

Canadian law libraries. The notion of unification versus decentralisation of collections, management, purchasing, and funding continues to loom as a huge issue for all of us for the next number of years.

- Fourth, that the law librarians of England are knowledgeable about their resources and extremely eager to network and inform each other about who has what through many ventures such as INTUTE, FLAG, BAILII, BL's ZETOC, and the IALS Library's Current Legal Research Topics Database and EAGLE-I (a couple of real winners!) Obviously, in times of diminishing resources all round, networking and sharing knowledge are increasingly important.
- Fifth, that my IALS colleagues were very interested in my sharing information from Canada through two talks that I presented to them. The first covered the law library scene, the structure of the bar, education for lawyers and law librarians in our country, and some of the electronic resources we have that IALS does not presently offer. My second presentation was

about my approaches to teaching legal research to both law and non-law university students at my home university and about some unique digital preservation initiatives in Canada, with particular emphasis on some of our own projects at my home library.

How might I summarise my time as a NELLCO International Fellow? Unique. Eye-opening. Friendly. Thought-provoking. And so much more. I sincerely hope that this programme continues and grows to allow even more fellows the same opportunity I had. There is no question that attending conferences in other countries and reading law library literature from around the world can certainly add to one's breadth of experience. However, there's nothing like "time on the ground" to ask specific questions and explore areas of common concern with colleagues who live and work in a faraway – but surprisingly similar – environment. I urge decision-makers within NELLCO to continue sponsoring this extremely worthwhile initiative, and I thank them for my great experience in England.

Biography

Melinda Renner is the Gerard V. La Forest Law Librarian at University of New Brunswick, Canada.

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A year and a day in the Australian Law Librarians' Association

Abstract: This article comes from Sue Woodman, the outgoing Chair of ALLA and brings us up to date with developments down under

Keywords: law librarians; professional organisations; Australia

Introduction

A new name, a new look and new website.....a lot can happen in twelve months and this took place in six. The following article provides a 12 month snapshot of some of the changes and activities of the Australian Law Librarians' Association (ALLA) formerly the Australian Law Librarians' Group (ALLG).

I am writing this update a year after a special resolution was voted on by members in September 2006 in support

of a change of name of the Australian Law Librarians' Group (ALLG) to the Australian Law Librarians' Association (ALLA).

Whilst a seemingly small change, it coincided with the energy generated from the inaugural joint conference with the New Zealand Law Librarians' Association and has been proven to be the catalyst of a number of important developments during the past twelve months and, as the Association moves towards its 40th anniversary, will hopefully continue to provide momentum in our growth and development.

The primary objectives of ALLA are to promote a co-operative network for Australian law libraries and law librarians; provide forums for continuing education programmes and conferences; and advocate the interests of law libraries and access to legal information within the wider community.

In meeting its commitment to members, the focus for the first six months was on the development and launch of a new website, new logo and colour scheme. Together with the *Australian Law Librarian*, the website aims to represent the Association to our external environment and promote relevance to members. Our current website now provides an opportunity for further development, including a member's only section which will incorporate and take advantage of Web 2.0 technologies. We hope to be able to benefit from the use of collaborative tools, such as social networking and searching, and to develop further web content which can be shared and which is accessible from a single platform.

Networking

The ALLA has approximately 600 members. With the exception of overseas applicants, all members join a state or territory ALLA Division. An ALLA National Executive of 15 members comprises both divisional representation, as well as elected national positions. It is most often from a national perspective that ALLA represents and advocates on behalf of law librarians and works to collaborate with the wider profession.

In May this year ALLA joined representatives from other peak bodies at the Peak Bodies Forum convened by the National Library of Australia. This annual meeting facilitates all library sectors sharing information and provides opportunities for collaboration. A particular area of discussion that impacts on all sectors within Australia is that of an ageing library workforce and difficulties associated with recruitment for entry level positions. At the recent ALLA conference, held in Sydney, this important topic was again being discussed during a presentation examining some of the issues which impact on library education and law librarianship, demographic and career data relevant to law librarians.

The Association has also been involved with a national cross-sectoral project entitled Electronic Resources Australia (<http://era.nla.gov.au>). This project was established in response to a Senate report on Libraries in the Online Environment. It is intended to facilitate free end-user access to online general reference resources. Whilst there are no legal resources available for subscription, ALLA will continue to support the development of the project and advocate that ERA consider the inclusion of legal services.

