

**LIANZA**

LIBRARY & INFORMATION ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND AOTEAROA  
KŌI HŌKŌA O TE IKA Ū MĀUI

**Victoria**

UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Te Whare Wānanga  
o te Ūpoko o te Ika Ū Māui



School of Information Management

# The New Zealand Library & Information Management Journal

## Ngā Pūrongo

**Vol. 51 Issue No. 1**  
October 2008

ISSN 1177-3316

- 04 Introduction to the New Zealand Library & Information Management Journal  
Loriene Roy
- 05 Editorial  
Alison Fields
- 06 Reference services for students studying by distance: A comparative study  
of the attitudes distance students have towards phone, email and chat  
reference services  
Lisa Lee *Peer reviewed*
- 22 Biculturalism in NZ libraries  
Tui Smith
- 35 The Parliamentary Library's contribution to the development  
of libraries in New Zealand  
John E. Martin
- 50 How Literacy programmes help rehabilitate young offenders  
Greg Fitcher
- 60 Selecting electronic resources in New Zealand special libraries  
Nicola Rawnsley *Peer reviewed*
- 73 Book Review – "Parliament's Library: 150 years"  
Amanda Cossham

# The New Zealand Library & Information Management Journal

## Purpose

The New Zealand Library & Information Management Journal is published by LIANZA with support from the School of Information Management at Victoria University of Wellington and is intended as a national forum on library and information management issues in New Zealand. It is not limited to a specific information sector or to articles of a particular type; rather, the content seeks to reflect the wide-ranging interests and needs of information professionals in New Zealand.

*NZLIMJ* is published in an online format biannually and hosted on the LIANZA website. Print editions of the *Journal* are distributed to all current LIANZA members.

## Editorial Board

The *NZLIMJ* Editorial Board fulfils two functions. First, and principally, members of the Board provide double blind peer-reviews of articles submitted for publication as reviewed articles. Second, the Board provides such advice to the Editor as may be requested from time to time on other matters related to journal content.

The Editorial Board for 2006-2008 consists of the following members:

**Professor GE Gorman (Chair)**

Victoria University of Wellington

Email: [gary.gorman@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:gary.gorman@vuw.ac.nz)

**Mr Philip J Calvert**

Victoria University of Wellington

Email: [philip.calvert@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:philip.calvert@vuw.ac.nz)

**Ms Amanda F Cossham**

The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand

Email: [amanda.cossham@openpolytechnic.ac.nz](mailto:amanda.cossham@openpolytechnic.ac.nz)

**Dr Daniel G Dorner**

Victoria University of Wellington

Email: [dan.dorner@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:dan.dorner@vuw.ac.nz)

(continued)

**Ms Jan Irvine**

The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand

Email: [jan.irvine@openpolytechnic.co.nz](mailto:jan.irvine@openpolytechnic.co.nz)

**Dr Gillian Oliver**

Victoria University of Wellington

Email: [gillian.oliver@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:gillian.oliver@vuw.ac.nz)

**Disclaimer**

The opinions or viewpoints expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of LIANZA. All materials and content were prepared by persons and/or entities other than LIANZA, and said other persons and/or entities are solely responsible for their content.

Any links to other web sites are not intended to be referrals or endorsements of these sites. The links provided are maintained by the respective organizations, and they are solely responsible for the content of their own sites.

# Introduction to the New Zealand Library and Information Management Journal

A watershed moment took place at the 1997 American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference in San Francisco when six members of Te Ropu Whakahau invited the American Indian Library Association to collaborate on planning an International Indigenous Librarians Forum. Those six Maori delegates--Chris Szekely, Hinureina Mangan, Bernard Makoare, Hinerangi Himiona, Ani Pahuru-Huriwai, and Jock Walker—were inspiring leaders through their focus on strategic thinking balanced with cultural perspectives. As a result, library workers around the world turned to Aotearoa for guidance and modeling on how to provide indigenous library services and to cultivate indigenous library staff. Subsequent Forums were held in Jokkmokk, Sweden; Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA; Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada; and Brisbane, Australia. Delegates return to Aotearoa in 2009, this time to Te Wananga-o-Raukawa in Otaki. The sixth Forum will be both exciting and challenging as attendees gather under the theme, Māku Anō e Hanga Tōku Nei Whare: Determining Our Future.

Group discussion at the Forums resulted in key documents—a vision statement, objectives, a manifesto, an action plan. More importantly, Forums enabled librarians to give voice to what it means to serve our communities and to conduct our work with and through our skills, talents, and cultural identities. These ideals gave me strength over the past decade, especially during my service in 2007-2008 as the first American Indian President of ALA, the world's largest and oldest library organization.

During that year, I responded to 150 media requests. The most common questions related to change: How are libraries faring in the age of the internet? What happened to the quiet library of my youth? Change produces uncertainty, leading to stress. The public sometimes reacts by reducing library budgets and even eliminating services to segments of our populations. Libraries have responded from their core values, especially those supporting equity of access. I learned that libraries are flourishing and, especially during these difficult economic times, the public still needs and wants these unique institutions.

More than ever, there remains a place for libraries, for library workers, and for the work they conduct. We need to continue to respond with services tailored for our communities delivered by library workers who represent the populations they serve. Yes, our communities have changed but that change is one of increasing diversity. The smart, strong, vibrant libraries that I see understand these realities. Megwitch, thank you, LIANZA and Te Ropu Whakahau, for continuing to develop and promote progressive library energies. The world is watching.

*Loriene Roy (Anishinabe)*

*Professor, School of Information, The University of Texas at Austin  
Immediate-Past-President, American Library Association*

# Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of this new volume, and of course to my first issue as the new Editor of this Journal. Hopefully it will be a seamless transition, with the Journal continuing on its journey of informing and enlightening our profession about the ideas, research and new developments happening within.

This is an interesting time for both our profession and the New Zealand Library and Information Management Journal. Not only is the sheer volume of information becoming available worldwide impacting on the range of library and information services we provide, but also the very way in which we operate and manage with this widening range of information is changing. And reflecting this is the widening range of articles being submitted to the journal, as well as options for managing the Journal itself. You will see this for yourself in the great variety of topics covered in this issue of the Journal.

It is also heartening to see the range of people who are writing and publishing in our profession. These range from senior and seasoned professionals and writers, through to the newly qualified in our profession working on their first works for the public arena. There are increasing choices for publication overseas, but this Journal remains the representative journal for library and information research, development and thinking in New Zealand. My thanks go to those authors who have submitted their work for publication in this Journal; for this issue, in the past, or considering it for the future. Without you, our voice would not be heard so clearly here, but would be mingled and diluted, scattered amongst the ever-increasing world of information out there.

I remember with fondness the people who helped me work on my first articles for publication in 1989. They were senior members of the profession who had published much themselves, and were willingly to help new and emerging librarians and researchers develop their own skills and interests in sharing their ideas and findings. One in particular said that it was easy to write after the first couple of articles had been accepted, and to my great surprise I found it was. The challenge for me now is finding the topics that entice and entwine, and from there the rest is easy. So – it’s nearly 20 years on, and now I find that I *am* one of the senior members of the profession, and it is a great joy for me to now have my time encouraging and assisting new and emerging writers in the profession with their own research and publication. It’s nice to have come full circle.

*Alison Fields*

*Editor of the New Zealand Library and Information Management Journal*

[Alison.Fields@openpolytechnic.ac.nz](mailto:Alison.Fields@openpolytechnic.ac.nz)

# Reference services for students studying by distance: A comparative study of the attitudes distance students have towards phone, email and chat reference services

Lisa Sandra Lee

University of Canterbury

[lisa.lee@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:lisa.lee@canterbury.ac.nz)

## Abstract

*Developments in technology have enabled libraries to provide reference services via email and virtual chat, making reference services more accessible to distance users. Chat reference appears to be a service suited to distance user's needs, providing a synchronous form of communication. However, much of the literature regarding chat reference reports a low uptake, as well as low satisfaction rates among users. This research investigates the attitudes of distance students studying education papers towards three reference services, phone, email and chat, and what barriers may be preventing them from using or returning to use these services. A mixed method design was employed, using a survey to gather data. Invitations were sent to 1500 distance students via email, asking for their participation through completing an online questionnaire. While the response rate was too small to be able to make definitive statements about the whole population, results showed that distance users were generally satisfied with all the reference services. A low uptake for the chat reference service was found, due mainly to the fact that few distance users had any knowledge of this service.*

## Introduction

Distance students are a distinct group of academic library users who may live in close proximity to the library or hundreds of kilometers away. Generally those enrolled in distance learning courses tend to be short on time, they are often older with children and may have less experience with libraries and technology (Goodson, 2001). In order to provide services to these students, libraries need to cater for their different needs and wants as well as supply the means for them to be able to access library services.

While academic libraries have been offering phone and mail reference services for years, many have now embraced developments in technology and now

provide virtual reference options such as email, web forms and chat. However there have been drawbacks: the lack of visual and verbal cues can be frustrating for both users and librarians; lack of education, resources and technology problems can all contribute to negative experiences.

The purpose of this study is to compare the attitudes distance students have to phone, email and chat reference services, and also to identify what barriers may be preventing them from using or returning to use these services.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions and sub questions were investigated in this study. The sub questions present within each research question combine together to provide an answer to that question.

1. What attitudes do distance users hold towards the three reference services, phone, email and chat? How satisfied are users with these services? Which service do they prefer?
2. What is the user's knowledge of the reference services offered? Do distance users know about these services and how they can access them?
3. What barriers do distance users have towards using the three reference services and what could be done to help eradicate or minimise these? What is preventing or discouraging distance users from using the reference services offered, and how do these barriers compare across the three services? What improvements could be made to better meet distance user expectations of a reference service?

## **Literature Review**

Needs and expectations of library users have changed with the introduction of the Internet, the increased availability of online resources and developments in e-learning. Libraries have had to adapt their services and adopt new technologies to fulfill the growing needs of users. Marcum (2005) states that distance education is one of the main forces behind the development of digital reference services. Users no longer have to physically enter a library to gain the information they require. A survey conducted by Kelley and Orr (2003) found that nearly two thirds of respondents very rarely or never visited a library and perceived off-campus access to materials as the most useful service that the library provided.

As recreational use of email and chat became increasingly popular during 1990s, an increasing number of libraries began to incorporate this technology into their reference services (Braxton & Brunsdale, 2004). Email has some disadvantages, users often have to wait for a reply, the reference interview can be extended for days and there is also a lack of visual and verbal cues (Coffman, 2001; McGlamery & Coffman, 2000; Straw, 2000). However it does provide a good reference service when the user does not need an immediate answer. Sending

emails is not limited to opening hours and it can be beneficial for shy students and non-native speakers (Croft & Eichenlaub, 2006; Kern, 2006; Straw, 2000).

Recently reference services have ventured into synchronous forms of communication using chat technologies, enabling an interactive, real-time connection (Kern, 2006). Its main advantages include its instant gratification, that it can be accessed from anywhere and can be set up as 24/7 service (Croft & Eichenlaub, 2006). Yet much of the literature reports low uptake and dissatisfaction (Lee, 2004; Lupien, 2006; Maxwell, 2004).

When Croft and Eichenlaub (2006) conducted a survey to compare user satisfaction of email reference with other modes of reference they found that the majority's first choice was email, followed by phone. Chat was the first preference with only 6% of those surveyed: however the validity of this, considering chat reference was not a service offered is questionable; many users may not have used chat technology before. At the time of this study, researchers decided chat was not a cost effective option due to low demand.

Nilsen (2006) compared user satisfaction with virtual (chat and email) versus face-to-face reference services and found virtual reference had a lower satisfaction rate. Interestingly Nilsen (2006) found students measured success by relational factors such as friendliness and helpfulness of staff rather than breadth of information found, which may explain why face-to-face was seen as more successful.

Pop-ups blockers, firewalls, security packs, the configuration process and dial-up connection speed have all been blamed as impacting negatively on the use of chat reference (Aubele, Jackson & Farmer, 2007; Lupien, 2006, Maxwell, 2004). Lack of knowledge, patience and poor marketing have also been blamed for discouraging students from using chat services more (Lee 2004).

Literature regarding staff attitudes towards chat reference mentions their feelings of pressure to provide answers immediately, their frustration with the technology, and the need to have a wide range of knowledge (Backhus and Summey, 2003; Ford, 2006; Trump & Tuttle, 2001). While the literature says reference services must appear welcoming, friendly and easy to use (Goodson, 2001; Kern, 2006; Stemper & Butler, 2001) it does not address the idea of a correlation between staff dissatisfaction and user dissatisfaction.

Most of the literature on virtual chat reference looks at its advantages, disadvantages, best practice and technological problems. Some literature compares different modes of reference, but does not always focus on distance students and investigating what prevents them from using chat reference.

## **Methodology**

This study utilises a mixed-method design. A single survey instrument was used to gather data using open and closed questions, requiring a combination of analytical tools from both qualitative and quantitative methods. The population for the survey was the 1500 Education distance students studying through the

University of Canterbury. All students studying at least one education distance paper through the University of Canterbury were invited to take part in this study. Emails were sent out asking for their participation in the survey by completing the online questionnaire, the link to this was included in the email. Only student email addresses were used.

### **Service descriptions**

Phone reference service: Distance users are provided with a 0800 free phone number for all inquiries, including reference.

Email reference service: There is a separate webpage for distance users and a generic distance email address is provided, users can send an email or fill in a “Request for Information” form.

AskLive (chat) reference service: The AskLive logo appears on all library webpages. By clicking on the logo users are taken directly to the access page, which includes a brief description of AskLive.



### **Limitations**

Rate of return: Due partly to time constraints, as well as the whole population being surveyed there was a low rate of return of 3% for this survey. The invitation to take part in the survey was emailed out once only and the questionnaire was only available online. This may have excluded those users who do not have regular or reliable internet. As the questionnaire was only live for two weeks, students who do not check their email regularly may have missed the deadline. The researcher knows from experience that many students (both on and off campus) do not check their student email, so many distance students probably never knew about the survey. Some distance students will never have used the library and may have thought they had nothing to contribute to the survey; others who attend some on campus classes may not ever have used the library as a distance student. Also, as these students are studying education papers, many go away for teacher practicum for blocks of 2-5 weeks, during this time they are very busy, are often away from their homes and internet access. If some of these students were away on practicum at this time, this may have prevented a large section of the population from responding.

Knowledge of face-to-face reference: It may have been interesting to look at the knowledge level of the face-to-face reference service. It was not included in this study as it was thought that all students would know about this service.

