

Where ALIA's Research Advisory Committee brings you news from the world of library and information services research.

FROM OUR COLLECTION:

On strategies to connect:

Moyer, M., & Coulon, A. (2012). LIVE at your library! *American Libraries*, 43(11), 46–48.

Salo, D. (2008). Innkeeper at the roach motel. *Library Trends*, 57(2), 98–123.

Schlosser, M., & Stamper, B. (2012). Learning to share: Measuring use of a digitized collection on flickr and in the IR. *Information Technology and Libraries (Online)*, 31(3), 85–93.

On outreach, leveraging networks and media

Doster, A. (2013). Friday night: library lights. *American Libraries*, 44(11), 30–32.

Kenney, B. (2014). The user is (still) not broken. *Publishers Weekly*, 261(4), 19+



WE MUST REACH AS WELL AS BUILD

This issue of INCITE features articles on promotion gathered under the catchphrase “build it and they will come”. Mary Anne Kennan took a look at the literature to identify evidence-based practice supporting this approach.

If one searches on the string “build it and they will come” in the Proquest journal database (which comes to us all as a part of our ALIA membership) there are 84 articles in this relatively small subset of the database covering 1994 to the present which have the phrase in their title, text or references.

The articles vary from research to reports of services offered in particular libraries and what has worked (or not), to scholarly (and other) opinion pieces. Many of these types of publications can be used as evidence to inform our practice as information professionals for day to day decision making, developing new services, improving the quality of existing services and understanding our users.

So let's see what some of these papers say about “build[ing] it and they will come”.

There is not enough space in this short column to reprise even the small proportion of articles on this topic in this database, but what we can draw attention to is broadly what the message seems to be; it is not enough to just build a wonderful service. What the literature seems to say is that accompanying the building of “it” – whatever the “it” is (a service, a digital collection, a repository, a building) there needs to be a strategic approach to understanding user, and potential user, needs and their environments, communities and goals in the development of the service.

It is not enough to think you may know what those needs are. Your service is more likely to be successful if you reach out and consult, or even partner, with users and potential users at all stages – service development, implementation and use.

Then of course, there is promotion and marketing, examples of which you can find throughout this issue of INCITE. The articles I looked at also noted that outreach is critical to help make a new service visible and social networks, both online and in person are important. Leveraging other media, such as press, radio, and local bloggers can help, while in some cases, particularly involving new technology or practices, it is necessary to educate users and staff.

And to give the final words to B.Kenney, “Meet people where they are – not where we want them to be”.

MARY ANNE KENNAN AALIA

Higher Degree by Research and Honours Coordinator and Senior Lecturer, School of Information Studies
Charles Sturt University
Member, ALIA Research Advisory Committee
m.kennan@csu.edu.au