

GET MORE OUT OF GOOGLE

The library and information profession is changing: as librarians we need to think different and be different in order to stay relevant. Griffith University has found different ways of looking at Google – and it's allowed us to explore, engage, and be more productive.

Sure, as academic reference librarians we used to cringe at the thought of students using Google Scholar to search for resources. However, good information literacy instruction can ensure that students have the ability to effectively evaluate the resources they locate on Scholar. Google Books is handy to an off-campus student who can't access a copy of a book through their library. Through a quick Google Books search, they can access the majority of the book online through Google Books.

Maybe the profession should look at adapting their information literacy instruction to incorporate more Google applications.

The academic library we work in places importance on the professional development of its staff. Our old system included a folder on a restricted drive that all staff could access. The problem with this is it isn't easily accessible. For the professional development coordinator, a need to improve this process became obvious. Is there a Google App that can make this better? The

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answer is yes. Google Sites.

The LibraryandITHelpPD Google Site has been



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created to effectively manage professional development in the online environment. It is easy to manage upcoming professional development events, to manage the uploading of reports, incorporate a blog to stimulate discussion around professional development, and include gadgets such as an RSS feed and a calendar gadget to view events. It is a dynamic site that allows other staff to have input through its collaborative nature. Feedback on the site has been very positive and in general inspires staff to become actively involved in their professional development.

The uses of Google don't end here though. There are many other ways Google can be incorporated into the library and information professional's working life.

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LIBRARY LOVERS' DAY AND THE SEARCH FOR AUSTRALIA'S FAVOURITE LIBRARIAN

For Library Lovers' Day on 14 February this year we're doing something a little different. We are launching a campaign to find Australia's favourite librarian. It's a great opportunity to showcase the extraordinary skills and talents of our members, as well as providing library users with the opportunity to nominate the people who have made a difference to their lives.

Now, you might be wondering ...

Do you mean librarian or are you using it as a catch-all for librarian, information professional, library technician, youth worker, arts coordinator, marketing, customer service, or systems support officer?

As far as some people are concerned, anyone who works in a library is a librarian. We won't be using this campaign to force people to make a distinction, but when it comes to the winners, they will have a degree in library and information science. There will be special awards for other professionals who have won the hearts of their users, but don't have LIS qualifications. Australia's Favourite Librarian however will be a librarian in the full sense of the word.

Is this just for public libraries?

No, not at all. We will be putting the word out to schools, academic institutions, businesses, and public sector organisations, as well as to councils, with the aim of generating media coverage for members in every sector. We know how grateful school, TAFE, and

university students are for the help of their librarians. In the recent survey of health library users that we carried out with Health Libraries Inc, one respondent thanked their library staff and said, "we got a distinction".

What about the 'I' in ALIA?

Australia's favourite information professional doesn't slip off the tongue as easily as Australia's Favourite Librarian, but this initiative can still include people whose position doesn't have 'library' in the title and whose place of work isn't called a library – you just need to be nominated.

What criteria are you going to use to judge?

This is primarily a media campaign. We won't be applying the kind of rigour we would use when assessing submissions for awards and grants. This is about the librarian who is best valued by their users and receives the most votes.

Do you have to be an ALIA member to be nominated?

Anyone working in our sector can be nominated to go forward to the vote. The purpose of the exercise is not to promote the Association: it is to generate publicity for the profession. It will give us the opportunity to talk up the role of libraries and information services and the skills needed to work in them.

How are we getting the message out to the sector?

We are promoting this as a Love2Read initiative, following on from

the National Year of Reading, and, in the spirit of partnership and collaboration, we hope that other library and information associations will adopt the campaign and help us spread the word.

How will it work?

On 14 February, we will announce that the search is on. You can be nominated by someone else or you can self-nominate. All we need is a maximum of 100 words about why you should be Australia's Favourite Librarian and, ideally, a photo. We will check with all nominees to make sure they are happy to go forward before putting their details up on the ALIA website, with a link to the Love2Read website.

People will be asked to go online and vote, but there will also be voting slips that libraries can print out for library users who prefer pen and ink.

Voting will close on 15 April and the winners will be notified early in May, so that we can gain maximum publicity in the run up to Library and Information Week from 20–24 May.

Depending on the nominations, we hope we will be able to select more than one winner. We will be looking for a favourite librarian for each state and territory, as well as a favourite school librarian, favourite university librarian, favourite law librarian, and so on.

We will be launching the campaign to the public on 14 February through traditional and social media channels. Information about voting will be up on our website www.alia.org.au and at www.love2read.org.au.