

FROM THE PAST, TOWARDS THE FUTURE ...

Jean Hagger, the first Head of RMIT's Department of Librarianship, believed that library "courses should relate to the style and principles of the institution in which they are studied. They should foster students' awareness of technology as applied to librarianship, and of the importance of other studies to their professional competence". Miss Hagger was appointed the Department in 1963 and as RMIT reflects back on 50 years of educating the library profession, the importance of Jean's view of education holds relevance for future generations of library and information management graduates.

'Style and principles' reflect the notion of being 'work ready' and for the LIS professional, this not only means having competencies in information organisation and retrieval, but also having the personal attributes of flexibility, creativity, and exploration. These attributes allow LIS professionals to adapt to ever-changing work environments. The LIS professional works with and manages published collections, but increasingly becomes the creator of new content. This is seen in the roles that the profession plays in scholarly communication, corporate information management, digital object creation, and in discovery layer development.



The Swanston Academic Building, built in 2012, alongside The Oxford Scholar Pub, 1887, the same year The Working Men's College (now RMIT University) was founded. Copyright © 2013 RMIT University, photographed by Magrund Sallowsky. Reproduced with permission.

In 1979, when reflecting on changes that occurred during her period of LIS teaching, Jean identified two main changes: "the use of the computer to assist in the clerical operation and information retrieval" and "the greater emphasis on the library

Miss Jean Hagger
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as a community asset". Obviously computers and technology continue to direct the profession. Technology is not new to our students. Their own use of technology, supported by their experience of learning technologies, positions them well for a world where technology is simply embedded in all aspects of information management.

There is also passion for the profession, not only within education, but also through research being undertaken to examine what

motivates information management and library students. Having graduates who are passionate about the profession and their work means that they are in a strong position to provide service to their communities and contribute to the sustainability of their profession. The impact of this is also seen in the number of graduates that support the New Librarian's group of ALIA.

The original RMIT Department of Librarianship prepared students as librarians skilled in the management of a print collection. Such skills are still important, however the underpinning principles of information organisation, access, and use now extend to a variety of information sources and formats. The future LIS professional is the expert who can facilitate access to all forms of information for the ongoing benefit of society.

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