

### 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

of chaos that sometimes comes with using the Internet. The author allows the librarian to constructively approach the vast quantities of information that are on the Internet. Her aim is to give librarians "a sense of the Internet as a community of individuals and organizations who share information through online conversations and online resources." (p.xi) To do this she covers the use of e-mail, newsgroups and Frequently Asked Questions, as well as library catalogues, databases and electronic books in reference and collection development work. While the lists of Web sources in the appendices are most suitable for public libraries (and some appear to no longer exist), there are useful strategies and principles here for the library professional, particularly those working in customer service areas. This book can only help boost any librarian's confidence, especially the more inexperienced Internet user, when approaching this rather daunting information resource.



*In July the Riverina Regional Library Service launched a new library system. This was the worldwide launch of the very attractive windows-based Libero system from Insight in Queensland. The following short article describes the process of getting to this stage. Although this system is in a public library, the experience described here would be of interest to anyone dealing with branch libraries.*

## AUTOMATING FOR THE THIRD TIME

Robert Knight  
John Scott

During the early part of 1994, it was becoming increasingly obvious to senior management at the Riverina Regional Library that the existing automated library management system was not catering to our needs, particularly in the area of service provision to our remote branches. The regional library includes a total of 10 branches within a 100km radius of the central library at Wagga Wagga, nine of which are not within local call access. The existing computer system did not facilitate the delivery of a number of basic library services at branch level, such as book reservation, member registration, automated catalogue facilities, and OPAC access. All work associated with these processes had to be done manually at headquarters, using either fax or phone to communicate messages; far from an efficient or cost effective means of doing business!

Consideration was given to installing direct lines at branch libraries, but costs ruled this option out and at the time our existing vendor was unable to provide an appropriate software solution. The quality and philosophy surrounding the telecommunications infrastructure in rural Australia leaves country residents seriously disadvantaged in terms of access to technology in situations such as these.

The decision was subsequently made to apply for a Library Development Grant in the annual NSW Library Council grant process to assist us in funding a computer system which would fulfil the immediate and future needs of the Riverina Regional Library. Early in May 1995 confirmation was received of a grant allocation of \$80,000; this amount, combined with library funds, enabled us to take the first steps towards purchasing a computer system which would meet our specifications. Earlier research had revealed that few software vendors currently had products available that would meet all of our remote branch requirements, without compromising the considerable functionality that our existing system provided at the central library, so we proceeded to write a very detailed tender specification document for our specific site requirements. Thankfully, we were able to use the excellent document prepared some months earlier by Richard Nichols of Clarence Regional Library as the basis for a very comprehensive and detailed specification.

We attempted to document all of our requirements in almost agonising detail, recognising that anything not included may well be omitted from the end product, and the vendor could argue "it was not in the tender document".