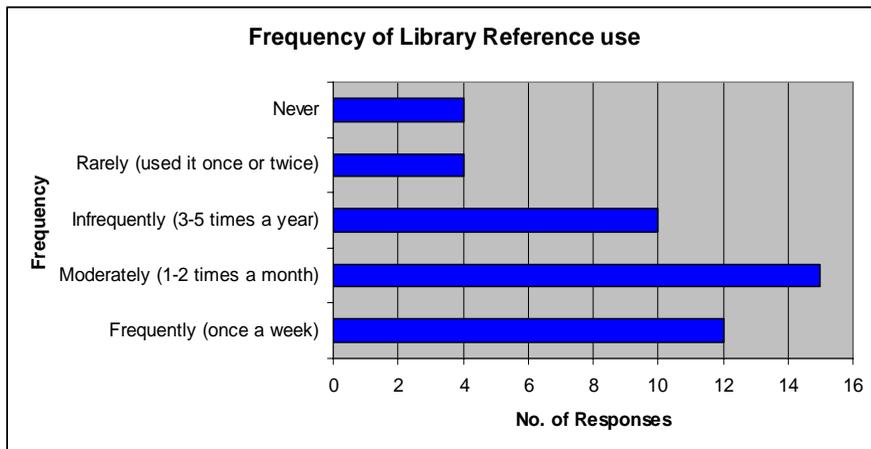
### **Results and Discussion**

46 questionnaires were submitted, and all partially submitted responses were included.

## Quantitative Data Results

The survey asked questions on a range of aspects, preferences and attitudes towards references services. The key results are outlined below.

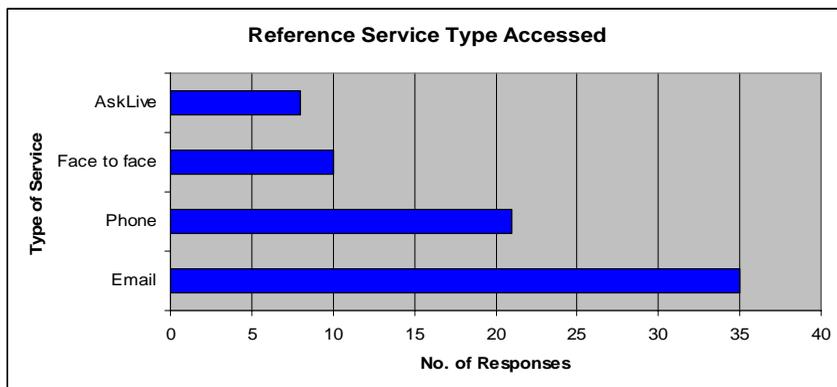
### Frequency of reference use



**Figure 1: Response count for frequency of library reference use**

The majority of respondents indicated they were either moderate or frequent library users. Of the 4 people that said they never use library services, only 1 respondent gave an explanation, that being that they lived overseas and believed distance services were unavailable to them.

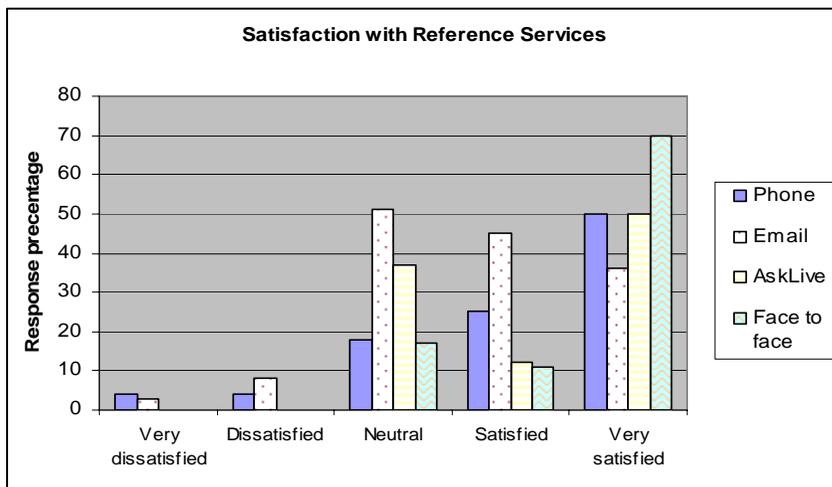
### Types of reference services used



**Figure 2: Reference services accessed by distance users**

81% of respondents indicated they had used the email reference service. This preference could be because sending an email is not limited to opening hours and there is little cost involved. A number of respondents stated that they found it easier to communicate through email. Phone had the second highest access rate, which may be because many people are familiar with how to use a phone, it offers personal contact and the 0800 free phone service makes it a cost effective option. 1 respondent commented that the phone service was easy to use and they found the 0800 number especially good. AskLive had the lowest use: only 19% of respondents indicated they had accessed AskLive. This supports the literature which reported a low uptake of chat services (Lee, 2004; Lupien, 2006; Maxwell, 2004).

### Satisfaction with reference services



**Figure 3: Response percentage of user satisfaction with reference services**

There is an inconsistency with these results as while 17 respondents gave a satisfaction rating for face-to-face, only 10 respondents indicated previously in this questionnaire that they had used this service before, indicating a possible misunderstanding regarding these questions.

The following coding scheme was applied to find the mean satisfaction rating for each service.

- 1 = Very Dissatisfied
- 2 = Dissatisfied
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Satisfied
- 5 = Very Satisfied

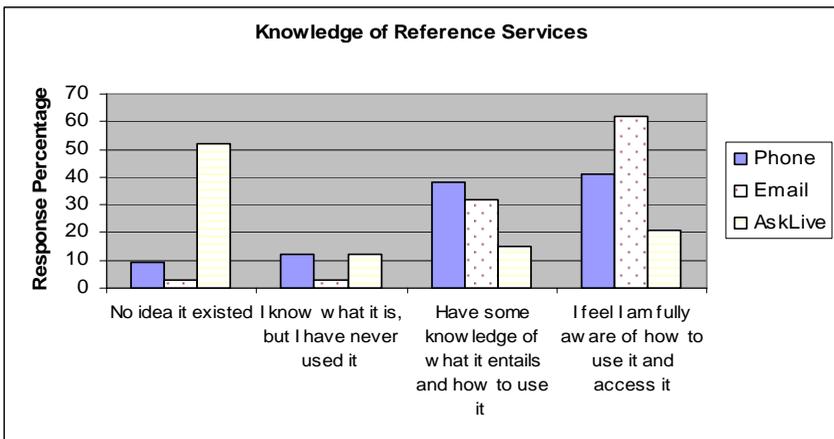
While the literature states that the face-to-face reference interview is becoming a thing of the past and that users are now moving towards using digital reference services (Ferguson and Bunge, 1997; Lee, 2004) respondents here seem to be very satisfied with this service. It had the highest mean satisfaction rate of all the reference services at 4.53 on the above coding scale. Differences between the means for each service were very small.

A mean satisfaction rating of 4.14 shows respondents were satisfied with the phone reference service. While email had the lowest mean satisfaction rating at 4.06, 29 respondents indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with this service. Only 1 of the respondents who indicated dissatisfaction provided an explanation, which was that they thought the email did not always provide answers quickly enough. 50% of respondents were very satisfied with the AskLive service, with a mean rating was 4.13. However this service also had the lowest total response count (16) across the services.

### Knowledge of reference services

Face-to-face reference services were not included here as it was assumed that students would either already know about this service, or be unable to use it as they are distance students. To calculate the average knowledge rating for each service the following coding scheme was applied. The following coding scheme was used for this question:

- 1= I feel I am fully aware of how to use and access it
- 2= Have some knowledge of what it entails and how to use it
- 3= I know what it is, but I have never used it
- 4= No idea it existed



**Figure 4: Knowledge of reference services.**

Most respondents indicated that they knew about the phone reference service,

41% indicated they were fully aware and 38% indicated some knowledge. Surprisingly 9% of respondents indicated that they had no knowledge of its existence. While this is not a large number, this service has existed for a long time. Of these 3 responses, 1 respondent said that they were a moderate user of reference services and the other 2 said they were frequent users. Perhaps they were new students and this is why they did not know about this service.

Email had the highest knowledge rating among the three reference services, with 62% stating they were fully aware of this service, a further 32% indicated some knowledge. With a mean knowledge rating of 3.53 most of the 34 respondents believed they had a fairly good knowledge of this service.

In contrast with the knowledge ratings found for phone and email, only 21% felt they were fully aware of how to use and access the chat service using AskLive. The majority of respondents, 52%, indicated that they had no idea that AskLive existed. This is possibly due to the promotion of AskLive. Lee (2004) proposed that marketing was a barrier preventing students from using chat reference.

### **Attitudes to different reference services**

Respondents were asked to respond to a series of statements by indicating their level of agreement. Students were asked to rate their answers based on the following coding scheme, and this was used to calculate the mean and standard deviation for each question.

1= Strongly agree

2= Agree

3= Neutral

4= Disagree

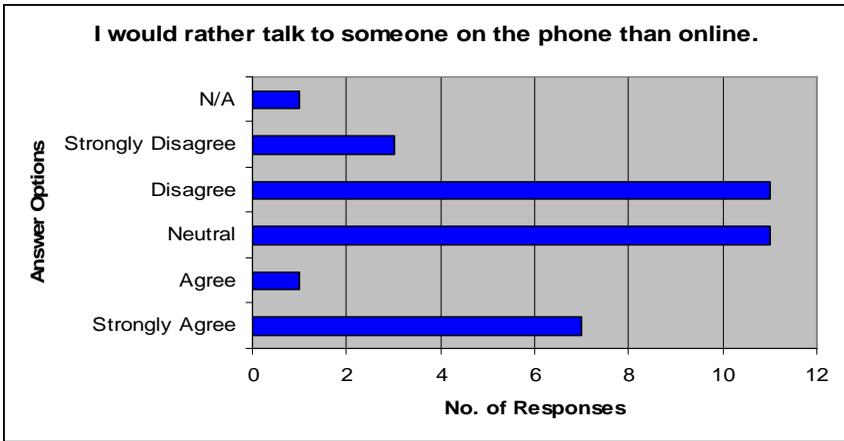
5= Strongly Disagree

The first statement posed in this part of the questionnaire was “I feel confident using AskLive”. 39% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, indicating many users did not feel confident regarding their ability to use AskLive. The mean rating is 3.29 (standard deviation=1.44) so a definitive attitude in either direction cannot be established.

The second statement posed was “I do not know enough about AskLive to attempt using it”. 56% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they did not know enough about AskLive to attempt to use it. The mean rating was 2.2 (standard deviation=1.24). While the majority of respondents did agree with this statement, answers are not tightly clustered around the mean, due to the 18% that disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The next statement posed was “AskLive should be better promoted”. Promotion of AskLive is possibly a contributing factor in the lack of knowledge distance users have about this service. This theory is supported by the 82% of respondents who agreed with the above statement. The mean rating of 1.65 (standard

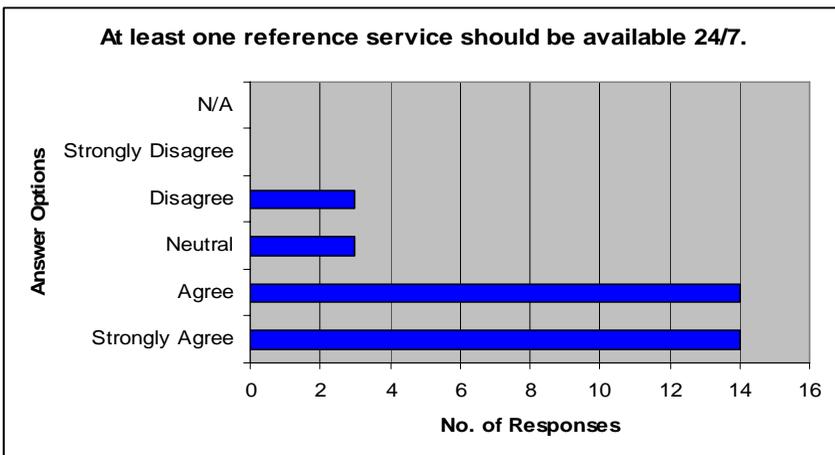
deviation=0.71), which indicates respondents felt quite strongly that AskLive needs to be better promoted so that more potential users are aware of it.



**Figure 5: Preference for phone over online chat**

A statement was posed about students' preference for phone rather than online (email or chat) reference services, with the statement "I would rather talk to someone on the phone than online".

The results show a wide range of responses, as the graph above shows. The mean rating for this statement is 3.06, due to the fact that 32% of respondents disagreed. A standard deviation of 1.27 shows that results were not tightly clustered around this mean and no definitive conclusion could be made regarding this data.



**Figure 6: Availability of reference services**

The statement was posed “At least one reference service should be available 24/7”. 82% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. While having one reference service available 24/7 did not feature prominently on distance users wish list outlined below, a mean response rating of 1.85 indicates that a 24/7 service may be something distance users would like. Although, it was clear from the responses to the open-ended questions that many distance users did not know that reference services operate outside of ‘office hours’, which may have affected these results.

The next statement posed in this part of the questionnaire was “Email doesn’t always provide answers quickly enough”. 65% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement, and the mean rating was 2.29, (standard deviation=1.24). Results were not tightly clustered around the mean due to the 21% who disagreed or strongly disagreed. 2 users wrote that slow response times made it difficult for them to use the email reference service, supporting the literature that stated slow response times was one of the disadvantages of email (Coffman, 2001; McGlamery & Coffman, 2000, Straw, 2000).

The literature states that a successful reference service needs to be welcoming, friendly and easy to use (Goodson, 2001; Kern, 2006; Stemper & Butler, 2001). This is supported by the results for the next two questions. The first of these statements posed in this part of the questionnaire was “I want a reference service to be friendly and personalized”. 50% of respondents were in strong agreement with this statement and the mean rating was 1.76 (standard deviation=0.89), only 1 respondent disagreed. The second statement posed in this part of the questionnaire was “Ease of use is the most important aspect of any reference service”. 91% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement and results are very tightly clustered around the mean of 1.42 (standard deviation=0.66). Ease of use appears to be the major criterion distance users want a reference service to have, and both ease of use and accessibility also featured in distance users’ wish list for reference services.

## **Qualitative Data Results**

The questionnaire allowed for students to make qualitative responses, adding in their own comments on a variety of issues. What follows is a summary of those responses, each grouped within the three reference types. A ‘wish list’ of what students would ideally like to be able to access in terms of reference services is included at the end.

