

Editorial

You might find this hard to believe, but this is an exciting time to be a librarian. One man who certainly does believe this is John Trevor-Allen, the outgoing – and outgoing! – President of CILIP, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. Indeed, in our interview with him in this issue of LIM he discusses the ways librarians are well placed to deal with a number of pressing issues, including worries over AI. “I think we can lead and we can teach people information skills, but we need to also make sure they understand that we are the people who would naturally be doing that,” he says. “It’s not that we’re muscling in on AI because no one reads books anymore, it’s that, actually, we go where the information is, not the other way around.”

It was great interviewing John, and inspiring too, and we’re confident you will be as inspired as we were, and maybe even a little flattered – after all, it’s not every day librarians are compared to superheroes (turn to page 207 to find out what that’s all about).

Also inspiring is the International Law Book Facility (ILBF), which sends donated law books to countries across the globe that are in dire need of good quality legal publications. Since it came into being in 2005 this amazing organisation has shipped over 80,000 books to more than 250 organisations in 56 countries. On page 213 Katrina Crossley, the chief executive of ILBF, tells us about its work and also explains how and why it’s working with BIALL to help train law librarians in Africa.

Wherever they might work, one thing all new law librarians will have to learn to live and work with is artificial intelligence; but the question everyone is asking is whether it will actually ever supersede them. With this in mind on page 219 Greg Bennett puts the premium version of ChatGPT to the test with some basic legal research, just to see if law librarians really do have anything to worry about. It’s a thought-provoking piece, and a must read.

CONFERENCE PAPERS

Much of the other content in this issue might seem just a little familiar to some of you, because as is traditional in



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the Winter edition of LIM we have published a number of articles based on presentations given at the 2023 BIALL Annual Conference in Belfast in June.

The first of these is a very interesting piece by Beth Flerlage of The Middle Temple, which explores its use of nano-training, a system that utilises small ‘bite-sized’ pieces of information to get a point across quickly and effectively, often using videos.

Getting a message across effectively is also at the core of Matthew Leopold’s article on marketing legal information services on page 230. With a headline of “Lazy, Selfish and Ruthless,” Matthew pulls no punches in this excellent piece, which really gets to the heart of what it means to effectively ‘sell’ your services.

Sticking with marketing legal services, on page 236 Ian Hunter looks at increasing the visibility of law firm library and information services in terms of what should be done and what should not be done. Or, as Ian puts it: “Is saying yes to everything really the right thing to do?”

In another piece related to how legal information services operate in the wider world, on page 240 Lauren Cummings outlines how she has developed and delivered a commercial awareness workshop to third year students at Goldsmiths, University of London, and the importance of employability training in general.

Our next article is also from the academic sector, and yet its subject comes out of the world of car production, of all things. Turn to page 245 to find out how Laura Griffiths and Alice Tyson of the IALS library have used the Kanban production method in a recent project and how it might be used in other library scenarios – by the way, we were so taken with this that we’re seriously thinking of having a Kanban board to help with the commissioning and editing of LIM.

Rounding off the Conference papers and tying in nicely with our interview with John Trevor-Allen, on page 251 we have a joint piece by Emma Sullivan and Sandra Smythe, the co-Chairs of the CILIP Trailblazer group, which is currently developing a Level 7 Library, Information and Knowledge Professional Apprenticeship Standard. The emergence of apprenticeships into the profession is perhaps one of the most positive changes in recent times, and the writers’ enthusiasm for the subject really comes across in this article.

REGULAR FEATURES

During one of the Editorial Board meetings in 2023 someone suggested we should do a subject resource guide on Construction Contracts, then someone else wholeheartedly agreed, and then someone else ... There really did seem to be a demand for this, and so we wasted no time in commissioning the guide you will find on page 255, by Debra O’Malley, which goes some way to explaining this very complicated area of law and

outlining the vast array of contracts available – in a huge spectrum of colours! – and where they might be found.

Our Product Showcase for this edition is from Dandy Booksellers, with its managing director Donna Ravenhill talking us through Public Information Online (PIO), a service that offers a wide range of official documents going back, in many cases, more than a hundred years.

Meanwhile, in our International Perspectives slot, Rebant Juyal looks at freedom of speech and the internet in India while on page 282 we review the all-new *Handbook of Legal Tech*, a timely guide from some leading figures in the legal technology space and a great overview of what's currently available to legal information professionals in terms of tech.

Finally, in our retrospective section we look at the issues, and the issues, of 2003, which doesn't seem so very long ago at all, really. Yet it's actually quite surprising how much has changed in the last 20 years, and yet also how much has remained the same. Turn to page 283 to explore this knotty little time travel paradox.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As always, our thanks go to Katherine Read and Heather Memess for their work in compiling the Current

Awareness section at the back of the journal, and of course LIM would be nothing without our contributors, so a big thanks to each and every one of you who has supplied us with copy for this edition – we feel the Winter LIM has a little bit of everything and we hope you readers agree. Talking of readers, we can't possibly finish without a mention and a huge thanks to the people who get to read all this first, our very professional and always thorough team of proofreaders. Also, thanks to Craig Baxter and Jamie Davidson at Cambridge University Press – this issue marks the end of our first full year as co-Editors of LIM and we certainly could not have got through it without CUP and everyone else mentioned above.

One final thing, if you have an idea for an article you would like to see in LIM, or even better if there is something you would dearly love to write about, then please contact us on limeditor@biall.org.uk. It will do wonders for your professional profile and look great on your CV, and you might be surprised at just how enjoyable writing up your thoughts, ideas and experiences can be. Maybe this should be your New Year's Resolution? On that note, Happy New Year!

Jas Breslin and Mike Breslin
Co-Editors in chief