

The politics of career change

This year my life came full circle. I took a leap of faith and moved from a workplace that I loved in an area I no longer wanted to live in, to move to the area I grew up and want to bring my daughters up in, and just let the rest fall into place. I've spent the last 5 years in the public library world. It's where I always envisioned myself. Unfortunately the local public library was unable to provide anything suitable, but just one perfectly timed phone call to my (original – we are talking 15 years ago!) alumni university's Campus Librarian started me on a life and career-changing journey. I never thought I'd end up in an academic library; frankly, I never thought I was smart enough!

The transition has been a huge learning curve, the most prominent example being the access and use of scholarly databases. Since completing my Graduate Diploma 5 years ago, the database I've most relied on has been *Fiction Connection*. A few months on, and I am establishing classes on how to best use academic databases for scholarly research, teaching under- as well as post-graduates advanced information literacy skills, and bibliographic tools such as EndNote.

Something else that has proved challenging has been the different workflows: The waxing and waning of the busy periods that come start of semester and exam period, whereas the public

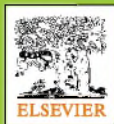
library was always busy! This year I've actually had my supervisor encouraging me to sit down and read (professional reading, of course!), something that's never really been a possibility before!

Another great joy that came as a surprise has been the demographics. Now I'm being completely stereotypical here, but the public library world has the majority share in the children and seniors' circles. The academic library is grabbing those in-between and I love the energy that those fresh out of school as well as mature age students bring.

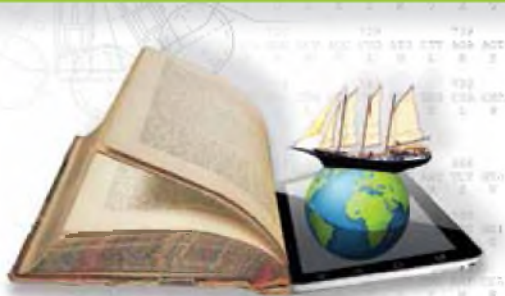
I believe libraries make a difference in people's lives, and I feel I can bring some of that philosophy to the academic environment. But I find I just can't seem to fully leave my public library hat behind. I keep thinking of ways the library could further engage and connect with the wider community, and events happening around the university and beyond. But all of that contains its own politics.

So where to next? Being at a university is tempting me back to study... perhaps a Dip Ed so I can become a teacher librarian? And there is a special library that I have my eye on setting up, so who knows!

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