### **Phone reference service**

Factors that made it difficult to use the phone reference service:

- Barriers in the environment: Lack of time to ring up; Live overseas so cannot access reference services; No phone access; No phone service at the times I need it.

- Communication issues: Difficulty explaining what I mean; Background noise from my end makes communication difficult; Seems harder to communicate over the phone; Preference for email as I can communicate more clearly in writing
- Service issues : Frustration with no-one answering; Waiting for a reply; Getting through to someone
- Other: Easier to use internet; No need as email so successful; Internet is less likely to make me feel like I am asking a stupid question

Helpful factors about the phone reference service

- Easy to use
- Free phone is particularly helpful for distance users
- 6 of the 20 responses to this question answered that they there were no factors preventing them from using the phone reference service.

### **Email reference service**

Factors that made it difficult to use the Email reference service:

- Barriers in the environment: The website is difficult to use; Understanding how to use this service the first time; Lack of internet access; Dial-up internet slowing the process down; Problems when server goes down; Password problems meant I gave up on email
- Communication issues : Would like instant feedback; Lack of personal contact
- Lack of acknowledgment : Would like acknowledgement that my email has been received
- Service issues : Slow receiving answer; Not receiving an email back in time

Positive remarks about the email reference service

- Found email to be a successful service
- Easy to use
- 6 of the 21 responses to this question answered that they there were no factors preventing them from using the email reference service.

### **AskLive reference service**

Factors that made it difficult to use the AskLive reference service:

- Barriers in the environment: Service unavailable when I went to use it
- Lack of acknowledgment : My question wasn't answered
- Lack of knowledge/need: No knowledge of its existence; Didn't know about this service; Not sure what this is; Unaware of this service; I know nothing about this service, so haven't bothered to use it; I don't know when nor how

to use this service; I know nothing about this, but other services work well so I don't need it; Not really sure what this does; Never used it and am not sure what it does; Haven't bothered to use this; Helpful factors about the AskLive reference service; Found this service to be fast and that it gave good advice.

### **Wish List for reference services to distance users**

- Availability/access: Availability and ease of use; Easy access 24/7; Service from 8am to 10pm would be good; Services outside of office hours; Online instruction course on how to get the most from reference services; Access for those students living outside of New Zealand; A special website just for distance users
- Service issues: More convenient and prompt; A friendly voice on the phone; Instant email reply that lets you know your request has been received and what will happen next
- Other: More information about AskLive
- Positive comments: The phone service is excellent; the librarians are lovely and bend over backwards to help distance students with their needs; I have been happy with the services I have used; College does an excellent job with its services to distance users.

### **Conclusion**

Due to the small response rate the researcher is reluctant to make any definitive conclusions from the results. As this research was conducted with a specific group of distance users it may be difficult to generalise these results to other institutions and these findings may not hold up with a larger sample. However this study could be the springboard for further research into areas of reference service to distance users.

### **Service Satisfaction**

Overall attitudes towards all the reference services were quite positive. All services received similar mean satisfaction ratings of around 4, indicating that on the whole distance students were satisfied with each reference service. Only 6 respondents indicated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with these services. Email was the most accessed service; many students indicated a preference for email as they found it easier to communicate what they wanted. It did receive the lowest mean satisfaction rating across the services (4.04), however most respondents were satisfied with this service. Technology issues seem to have been the cause of most of the dissatisfaction with this service. The majority of respondents were satisfied with the phone reference service and dissatisfaction seems to be due mainly to communication issues. AskLive had the same mean satisfaction rating as phone, but it was the least used service; interestingly more people had used the face-to-face reference service. While only 10 respondents had used the face-to-face reference service it received the highest mean satisfaction rating of all the services.

## **Service Knowledge**

Distance user's knowledge of reference services was surprisingly low. Less than half of the respondents indicated full awareness of the phone (41%) and AskLive (21%) services. While this result for AskLive is not unexpected given findings in the literature and the researcher's own experience, it is surprising that the knowledge level is not higher for phone and email. It seems that many respondents did not use the website or found it hard to navigate and so may never have found the distance website which gives details about accessing reference services. 17 (52%) of respondents indicated that they had no idea that AskLive existed, and 9 respondents wrote that lack of knowledge was the main barrier towards using this service.

## **Barriers to services**

Technology issues seem to be some of the main barriers preventing distance users from using the email reference service; these problems included navigating the website, poor internet access and password problems. Another barrier is the asynchronous nature of email as users expressed frustration with having to wait for a response. Many of the barriers discouraging users from using the phone reference service involved communication issues, users found it difficult to communicate clearly over the phone. Without having knowledge of these conversations it is difficult to say why users were struggling with communication, but some possible explanations are the lack of visual cues, bypassing of the reference interview or having English as their second language. This supports the literature which states that while distance users appreciate the personal contact afforded via phone it is not always the most convenient and accessible service (Meola and Stormont, 1999).

Frustration was expressed by 3 people about the inability to access someone on the phone and needing to ring up outside of office hours. The one clear barrier preventing distance users from accessing the AskLive service was lack of knowledge about this service. One respondent wrote that they would "like to be able to ask for advice directly and explain what I need. Like instant feedback." This student had no apparent knowledge of AskLive. Distance users wanted reference services to be welcoming and easy to use, with 30 (91%) respondents believing ease of use to be the most important aspect of any reference service.

## **Suggestion for Improving Reference Services to Distance Students**

All services

- Promote opening hours to distance users.
- Ensure all services are easy to use, friendly and personalised.
- Promote reference services to distance users, including how to use them and why they would benefit from using them.

### Phone reference service

- Use reference interview techniques to help overcome communication problems.
- Ensure someone is available to answer the phone during opening hours.

### Email reference service

- Look at ways to make email reference more prompt-perhaps an automatic response that lets users know their questions have been received. Straw (2000) suggests that upon receiving an email inquiry an acknowledgment email needs to be sent back immediately so that users know their query has been received and is being worked on, however this may not be feasible. Perhaps it needs to be made clearer that email does not give instant feedback, but chat or phone will.

### AskLive reference service

- Raise knowledge of this service through promotion and marketing. Promoting the AskLive reference service could be as simple as changing the size or prominence of the logo, Marcum (2005) stated having a logo that is prominent and eye-catching will be much more effective at attracting people to this service than something non-descript. While increasing the size or prominence of the AskLive logo may not be feasible, it could be accompanied by a caption giving users some idea about what the service does or what the logo relates to.
- The researcher suggests that institutions looking to implement chat reference ensure that a chat reference service is what their users require. Coffman (2001) suggests that a lot of the chat technology available is not conducive to reference service. Perhaps other technology needs to be explored, such as conducting a reference service using cell phone text messaging.

### Ideas for future research

- Future research in this area may include increasing the scope of the population by including distance users from other subject areas or other tertiary institutions. Also it would be interesting to include on-campus students as a comparison and to see if the age of users affects service use and attitudes. It could be beneficial to investigate whether other forms of reference, such as text messaging, would be a more cost effective reference service than chat.

## Bibliography

Aubele, J., Jackson, S., & Farmer, L. (2007). Technology impact on information needs and behaviors of the academic community. In Farmer, L (ed), *The Human Side of Reference and Information Services in Academic Libraries* (pp1-18). Oxford, UK: Chandos Publishing.

Backhus, S.H., & Summey, T.P. (2003). Collaboration: The Key to Unlocking the Dilemma of Distance Reference Services. *The Reference Librarian*, 40 (83/84), 13-202.

Braxton, S.M., & Brunsdale, M. (2004). Email reference as a substitute for library receptionist. In West, J. (ed) (2004). *Digital versus non-digital reference: Ask a librarian online and offline*. (pp 19-32). Binghamton; New York: Haworth Press.

Coffman, S. (2001). Distance education and virtual reference: Where are we headed? *Computers in Libraries*, 21 (4), 20-25. Retrieved August 3, 2007 from ProQuest database.

Croft, R & Eichenlaub, N. (2006). E-mail reference in a distributed environment: Best practices, user satisfaction and the reference services continuum. *Journal of Library Administration*, 45, (1/ 2), 117-147. Retrieved July 23, 2007 from Haworth Press Journals Online.

Ferguson, C.D. & Bunge, C.A. (1997). The shape of services to come: Values-based reference service for the largely digital library. *College and Research Libraries*, 58 (3), 252-65.

Ford, C. (2002) What's the difference? A comparison of face-to-face and computer-mediated reference interactions. Paper presented at 2002 Virtual Reference Desk Conference. Retrieved August 3, 2007 from <http://webjunction.org/do/DisplayContent?id=12621>.

Goodson, C. (2001). *Providing library services for distance education students*. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers.

Kelley, K.B. & Orr, G.B. (2003). Trends in distant student use of electronic resources: A survey. *College and Research libraries*, 64 (3), 176-91.

Kern, M.K. (2006). Chat it up! Extending reference services to assist off-campus students. *Journal of Library Administration*, 45, (1/ 2), 117-147. Retrieved July 25, 2007, from Haworth Press Journals Online.

Lee, I.J. (2004). Do virtual reference librarians dream of digital reference questions?: A qualitative and quantitative analysis of email and chat reference.

- Australian Academic & Research Libraries* 35 (2) 95-111. Retrieved August 1, 2007, from InfoTrac OneFile database.
- Lupien, P. (2006). Virtual reference in the age of pop-up blockers, firewalls and service pack 2. *Online: Medford*, 30 (4), 14-16 & 18-19. Retrieved August 1, 2007 from ProQuest database.
- Marcum, B. (2005). Digital Reference: Stressmaker or savior? *Kentucky Libraries*, 69 (2), 19-24. Retrieved August 5, 2007 from Library Literature & Information Science Full Text database.
- Maxwell, N.K. (2004). The seven deadly sins of library technology. *American Libraries*, 35 (8), 40-42. Retrieved August 3, 2007 from MasterFile Premier database.
- McGlamery, S., & Coffman, S. (2000). Moving reference to the web. *Reference and User Services Quarterly*, 39 (4), 380-387. Retrieved July 22, 2007 from ProQuest 5000 database.
- Meola, M., & Stormont, S. (1999). Real-time reference service for the remote user: From the telephone and electronic mail to internet chat, instant messaging and collaborative software. *Reference Librarian*, 67/68, 29-40.
- Nilsen, K. (2006). Comparing users perspectives of in-person and virtual reference. *New Library World*, 107 (3/ 4), 91-104. Retrieved July 30, 2007 from ProQuest database.
- Simonson, M., Smaldino, S., Albright, M., & Zvacek, S. (2006). *Teaching and Learning at a distance. Foundations of distance education*. New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.
- Stemper, J.A., & Butler, J.T. (2001). Developing a model to provide digital reference services. *Reference services review*, 29 (3), 172-188. Retrieved July 23, 2007 from ProQuest 5000 database.
- Straw, J.E. (2000). A virtual understanding: The reference interview and question negotiation in a digital age. *Reference and User Services Quarterly*, 39 (4), 376-379. Retrieved August 1, 2007 from ProQuest database.
- Tipton, C.J., & Earn, V.J. (2004). One school's experience with virtual reference. *Internet Reference Services Quarterly*, 9 (3 / 4), 99-114. Retrieved December 20, 2007 from Haworth Press Journals.
- Trump, J.F., & Tuttle, I.P. (2001). Here there and everywhere: Reference at the point of need. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 27 (6), 464-466. Retrieved July 28, 2007 from Library Literature & Information Science Fulltext database.

# Biculturalism in NZ libraries

Tui Smith

[study2006@ihug.co.nz](mailto:study2006@ihug.co.nz)

*This article is based on the report that won the Te Pumanawa Award in 2006 for the best piece of work on a bicultural theme to be produced in any of the courses which make up the Information a Library Studies major at The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, and is published here for the first time.*

## Abstract

*This study surveyed the opinions of both Maori and non-Maori to determine if there was any noticeable difference in their perceptions and attitudes to libraries and information. Results show that overriding differences were between the various age groups of the respondents, and not between their ethnicities. Results are compared to similar studies previously conducted in New Zealand, notably Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices (1997). The key points from the comparisons of these studies are that in the last 20 years both libraries and library patrons have changed, and that it may be time to reassess the way in which bicultural needs are viewed and approached in relation to the delivery of library and information services.*

## Introduction

This study was undertaken with the aim of satisfying the curiosity of the writer. I wanted to know whether Maori opinions of libraries and information are the same as non-Maori opinions of libraries and information. I became interested in this topic by reading about bicultural activities within the library context which are focused on helping Maori and are considered necessary because it is assumed that Maori have different information needs and library perceptions to non-Maori. As a Maori I do not understand the need for biculturalism in a library or information context because I do not think I have different information needs or library perceptions to non-Maori. I do not think biculturalism serves any significantly useful purpose in the library except perhaps for special needs groups.

*Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* (1997) is a report of a nationwide series of discussions about Maori opinions of libraries and information needs. Key points from the report are given in the literature review. Findings and recommendations from *Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* are accepted as authoritative and are extensively referenced in other writings such as Lilley (2000), McCahon & Oliver (2000), and Bidwell (2004). These writings promote the message that Maori have different opinions of libraries to non-Maori and have different information needs to non-Maori.

In my view, the current literature does not prove that Maori and non-Maori have different information needs or library perceptions. I found considerable documentation of Maori opinion but very little documentation of non-Maori opinion. To really see if they are different, a study needed to be done to discover and compare both Maori and non-Maori opinions. This report shows the results of such a study. Due to time constraints I surveyed only twenty participants. Nevertheless, the outcomes are very revealing and lead me to suggest that another national study of Maori and non-Maori information needs could yield useful results for libraries and library users. It would ensure that national policies truly reflected the current needs of the people.

## **Methodology**

I conducted a comparative study of Maori and non-Maori opinions of libraries and information by using a literature review to discover historical opinion, and also a questionnaire survey to discover current opinion. Findings from the literature review and questionnaire survey were compared and discussed.

## **Test questionnaire**

A literature review was used to gather documented information about Maori and non-Maori opinion of libraries and information. The most authoritative literature about Maori opinion of libraries and information was *Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices*. Comments from *Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* were used to create my questionnaire. This provided a point of comparison between my findings and that of the existing literature. The questionnaire set out a list of comments and participants were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each. A test questionnaire was constructed and responses were used to refine the final questionnaire.

