Professional development

The Knowledge Ride at Luna Park

Many thanks to ALIA for awarding me a place at ARK's "Knowledge Management – From Diverse Perspectives" two-day seminar at Crystal Palace, a conference centre located in Sydney's Luna Park. KM is not a new concept, but is emerging as a critical tool in creating and sustaining a competitive advantage, and, as it is my Masters' degree subject, I was particularly eager to network with peers and learn from experts in the field.

The seminar opened with Dave Snowden, the highly respected guru of KM, discussing the importance of aligning KM practices with organisational strategy by identifying a practical range of tools and methods to use limited resources and to encourage decision making and innovation. Vendors showcased their products and speakers discussed KM projects and experiences, including an enthusiastic Manson Yew from NASA and the entertaining Cory Banks.

Delegates were moved by the innovative presentation from Dr Olimpia Salas. After involving the whole group in a conga line, Dr Salas discussed the challenges she faced introducing KM practices in Latin America to improve nutrition and quality of life for communities that survive by eating charcoal and drinking contaminated water.

However, the biggest learning opportunities for me were the interactive sessions involving the KM cards and Knowledge Café. Patrick Lambe provided packs of his KM method cards and organisational culture cards and each table selected a game to play, providing a great opportunity to meet the other delegates and discuss common KM issues and experiences. We chose 'trumps' where each culture card depicting a behaviour could be trumped by another with more dominant or positive traits; delegates identified and discussed the various behavours. Our group then discussed how the various tools are related and which behaviours affect or encourage the implementation of KM practices.

The second interactive session, the Knowledge Café, involved delegates discussing a topic for 20 minutes and then moving to another table with a different question. Each delegate discussed three topics with the main points from each table written on poster paper and stuck on the wall for the rest of the conference. This was an innovative method of encouraging discussion on current KM themes and an excellent icebreaking tool. The Café could easily be implemented at an ALIA conference to spark conversation on a wide variety of shared library issues.

I attended two small-group workshops after the conference. The first was hosted by Patrick Lambe, a qualified librarian and engaging speaker, who discussed the importance of identifying KM competencies and champions to encourage the adoption and implementation of KM practices within an organisation. As a newcomer to KM it was exciting to relate the information from this workshop and stories from the other participants to the knowledge I have gained from my studies and personal work experiences.

The second workshop was a lively discussion with Arthur Shelley, author of *The Organizational Zoo*,who introduced the use of animal traits to identify work place behaviours. We discussed positive and negative behaviours found in most organisations and those required at various stages during a project or business plan.

ARK has a reputation for providing high quality conferences and I was impressed with the program diversity, networking opportunities, availability of the speakers to discuss their presentations, and the innovative sessions. I have papers, reference lists, and purchase details for the interactive cards if you wish to email me for more information.

Conferences provide fantastic opportunities to promote your career, receive in-depth learning on a particular subject, or network among like-minded peers. I encourage ALIA members to submit an application to win an ARK conference and enjoy the learning experience.

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RAILS 6 Promoting research in the profession

The next RAILS (Research Applications in Library Science) six seminar will continue to build on the theme of previous seminars linking research with practice. Research-active practitioners, academics, research students, and recipients of research awards in the field of librarianship and information studies are invited to use this opportunity to share their ideas and research work with others.

RAILS 6 is being organised by the School of Information Studies, Charles Sturt University, and will be held on the Canberra Campus (The Australian Centre for Culture and Christianity), on Friday, 22 January 2010. This campus enjoys a peaceful setting in a bush environment next to Lake Burley Griffin. For educators, there will also be a day-long meeting prior to the conference on Thursday 21 January, to be held at the Charles Sturt University, Canberra Campus.

Presenters have the option to present a short paper (15 min) or a full paper (25 min). All full papers will be peer reviewed and be published in *Australian Academic & Research Libraries* in 2010.

Further details and registration details ($100 for the day) are available on the CSU website **http://www.csu.edu.au/faculty/educat/sis/RAILS6.html**

ALIA is sponsoring the event by providing two scholarships of $500 each to enable two higher degree students in the LIS field to attend and present. Students must be financial members of ALIA to be eligible to apply. A brief application – maximum one page – should include an outline of the proposed paper and claims in support of the application plus ALIA membership number and contact details. This should also be accompanied by a supporting statement from an academic supervisor. These to be emailed to **dlodge@csu.edu.au** by November 30 2009.

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