

# ALIA SCHOOLS: AN APP A DAY

For several years the ALIA Schools Group has facilitated a number of online conferences, conducted on our wiki. However, the committee members felt that a blog could be more user-friendly. Accordingly, in May this year, we launched our first online conference on our new blog [aliaschools.wordpress.com](http://aliaschools.wordpress.com). Titled *An App a Day*, the purpose of this seminar was to introduce and discuss Apple and Android apps that were appropriate for staff and students in a school setting. Our overall statistics for *An App a Day* revealed that, over the week-long seminar, a staggering 1185 page views were made. Further, 56 comments were posted and 48 library

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professionals signed up to follow our blog. We were thrilled with these results.

Each morning of the seminar week, a new app was posted to the blog with a description of the app and instructions on downloading it. We also suggested user groups (i.e., staff or students) for each app. Participants were then encouraged to download the app and spend some time during that day exploring the benefits of that app. Library professionals were requested to consider and then post comments about how that app could be useful in their professional lives.

The apps chosen were all available in both the *Apple Store* and *Google Play Store* to ensure that they were accessible for all participants. Most apps also had online versions which could be accessed from computers. The following apps were discussed in the seminar:

*School A to Z*. Developed by the NSW Government, it was created to assist parents and students to complete homework tasks. The app provides definitions and examples of concepts for several subjects. The app also provides

research starting points for a variety of assignment topics.

*EasyBib*. An MLA, APA, and Chicago citation generator. Unfortunately this app does not create Harvard style citations which is the style used in many schools.

*Pocket*. Previously called *Read It Later*, this app allows users to save webpages or articles to their mobile devices and read them at a later time.

*Google Search*. Not just a search tool, users can use the *Goggles* feature to photograph an image and receive related search results. The *Google Now Cards* use your location to generate weather forecasts and suggest best routes to work. The cards also give restaurant recommendations as well as other general tips.

*Evernote*. A note-taking tool (and more) that syncs notes across devices and stores them in the cloud. Use with the *Penultimate* or *PenSupremacy* apps to create handwritten notes on your device.

*Goodreads*. A social networking website and app for book lovers. You can access recommendations and participate in (or create) online book clubs.

During the seminar, a number of library professionals from around Australia posted comments each day. These included praise for some apps and suggestions for alternative or complementary apps. Occasionally, participants stated an app would not be useful to them.

In summary, it was wonderful to read the diverse viewpoints of our seminar participants. We realised that our new blog was more successful than our wiki. Our blog generated more input from participants than previous online conferences. We look forward to conducting more seminars on our blog and interacting with library professionals about a range of issues. Meanwhile, everyone is welcome to visit our blog and follow us to receive email updates each time a new post is made. The next ALIA Schools online conference will be held in August. <http://aliaschools.wordpress.com>

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