Responses to the test questionnaire showed many comments in *Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* were no longer relevant to today's libraries and library users. For example, many *Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* participants perceived libraries to be unwelcoming places and one comment was that 'libraries need big conversation areas where people can study and flop on the floor and have it be more user friendly'. I used that comment in the test questionnaire and respondents said that their library does have a place where people can relax and flop on the floor. Therefore the comment no longer reflected current needs so it was deleted from the questionnaire.

Many comments in *Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* reflected a degree of negativity that was not shared by test respondents. For example, most comments about librarians were negative and I included several in my questionnaire. Test respondents disagreed with the negative comments so I changed the questionnaire to reflect positive opinions of librarians.

## Revised questionnaire

The questionnaire was revised accordingly, and sent out to 29 people in the following manner:

- 17 questionnaires were sent to people by email and 10 responses were received. Technical problems may have prevented more responses from being made, for example, questionnaire attachments sent to hotmail addresses could not be opened.
- 8 requests for phone interviews were made and 6 responses were received.
- 4 requests for face-to-face interviews were made and 4 responses were received.

Participants range in age from teenage to elderly. Participants encompass a wide range of occupations from high school student to retired.

	<b>Maori</b>	<b>non-Maori</b>
13 to 19 years	3	2
20 to 60 years	5	4
Over 60 years	2	4
<b>Total participants</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

*Figure 1. Participant categories*

Figure 1 shows that twenty responses were received to the questionnaire. Ten responses came from people of Maori descent and ten from people of non-Maori descent. For comparison purposes, responses were divided according to participant age as well as ethnicity. I wanted to discover how age might affect library opinion and information needs along with ethnicity.

## Quantitative data

The questionnaire consisted of a list of comments and participants were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each one. The responses were ranked on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). All rankings were entered on a chart and averages were worked out to show the degree to which the entire group of participants agreed or disagreed with each comment. If the average for a comment measured between 1 to 2.5 it was taken to mean general agreement, between 2.5 to 3.5 indicated neutral opinion, and between 3.5 to 5 showed general disagreement.

Information was collated for the following categories of respondents:

- complete analysis of all responses
- response averages for Maori and non-Maori
- response averages for different age groups within Maori and non-Maori
- response averages for different age groups

## **Qualitative data**

Every participant answered every question. A blank column was created for respondents to add their own comments next to the ranking they gave. Fifteen respondents added comments, some added comments to every question.

There were twenty-five questions in all, twenty-three were closed questions and two were open. The closed questions were those which asked for a response to a comment on a scale of 1 to 5. The open questions were intended to generate more open communication than was expected from the closed questions. Contrary to expectations, there was much more feedback from the closed questions than the open. These were very helpful in understanding why participants agreed or disagreed with questionnaire comments.

## **Findings**

### **Opinions of libraries**

There was unanimous agreement that libraries are important for learning. Most respondents expressed strong agreement that they were comfortable with libraries and liked visiting them. Only two respondents expressed strong disagreement. They were high school students aged 13 to 19 years. Several respondents never learned how to use the library as a child, and with the exception of one person, all had since learned. The exception was a person aged over 60 years and he said that libraries were important and it's good to learn how to use them although he never did. Only two people agreed with the comment that big libraries are frightening, both were aged over 60 years. All other participants indicated strong disagreement. Strong disagreement with the comment that libraries are places of silence which is off-putting. Participants indicated acceptance of and comfort with the level of noise in their libraries. Only one person agreed with the comment 'I don't know my way around a library so I never use them'. He was aged over 60 years. All other respondents expressed strong disagreement.

### **Opinion of librarians**

There was a strong positive opinion of librarians. Strong agreement that librarians are helpful and friendly. A majority feel there are enough librarians to provide service although they can be busy depending on the number of people in the library.

### **Attitude towards information literacy skills**

There was overall neutrality to the comment that most people are too shy to admit they don't know how to find information, but, there was a marked difference between Maori and non-Maori. In every age group most Maori indicated disagreement but most non-Maori indicated agreement. Comments from Maori participants were: 'I've never come up against that concern', 'people don't mind asking', 'I usually ask'. Comments from non-Maori were: 'that's me', 'I think most people would ask'.

Everyone indicated strong agreement that people should be prepared to ask the librarian for help. Possibly this means that although some admitted to being shy, they recognised a need to get over the shyness and be prepared to ask the librarian for help. A majority felt that librarians should also teach people how to find information. Only one respondent strongly agreed that the catalogue was hard to use. She was a university student and although she is information literate, her response reflected frustration with unsuccessful catalogue searches. Fifteen respondents expressed no problem with using the catalogue although strongest disagreement that it was hard to use came from those aged 13 to 19 years. Two of these also said they had never used the catalogue and until I mentioned it to them, they didn't know it existed. Both are aged over 60 years and are happy with their current method of finding information with the help of the librarian.

### **Attitude towards information**

There was strong agreement that libraries are useful for meeting our information needs. One respondent said most of her information needs can be met at home on the internet but when the computer's not working then the library is the next best option. There was very strong agreement that libraries can help our children learn about their heritage. Several respondents commented on how they loved the wealth of material available in libraries.

### **Attitude towards bicultural element**

There was very strong disagreement that Maori feel more comfortable dealing with Maori librarians. Respondents felt that there was no advantage to using the service of Maori librarians as opposed to non-Maori librarians. High neutrality indicated towards the comment that it would be good for librarians to have Maori language training but there were notable differences between Maori and non-Maori responses. Four Maori disagreed and four were neutral. Four non-Maori agreed and four were neutral.

- Maori comments were: 'not helpful unless the customer can speak the language', 'don't care', 'it would be nice but I'm more comfortable with English', 'doesn't make a great deal of difference'.
- Non-Maori comments were: 'some Maori language speakers should be available', 'I don't think it makes a difference', 'no help to me, I don't see the point', 'how many Maori patrons speak Maori?'.

The above responses reflect similar attitudes between Maori and non-Maori but differences in questionnaire rankings likely show differences in Maori and non-Maori interpretation of the comment. Maori probably looked at how the comment related to themselves, and finding Maori language in the library irrelevant to themselves, they indicated disagreement. Non-Maori probably looked at how the comment might affect others, and although Maori language had no relevance to themselves it might be relevant to others.

## Summary of literature review

There was strong support for *Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* report findings in the literature review. *Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* presents the findings of a nationwide series of discussions in which small groups of people met to discuss Maori opinion of libraries and information needs. The research was commissioned by the Library and Information Association of New Zealand (LIANZA) and Te Ropu Whakahau, the association for Maori information workers. *Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* forms the basis for LIANZA's bicultural planning activities and is the single most influential literature today for the promotion of bicultural activities in libraries. Key points to emerge from *Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* in order of prominence are:

- Information literacy: Participants expressed unfamiliarity with library services, have difficulty using technology, lack information access skills.
- Maori youth: Participants expressed a wish to foster literacy at an early age, concern over lack of materials for Maori studies students, concern with success at school.
- Maori staffing: Participants suggested Maori patrons prefer dealing with Maori librarians, more librarians needed in the profession.
- Maori communities: Participants expressed a desire for Maori libraries.
- Intellectual and cultural property rights: Participants expressed concern over libraries holding Maori genealogies and tribal histories, concern over accuracy of Maori records.

The most dominant theme was information literacy which emerged from discussions about libraries as did the themes on Maori staffing, Maori libraries, and Maori communities. Themes on Maori youth and Intellectual and cultural property rights emerged from discussions about information needs.

### Information literacy and libraries

Reviewed literature reflects strong negativity and pessimism toward Maori abilities in information literacy. Lilley (2000) says a big barrier to advancing information literacy amongst Maori is non-use of the library. He referred to *Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices*, saying participants expressed negative impressions of libraries which could explain why Maori don't use them. Bidwell (2004, p.21) also referred to *Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* and said that the needs of Maori are the similar to other unconfident users in that they need help to locate what they want. Blake (1990) says the lack of library use by Maori is a concern in the library profession. It is hoped that Maori librarians coming through the qualifications system, as well as interested non-Maori, will modify and improve services to encourage Maori patronage.

*Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* (1997, p.23) said Maori generally did not know how to find information. Participants also expressed difficulty using the computer catalogue. They said a lot of students are shy about asking for help.

Lilley (2000) says information literacy is a low priority for Maori because they are distracted by problems 'best reflected in the statistics collected by Statistics NZ'. These show that Maori dominate all the negative statistics in NZ such as lower life expectancy, lower average earnings, lower educational success, and higher chances of imprisonment. Murphy (1998) agrees that Maori suffer from high imprisonment, low paid employment, and low education and these things affect the way Maori look at libraries. He believes that libraries should be tailored to meet Maori information needs and to make them feel welcome. Lilley also believes that libraries should be more welcoming to Maori.

I researched statistical data referred to by Lilley and Murphy and found a report written by Allan (2001) for Statistics NZ. The report said ethnicity information is collected by Statistics NZ and used by government agencies, policy makers, researchers, and community groups to plan services and allocate funds aimed at assisting ethnic groups. Information is used to measure and assess the economic and social well being of ethnic groups. Some people oppose ethnic data collection. They advocate the 'instrumentalist theory' which says ethnicity data is a tool used by political powers to exploit ethnic groups for their own interests. Allan says ethnicity is self-perceived in that a person may claim Maori ethnicity if they feel a kinship with that group. People are able to change their ethnic group during the course of their life and people can belong to more than one ethnic group. Statistics NZ uses highest priority counting where a person is counted as Maori even if they claim two ethnicities. For example, a person who has one parent who is Maori and one who is Chinese would be counted as Maori but not Chinese.

### **Attitude towards information**

McRae (1992, p.70) sees a difference in Maori attitudes towards information and libraries from non-Maori. She says Maori have a strong sense of oral tradition which renders knowledge as something sacred and to be protected, which practice does not mesh well with Pakeha librarianship practices. Carroll (1990, p.12) repeats this message by saying 'in Maori people, knowledge is precious and given out as a person is able and competent to handle it. Somehow there is a conflict between our Pakeha idea of spreading it around and Maori people in treasuring and protecting it.'

### **Biculturalism**

Szekely (1992) says the lack of Maori participation in libraries as patrons and as librarians is a problem. The rate of entry for Maori into the profession is very slow. He says this is due to the non-Maori image of librarianship, also, Maori perceive the profession to be dull. He says libraries have difficulties providing information to Maori because they lack Maori skills such as librarians who speak the language. Szekely says that in a national survey of librarians, biculturalism was ranked very low in importance. He believes apathy among librarians is one of the largest barriers to Maori participation in libraries. The need to educate and encourage librarians to promote biculturalism in libraries is now recognised by

Victoria University and The Open Polytechnic of NZ in their library studies programs (Szekely in McCahon & Oliver, 2000, p.18). Szekely adds that groups such as bilingual school units are making demands on libraries for materials in Maori. Assessing material is an important part of the library purchasing process and there are very few librarians who can speak Maori to provide content analysis of Maori literature.

## **Survey findings and literature review comparison and discussion**

### **Information literacy and library use**

Behrens (1994) says an information literate person is one who can access information using necessary technology and methods and demonstrates the capacity to understand and use the information that's uncovered.

Lilley (2000), Murphy (1998), Blake (1990), and Szekely (1992) all say that non-use of the library by Maori is a problem and a barrier to advancing information literacy. Lilley and Murphy say the reason for non-use by Maori is found in social issues such as higher unemployment, lower life expectancy, and lower education, citing data published by Statistics NZ. Although there is no evidence to suggest a correlation, statistics have been used here to promote the idea that Maori have different library and information needs to non-Maori because of social challenges. Their reasoning seems to indicate use of the instrumentalist theory explained by Allan (2001). The theory suggests that statistics are a tool for exploiting ethnic groups. Statistical data is used to act upon a group and/or the group's needs are used to gain certain aims. In this instance, the social/economic data of Maori are being used to obtain bicultural aims.

Allan (2001) said people may change their ethnicity during the course of their life, may claim Maori ethnicity regardless of parentage if a strong feeling of belonging exists, and is counted as Maori even if they claim two ethnicities. To my mind these statistical variables may lead to less than accurate conclusions being drawn about Maori.

*Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* (1997, p.13) reported many negative comments about libraries. Participants said they were places of silence which was off-putting, they were not welcoming, and large libraries were intimidating. In contrast, most survey respondents in the study I conducted agreed that they felt comfortable with libraries and liked visiting them. The exception were two people aged 13 to 19 years who expressed strong disagreement. They were high school students and probably thought of libraries in terms of school work and all it entails, therefore they disagreed that they liked visiting them. Only two people expressed agreement when I asked whether big libraries were frightening. They were both aged over 60 years. Only one person agreed with the comment 'I don't know my way around a library so I never use them', every other respondent disagreed. The exception, as noted earlier, was one of several respondents who had never learned to use the library as a child. He was aged over 60 years and felt

that libraries were important and it's good to learn how to use them although he never did learn. Those others who never learned to use libraries as children were also aged over 60 years and have since taught themselves how to use them. These findings show a very strong opinion that libraries are important, however, a person's age and opportunities for learning can determine their use of libraries. Those aged 60 years or older did not have access to libraries, as we know them, when they were young and may not have a need to learn to use them as adults. Those aged 20 to 60 may not have had access to libraries either but they usually learn how to access information due to need, for example, extended studies or work.

On the question of silence, there was strong disagreement from survey respondents that libraries are places of silence. Respondent comments indicated comfort with the level of noise in their libraries. Many pointed out that libraries now have music areas, video screens, and places where you can sit and relax and where silence is not an issue. In this instance, comments from *Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* were found to be irrelevant and outdated because of the changes in libraries throughout NZ.

Survey findings show lack of support for academic opinion regarding Maori information literacy and library use. Outcomes do not show ethnicity played a significant role in library use or patron opinion. It appears that a person's age, opportunities for learning, and changes in the library were more important factors.

### **Information literacy and asking for help**

*Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* (1997, p.23) says a lot of students are shy to ask for help. Bidwell (2004) says Maori are like other unconfident users in that they need help to locate what they want. These statements were not supported by the survey findings. On the question of shyness, most Maori disagreed that people are too shy to admit they don't know how to find information but most non-Maori agreed. Maori comments included 'I don't mind asking', 'I think most people would ask'. Non-Maori comment included 'that's me'. These findings contradict the idea that Maori rather than non-Maori have difficulty approaching a librarian for help. Despite the shyness, all respondents strongly agreed that patrons need to be prepared to ask librarians for help. There was also agreement that librarians have a responsibility to teach people how to find information. Strongest support for this came from the 13 to 19 years age group (2.0 average), compared to the 20 to 60 years group (2.5 average), and those over 60 years (2.8 average). This probably reflects the opportunities for learning within each age group. Those aged 13 to 19 years receive information literacy training at school and are probably use to approaching the school librarian for additional help.

