

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.

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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.

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