

CONTEXT AND EXPERIENCE IS EVERYTHING

Let me start by wishing a happy new year to all. Our agenda for 2014 is already hefty and includes a full list of professional issues identified for further consideration as a result of the last two years of work focusing on the future of our profession.

In an analysis of future trends, European telecommunications company Telefonica reported that “knowledge will be offered and demanded in efficient markets”. The transformation of the way people are now accessing music is a great example. People want content when they want it, where they want it and how they want it.

ON ALIA'S AGENDA

Our work over the past two years on the future of the profession has identified a number of topics that we're planning to explore further. They include:

- Research: what research about our profession do we need to conduct?
- Qualifications: what qualifications will we require into the future and will professional development need to become compulsory for our profession to be fully recognised as a profession?
- Copyright: open access, digital rights management (DRM), content and experience—how do we deliver great experiences to our respective audiences by exploiting the content that sits on our shelves, both physical and digital?
- Data: data text and data mining—as well as using our collections effectively, how do we harvest the information we collect every day?
- The digital divide: how do we continue to offer services to those who have no access to technology without compromising services for those who do?
- Partnerships: who can we partner with to address these issues to develop new services and products and reach new audiences?

As Mark Mulligan from Forrester Research puts it, “Digital natives see music as the pervasive soundtrack to their interactive, immersive, social environments. Ownership matters less. Place of origin matters less. Context and experience is everything”.

So how do we take this new set of expectations into the future? If context and experience is everything, how do we mine the information we have and reshape it to deliver new experiences?

For example, imagine using our local history collections in partnerships with technology companies and tourism companies to provide an ‘augmented reality’ experience for those travelling to our local areas.

We at ALIA see a future where more than ever our expertise and reputation for understanding and finding information will be vital. But what will be our qualifications for that future? What evidence must we show that we are keeping abreast of trends and leading discussions on information and access?

Research is at the top of our list as it is clear that much more research is required to help inform and shape our arguments, reputations, advocacy, and our future. Accordingly, this year our strategic plan includes the development of a detailed research agenda for our Research Advisory Committee to lead over coming years.

Our strategic plan priorities also include continuing to investigate new models for course accreditation and professional development, along with working together to explore what the ‘I’ in ALIA really means.

Information is only one part of our future—it’s what we do with it that counts.



JULIE RAE
ALIA President