduate librarians at the University of Adelaide library. My mentoree also uses an e-portfolio (she is involved, through ALIA, with the Australian e-portfolio Project). Rebecca and I can view, comment, and collaborate on selected parts of one another's e-portfolio. For example, she can contribute to my mentoring blog and I can have input on her action plan for developing her presentation skills. Along with our other mentoring activities – informal meetings, library visits, work-related projects – we find that the e-portfolio is a valuable tool in our mentoring relationship.

E-portfolios aren't for everyone: it takes time and energy to create and maintain one (not to mention access to the right software: I use PebblePad, which is a fabulous tool.) But if you enjoy working on your professional development and personal learning as a librarian, they're a great way to go!

Reference:

Sutherland, S (2005) *E-portfolios: a personal learning space* in de Freitas, S and Yapp, C *Personalisation in the 21st century* Stafford: Network P

Whenever I thought about possibilities for professional development, I often thought in terms of attending conferences, seminars, and other 'official' learning experiences. While these are indeed fabulous opportunities where many new things can be learned, I have found another extremely useful learning experience that has furthered my professional development – involvement. The main barrier to involvement is that commodity of which there is so very little – time. However, once I committed myself to managing the time commitment, involvement – however accidental and unexpected for someone with a healthy cynicism when it comes to committees – has brought me a number of personal and professional gains.

I used to believe strongly in three very simple edicts when it came to any sort of involvement. The first was never volunteer for anything. The second was that the only thing committees manage to produce are camels. The third was if you don't like it, do something to change it. While the first two edicts seemed perfectly reasonable, I came to realise they were inhibiting my personal and professional development. The third edict was fine

until I realised that all I was doing was talking (read whingeing) about whatever my particular bugbear was on the day. So, it was this third edict that meant I didn't put up too much of a fuss when I found myself *involved* in a committee, almost by accident, as the president of the QUT Information Professionals Alumni chapter.

What a learning curve it has been! While I can't point to any one particular topic and say "I have learned **this**", as one might after attending a seminar, I have learned, and am continuing to learn, a number of highly useful benefits to involvement. Firstly, we truly work in a profession bursting at the seams with interesting and exceptional people – and I've only ever met a few of them. The second is that the opportunity to meet, talk, and hear the stories of these fascinating people offers valuable personal and professional insights that have helped me learn and grow in the profession. Thirdly, although we as a committee have probably produced a few camels, we've also managed to organise a number of interesting, worthwhile, and fun events. Nothing tests your mettle like organising an event for a diverse group of professionals within a tight timeframe. It also gives an opportunity to try your hand at a range of roles and activities, from promotion to emceeing, in a supportive and non-job related setting. The skills and abilities gained then become valuable professional assets.

The list of what I have gained through my involvement with the QUT IP Alumni could go on and on but I think you may be getting the idea. All I have had to do to gain these benefits is be involved a couple of hours a month. As for my simple edicts, I've discovered something interesting. Yes, committees produce camels but camels are great to have around in certain situations. I still may not be the first to put my hand up when a call for volunteers is made, but I do find myself getting involved a lot more and reaping piles of benefits for a small investment of time. As for the third edict – I may not be changing the world, I may not even be changing my small corner of the world, but I am genuinely trying to do something about it. This means I'm not whingeing, oops sorry – talking – as much and *that* can only be a good thing. All jokes aside though, while I always get a lot out of professional learning activities, I've gained just as much, both professionally and personally, from being involved. So next time you're thinking about your professional development, don't forget about the professional development you can gain from becoming involved – whether it be ALIA, alumni, or some other professional group. You might be surprised what you gain from it while having some fun – and it costs a lot less than a plane ticket too.

Julanne Neal
President, QUT Information Professionals
Alumni Chapter, and Associate Lecturer
Queensland University of Technology
j2.neal@qut.edu.au

Put it in writing: five tips for rich professional development

Simply reading an article on exercise, making money, or career progression will not, unfortunately, make you any fitter, richer, or promotable. You need to apply some physical and mental muscle. Simply writing, however, can help with professional and personal development.

Many articles about personal wealth operate on the premise that those who achieve riches are those same people who have written plans on how to succeed. People employed in libraries can also 'earn' professional development richness by writing, whether for publication or private reflection.

One popular approach is to write-to-learn. As you write, ideas are discovered, clarified, and refined.

Below are five tips on how to start writing and turbocharge your career. The writing process itself is important to professional growth. Publication is just a delightful side-effect.

1. You already know how to interview – LIS Professionals and LIS Magazines

Most LIS workers have conducted reference interviews with even the most reluctant or taciturn patron. Why not transfer those skills over and interview LIS professionals? Write a profile of an admired colleague. Interview people for career information not often taught at library school, or in the workplace, such as the specifics of budgeting. By interviewing others and then writing up the information, you reinforce what you have learned in your own mind, and you can also help others who are curious.

2. Writing for and commenting on LIS group blogs

Blogs are valuable tools for reflective learning and peer support. Libraries Interact (<http://librariesinteract.info/>) is an Australian collaborative blog. By contributing a post or commenting on published posts, you consolidate your own LIS knowledge. In the Library with the Lead Pipe (<http://inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/>) is a peer-reviewed blog. Guest posts are published every two weeks.

3. Articles about LIS in non-LIS publications

Explaining information on any topic to a layperson takes some skill, but in doing so the information often remains imprinted in the memory of the teacher. Aim for publication in a non-LIS journal about a library topic. After all, is defining libraries in terms the reader understands so different to library customer interaction?

4. Researching publication markets

Finding markets to publish in increases professional awareness. You'll need to get familiar with the chosen journal before submission, just as you would get familiar with an organisation before applying for a job there. The LIS Publications Wiki (http://slisapps.sjsu.edu/wikis/faculty/putnam/index.php/Main_Page) produced by the San Jose State University's School of Library and Information Science analyses the submission requirements of LIS and non-LIS journals.

Other sources include researching the ALIA ProQuest suite of Library and Information databases, the free EBSCO Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts database (<http://www.libraryresearch.com/>), and writers' markets directories. You can also check magazines for editorial themes, and Ulrich's Periodical Directory for library titles.

A Library Writers' Blog (<http://librarywriting.blogspot.com>) has various opportunities, from calls for book chapters and conference papers to blog posts.

5. LIS book reviews

Reading library literature for review contributes to professional development. Critical assessment of a book to explain how and why it does or does not work helps to make sense of what you have read. Plus you get to keep the book. *Australian Library Journal* and *Australian Academic & Research Libraries* are two journals in need of reviewers.

Although rare in this profession, some like *ONLINE Magazine* pay for a published article. Most do not. The wealth gained by the writer is the sharing of professional knowledge through print. You may not get filthy rich, but could very well get professionally wise.

Doreen Sullivan
RMIT University Library
doreen.sullivan@rmit.edu.au