

EVALUATING information accuracy



A LIA President VICKI MCDONALD outlines the need for library and information professionals to continue to provide accurate sources of information.


In this issue of *INCITE* we are exploring the role of libraries in the post-truth society. Today, our daily news bulletins and social media are dominated by concepts of 'truth', 'untruth', 'truthiness', 'fakenews', 'facts' and also the curious iteration – 'alternative facts'. Much of this discussion and debate has at its core the principles of our profession: freedom of expression and access to information. These principles are also reflected in our Association's values: 'promotion of the free flow of information and ideas through open access to recorded knowledge, information and creative works' and 'commitment to literacy, information literacy and learning.'

Irrespective of which sector we work in, as a profession, one of our core roles is to support our clients to develop their skills to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use that information for the issue or question to be resolved. Since January 2016, the international library profession has enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to take a more active role in providing access to accurate information by supporting Wikipedia's annual #1Lib1Ref (one librarian, one reference) project. The project aims to ensure Wikipedia is a reliable resource by adding a citation to the online encyclopaedia. Australian libraries are recognised internationally for their work in adding authoritative content to Wikipedia and participation in #1Lib1Ref.

As the global voice for libraries, IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) successfully lobbied at the international level for public access to information to be included in the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the targets for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The International Advocacy Program (IAP) is IFLA's capacity-building program designed to promote the role libraries can play in the planning and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. ALIA is an active participant in this vital program, and has adopted a lead role in working across government to increase awareness of the role that Australian libraries play in supporting the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 goals.

In July 2018 ALIA will host the Asia-Pacific Sustainable Development Goals Summit in Gold Coast. The Summit will bring together library leaders from across the Asia-Pacific

region to share their experiences and develop strategies for incorporating the SDGs in their work in communities, in schools, in academia, with government and with other stakeholders. Major themes for the one-day pre-conference summit will be: ensuring public access to information; preserving and providing access to cultural heritage; and promoting universal literacy.

Libraries have always been a force for good in the world. The SDGs provides us with an opportunity to show how much we can achieve by improving access to information and helping people transform their knowledge into life-enhancing opportunities. 

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