

Writing with ALIA

To grow, thrive, and survive, industry professionals need to publish. It's from these publications that discussions arise, investigations are conducted, and eventually best-practice emerges. But, let's face it, putting your name out there, especially when connected to a hypothesis or theory that may attract controversy can be very daunting. While I can't offer up much advice on screwing your courage to the sticking place (though I understand alcohol can be helpful), I can offer up some pointers on the what, when, where, how, and why of publishing with ALIA publications.

First, the What. This is probably the most common stumbling block – getting past the 'what could I write?'

The answer is almost anything in your day-to-day professional life. The trick is determining where it fits best.

inCite – as the industry's news magazine, *inCite* is interested in articles and thought-pieces about things you've done that worked, didn't work, or may work in the future. *inCite* is a great place if you want to report on an event, share a personal experience that can shed light on an aspect of

librarianship, reflect on a particular topic, or bring up a common challenge faced by your workplace. *inCite* also offers a range of ways to contribute. Articles are short – less than 1000 words – and to-the-point. Language is accessible and conversational. Feature themes are offered every month, which can also make the 'what' question much easier to answer. *inCite* reports can include PD exercises, conferences, or group events, or contributing to a regular column like E-E-I. Finally, if you have something to say, a question to ask,

or a suggestion, letters to the editor, published in the Your Voice section, are 250 words or less and generally address one particular issue, either as a compliment, a criticism, or a critical issue. For any questions or advice, email inCite@alia.org.au

ALJ – *The Australian Library Journal* is a research-based journal that focuses on practitioner-based and best-practice research. If you've identified an issue, done some research, implemented a solution, then evaluated a solution (basically, if you've solved a problem), then ALJ is a great place to publish that journey. If you've conducted a literature review about a problem/issue/new development in your library or LIS workplace, ALJ is a great place to publish the result. ALJ is published quarterly. The editor of ALJ, Ann Ritchie, can be contacted at alj.editor@alia.org.au and is more than happy to answer any of your questions, or aid you in your journey from concept to completion.

AARL – *The Australian Academic and Research Libraries Journal* is also published quarterly and is devoted to librarianship in university and college libraries, including the Technical and Further Education sector, and in research libraries of all types. It publishes contributions on all aspects of librarianship past and present, pure and applied bibliography, publishing, information science and related subjects. If you have conducted high level research (perhaps in a Master's or PhD program or as part of the ALIA Research Mentoring Scheme), AARL is a good place to look at publishing. Bob Pymm is the editor of AARL, and can be reached at aarl.editor@alia.org.au

editor@alia.org.au and can answer any questions you may have about publishing with AARL.

How to write for ALIA?

Once you've figured out the what and the where, it's time to get down to business. The best way to know what style, tone, length, and subject matter is most appropriate for your targeted publication is to be familiar with said publication. It would



be very hard to write for *inCite* without knowing what kind of articles normally get printed in *inCite*. So first, read!

Once you're familiar with your publication, hop onto ALIA's website. All three publications offer guidelines for potential authors, covering concerns like topics of interest, tone, and – most importantly – reference style. If you have further questions or need further clarification, the editors of all three publications are very happy to answer them for you. Just send an email.

One of the best things about writing for ALIA is that you are writing for your peers, so once you have a piece ready, you have a whole network of people to tap into for beta-reading and proof-reading. Having someone else look over your work will bring up any potential problems and give you a boost of confidence when they offer you bundles of praise for your hard work.

Why write for ALIA?

By writing about your event, reflecting on an issue, documenting your research journey, or contributing to a body of knowledge through a lit review, you are not only contributing to your own professional development (and earning PD points!), you are contributing to the development of the profession. How many times have you used another library's ideas or experiences to tailor a new program or introduce a new service? How many times have you implemented a new program, only to hear someone else present on something similar at the next conference, taking all the kudos? If the profession doesn't publish, it will mire itself in constantly re-inventing the wheel. The personal benefits to publishing are many, including professional development, fantastic resume fodder, recognition as an expert or innovator in a field, and the satisfaction of seeing your name in print (it's a thrill!). But the professional benefits are far greater – and more important.

The most pertinent question here is not the Why – it's the *Why Ever Not?*

Kate van der Veer
ALIA Publishing Manager
kate.vanderveer@alia.org.au