

## ENERGISE, ENTHUSE, INSPIRE

EEL gives a voice to the new generation of library and information professionals. If you have any suggestions or topics for this column, please contact the column co-ordinator Lesa Maclean at [maclean.lesa@gmail.com](mailto:maclean.lesa@gmail.com)

# A RECIPE FOR THE FUTURE

Librarian androids, direct-to-brain downloads of the world's knowledge, or librarians in outer space: the potential future? The future of the profession was a topic that was heavily discussed at the recent New Librarians Symposium (NLS6) and ALIA's Information Online. From open data to augmented social networking to geocaching, the conferences were buzzing with different takes on innovation. Not even the futurist Dr Stuart Candy who spoke at NLS6 could predict the future, so how do we prepare for it? I propose that the future of librarianship just needs a little spice.

Preparation Time: 1 lifetime

Feeds: RSS

Ingredients:

1 librarian (can be either seasoned or fresh from library school)

1 computing device

1 internet connection (NBN currently optional)

1 ounce of willingness to learn

50 kilograms of patience

A pinch of spice of life

## Methods:

### 1. Get interested.

Technology news daily announces discoveries that seem futuristic. Keeping current with gadgets and technology through local and international technology blogs is a great way to be on the pulse and get interested. I stay pretty up to date with new developments and technology news through the blogs and social media. And by participating in the blogs, I have ready access to a community of tech-savvy people when I have to go beyond my tech skills.

### 2. Innovate yourself.

Tools like social media sites, 3D printers, and smartphones are just tools. They are tools that have been developed from innovative thinking that we need to adopt as a profession. These tools were created because there was a gap in what people needed and what services already existed. The Edge at the State Library of Queensland has a basement full of weird things where they are letting the public use their 3D printer and create arcade game machines. Offer spaces where further

innovation can happen and document the creations. We need to think beyond thinking outside the box. Are we even thinking?

### 3. Update your toolkit.

Learn to use technology outside of your comfort zone. Social media is just an extension of a virtual branch, think of Twitter as being the voice of front desk staff who answers ready reference and directional queries. Play with social media sites to learn their worth, and decide what best suits you and your organisation. Learn HTML and CSS through online tutorials, read blog posts about how to make your website mobile friendly. I am by no means an expert in how to fix Toshiba tablets, but I cracked mine open and fixed it after Googling gadget forums for how to get past the boot screen.

### 4. Get creative.

The internet is a playground where your patrons and library science students are playing. Are you in the sandpit? Jump into using that new app, make a mash up, record a book trailer, play the game you are afraid of losing. Reflect on your losses and wins equally. Get creative in any way that you are comfortable.

### 5. Stir until mixed.

The traditional library school teachings are still important. Metadata isn't going anywhere, and we have the knowledge of traditional information management principles. We could be playing in open data, creating new services, or providing linked data for our databases to connect information in meaningful ways. We could be providing traditional reference services or information literacy classes through Skype or Tumblr.

### 6. Repeat steps 1–5 until retired.

Looking to the future is hardwired into our professional psyche. Undertaking research projects or partaking in the professional development scheme is part of our need to never stop learning. Use these steps to reflect on your professional work ethic.



Library and information science is a profession that is expanding exponentially as the information available grows. Information professionals of the future will be able to analyse information in ways we are still imagining. The future librarians could be innovators, philosophers, technologists,

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or astronauts. The different backgrounds we bring to librarianship give the profession a rich array of skills and makes for a diverse and vibrant working environment. We should embrace our differences and work towards collaboration, whether it is between libraries across the world or maybe to a librarian in outer space.

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