Many in *Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* (1997, p.23) expressed difficulty using the computer catalogue and said Maori did not know how to find information. In the survey, five agreed that the catalogue was difficult to use but only one expressed strong agreement. That person was a university student. Fifteen respondents

expressed no problem, yet two of those with no problem also admitted they had never used the catalogue. They were both aged over 60 years and unaware that the catalogue existed. They are happy to find information with the help of their librarian.

### **Biculturalism**

Szekely (1992, p.67) says librarians throughout NZ ranked biculturalism as low in importance. Survey respondents also ranked biculturalism as unimportant. When asked whether Maori people like to deal with Maori librarians, only two respondents agreed. They were both non-Maori. The great majority disagreed and gave indications that they saw no advantage to using the service of Maori librarians as opposed to non-Maori librarians. It is likely that the two non-Maori agreed because they were thinking of others and how it might be good for them. On the question of librarians receiving Maori language training, the overall response was neutral however there was strong indifference indicated by respondent comments. Maori respondents made nine comments, seven indicating indifference such as 'don't care', and 'doesn't make a great deal of difference', and two indicating it would be good for themselves. Non-Maori made four comments, two indicating indifference and two indicating it would be good for others. Findings here show that Maori patrons do not need bicultural elements in the library but non-Maori probably support it because they think Maori want it.

Literature and survey findings indicate that biculturalism is not important to many library users or library workers whether Maori or non-Maori.

### **Conclusion**

I conclude that Maori opinion of libraries and information needs is the same as non-Maori. This is speaking in general and not taking into consideration special needs groups such as bilingual language units. I found that changes to libraries, a person's age, and opportunities for learning created noticeable differences in opinion rather than ethnicity.

In two instances overall response to a comment was neutral yet there were marked differences between Maori and non-Maori. This occurred on the question of shyness where more non-Maori than Maori indicated shyness and again on questions of biculturalism where more non-Maori than Maori indicated support. Perhaps this gives a hint of where biculturalism is coming from. It seems that influences outside current Maori library users feel Maori need bicultural elements and have sought to provide them. I believe the motives behind bicultural initiatives are altruistic. However, it is questionable as to whether biculturalism meets basic library functions of knowing the needs of patrons and then meeting them.

I conclude that bicultural initiatives are unwanted by the majority of Maori patrons. The reason for this is that Maori do not perceive them as being relevant to their individual needs. I do not feel it's necessary to create issues over

ethnicity in the library. I think people should be treated the same and the traditional library function of discovering patron needs and striving to meet them is still the best way to provide useful, satisfying library services for all.

I conclude that national statistics should be used with caution. Variables in data collection and age of information renders this data unreliable for reflecting current local needs. Literature that uses statistics to promote biculturalism comes across as negative, pessimistic, and patronising to Maori.

I conclude that my study did not support the findings of *Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices*. Participants in *Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* expressed negative attitudes towards libraries, librarians, and information technology. In contrast, my survey findings showed overwhelming approval of libraries and librarians and few problems with information technology. I suggest two main reasons for this contrast:

Libraries have changed since *Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* was published. As indicated in methodology, many comments in *Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* tested irrelevant to today's libraries and library users. For example, many *Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* participants perceived libraries to be unwelcoming places and one comment was that libraries needed big conversation areas where people can study and flop on the floor. I used that comment in the test questionnaire and respondents said their library does have a place where people can relax and flop on the floor.

Library patrons have changed since *Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* was published. Children are now taught to be information literate from a very young age and show greater comfort and familiarity with libraries and computers than what was evident in 1997, when *Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* was published. Patron realities have changed. For example, my study showed strongest negativity towards information technology came from a university student, not because she didn't know how to use it but because it wouldn't produce results she wanted. My survey also showed strongest dislike for libraries came from high school students. This was not because they didn't know their way around libraries but because they knew libraries meant homework.

*Te Ara Tika Guiding Voices* did not gather non-Maori opinion and were not able to distinguish whether comments were made because of ethnicity or for some other reason. Since all their participants were Maori, it was assumed that they represented Maori opinion. However, except for opinions on biculturalism, I think that age, opportunity for learning, and current library conditions may have played a more important role in creating opinion than ethnicity.

## Bibliography

Allan, J. (2001). *Review and the measurement of ethnicity. Classification and issues*. Wellington, NZ: Statistics NZ. Retrieved 11 November, 2004, from [http://www.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/web/aboutsnz.nsf/0/bdb7c876674de4fdcc256ae800750984/\\$FILE/issues\\_main.pdf](http://www.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/web/aboutsnz.nsf/0/bdb7c876674de4fdcc256ae800750984/$FILE/issues_main.pdf)

Baker, T., Isaac, M., Li, M., Marshall, K. (2004). Learning expectations of different ethnic groups: An exploration. *Better business through education*. Paper presented at the NZ applied business education conference, 28-30 September, 2004, Te Papa, Wellington.

Behrens, S. (1994). A conceptual analysis and historical overview of information literacy. *College and research libraries*, 55(3).

Bidwell, P. (2004, September). Meeting the reference needs of Maori. *Library life*, 293, 21.

Blake, B. (1990). *Biculturalism and NZ libraries*. Wellington, NZ: Victoria University of Wellington.

Carroll, R. (1990, December). Bicultural library services: A personal view. *New Zealand libraries*, 46(7/8).

Dennis, P. (1996, September). Maori memories of the creator: Native people remember God in the land of the long white cloud. *Creation magazine*, 18(4). Retrieved on 31 May, 2005, from <http://www.answersingenesis.org/creation/v18/i4/maori.asp>

Evans, G. & Zarnosky, M. (1999). Selection process: Theory. Chapter 4 in *Developing library and information centre collections* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). Retrieved 22 April, 2005, from [http://lu.com/bookext/evanszarn\\_chapter04.pdf](http://lu.com/bookext/evanszarn_chapter04.pdf)

*Library life te rau ora: Bicultural feature*. (1998, July). 225, 1.

Lilley, S. (2000, May). Major concern for Maori. *Library life*, 245.

McCahon, R., & G. Oliver (Eds). (2000). *Informing NZ: Libraries, archives, and museums*. Lower Hutt, NZ: Open Mind Publishing.

MacDonald, T. (1993). *Te ara tika: Maori and libraries: A research report*. Wellington, NZ: NZ Library and Information Association.

McRae, J. (1992, Summer). Getting it right between Maori and Pakeha in libraries. *Sites*, 25.

Murphy, T. (1998, July). Te tikianga Maori house: Takawai talks. *Library life te rau ora: Bicultural feature*, 225.

Roach, P., & Morrison, M. (1998). Pursuing the winds of change. *Library association record*, 100, no.7.

Szekely, C. (1992, Summer). Maori people in libraries. *Sites*, 25.

Szekely, C. (1997). *Te ara tika guiding voices*. Wellington, NZ: NZ Library and Information Association.

The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand. (2003) Bicultural communication: Maori and libraries. In *7221: User education and reference skills, Module 2: The reference encounter*. Lower Hutt, NZ: The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand.

# The Parliamentary Library's contribution to the development of libraries in New Zealand

John E. Martin

Parliamentary Historian

Parliamentary Library

[john.martin@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:john.martin@parliament.govt.nz)

## Abstract

*This article explores various ways in which the Parliamentary Library aided the broader evolution of libraries in New Zealand. It emphasises the genesis of the National Library. It also includes contributions made by particular Parliamentary Librarians, the early years of the Alexander Turnbull Library, and the newspaper, New Zealand and international documents collections which over the years became national resources. The history of the Parliamentary Library (for much of its life the General Assembly Library) reveals the significant role it played in library developments in this country.*

## Introduction

In many countries the libraries created for legislative and parliamentary purposes have also served broader national functions, and have played an important role in library developments. New Zealand is no exception. We can look to the examples of the Library of Congress and the Canadian and Australian federal Parliaments (Laundy, 1980). The recently published book *Parliament's Library - 150 Years* refers to this theme from time to time but is not able to develop it (Martin, 2008).

The contribution of the Parliamentary Library has ranged from collections, bibliographic resources, classification and cataloguing to policy and organisational developments in libraries. Its librarians and parliamentarians associated with the Library have made vital contributions to library developments in this country.

The Library's beginnings were in a small reference collection in a storeroom in the original Parliament Buildings in Auckland (1854-1864). With Parliament's move to Wellington in 1865 the Library gained more spacious premises and began to expand as greater numbers of books were purchased, exchange relationships with other countries developed, and donations accumulated. The Library began to print its catalogues from the mid 1860s and broadened its collections beyond parliamentary reference materials to the classics, political and

social science, biography, history and travel, and established a useful fiction collection.

The Library by the 1880s had become the leading library in the country. In his review of New Zealand libraries in 1884, C.W. Holgate of the British Library Association concluded that the General Assembly Library was ‘the finest and most important, as is fitting, in New Zealand’. It was a ‘first-class reference library. It contains some very fine early editions of the classics, a good collection of works of history, biography, and travel, and of parliamentary papers and statistics. There is an excellent collection of bound volumes of colonial newspapers, I suppose no library except Melbourne has a better. These will be invaluable to the future historian of New Zealand’ (Holgate, 1886, 18, 21-2). By this time the Library had 26,000 volumes compared with about 7,000 in Auckland’s Public Library, 9,000 in Wellington’s Athenaeum, 16,000 in the Canterbury Public Library and 20,000 in Dunedin’s Athenaeum.

### **Parliamentarians and librarians**

Unsurprisingly a number of members who were active in developing Parliament’s Library also made important contributions to wider library developments – to mention just one, Maurice O’Rorke member of Parliament, 1861-1890, 1893-1902, and 1904-1916 and Speaker for a substantial part of that time. He was a keen user of the Library and a member of the Library Committee, who worked to improve the Library in various ways. He enjoyed philosophy, theology, belles lettres and French literature, and was something of a classical scholar, making recommendations for acquisitions in this area to the Library Committee. He battled to have a new fireproof Library building constructed, having raised the matter as early as 1871. On account of ‘the serious risk of fire’ a brick or stone building was needed – ‘one more worthy of the national character’ he said (*Parliamentary Debates*, vol 11, 1871, 670-1).

O’Rorke was a vigorous promoter of Auckland libraries and of legislation aiding public libraries (Northey, 2000; Tolley, 1959, 1960; Traue, 1998). He had the Public Libraries Act 1869 passed, enabling local bodies to rate at one penny in the pound and to borrow to erect and maintain libraries. Libraries established under the Act were to be open to the public free of charge. He followed this up with the Public Libraries Powers Act 1875 which allowed incorporation of libraries and local authorities to make bylaws and impose and recover fines. But this, like the Act of 1869, did little to aid the establishment of libraries. In 1877, in the wake of the abolition of the provinces, he helped steer through the Public Libraries Subsidies Act in which the central state matched pound for pound money obtained by local authority rates for libraries. Some £5,000 was allocated for these purposes.



*1. George Maurice O'Rorke, Speaker of the House of Representatives 1879–90 and 1894–1902, was an important figure in the development of libraries in New Zealand. Parliamentary Service Collection*

General Assembly Library staff made notable contributions to broader library developments. Herbert L. James, who worked in the Library from 1889 until 1923, was an important if little-acknowledged figure. Some regard him as the ‘father’ of librarianship in this country. James graduated with a BA from Auckland University College in 1886 and became a secondary school teacher before joining the General Assembly Library in 1889, having taught himself librarianship. James had a keen interest in ancient and modern languages and the classics, and was a noted chess player. He became Acting Librarian in 1890, but his career was halted by a mistake made while a young student that meant he never became Chief Librarian. He was relegated to Assistant Librarian in 1901 when Charles Wilson (1901-1926) was appointed Chief Librarian. James continued in this capacity until his retirement in 1923.

James made a substantial contribution to the Library even if never appointed its formal head. He was largely responsible for the massive two volume printed catalogue of 1897 which, with its 40,000 volumes, encapsulated the Library’s

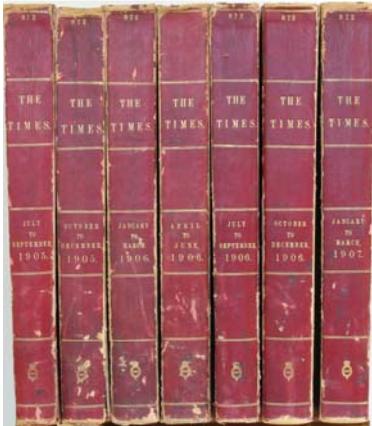
proud 19<sup>th</sup> century development. He introduced the Dewey decimal classification system into the Library (and probably into New Zealand at large) and helped the Christchurch and Wellington Public Libraries adopt it. He also introduced a card catalogue to the Library in place of the printed book catalogue and brought in systematic accessioning by number. James' paper to the inaugural conference of the New Zealand Libraries Association on the Dewey system discussed in detail how the system could be developed for New Zealand, based on the experience of the General Assembly Library (James, 1910).



2. Herbert James, acting General Assembly Librarian, 1890-1901. *Cyclopedia*, vol 1, Wellington, p. 108

## Newspapers

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Library became a treasure house, not only through its acquisition of many thousands of books but also through its extensive newspaper collection. From the late 1850s onwards files of newspapers were deposited in the Library and from 1869 it instituted a system of obtaining two copies of New Zealand newspapers in exchange for Parliament sending out copies of parliamentary papers and *Hansard* to newspaper proprietors. Parliament keenly appreciated the importance of keeping newspapers for the historical record, especially in its early years when it did not have a transcript recording of its debates. *Hansard* was not established until 1867; Parliament had to rely upon newspapers for the record of its debates. The Library also built up collections of *The Times* of London and a range of British periodicals.



3. A selection of *The Times*, London.  
Parliamentary Library

The newspaper collection became a prime historical archive for the country, even though one unsympathetic member referred to the ‘many tons of old newspapers’ that could happily be burnt to make more room as the Library groaned under the weight of its collections (*Parliamentary Debates*, vol 57, 1887, 279). Librarian James Collier pronounced: ‘No part of the literature of a young country will ultimately have more value than its newspapers’. ‘Future histories will, by the help of those records, be written of these young republics which will make all past histories of old countries seem meagre and superficial. They are therefore a priceless part of the Library possessions’ (*Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representatives*, 1887, session I, H-10, 2).