Advocacy and access

For over fifteen years, the ALLA has actively campaigned for, and supported, the development of law libraries

within the Pacific Region through the Pacific Law Library Twinning Program. The ALLA Library Twinning Program was born at the 1991 Asia Pacific Law Librarians conference out of concern about the ad hoc provision of legal materials to the South Pacific. Several organisations at this time voluntarily took on 'twinning' arrangements with like organisations in the Pacific, focussing on the provision of both legal texts and training of librarians.

Since this time law librarians from Australia have travelled through the region to provide expertise and training in the establishment of law libraries, physical organisation of collections, cataloguing of materials and support of library staff.

The release of the White Paper on the Australian Government's overseas aid program *Australian Aid: Promoting Growth and Stability* with one of its organising themes being to foster functioning and effective states through, amongst other areas, the law and justice sector, provided a confirmation to ALLA of the importance of this work and the long established relationships fostered by this Program.

In 2007, the program involves 14 Australian and New Zealand law libraries twinned with 22 counterparts in the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and Samoa.

In addition the ALLA supports the Twinning Program through the provision of a Pacific Law Libraries Scholarship, which provides an opportunity for law librarians and law library staff to attend the ALLA annual conference.

Professional development

In recognition of achievements and contribution to the profession, ALLA has implemented a series of Awards and Scholarships which provide opportunities for ongoing professional development. In 2007 the Lynn Pollack Memorial Scholarship was introduced. Lynn Pollack was inspirational in her dedication to her profession, encouraging and supporting colleagues and taking an interest in their careers. The Scholarship aims to assist new law librarians in their professional development and provide a young law librarian with the opportunity to attend the Australian Law Librarians' Conference.

Information ALLA Carte, the 2007 ALLA conference has just wound up – we were promised a heady 'ragout of flavours' and this was successfully delivered. Two hundred delegates gathered at the University of Sydney to participate in a stimulating and informative conference and array of social events. Concepts and realities that we are working with today were on the programme - digitisation of collections, collaboration, collective intelligence, unmediated access to information, intranets, career development and education.

With conference presentations still fresh in the mind and ALLA approaching its 40th anniversary, it is worth reflecting on the immense cultural, social and technological changes that have influenced our profession. The challenges and opportunities that lie ahead are how we will continue to weave these changes into our profession and

organisations and how we in turn as a profession will look for return on investment.

Planning for next year's conference is now well underway and on behalf of your Australian colleagues, I extend an invitation to you to join us in Perth, Western Australia in September 2008.

Biography

Sue Woodman is the Immediate Past President, Australian Law Librarians' Association (ALLA).

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Checklist – Setting up a Library and Information Service

Abstract: In this very practical checklist Michael Oberwarth identifies the key tasks to be undertaken when starting a law firm library from scratch. He then suggests strategies for setting up an information service which will add value to the fee earners.

Keywords: law firms; information services

Introduction

Setting up a library and information service is an exciting, and ultimately fulfilling, challenge. Not only does it enable you to utilise the library skills that you have developed over the course of your career thus far, but it also requires you to bring to the fore other skills you may not have had to rely on as much: e.g. marketing, time-management, budgeting, negotiation and, particularly, the art of persuasion for when you need to convince the Finance Manager to give you some extra money to pay for the database you know the firm can't function without, or for when you need to negotiate the all-important discount with the supplier so you can afford to buy it!

However, whilst planning and setting up a new library and information service is undoubtedly an exciting challenge, it can also be a daunting one if you've not done it before. The purpose of this checklist is to provide a step-by-step guide to what should be considered when putting a new service in place. I don't pretend that it is a

definitive guide, but it's based on my own personal experience of setting up a new library and information service for the first time at the law firm Matthew Arnold & Baldwin.

Where do I begin?

You arrive at your new firm, are shown the library or, as was my case, 'the room in the building which stores the books', and are then left to your own devices. Where do you start?

Firstly, it is vital to carry out an **information audit** so you can identify and assess what information resources the firm currently has and what it actually needs. Do the information resources actually meet the firm's needs? Fee-earners are the best judges as to whether a source is of benefit to them, so it is your job to identify what resources are potentially useful, and let them decide which are best. In my experience, fee-earners see a book flyer which interests them and immediately want to buy