



# *Hey, That's My Job!*

*by Marilyn Gane,  
Head Librarian, Avondale College of Higher  
Education.*

**S**o, here we are at the end of the conference – probably with a mixed bag of emotions, one of which is no doubt exhaustion! Most of you are on a real emotional high – you've caught up with old friends and colleagues and made new ones, you have been, are, and will continue to be, processing the multitude of possibilities with which we have been presented. You've been challenged with new ideas and innovations, and are already thinking about how they can be applied in your workplace. Some of you may be frustrated because you are hampered by a lack of resources with which to put them into practice. Or perhaps you are now simply turning your thoughts towards home – as cars, taxis and planes await you, and some of you may even be thinking of next year in Adelaide.

Some of you have been members of ANZTLA for a very long time, others have been in the library industry for some time in a variety of roles, others are finding themselves in libraries as a second career choice, while others of you are just starting out. But no matter where you are on your journey you will have either been affected by change in your library or been instrumental in introducing change in your workplace. The job description you began with is most likely very different from what you are doing now.

I have to admit to being in libraries, off, but mostly on, for nearly 40 years! Longer than some of you are old I know, so I beg your indulgence as I reminisce just a little ...

## **Remember When?**

I remember when ... the roles of libraries were to simply identify, acquire, organise, interpret, and preserve resources and the tasks of a librarian were very clear cut: we checked print catalogues and book lists, typed up order forms in triplicate – using carbon paper – and posted them to the supplier using envelopes, stamps and the post office, we noted their receipt in huge accessions registers, paid invoices by cheque, catalogued onto multiple cards making sure every dot, dash and comma was in the correct place, and classified according to printed copies of Dewey. We stamped the books, added date due slips and book pockets, and shelved them. Then when someone came for assistance we just pointed them in the direction of the catalogue with its myriad entries for author, title, subject, series, added author, and so on. We may have conducted a reference interview, carried out the research and presented it to our client all carefully assembled in a neat file. We might have had vertical files of newspaper clippings or picture files for students to use in class, or even music on LP's and sermons on cassette.

We recorded the arrival of journals and newspapers on accession cards and chased up the missing issues by letter or phone call. If we were fortunate we could search for journal articles in hefty volumes of print periodical indexes.



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My first job as a librarian was in the Periodicals Department of the State Library of NSW where I was the Annuals Officer – one full time person just to accession and process annual publications and chase up missing ones! But we were state of the art – we had access to a computer!!

So instead of accession cards, we entered code into huge books of computer printout – different codes for different frequencies of periodicals - daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annual, irregular and so on. Then every week the printout was taken away and the information converted onto punch cards and fed into a ginormous computer somewhere in the depths of the state office block. And every Thursday back came the reports with an up-to-date list of the most recent journal issues received in the library, and the process started all over again.

Computer technology had arrived and life would never be the same again!

Add to the mix: photocopiers, and fax machines and microform readers, and computers that sat on a desk instead of in a room. And online databases which could only be interrogated by librarians after long and exhaustive training sessions, and carefully worded search strings because every return key clocked up numerous dollars. Add in videos, and CD-ROMs, and then CD-ROM's that anyone could search (I even wrote a paper on that in the early 90's) and then you needed a place for towers of CD-ROMs because that was the way of the future. Somewhere in there came email, and the Internet and intranets, and OPAC's, and the Internet for everyone on their desktop, online chat, end-user searching of online databases, and electronic journals, and off-campus access and open access and restricted access, and ereserve, and online learning, and social media and Web 2 and ebooks and federated searching. And somewhere along the line mice, apples, blackberries, and clouds entered our lives and everything was simply tweet and delicious and in a flickr we took on a second life and it just hasn't stopped and now instead of computers in rooms we have them in the palm of our hand.

And people still think working in libraries is all about books and shooshing people?? I don't think so! What a dynamic workplace we inhabit. I am constantly in awe of what is available and what we can offer our students. We are living every day in a place of constant change and new technology and it is our challenge to blend the new with the old to create a place of dynamic learning.