Chief Librarian Guy Scholefield (1926-1947), as a journalist and historian of some note, was conscious that the Library had built up a key national historical resource in its newspaper collections, but that more could and should be done. He was acutely aware that the Library systematically destroyed its copies of newspapers other than the major dailies after a period of two years. He began to promote their preservation by encouraging newspaper publishers and libraries to preserve their own local papers.

Scholefield also provided finding aids for newspaper holdings. He published a *Union Catalogue of NZ Newspapers* in 1938, and, after his retirement, *Newspapers in New Zealand* (General Assembly Library, 1938; Scholefield, 1958). The *Union Catalogue* included not only newspapers in public libraries but also those held by local authorities and newspaper proprietors as well as New Zealand newspapers held in Australia and Great Britain. Work done on a supplement to the *Union Catalogue* in the late 1950s revealed that losses of local newspapers continued. The Library made an offer to keep any newspaper files for which there was no local home. When the time came to consider transfers from the Library’s holdings to the National Library in the 1980s, much of the newspaper collection went to the Turnbull Library’s National Newspaper Collection.



4. *The newspaper index. Parliamentary Library*

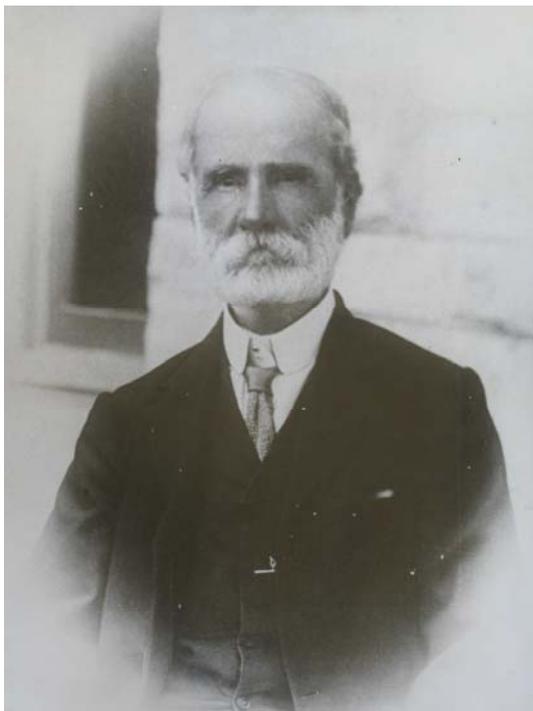
The Library also built up a newspaper subject index that remains a very valuable resource. When the Library initiated a reference service in the mid 1920s it also began to create an index of the *Evening Post*. By the 1930s the index employed one staff member full-time and it soon became the best in the country. Over time the *Dominion*, *New Zealand Herald*, *Christchurch Press* and the *Auckland Star* were added. As the many thousands of handwritten cards accumulated the index became an increasingly useful historical resource when associated with the newspaper collection.

### **New Zealand collection and copyright**

By the 1880s thought was being given to enlarging the Library's New Zealand collection. Librarian James Collier (1885-1890) energetically pursued New Zealand books and pamphlets and was given carte blanche to buy them. He began to look at private collections on sale and entered into complicated exchange relationships, such as with Dr Hocken of Dunedin, to obtain missing publications (McCormick, 1961). He also enlisted the assistance of Agent-General F.D. Bell in London in the quest. As a result of his efforts Collier was able to publish the first relatively complete bibliography of New Zealand literature (Collier, 1889; Bagnall, 1967).

For some time the matter of copyright deposit had exercised the minds of legislators. From at least 1869 there had been discussion of this. In that year T.H. Potts, MHR, raised the matter of legislation in Parliament in order to assist in the establishing of public libraries. All books, maps and other publications published in New Zealand should be forwarded to selected libraries as occurred in Britain and other countries. Public papers and other documents and newspapers should also be considered for inclusion.

Collier in 1888 suggested the enactment of copyright legislation that required the deposit of all publications into the General Assembly Library, Britain having passed the International Copyright Act in 1886. The Library Committee asked Premier Atkinson to support a bill and this was done but it did not get past its first reading. Herbert James raised the issue again in 1894 and in 1895 W. Hutchison introduced a bill requiring publishers to deposit in the Library two copies of all books and pamphlets published in New Zealand. The Librarian was to keep a bibliographic register that should be published annually in the *Gazette*. The Library Committee wanted the bill confined to depositing books in the Library rather than dealing with the difficult issue of copyright. The bill was discharged.



*5. James Collier, General Assembly Librarian, 1885-1890. Parliamentary Library, New Zealand Portraits, New Zealand Collection*

In 1903 Chairman of the Library Committee John Rigg and member of the Committee and historian Robert McNab pushed copyright provisions through Parliament. The General Assembly Library Act required that two copies of all publications, including pamphlets, be deposited in the Library to help constitute it as a ‘national library’. Those not complying would be fined £5; this was to be paid into the Library fund.

This legislation (incorporated into the Copyright Act 1913) created a foundation for the Library to become the most comprehensive collection of New Zealand materials in the country. The Library began to list publications received under the Act from 1928 and printed separate *Copyright Publications* from 1946. In 1967 this listing was superseded by the *National Bibliography* compiled in the Turnbull Library as part of the National Library.

The Copyright Act was amended in 1971 so that three copies of all materials published in New Zealand were deposited instead of two. The General Assembly Library continued to get two copies and to administer copyright deposit. It passed on one of the copies to the Turnbull Library from 1972. It still kept a large proportion of New Zealand publications (about two-thirds of all New Zealand publications, and half from 1984), but the Turnbull Library formally gained responsibility for the national collection. Chief Librarians Hillas MacLean and Ian Matheson agreed that copyright deposit should move to the National Library when the new building was constructed. In 1987 the Library finally relinquished its role, following agreement in Cabinet in 1985 that this should take place as part of the separation of the Library from the National Library.

### **Alexander Turnbull Library**

The General Assembly Library also contributed to the development of libraries in New Zealand through its somewhat controversial involvement in the Alexander Turnbull Library in its early years. Chief Librarian and bibliophile Charles Wilson was given supervisory oversight over the new library as its ‘Advisory Director’, having claimed to have been Turnbull’s intimate friend (Bagnall, 1970; Barrowman, 1995; Bassett, 1997, 89-90; McCormick, 1974). Wilson was at the heart of the process of the government taking charge of Turnbull’s collection and he had Johannes Andersen appointed as the collection’s first librarian. The two libraries began to modify their acquisition policies to complement one another. It did not take long for conflict to erupt between Wilson and Andersen, however, and the latter mounted a lengthy campaign to have the Advisory Director position abolished.

Andersen continued with his campaign when Dr. Guy Scholefield, journalist and historian, was appointed to the position of Chief Librarian in 1926. Andersen felt that he should have got the job and it rankled that Scholefield would supervise his work.

In the late 1920s Scholefield reported on how the Turnbull Library might be developed into a national collection. It needed new facilities to house the growing collection and make it more available for research. Co-operation between the two libraries could be developed further in the collection of pamphlets and the operation of the copyright provisions so that the second copy of all New Zealand publications went to the Turnbull Library. The General Assembly Library began to forward duplicates of pamphlets and books to the Turnbull Library. In 1930, following up on these discussions, Scholefield

unsuccessfully proposed amending the Copyright Act so that three copies were obtained, with one to be sent to Turnbull. Andersen's protests continued until the Advisory Director position was eventually abolished as part of the depression cuts in 1931.

## **The National Library**

The single most notable contribution made by the Parliamentary Library to library developments was undoubtedly its role in the emergence of a national library for New Zealand. Indeed it was itself the precursor for a national library as the premier library in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, for its growing New Zealand collection and holdings of newspapers, and at the turn of the century because of its copyright deposit function. One could add to this the Library's responsibility for the custody of the nation's official archives from 1926 until the early 1950s – not dealt with here because this function was largely beyond that of publications – but it was important as an associated national responsibility nonetheless.

The relationship of the General Assembly Library to the National Library is described in detail in chapters 5-7 of *Parliament's Library*. Here we look at important elements in the genesis of the idea of a national library and the place which the General Assembly Library had in these developments.

Parliament's librarians, once a substantial reference collection had been established, began to broaden the Library's collections and to think of it as a 'national library' in the making. Collier in the 1880s envisaged 'an institution which shall be the depository [sic] of the archives of the future nation and a centre for the diffusion of culture throughout both Islands'. He foresaw the day when 'Well equipped and well managed, the Library might become a kind of intelligence-department, to which inquirers from all parts of the colony might resort' (*Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representatives*, 1886, H-15, 2-3). He considered that the work involved laying the foundations of a national library. James, who took over in an acting capacity during the 1890s, persisted with the notion of a library for the nation but the financial constraints of the time meant that the necessary accessions could not be kept up.

Charles Wilson was appointed as the first Chief Librarian – like those before him he aspired to make the Library into a truly national library. More money became available for purchasing books and New Zealand publications began to flow in under the copyright provisions. Wilson got a special grant for New Zealand purchases and accessions rose substantially. Abandonment of the expensive binding of books in Britain helped increase the numbers of volumes coming in. Wilson remarked, 'as years go by this Library will be regarded as a truly National Reference Library, serving the same purpose ... as the British Museum' (*Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representatives*, 1907, H-32, 1).



6. General Assembly Librarian Jim Wilson (left) and other senior officers of the National Library share a cup of tea with National Librarian Geoffrey Alley (third from right), 1967. Alexander Turnbull Library, PAColl-0522-1-14

Following the fire of December 1907 that destroyed Parliament Buildings, with the exception of the masonry Library, he was particularly keen for the Library to move into more spacious premises in the planned new Parliament House. He advocated a large open-plan library on the principle of the British Museum reading room so that the Library might become a fully-fledged national library. This was not to be – only one half of Parliament House was built.

Meanwhile pressure for better public access to the superb collections was building up. From the 1880s onwards greater access had been allowed but this was still largely restricted to Wellington's social élite. From the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Wellington City Council, spearheaded by Labour councillors David McLaren and A.H. Hindmarsh (later Labour MPs), demanded better access to the collections for ordinary people. Soon-to-be leader of the Opposition William Massey asked who paid for the Library: 'It belonged to the taxpayers, and therefore the taxpayers should have the utmost possible benefit of it' (*Parliamentary Debates*, vol 125, 1903, 11-12). Some such as Rigg wanted 'every respectable person in the Dominion [to have] the right to use the library during the recess' (*Parliamentary Debates*, vol 155, 1911, 732).

New Zealand's librarians would from this time pursue the concept of a national library. This put the General Assembly Library in the spotlight in no uncertain terms, for it was the obvious candidate to build such an institution upon, even if its collection was jealously guarded.

From the beginning there was conceptual tension between the idea of a national library to provide a distribution service, particularly to those in country areas, as had developed in the USA and Australia, and a national library as a reference repository for the country as a whole, along the lines of the British Museum. While the General Assembly Library could see virtue in the latter it was not able to accept that its stock might become part of a wider system of circulation. Wholesale lending of books could not be reconciled with the need to keep books to hand for urgent parliamentary purposes.

These issues surfaced at the first conferences of the New Zealand Libraries Association from 1910 to 1912 at which it was suggested that the General Assembly Library be 'treated as a Dominion Library and thrown open as fully as is practicable to the general use of the public' (McEldowney, 1962). The Library was seen as the 'nucleus of a National Library'.

The views of the wider professional library and interested community had been registered in no uncertain terms, but within Parliament wider circulation threatened the service that the Library provided to MPs. Minister for the Legislative Department F.M.B. Fisher, endorsed by Library Committee Chairman G.J. Anderson, proclaimed that there was not a member in the House who would agree with the public taking books out of the Library during the session (*Parliamentary Debates*, vol 164, 1913, 215-20).

The Libraries Association then fell into abeyance. Impetus towards a national library came from another direction during the following decade – the move to put New Zealand's scientific endeavours on a new footing (Martin, 2008, 131-2). Attention shifted from the General Assembly Library to the work of the Board of Science and Art and its plans for a Dominion Library that might house the nation's collections, together with historical archives and art works.

From the mid 1920s until the 1960s, when the National Library finally came into being, the creation of a national library was a pivotal plank of the library profession in New Zealand. For some years it seemed that a National Library might be built around the General Assembly Library itself, but in the end, as a result of the protracted policy and organisational debates, the seeds of the National Library were sown elsewhere. Nonetheless, the General Assembly Library was at the centre of the debate. It had superb collections and a growing research capacity. But a fundamental stumbling block was that parliamentarians had to have priority in using the collections. This made it difficult to contemplate going beyond a national reference library.

The 1930s were crucial to the eventual outcome – which was that the General Assembly Library (and the Alexander Turnbull Library) were brought together with the new National Library in 1966. The formation of the Country Library Service in 1938 was vital to these developments (Alley, 1956). Scholefield has tended to be viewed as an obstacle to what happened, but he did have a generous and supportive attitude towards the idea of a national library, and towards those working towards the goal, even if he was cautious by temperament.

In the late 1920s, with the re-forming of the Libraries Association, it appeared that the General Assembly Library might become a national library that would provide a country library service. John Barr of the Auckland Public Library led the charge. The key issue was the physical location of collections and segregation of users of the services, in other words a suitable building. In the existing building the Library was unable to operate a separate reference service for the general public let alone develop distinct collections for parliamentary and public use – it simply did not have the room.

Barr persisted with his vision during the depression years, now enlisting the aid of the Carnegie Corporation of New York to give it impetus. The General Assembly Library still figured large in discussions. The young Alister McIntosh (who worked as reference officer in the General Assembly Library) came to the attention of the Carnegie Corporation (Beeby, 1988; Rochester, 1990). He travelled overseas on a Carnegie travel grant in 1932-3 to study libraries in the USA, Canada and Britain, extensively corresponding with Scholefield and getting excited about creating a ‘miniature Library of Congress’ in New Zealand. Scholefield began to develop plans for the closer co-ordination of the General Assembly and Turnbull Libraries – to eliminate duplication, to distribute copyright books better, make economies in staffing and to supervise research.

McIntosh’s subsequent wide-ranging report urged the formation of a National Library based on the General Assembly Library. The Library should be reorganised and the administrative difficulties posed by the triangular control by the Legislative Department, Speaker and Library Committee dealt with.

Scholefield, unhappy with the report, did not pass it on to Clerk of the House of Representatives, T.D.H. Hall, but McIntosh became a key contact in New Zealand for the Carnegie Corporation. Together with Hall, he played a vital role in developments (Alley, 1983).

