# Professional development

## Introduction to Library Metrics – A participant's report

In late November 2009 I had the opportunity to attend the excellent 'Introduction to Library Metrics' workshop as an ALIA sponsored participant. The professional development workshop was delivered by Sue Henczel, as part the PICS seminar series (**www.pics.com.au**). The workshop was a great opportunity to learn about the challenges of statistics collection and share the experiences of colleagues in the profession.

An intriguing feature of the library profession is that we tend to collect alot of output statistics (eg: number of patrons, loans, reference inquiries, etc) over time, but don't necessarily use them for our advantage, or have a clear understanding of why they were collected in the first place. When developing a statistical framework for a library service it was suggested to consult the two (rarely used?) standards relating to library statistics collection;

- ISO 2789 (2006) *Information and documentation – International library statistics*
- ISO 11620 (2008) *Information and documentation – Library performance indicators*

University libraries and public libraries seem to have well established collecting protocols relating to state/national benchmarking activities, but smaller, special libraries tend to have their own individual collecting practices. At the Fairfax Media Research Library in Sydney, we collect reference statistics, (including number of queries, time taken, client details, and resources used) via RefTracker software. This has been useful for tracking trends over time and is informative for resource allocation in relation to staffing and collection management. I will be analysing these statistics to measure the effects of changing the default search interface of our online full text newspaper database, the Fairfax Digital Collection (FDC) to a more 'user friendly' web search engine – will this mean less reliance on library staff to search FDC for end users? Time will tell.

Participants also heard of a trend towards finding ways to measure impacts and outcomes, especially in relation to corporate objectives – for example finding social capital measures (public libraries) and rating graduate attributes such as information literacy (university libraries). Ileft the workshop with a challenge to take back to my team – how to measure the impact of library services tied to a corporate objective – how do we measure our contribution to 'quality journalism'?

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## Public speaking with confidence

Library professionals are required to speak with confidence in presentations to their managers and boards, to members of the public with internal staff training and especially when advocating for extra funding and more resources. This skill can be learned.

Dr Irena Yashin-Shaw has developed a teleconference course for ALIA specifically designed for librarians and library technicians to build public speaking skills.

Dr Yashin-Shaw is an experienced professional speaker, educator, and workshop leader who has helped many people to discover the joys of public speaking and the success that it brings. She is Immediate Past President of the QLD Chapter of the National Speakers Association of Australia (NSAA) and the current National Professional Development Manager of NSAA.

You will have four opportunities to participate in the ALIA Teleconference Course in 2010. The course will provide guidance in preparing speeches so that members can present well in public forums and develop strong verbal cases when opportunities arise.

By the end of the teleconference course participants will be able to prepare a 1–2 minute speech, identify strengths, skills, and capabilities relevant to their verbal presentation, prepare responses to workplace public speaking demands, and develop a professional development strategy to support continued confidence building in public speaking.

For information **http://www.alia.org.au/education/pd/pd.services/**

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*Currently reading The art of travel by Alain de Botton*

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## Camden Living Library is part of community harmony strategy

Camden in Sydney's south-west is like many communities in Australia. It is facing a population increase and in the next 25 years the number of people in the area is expected to grow from 50 000 to 250 000. That means the cultural and linguistic makeup of the area will change in the coming years.

In 2008 the Camden Council received funding from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship for a Local Government Area Community Harmony Strategy. This two-year program of low-key, community activities is helping Camden to positively respond to these population changes.

There are seven projects in the strategy which come together to form a whole of area approach. It will encourage people in schools, key organisations, and faith communities to regard Camden as the place where everyone belongs. This March the Council is using Harmony Day on 21 March as a focal point to bring the community together.

Camden's Living Libraries Program has also been playing a key role in the strategy by introducing people from different sections of the community to one another.

Living Libraries in Camden is similar to undertakings elsewhere. It relies on local volunteers to act as books that library patrons can borrow. Through conversation and sharing their personal experiences the volunteers help break down prejudices and address misunderstandings. So far 20 people have volunteered as books.

Among them are an 18-year-old Muslim woman, an Indigenous elder, Council staff, and an 80-year-old nun who has travelled the world and migrated from the UK when she was 75.

The Council estimates Living Libraries has made a positive, local impact and Syd Lee, a volunteer who works for the Council, agrees.

Syd said his contribution to the library efforts has been to share his story as a Chinese Australian growing up in Sydney's inner suburbs. And he has used the opportunity to put another perspective on media reports that were circulating some time back about intolerance in the Camden community.

"I just wanted to share my background and highlight that I value and am a product of Australia's mature diverse community. Camden has mainly an Anglo-Saxon population mix and I have not personally encountered any issues about my cultural background."



*Living Library 'Book' Syd Lee*

For Camden, Living Libraries is a key part of the City's Community Harmony Strategy. Like Harmony Day and other Council activities it is helping to build community resilience and limit the potential for intolerance as its population grows.

Libraries can use Harmony Day on 21 March 2010 to promote their Living Libraries program, bring communities together and profile their services.

Order free promotional items through **www.harmony.gov.au**

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