### **Change @ Avondale**


If I rein in my reminiscing to the past 18 months – since the beginning of 2011 - and limit it to my own library, I also see dynamic change. While Avondale Library is certainly not an early adopter, I would like to think that we are not that far behind - we like to see how things go in other, bigger libraries first, and let them iron out the bugs! Some of you may have already implemented many of these



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initiatives and moved on, while others may be thinking along these lines or currently in process. Some involve the introduction of new technologies, others relate to the demise of the old:

- **Ebooks** 2011 saw a concerted effort to purchase ebooks; space is at a premium in our library, so ebooks is a great option all around - not as the mandated option, but certainly as the favoured option. You all know the benefits and students certainly appreciate having them always available and no overdue or fines;
- **Ejournals** – “we’ve had those for years” I can hear you saying, yes and we have too, but we only purchased ejournals in database collections or as print+online packages, but last year we started purchasing ejournals by individual subscriptions;
- **Reduction of print journals** – no doubt you too are cancelling print in favour of electronic or dealing with titles that have ceased publication in print to offer an online only option, while others sadly simply ceased publication altogether;
- **Reduction of print reference** – as we purchase more online reference collections, our print collection has been substantially reduced and this has freed up precious shelving space;
- **Online tutorials** – previously we had sought permission to customise online tutorials developed by the University of Newcastle, but more recently we have been able to develop our own online tutorials specific to Avondale needs;
- **Library Liaison Programme** – while all faculties and schools at Avondale are represented on the Library Management Committee, Avondale’s Library Liaison Programme enables library staff to attend and present on library matters at faculty Learning & Teaching meetings and build relationships with individual faculty members in their world – a far more proactive approach – and as you know, it’s amazing what you learn from a quick chat in the hallway or in their office!;
- **Video databases** - we are constantly increasing our online databases, but in an attempt to address the high cost of DVD’s and do away with obsolete AV technology – we are purchasing video databases which enable students to search video scripts by keyword and make playlists of relevant video clips for use in class or in assignments and tutorials. How cool is that? How many of you have videos on your shelves which no one is borrowing?;
- **Information Literacy (IL) Training** – as digital resources increase, so too does the need for IL training whether our students think they need it or not! After all, we need to make sure we’re getting our money’s worth and that our students know how to use these amazing resources. While IL training has been compulsory on our Sydney campus, it has always been optional on our main campus. But this year, with a change in administrative personnel we were able to



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achieve endorsement for compulsory IL training for all first year students. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the benefits are already being felt as faculty see better researched and referenced assignments, but we do plan on surveying our faculty to get documented evidence;

- **Discovery Service** - PrimoSearch is our discovery service and has been welcomed enthusiastically by faculty and students alike. So much better than searching multiple databases and the library catalogue separately;
- **Institutional Repositories** - ResearchOnline@Avondale - when I spoke at ANZTLA in Canberra 3 years ago, our Institutional Repository was still a dream. It's now been operating for 2 years and is starting to fulfil our expectations of disseminating our research and scholarship, and developing those all-important contacts and collaborative opportunities around the world. We are now moving to the next stage of expanding the content to include graphic and audio files and a new online journal;
- **And Coming Soon** - Avondale Library's mobile app PS Mobile – thanks to the pioneering work of CSU and ACU, our UNILINC siblings - will be implemented in the next few weeks; and
- **Live Online reference support** – while we have offered an Ask a Librarian email service, and telephone reference services, we are heading to live online chat to support our distance students in 2013.

Now all of these are wonderful innovations for our students and faculty – and some quite overdue according to some of our students!