On Barr’s initiative, Ralph Munn, Director of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, was invited to New Zealand to provide a survey report on libraries in 1934. The pair toured around the country. The Munn-Barr report bluntly stated: ‘It is time to settle the question of whether the General Assembly Library is to become a national library’ along the lines of the Library of Congress. It should develop further the legislative reference section as it existed in Congress and become ‘a great national reference library free to all citizens’ (Munn and Barr, 1934, 31).



7. National library system for New Zealand. Ralph Munn & John Barr, *New Zealand Libraries*

In 1935 Scholefield himself left New Zealand to look at a wide range of libraries, with the formation of a national library in mind and to prepare a report on a rural library service. His cautious report was predicated on the existence of the depression conditions and the presumed absence of state financial assistance (*Appendix*

to the *Journal of the House of Representatives*, 1936, H-32A). The coalition government's election manifesto included provision of a rural library service. By now Hall and McIntosh were raising serious questions about the capacity of the General Assembly Library to provide such a service, particularly if it was based on local authority rates rather than centrally funded.

In late November 1935 Labour was victorious at the polls. The context of the debate immediately shifted. Minister of Education Peter Fraser, advised by McIntosh and Hall, began to consider a 'national scheme of library reorganisation'. Scholefield's suitability to push the proposal forward was being gauged, while in the meantime the General Assembly Library was still considered the best home for the scheme. Scholefield himself was beginning to draw up detailed plans for an extended General Assembly Library, including the incorporation of the Turnbull Library and a country library service.

The Library Association conference held at Parliament in 1937 was crucial in making progress. Minister Peter Fraser accompanied Scholefield as an official General Assembly Library delegate to the conference. This conference's theme was a national library system. Fraser decided on a national rural library scheme funded by the government, in principle supervised by the General Assembly Library. But Hall and McIntosh began to focus on an autonomous organisation headed by Geoffrey Alley (McEldowney, 2006). In the end the Country Library Service, launched in 1938, was funded through the Department of Education. The Service, led by Alley and under the supervision of Hall himself, was housed in the basement of Parliament House. The decisive shift away from the General Assembly Library had taken place. The initiative was now with the dynamic Alley and his growing organisation. The Country Library Service became the National Library Service and from the mid 1950s onwards Alley worked tirelessly to create a fully fledged National Library that would, in the end, itself incorporate the General Assembly Library in 1966 (Ronnie, 1990).



8. *New Zealand Library Association Conference, 1937, in front of Parliament House. Alexander Turnbull Library, PAColl-5920-01-12*

## Conclusion

The General Assembly Library existed as part of the National Library until 1985. The merger provided the stimulus for a fundamental reorientation of the Library. Over time large parts of its collections, less relevant to contemporary parliamentary reference purposes, were transferred to the National Library. The Library began to focus much more on its services to Parliament and this has been emphasised increasingly in recent years. Throughout its history the Library has played a role in library developments; even today its New Zealand collection, its newspaper index, and its international documents collection are nationally significant resources. Its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2008 has provided an opportunity to highlight its place in history.

## Bibliography

Note: only published sources are cited here – primary sources are to be found in Martin (2008)

Alley, G.T. (1956), 'Country Library Service, 1930–1955', *New Zealand Libraries*, vol 19, no 6

Alley, G.T. (1983), 'Some people remembered', *New Zealand Libraries*, vol 44, no 1

Bagnall, A.G. (1967), 'The rival bibliographers: James Collier and T.M. Hocken', *Turnbull Library Record*, vol 1, no 2

Bagnall, A.G. (1970), 'A troubled childhood: "The nucleus of a national collection"', *Turnbull Library Record*, vol 3, no 2

Barrowman, Rachel (1995), *The Turnbull: A Library and its World*, Auckland: Auckland University Press

Bassett, Michael (1997), *The Mother of All Departments: The History of the Department of Internal Affairs*, Auckland: Auckland University Press

Beeby, C.E. (1988), 'The influence of the Carnegie Corporation', in Malcolm McKinnon (ed.), *The American Connection*, Wellington: Allen & Unwin

Collier, James (1889), *The Literature Relating to New Zealand: A Bibliography*, Wellington: Government Printer

General Assembly Library (1938), *A Union Catalogue of New Zealand Newspapers*, Wellington: Government Printer

Holgate, C. W. (1886), *An Account of the Chief Libraries of New Zealand*, London: Dryden Press

- James, H.L. (1910), 'The Dewey system of library classification', Libraries Association of New Zealand, *Proceedings of First Conference*, Dunedin
- Laundy, Philip (1980), *Parliamentary Librarianship in the English Speaking World*, London: Library Association
- Martin, John E. (2008), *Parliament's Library – 150 Years*, Wellington: Steele Roberts
- McCormick, E.H. (1961), *The Fascinating Folly: Dr. Hocken and His Fellow Collectors*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press
- McCormick, E.H. (1974), *Alexander Turnbull: His Life, His Circle, His Collections*, Wellington: Alexander Turnbull Library
- McEldowney, W.J. (1962), *The New Zealand Library Association, 1910-1960*, Wellington: New Zealand Library Association
- McEldowney, W.J. (2006), *Geoffrey Alley, Librarian: His Life and Work*, Wellington: Victoria University Press
- Munn, Ralph and Barr, John (1934), *New Zealand Libraries: A Survey of Conditions and Suggestions For Their Improvement*, Christchurch: Libraries Association
- Rochester, Maxine K. (1990), *The Revolution in New Zealand Librarianship*, Halifax, Nova Scotia: Dalhousie University
- Ronnie, Mary (1990), 'The National Library Act: The birth of an institution', *New Zealand Libraries*, vol 46, no 6
- Scholefield, Guy H. (1958), *Newspapers in New Zealand*, Wellington: Reed
- Tolley, C.W. (1959), 'Library legislation and government aid: part I – the provincial period', *New Zealand Libraries*, vol 22, no 8
- Tolley, C.W. (1960), 'Library legislation and government aid: part III – subsidies for libraries', *New Zealand Libraries*, vol 23, no 1
- Traue, J.E. (1998), 'Legislating for un-free public libraries: The paradox of New Zealand public library legislation, 1869–1877', *Libraries and Culture*, vol 33, no 2

# How Literacy programmes help rehabilitate young offenders

Greg Futcher

[Greg.Futcher@wcc.govt.nz](mailto:Greg.Futcher@wcc.govt.nz)

## Abstract

*This essay gives an overview of historical programmes and methods for rehabilitating young offenders in New Zealand and overseas, and compares imprisonment and recidivism rates. A specific literacy programme that has been used successfully overseas is examined, as well as a variation of that concept. 'Changing Lives Through Literature' is a unique programme that was developed in Massachusetts and has been taken up by other American states, and England. It involves the sentencing judge, probation officer and an academic, meeting to discuss books with young offenders in a classroom setting. The ideas and interaction generated, as well as a graduation ceremony for successful participants, has proved to be beneficial.' Read To Succeed' differs in that it caters for young offenders with reading difficulties, by having stories read aloud. It is held in the detention facility and staff attend, rather than a judge or probation officer. This programme has also had success in rehabilitating young offenders. It is recommended that these types of programmes be introduced into New Zealand.*

*Jails and Prisons are the complement of schools, so many less as you have of the latter, so many more must you have of the former.*

*Horace Mann.*

## Introduction

Not being able to read or write does not guarantee being sent to prison, but it does reduce other options, and makes the prospect more likely. As principal of a prison high school on Riker's Island, Gloria Ortiz says of her students 'If the education system did not fail them outside, they wouldn't be in jail' (Hong, 2000, para. 11). As well as reading and writing ability, basic numeracy is necessary to function well in society. Being literate is more than this however. Literacy programmes recognise that reading for pleasure or knowledge enables one to live vicariously, experience other lifestyles, empathise with other people and realise cause and effect, repercussions and consequences of certain actions. Literature helps us to learn some of life's lessons without actually experiencing the trauma and tragedy ourselves.

## **Literacy and offenders in New Zealand**

There are no literacy programmes in New Zealand other than teaching prisoners basic reading and writing. This has meant that only secondary sources have been able to be used, and the conclusions and recommendations are drawn from that material.

One common characteristic of people in prison is a lack of education and literacy. Over 73% of New Zealand prisoners only attended school to Year 11 (Form 5) or less, and over 23% only attended school to Year 9 (Form 3). Less than 3% had reached Year 13 (Form 7) (Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit 2005, p. 24).

A 1992 Department of Corrections survey found 60% of inmates had reading problems. It is unlikely that conditions have improved, as, although the department says 2258 prisoners currently have one or more educational objectives, in 2005 only 353 inmates actually attended literacy classes. In fact, 44% of the education budget went unspent in 2006 (McIntyre, 2006, para. 7).

While there seems to be some reluctance for authorities to fully promote literacy education, there is mounting evidence of their benefit. Researchers Ryan and Mauldin reviewed 97 studies on the impact of education on recidivism (re-arrest rate) conducted between the 1960's and 1990's. They reported that 85% of these studies showed 'a positive relationship between educational participation and reduced recidivism' (Steurer, Jenkins, 1997, para. 3).

## **Literacy and offenders in other countries**

Monica Frolander-Ulf teaches anthropology at the University of Pittsburgh. Since 1991, with others from the University, she also teaches college courses at a maximum security prison. She states 'Nearly all studies show that the more schooling an imprisoned person receives the less likely he or she is to get in trouble upon release. Literacy programs reduce recidivism...'. In the same article she refers to research from the Center on Crime, Communities and Culture: 'Inmates with at least two years of college have a 10% re-arrest rate, compared to a national re-arrest rate of approximately 60%' (Frolander-Ulf, 2001, para. 9).

If young offenders, in prison, or before they are convicted, can be educated to think about their own various issues, and the consequences of actions they might make, or have made, we would all benefit. Of course, these young people, because of their backgrounds and experiences, have attitudes that make it difficult to reach them. As evidenced by their high recidivism rates 'young offenders are not particularly responsive to sentences designed to deter from offending...Reconviction rates range from 81.7% for those sentenced to licence loss to 93% for those sentenced to corrective training (Zampese, 1997, p. 8).

The Scottish experience bears this out. A report on reducing re-offending by the Glasgow School of Social Work states ' Unlike in England and Wales,

community disposals in Scotland are not cast as punishment in the community; rather the emphasis is on rehabilitation.... Scotland's Criminal Justice Plan recognises that short- term prison sentences which fail to rehabilitate prisoners are counter-productive (McNeill, Batchelor, Burnett, Knox, 2005, p. 8).

Literacy programs would not be a punishment (though some offenders might think so) but a non-adversarial approach to enable the participants to experience different ideas and viewpoints. Through the use of literature (books and stories) tailored to their reading ability, young offenders can explore other avenues and options.

*All in all punishment hardens and renders people more insensible; it concentrates; it increases the feeling of estrangement; it strengthens the power of resistance.*

*Friedrich Nietzsche*

### **Crime and reoffending in New Zealand**

Crime is a growth industry. Police released the latest crime statistics in October 2006 with total reported offences increasing by nearly 7% in 12 months. Contributing to that increase was violent crime (up 10.2%), sexual offences (up 8%) and methamphetamine-related offences (up 50%)(Watt, 2006, p.A3).

New Zealand has one of the highest imprisonment rates in the western world. We are not the highest, that position is held by the United States with a massive 724 prisoners per 100,000 people. Our more modest rate of 181 per 100,000 is still higher than Australia (124), Scotland (135) and even England and Wales (146) (Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit 2005, p. 22).

What is worrying is not just the numbers of people in prison, but the age of young offenders arrested and convicted of serious crimes. Wilson and Rolleston (2004) in the introduction to their report state that a large number of studies show that the younger a person is when first convicted, the more likely they are to be repeat offenders and 'are more likely to commit further acts of violence and criminality than those who become criminally active later in life' (para.3).

Also of concern is the high recidivism rate, particularly of young offenders, which is usually higher than for adults. In America the re-arrest rate for all offenders is approximately 60%, with a re-imprisonment rate of 41% (Frolander-Ulf, 2001, para. 9). The recidivism rate for young offenders has been reported to be as high as 96% (Day, 2005, page 4). In England, Home Office figures show in February 2007 there were 11,872 under 21 year olds in prison, with an average reconviction rate of 78% for 18-20 year olds, and over 80% for under 18year olds (Prison Reform Trust, 2007, para. 6). In New Zealand the recidivism rates released in 2004 are comparable: 37% of all offenders re-imprisoned with two years and 51 % re-imprisoned within five

years. Again youth have the highest rate of recidivism with 24.5% being imprisoned within six months and 71.5% being imprisoned within five years (Wilson, Rolleston, 2004, para. 2).

This was further confirmed in 2007 in a report released by the New Zealand Department of Corrections. This was a 48-month follow-up on almost 5000 offenders released from prison over a 12-month period in 2002/03. The overall re-imprisonment rate was 49%, but of offenders aged under 20, 70% were re-imprisoned within the 48 months. These young offenders have twice the likelihood of being sent back to prison than do offenders aged over 40.

### **General programmes for reducing reoffending**

New Zealand has tended to follow the lead of the United States and Britain in developing rehabilitation programmes to reduce recidivism. Wilderness programmes, developed in North America were in vogue from the 1960's and were used in New Zealand well into the 1980's (Zampese, 1997, p. 36). Vocational/job skills programmes have also been popular with the Corrections Department. In July 2005 24 Canterbury inmates were the first in the South Island to graduate with a National Certificate in Employment Skills (NCES) (Corrections News, 2005, p. 2).

There have also been treatment programmes focusing on targeted offender groups, such as sex offenders, violent offenders and driving offenders. There has not been as much emphasis on educational programmes as they do not have the explicit goal of reducing recidivism (Anstiss, 2004, para. 9).

*When all you can pay is attention, then all they can take is your time.*

*Kris Kristofferson.*

The Forensic Psychology Research Group in South Australia conducted research on the best ways to reach young offenders. They also recommended structured cognitive-behavioural programmes, particularly those that focus on changing attitudes and beliefs that support offending. Programmes need to be engaging and responsive to their needs, and where possible delivered in community settings. One of their findings was that change is unlikely to take place unless a positive emotional relationship exists between the young offender and the service provider (Day, 2005, page. 5-12).

Studies that ask offenders about what has helped them desist offending have found that: it is a process; that it is helped by someone believing in the offender; and by discovering the ability to make choices and govern one's own life (McNeill, Batchelor, Burnett, Knox, 2005, p. 4).

