FUTURE GAZING

With ALIA's focus on the Future of the Profession in 2013, we asked some of our vendors to use their unique expertise and position to future gaze. What is the future of the industry?

Nell Hirst, Zenith

Librarians understand, and have acted on, the strong messages around the need for on-going development in the use of technology to both source and deliver resources to our clients. We also understand that training clients on how to fully utilise technology is now one of our most important functions. We get it – we are doing it. And so to our future – what next? Client Service springs to mind. Clearly it is at the core of what we do, and there are certainly changes afoot.

I would refer you to the following presentation at VALA 2012 detailing the changes made in the client service team at the University of NSW Library: http://webcast.gigtv.com.au/Mediasite/Play/e26b2f9e7398410cba8dc413fcbf6ec11d

Online interface has become the norm in the commercial, retail, and social world – but the next trend we predict will be toward **more** face-to-face human contact, not less. Humans are hard wired to recognise and respond to the humanity in other humans. The Commonwealth Bank is willing to put money behind a marketing campaign to promote the human face-to-face contact that its branches offer through the use of a real life, non-virtual, smiling and happy to help concierge. I always use the same coffee shop – not just because they make the best coffee – but they greet me by name, know my order, and personalise the interaction.

Our future is human.

Ray Wright, Tag Alert

We see an increase in the need for libraries to supply access to all types of digital repositories of information as well as the traditional printed resources and DVDs. EAS Security systems will protect not only traditional resources, but also tablets, iPads, and other new types of electronic equipment which will be offered by libraries as an alternative to printed resources.

Circulation of books, DVDs, and electronic devices will be handled mainly by the library clients themselves using self loans and returns systems, and automatic book sorters working with smart tag systems. Smart tag driven book sorters and robotics will cut staff inputs while reducing the time required to get items back into circulation.

We see the future library professional being a highly trained IT expert with impressive training capabilities to enable them to assist their library clients in the use of new types of electronic equipment and being able to recover the digital information available through the libraries electronic systems.

> I like the notion that libraries will transition from being centres of information to centres of culture.

Andrea Gilby, Informa

If we take steps to adapt now, perhaps the change won't be difficult to manage in 2030. It's vital as online publishers that we embrace technological innovation, finding new ways for the delivery and access of information. Next generation search technology will be even more sophisticated and complex, strengthening the role of the librarian.

I believe that social media sites will play a greater role in the discovery and usage of our e-resources, although Facebook will probably have been superseded by something much greater. In libraries, the physical content will continue to diminish and the emphasis will be on protecting and enabling resources, with an increase of digital repositories. I like the notion that libraries will transition from being centres of information to centres of culture.

Driven by library demand and government mandates, academic publishers must start to consider Open Access publishing as a viable option. I believe Gold access will account for 50% of published journal articles by 2020 and 90% by 2030, which will inevitably mean that the role of the subscription agent will be obsolete and as vendors we will also have to redefine our roles.

As for me, 2030 will be my official year of retirement, so I shall most likely be exploring some European gallery while searching for my Google glass!

Matt Keys, Allied Pickfords Business Relocation

The workplace of the future is going to be less centralised, more mobile, and more flexible than anything most people have experienced before.

Global internet adoption has changed our concept of what work is, and the trend towards activity-based or co-working spaces, cloud computer storage, and mobile devices is leading the path to the future. Transportation technology is progressing at a slower pace than some other industries, however in the near future, companies will focus on fully automated vehicles where people can "punch in" or "speak" the place they want to go to and the vehicle will automatically take them there.

Business relocation specialists will integrate IT engineers to offer services such as server and data centre relocations, PC disconnect and reconnect, cabling and sophisticated electronic inventory management systems using bar code technology.

If we look at the library of the future, we may see library buildings converted into computer labs, study spaces, and headquarters for information-technology departments. Collection development would become a matter of maintaining database subscriptions recommended by faculty and cataloguing the exclusive purview of the vendors of digital-book-and-journal collections.

In summary, business relocation specialists will employ a highly skilled workforce to move less furniture, less paper, less books and files, and more and more technology.

Nada Stanojlovic, James Bennett Pty Ltd

The role of libraries and library vendors continues to evolve and adapt to the world around us. User ability, access, and selection for maximum demographic-based-use are factors impacting the future of the library profession. The selection of quality content has been fundamental to a library service and to their users, as is librarians ensuring metadata accurately reflects the information to be delivered. The most important future variable is 'how will content be delivered'. Will it be in packages of metadata delivered through a few platforms or will it be thousands of 'books' or bits of information which require sorting and effective dissemination? In the next few years innovations include the delivery of the written word in an electronic environment with platforms such as Axis 360 and mediated profiling which allows each library to maintain its local selection skills while maximising content and cost effective workflows. Library vendors will continue making selection, ordering, and receiving processes more cost effective for all library types.

Pam Millist, Maxus Australia

The proliferation of open source and social media tools as well as expectations of access to information over the internet have accelerated computer literacy and created widespread interest in managing information. These expanded expectations for personal and organisational collections and resources to be available online are now beginning to demonstrate the failure of technological solutions to effectively categorise and organise information. All this is creating new roles as well as strengthening demand for existing roles. Some of the new opportunities and roles are for design thinking, user testing for information access, and digital strategists.

The future for librarians and information management professionals will be dictated by the ability to take the lead and to assert influence in contributing to the solutions for the so-called 'Information Age'. Otherwise, with the rise in power of other professions encroaching on this work, the role of LIS professionals will be completely usurped.

Liberty

The cloud-based, fully customisable, integration rich, knowledge performance platform

Liberty is a cloud-based knowledge, content and library management solution for managing and delivering organisational assets to achieve knowledge performance outcomes. Based on an intuitive platform used by 10,000 organisations worldwide, Liberty is the ideal solution for 24/7, anywhere, anytime knowledge sharing.

Liberty provides:

- Superior customisation
- Digitally ready
- High performance discovery
- Integration rich platform
- Ease of navigation and intuitive user interface
- Dedicated, local support and services

Organisations that rely on Liberty include:

Academic
Special
Health
Public
Theological

Softlink

Contact Softlink on **1800 777 037** or via **www.softlinkint.com**