#### Change 4 Staff


But what about my library staff, and yours, when you introduce changes such as these? How do they feel about all these wonderful new innovations? Are they part of the process and have ownership of the changes? Do they embrace the changes or do they take a while to warm to the idea? How do these innovations affect their jobs? How do they impact the way they carry out their day to day functions, procedures and processes? Do they have the skills, or the will to get the skills, to do what needs doing to support the ever increasing demands of our students and the changes in technology? Are they willing to let go of the old, and embrace the new? Is there an imbalance in responsibilities when new technologies, resources or services are introduced? Do some positions appear to have less to do while other staff members are being totally overwhelmed and definitely overworked? Do the job descriptions match the jobs? Do you need new positions to cope with your library's new offerings?

At the beginning of 2011 when we started with these innovations, the main campus Library at Avondale employed:

- Four staff in Technical services equating to three full time positions – for acquisitions, cataloguing, serials, and end-processing. In addition to technical services work they also spent around 30 hours a week working on the Information Desk and other tasks. But we were in crisis – one of our positions had just been reduced to part time – how would we cope?;
- One full time librarian in Circulation Services, with help from student assistants; and
- Two part time librarians, equating to one full time position supporting all our reference and electronic services, and providing information literacy training.

So with that in mind, let's take another look at some of those innovations but this time with their impact on staffing and skills:

Innovation	Impact on staff & processes
Ebooks	<p>Acquisitions – orders &amp; payments.            No claims, receiving, end-processing or shelving Less time.            Cataloguing – More time? Same time? Less time? – depending on quality of MARC records and how you want them enhanced.            Circulation – no checkouts, checkins, overdues, shelving, missing books, no fines, no lost or damaged books, no cranky patrons when the book they need hasn't been returned or cannot be found etc. Less time.            Reference &amp; Information Services – well! What is an ebook? How does it work, where do I get it? Just as we did with online databases when they first appeared, so we needed to spend some time training our students in the features of ebooks.            And then there are all the technology issues: Online access, links through proxy, liaison with IT; or do library staff have skills to do this?</p>
Ejournals	<p>Serials – orders, payments, special licensing arrangements?            No claims, checkins, end-processing, shelving, binding.            Cataloguing – about the same.            Reference &amp; Information Services – maybe some training needed.            Online access, proxy servers, liaison with IT?</p>
Demise of Print journals and reference materials	<p>No orders, subscriptions or standing orders, payments, claiming, checking in, end-processing, shelving, binding – roles substantially reduced.            Just tidying up catalogue records, perhaps a decision to keep or discard?</p>
Online tutorials	<p>For Avondale, these fall under the responsibility of our reference librarians. But there are questions to be asked. Is there something out there already you can use? If so, do you need to obtain permission? Do you want to customise? How are you going to keep up with updates to the tutorial should the creator change it? OR Do you have the skills and the time to create your own? What software will you use? Then it's a matter of writing the script, designing the pages, testing, doing voice overs, advertising it and loading it to the library website.            Who does that? Do you have staff with skills?            As the skill sets in our staff changed, we were able to take on the additional work of creating our own tutorials.</p>
New databases	<p>Selection, licensing, payments, training, organising access, proxy servers.            While selecting new resources tends to fall to me, the access and training falls to our reference librarians.</p>
Discovery Services/Federated Searching	<p>Which product will you use, who will organise trials, who will design the interface and do the testing, who will train staff and students in its use? Reference librarians?</p>
IL training	<p>Reference – training, online and face to face support, Moodle or other online course software, referencing skills, Endnote or other citation software, specialist database training, essay and assignment writing.</p>



*“By documenting what we had achieved and backing it up with statistics, outlining our plans for the future, and marshalling support where it counted, we were able to reclaim our lost staff funding and deploy it to where it was needed most.”*

Are you seeing some trends here? Is it the same in your library? Whether you are a one person library or a multi-person library, there is a definite shift away from the traditional technical services to the frontline services – reference, information services, information literacy training, research support, distance education support, online learning support – with many libraries relinquishing part or all of their in-house technical services in favour of outsourcing, patron driven acquisition or approval plans.

