

Library of Australia holds a collection of approximately 20,000 volumes of theology. The library contains 'extensive collections of missionary records in microform ... a high collection level in the following subjects: religion, religions, theology, social and ecclesiastical theology, church history, sects, comparative religion, Indian religions, Judaism, Islam'. Approximately 3,000 volumes donated to the National Library from the Australian Buddhist Library, which, with the National Library's other holdings of Buddhist literature (Gosling, 1995), forms the largest collection of Buddhist works in Australia.

Although public libraries hold a few volumes of theology - usually popular, donated and reference works - a small number hold genuine collections of theology. Other libraries which may hold collections of theology include school libraries: those which do not have a religious affiliation usually hold copies of the scriptures and theological reference works, while those with religious affiliation can be expected to hold materials about their own church as well as resources for religious education and devotional reading. Many churches own small libraries for their members or for children in their Sunday Schools.

#### **Bibliography:**

Drakeford, Paul (ed.) (1974) *The Australian & New Zealand theological library directory*. Melbourne: Citadel.

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## **Managing a One-person Library** Toni Silson, Lady Davidson Hospital

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The most important point to remember in managing a one-person library is that you, as the librarian, are really managing yourself. The aspects of management that you need to be aware of, therefore, are the importance of time management and setting priorities, planning the service ethic, and networking.

### **Time management**

Because of the limitations inherent in managing a one-person library, being able to manage your time effectively is of primary importance. It is necessary to be realistic in your appraisal of the amount of time taken to do specific tasks, and of the importance of each task to the overall objectives of the library. You will therefore have a clearer idea of which services are necessary, and which are just 'nice', and allocate your time accordingly.

The limitations of a small library are not necessarily a cause for apology. It is possible to do a particular job better than larger libraries, whose resources and services are less focused. The staff and management of the organisation which the library serves should also be aware of the limitations inherent in a small but specialised service. There should be no feeling of disappointment, either in them or the librarian, if it becomes necessary to refer them on to another type of library or service. Many one-person libraries are also staffed by part-time librarians. This makes time management and prioritisation even more difficult. There is often a feeling of guilt on the part of the librarian that s/he is not able to provide all the services that s/he (or the users) would like. Although this feeling is natural, it is not necessary, as these limitations are imposed by the organisation, not the librarian.

### **Planning**

Time put into planning and setting objectives is not wasted time, as without objectives, it is not possible to adequately prioritise work. Many one-person librarians complain about the lack of time to do everything that needs to be done. This is often true, but it is also true that time will be found when the work is considered necessary to the good management of the library; and planning is as necessary as shelving books.

### Service ethic

When planning it is most important to remember that the library's *raison d'être* is to provide a service to its particular clientele. It is often necessary for a librarian in a one-person library to do as much boring and mundane work as there is challenging and interesting work. However, if that is what it takes to provide a good service to your users, then it is important work, and worthy of your best efforts: what is the good of a wonderful collection if it is shelved so badly that no-one can find anything?

A librarian in a one-person library must be prepared to do a little, a lot. However, the variety of tasks is often a compensation for the lack of time spent on each. Although it is often not possible to spend the amount of time some people would like in order to catalogue an item 'to perfection', there is also satisfaction to be found in doing acquisitions, cataloguing, processing and circulation all in the one afternoon!

### Networking

Being the only one of your kind in an organisation can often lead to a feeling of isolation and professional or personal stagnation. It is most important to overcome this by professional development (including attending conferences, meetings and seminars) and networking, both within the organisation and with other librarians in a similar situation.

'Management by walking around' is a very useful method of getting yourself (and therefore your library) known around the organisation, and also of discovering how you can best serve your current, or prospective clients: use their suggestions or critiques to help improve your services.

Professional networking is essential to the manager of a one-person library in order to keep up-to-date on changes in the profession (especially in relation to technology) and also to gain the sort of support only possible from those who are in the same situation. A new special interest group, OPAL (One-Person Australian Librarians) has recently been formed to help in this regard. The purpose of this group is to act as a national forum to discuss topical issues, provide support, share problems and solutions and exchange ideas unique to library professionals working in one-person libraries. It is intended that it will be for librarians in a wide range of libraries, from hospital and special libraries, to school libraries, and small public or TAFE libraries, to name a few. It will provide forums for discussion via a newsletter, meetings, library visits and hopefully, via the Internet. Those interested in joining the group should contact Georgina Dale, Janssen Cilag, Locked Bag 30, PO, Lane Cove 2066, Telephone (02) 779 2364, Mobile 041 601 9271, Fax (02) 779 2399.



### NEW BOOKS:

**Martin, Lynne M. (ed.)** *Library instruction revisited: bibliographic instruction comes of age.* Binghamton, N.Y.: Haworth Press, 1995. ISBN 1560247592 Price: US\$59.95

This book of essays is worth reading if you conduct any reading education program in your library. Also published as *The Reference Librarian* numbers 51/52, 1995, it includes a look at the development of reader education/bibliographic instruction, learning theories, teaching technology and teaching with technology, and a look at RE for diverse cultures. The aspects of this book I found most interesting was that dealing with technology, especially the Internet, and also RE targeted at students from other cultures. As with most issues of *The Reference Librarian* there is a strong emphasis on practical aspects and the experience of other libraries/librarians. Having read this book, I was encouraged to take a fresh look at my own practices, and think about the expected outcomes of my reader education programs and whether I was achieving these.

Another interesting book I have come across recently is:

**Thomasen, Elizabeth.** *Reference and collection development on the Internet.* New York: Neal-Schuman, 1996. ISBN: 1555702430.

The title of this book sounds very promising and it is one of the *A how-to-do-it manual for librarians* series, many of which are very useful. While I found the collection development section a little disappointing (although it would be of more use to a generalist library) reading this title helps overcome the feeling of touching the edges