

EDITOR'S NOTE

DEFINING DISTANCE

The 'tyranny of distance'. If you were asked who said or wrote that phrase at a quiz night in Australia, you would probably answer it was Geoffrey Blainey. You would be right. You might very well also be right if you said Samuel Morse. The inventor is said to have claimed he had overcome the tyranny of distance with his invention of the telegraph and morse code.

Both Morse and Blainey are talking about the effects and challenges of physical distance of course, and that's the first sort of distance that comes to mind when this phrase is quoted. Australia is a big, big country – so big that when I used to travel internationally a lot I often packed a couple of handy maps showing the United States and Europe superimposed over Australia. It got the message across far more eloquently than words ever could.

But distance is many things. It can be technological – ask anyone trying to access the internet from a 'black spot', whether it's deep in the outback or just down the road in suburbia. It can be mental too – there is a frightening increase in the sense of disconnectedness people are feeling these days – and it can be technological as well. In the rush to adopt new technology (and Australians are amongst the fastest in the early adoption stakes) we can accidentally leave some of our community behind.

Since Google isn't actually the answer to everything, and since Australian information professionals are pretty adept at overcoming the challenge, this month *INCITE* has gathered examples of many distances and the many ways we traverse them.



LOVE IT! THANKS TO RIVERINA REGIONAL LIBRARIES FOR THIS IMAGE. FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THEIR STATE OF THE ART MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE ON PAGE 24.

This month we also report on some of the happenings for Library and Information Week and National Simultaneous Storytime from around the country. From dotty biscuits to an inspired spot of acquisitioning in real time, thousands of people were reached by the 2014 campaign and many commented on the adaptability across sectors and activities of the Join the Dots theme this year. Space constraints mean we couldn't include everything received but rest assured there will be more good stories and inspiring people to come in the September issue.

This month we also talk to ALIA National 2014 keynote speaker Susan Benton. Susan is the CEO of Urban Libraries Council. As the conference fast approaches, we talk to Susan about her experiences of collaboration between libraries and their funding agencies and managers. Let that inspire you to be in Melbourne next month to network, collaborate and celebrate with your colleagues. Who knows what might come of the conversations?

LEE WELCH
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