Are there people on your staff who have the skills to provide and support a secure environment for your online offerings? Do you have to rely on IT? Do you need to provide training to current staff? Do you need to seek out new staff with the skills to fill these roles? Or do you, like Avondale, have the staff but not necessarily in the right places anymore?

In 2010 we employed a part time Electronic Services Librarian at Avondale to develop our Institutional Repository and manage all our online resources, however the position as it was created and the position as it is now, are very different because technology has moved on so quickly, new resources are available, our Institutional Repository has taken off, and we are providing far more in the way of training, support and online tutorials and as you can see the call on reference and electronic services staff is ever increasing.

So, back to our staffing crisis of 2011. It was a painful and very stressful year and yes some services were cut, but being the eternal optimist, I took it as an opportunity to review what we were doing, how we were doing it, why we were doing it, and if we needed to do it at all. And we didn't just limit that review to technical services – we all stepped back and took a good hard look at what we were doing.

Because let's face it, and I love this quote from eco-designer, Mark Shayler, which was on the cover of *InCite* a few months ago:

**It is not sufficient to do things better, we need to do better things**

I think you'll agree that librarians and libraries are always striving to do things better. What is harder is the second part – doing better things – because that often means having to let go of the old, tried and true, comfortable, and really putting yourself out there.

As it turned out, we came to the conclusion that we didn't need a full time person in that position any more. We didn't necessarily need to do things better in that space – we had skilled staff, our print journals were reducing in numbers, our processes were continually being streamlined and made more efficient and we were using our LMS and online claiming as it was designed to be used. So we kept the position part time and redesigned it to do better/different things including taking on responsibility for electronic journals as well as print ones.

But we still needed more resources on the front line. By documenting what we had achieved and backing it up with statistics, outlining our plans for the future, and marshalling support where it

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counted, we were able to reclaim our lost staff funding and deploy it to where it was needed most. Not to mention, gently reminding administration of what would not happen if we didn't get more staff in those areas. So while our reference staff still numbers only two, they now equate to 1.4 full time positions and we are far better equipped to grow and support our new digital initiatives.

I'm not sure how long it is since you've looked for library positions, or even employed new staff, but I was fascinated by the latest offerings on the ALIA website. This is what libraries are currently looking for:

Independent Learning Centre Coordinator  
Manager E-resources Consortia  
Manager Australian Newspaper Digitisation Programme  
Learning Skills Advisor  
Knowledge Management Manager  
Systems Support Officer  
Junior Research Specialist  
Web Content Manager, and the list goes on... Wow!

Combine that with what the technologies and resources that are already on offer and the emerging technologies that are identified in the annual Horizon reports and we are facing an amazing future.

The *2011 Horizon Report for Higher Education* listed ebooks and mobile devices as having the most impact over the next year or less and we've certainly seen that come to fruition.

The 2012 report lists mobile apps and tablet computing for the year ahead, along with a whole raft of other things I really don't understand and I've read the report!

So, my question is:

Are we trying to provide a future for our students and staff with yesterday's tools and yesterday's concepts?<sup>1</sup> Are we trying to do things better with what we have using traditional methods, or are we taking the leap and doing better things and offering new and improved services by embracing new concepts and emerging technologies?

We can't afford to underestimate the impact of emerging trends but we do have choices. We can do nothing, or we can do something. And if we choose to do something, then again we have options. We need to redesign workflows and procedures and we also need to retool staff competencies to meet the needs of our libraries now and in the future, because

**The time for e-content will be always, the place will be everywhere, and the demand will become insatiable.<sup>2</sup>**

Are you and your staff ready?

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1 Marshall McLuhan, "Marshall McLuhan quotes," 2008, <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/marshallmc400205.html>.

2 Arnold Hirshon, "A Diamond in the Rough: Divining the Future of E-Content," *Educause Review* 40, no. 1 (2005): 38.

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