## **Literacy programmes for reducing reoffending**

Recently there was information published about an interesting project in Wanganui. It is proposed that Year 1 and 2 children, who have fathers at Wanganui Prison, will take part in a literacy programme designed to help the parent learn how to read. Scheduled to start in September or October, the programme is part of The Literacy and Employment Project, established by Massey University (Gill, 2006, para. 8).

While this has never been tried in New Zealand before, there are similar projects in various American States that have proved successful. Programmes in Maryland involve children visiting fathers in prison and reading to each other (Shirley, 2005, para. 11), while programmes in Indiana involve incarcerated parents recording books on tape or video for their children or local schools (Indiana State Library, n.d.).

The results of these programmes are well documented. In New Zealand, reviews of Department of Corrections programmes are mainly internal, and few have been published externally (Anstiss, 2004, para. 9). This makes it difficult for researchers to form a complete picture. It is the same for young offenders. There have been few well-controlled evaluations of young offender programmes carried out in New Zealand (Zampese, 1997, p. 1). This makes it difficult to evaluate effective programmes.

## **The ‘Changing Lives Through Literature’ programme**

A programme for young offenders that I think would be effective here in New Zealand is Changing Lives Through Literature (CLTL). I first read about this programme when I saw an article on two librarians in Johnson County, Kansas who had won awards for their literacy programmes with young offenders (Johnson County Library, 2005, para. 1).

Their programmes are based on the concept developed in Massachusetts in 1991 by Robert Wexler, an English professor, and Judge Robert Kane, a Massachusetts District Court justice. They were concerned at the lack of success prison had in reforming prisoners, and decided that using literature could be an effective rehabilitation tool (Trounstone, 2005, p. 1).

The programme they devised was initiated with eight men, sentenced to probation with the requirement that they participate in the programme. Between them, these men had 148 convictions for crimes such as armed robbery and theft. For twelve weeks the men met at the University of Massachusetts and were exposed to Modern American Literature - short stories and novels (Trounstone, 2005, p. 2).

What makes the programme unique is the fact that the sentencing judge, a probation officer and the facilitator, usually a college professor or librarian, all attend the meetings, read the same books and participate in the discussions. This means that all the participants (court officials, academics, offenders) are on an

equal basis, each of them given the chance to express their opinion or feelings. The offenders find, perhaps for the first time, that authority figures are willing to listen to them, and in fact encourage them to open up (Trounstine, 2005, p. 2). Offenders who participate just to avoid a prison sentence can be imprisoned if they fail to complete the programme.

This can be powerful and empowering experience for the all the participants. Through people meeting in a room, with no roles to act out, interaction and discussion of stories and the character's actions can evolve into revealing and personal insights. The offenders are able to re-evaluate their own actions and deeds by relating to and identifying with, or repudiating, fictional characters. The officials gain a deeper understanding of the offender's motivations and experiences. Of course, integral to all these things happening, is the literature. These books and stories must lend themselves to the ideas and issues to be explored. They provide the inspiration for the offenders to commit to change.

Another unique characteristic of CLTL is that there is a graduation ceremony, often held in the same courtroom that offenders were sentenced. Having successfully attended meetings, and fully participated in discussions, the graduates not only receive a certificate of completion, they also receive validation of their efforts from the judge, probation officer and facilitator. This is an important motivating factor in the offender's struggle to turn their life around (Trounstine, 2005, p. 4).

*San Quentin, what good do you think you do? Do you think I'll be different when you're through?*

*Johnny Cash.*

A year after the initial programme was run, it was taken up by a female Humanities professor and a woman's programme was developed. The programme has since spread to a number of U.S. states and to England. The remarks of one United Kingdom graduate of the course are typical of many. He said:

*It has made me realise how I have made people feel by acting and committing the crimes that I have during the past. And the pain I must have caused to all the people I have affected through my criminal behaviour. Not just my family or loved ones who share the pain right to the very end but the victims as well. Sometimes I wonder at just how much pain I have caused people in my life and when will I finally get this right?* (Trounstine, 2005, p. 6).

Although the basic principles remain the same, the programmes developed in other states and countries differ. Some meet more often, some are mixed gender, and in some the judge supports the idea, but does not participate.

## The ‘Read to Succeed’ programme

In Johnson County, Kansas, two librarians developed two literacy programmes for young offenders: one a Changing Lives Through Literature programme adapted for teen probationers, and the other, a programme called Read to Succeed, for teen residents of the Johnson County Juvenile Detention Center (Johnson County Library, 2005, para. 4). Both programmes recognise that reading, and reading ability, are important issues for young offenders. CLTL follows more closely the original concept developed in Massachusetts, but is adapted for youth: A judge and a probation officer participate in the two hour meetings, which are held every second week for fourteen weeks. Modern young adult fiction is selected for relevant themes for reading and discussion. Participants are asked questions to facilitate discussion: why do characters do what they do? What are the results and consequences of those actions? How would the story change if they did something else? (Suellentrop, McClellan, 2001, p. 1).

Read to Succeed differs slightly in that it allows for teens with reading difficulties to participate. Library staff provide a collection of paperback books, and visit the center twice a month. Each session lasts 45 minutes and includes book reviews, book talks and a read aloud section. A short story or chapter of a book is read to the group followed by related questions and discussion. Those teens that struggle to read can still participate and contribute. Peer pressure, anger, betrayal and prejudice are some of the themes explored. Residents are asked to talk about books they are reading, and, while no judge or probation officer attend, juvenile detention staff do, and also talk about books they are reading (Suellentrop, McClellan, 2001, p. 1).

Statistics indicate that CLTL is successful in helping offenders turn their life around. The recidivism rate is 17% for teens and 29% for adults in a similar programme. This compares to a recidivism rate of 58% for other Corrections clients (Johnson County Library, 2005, para. 7).

*I am not saying there shouldn't be prisons, but there shouldn't be bars. Behind bars, a man never reforms. He will never forget. He never will get completely over the memory of the bars.*

*Malcolm X.*

## The current New Zealand situation

When Celia Lashlie, the former prison officer and manager of Christchurch Women's Prison, wrote her book *The journey to prison*, the prison population numbered ‘around 5500 and climbing’ (Lashlie, 2002, p.13). As at 1.3.06 the present prison population was 7651, a 28% increase in three and a half years (MacIntyre, 2006, para. 9).

Lashlie created controversy in 2001 with a speech she gave to a Restorative Justice meeting. Based on a composite of children and young offenders, she

talked about a blond, blue-eyed 5 year old who is destined to be imprisoned for killing or seriously injuring someone. The uproar over that statement was the basis for her book. In *The journey to prison* she talks about young people as young as 12 and 13 convicted of murder and violent crimes (Lashlie, 2002, p. 129-132).

In the introduction to a report by the Psychological Service of the Department of Corrections, studies are quoted that indicate fewer than 10% of young offenders account for around half of all reported youth crime (Wilson, Rolleston, 2004, para. 4). If this is true, coupled with the fact that, the younger offenders are convicted the more likely they are to keep offending, then it is apparent that the earlier we can bring a positive influence on young offenders the better.

The report then goes on to say that programmes based on cognitive-behavioural principles with high levels of integrity can reduce reconvictions of young offenders up to 50%. It further states that the most effective treatments involve people significant to the young offender. These include educational institutions, as well as family, employers and peers (Wilson, Rolleston, 2004, para. 6-7).

The Changing Lives Through Literature programme is one such programme based on behavioural-cognitive principles; it does involve people significant to the offender (a judge, probation officer, librarian); it involves a library or university setting, not a correctional facility; opinion and feedback is sought from offender; the group is made up of people who discuss their thought, feelings and emotions to create a bond; it is set over an extended period that enables a process of change to occur; to be sentenced to the programme bestows belief that the offender is worthy of participating, and they then develop the ability to make their own choices.

## **Conclusion**

As evidenced by Johnson County, committed librarians were able to initiate programmes that have had a positive impact on many young offenders, and have given encouragement to court and correctional officials. New Zealand libraries, with their high involvement of community programmes would be equally able to offer a life-changing programme to young offenders here. It is recommended that such a collaborative effort between the court, corrections department and local libraries be initiated.

While it is true that lack of literacy is not limited to offenders, the high percentage of prisoners with reading problems and limited education indicates there is a connection between the two. But, it is not just lack of literacy that is a problem, but the lack of knowledge and understanding of other possibilities and options. Being denied access to the world of literature is something that many people could not contemplate or imagine. By giving young offenders access to this world, a world they may never have known existed, we not only introduce them to all that makes us human and civilised, we give them the means to rewrite their own stories.

## Bibliography

Anstiss, B. n.d, *Just how effective is correctional treatment at reducing re-offending*, viewed September 1 2006, <http://www.corrections.govt.nz/>

Correction News 2005, *Canterbury prisoners graduate*, viewed September 2, 2006, <http://www.corrections.govt.nz/public/news/magazines-newsletters/correctionsnews/>

Day, A. 2005, *Rehabilitation programs for young offenders: Towards good practice?*, viewed 20 August 2008, [http://www.ocsar.sa.gov.au/docs/other\\_publications/papers/AD.pdf](http://www.ocsar.sa.gov.au/docs/other_publications/papers/AD.pdf)

Frolander\_Ulf, M. 2001, *Teaching in prison*, viewed August 13 2006, [http://www.ala.org/ala/olos/outreachresource/teaching\\_inprison.pdf](http://www.ala.org/ala/olos/outreachresource/teaching_inprison.pdf)

Gill, P. 2006, *Prison literacy programme may help cut reoffending*, viewed August 10 2006, <http://www.wanganuichronicle.co.nz/localnews/storydisplay.cfm?storyid=3695781>

Hong, C. 2000, *Prisoner's dilemma: Learning the hard way at Riker*, viewed August 25 2006, [http://www.villagevoice.com/arts/0031\\_hong\\_16898\\_12.html](http://www.villagevoice.com/arts/0031_hong_16898_12.html)

Indiana State Library. (n.d.). *Read-To-Me: A cooperative effort of the: Indiana State Library & Indiana Department of Corrections*, viewed 25 August 2008, <http://www.in.gov/library/files/Read-to-Me.pdf>.

Johnson County Kansas Government 2005, *Library wins national award*, viewed August 11, 2008, <http://www.jocogov.org/featurestories/mar.htm>

Lashlie, C. 2002, *The journey to prison: Who goes and why*. Harper Collins, Auckland, NZ.

MacIntyre, J. 2006, *Written off because they don't know how to read or write*, viewed August 11 [http://subs.nzherald.co.nz/location/story.cfm?l\\_id=395&ObjectID=10370457](http://subs.nzherald.co.nz/location/story.cfm?l_id=395&ObjectID=10370457)

McNeill, F., Batchelor, S., Burnett, R., & Knox, J. 2005, *21<sup>st</sup> century social work reducing re-offending: key practice skills*, viewed August 14, 2006, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/37432/0011296.pdf>

Prison Reform Trust n.d. *Time to stop locking up so many children and young people*, viewed 20 August 2008, <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/subsection.asp?id=874>

Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit. *Beyond the holding tank: Pathways to rehabilitative and restorative prison policy*, viewed August 22 2006, [http://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/SITE\\_Default/x-files/15853.pdf#search=%22beyond%20the%20holding%20tank%22](http://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/SITE_Default/x-files/15853.pdf#search=%22beyond%20the%20holding%20tank%22)

- Shirley, G. 2005, *Behind the walls has your public librarian been in prison?*, viewed September 5 2006, <http://www.ala.org/ala/olos/outreachresource/prisoncol5.htm>
- Suellentrop, T., & McLellan, K. 2005, *Key to the captive teen: Teens at risk.*, viewed August 11 2006, <http://polaris.gseis.ucla.edu/yalsa/doc/TeensatRisk.pdf>
- Steurer, S., Jenkins, D. 1997, *The impact of education on post release success: Research in progress in Ohio, Maryland and Minnesota*, viewed August 11 2006, [http://www.epea.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=272&Itemid=345](http://www.epea.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=272&Itemid=345)
- Trounstine, J. 2005, *Finding a voice: The practice of changing lives through Literature*, viewed August 15 2006, <http://www.press.umich.edu/pdf/047203040X-ch1.pdf>
- Watt, E. 2006, Big rise in violence, drugs. *Dominion Post*, p. A3.
- Wilson, N., & Rolleston, R. 2004, *A risk-need profile using four measures for youth offenders incarcerated in young offender units*, viewed September 2 2006, <http://www.corrections.govt.nz/public/research/risk-need-profile-youth-offenders/>
- Zampese, L. 1997, *When the bough breaks: A Literature based intervention strategy for young offenders*, viewed August 19 2006, <http://www.corrections.govt.nz/>

# Selecting electronic resources in New Zealand special libraries

Nicola Rawnsley

[Nicola.Rawnsley@adls.org.nz](mailto:Nicola.Rawnsley@adls.org.nz)

## Abstract

*Despite the large amount of literature concerning the selection of electronic resources, there is little research on what policies and criteria are being used in real library environments. While some published studies exist for the academic sector, special libraries in New Zealand are not represented in the literature. An online survey, responded to by 25 special librarians, showed that not all respondents were using collection development policies, that most of the criteria discussed in the literature are used in practice, however cost and content were the most frequently used, and that finding adequate resources and high costs coupled with limited budgets were the main challenges experienced.*

## Introduction

The use of electronic resources in libraries has increased dramatically over the last few decades, and consequently the literature on how to manage these resources has also increased (Case, 2000). Making informed and justifiable selection decisions in this area has become a vital part of the collection development activities of most libraries, and with increasing costs and decreasing budgets, these decisions have become even more complex (Allison, McNeil & Swanson, 2000). The specific criteria to use for selection is well documented in the literature and the academic sector, in particular, has been a focus of published studies. The special library sector however, has been little examined.

In order to shed some light on this area of collection development, librarians working in special libraries in New Zealand, who had collection development responsibilities, were invited to complete an online survey. The survey was composed of a series of closed and open questions which asked the librarians about their use of collection development policies, what criteria and they used to select electronic resources and what challenges they faced when making selection decisions in this area.

For the purposes of this study the term 'electronic resources' referred to those electronic resources supplied to libraries on a purchase or subscription basis from vendors or publishers (e.g. subscriptions to electronic journals, aggregator databases etc). The study was also restricted to special libraries which included

those libraries in the legal, health/medical, research, business/commercial and government sectors.

## **Literature Review**

### **The changing environment**

With the rapid development of electronic resources and their expanding place in library collections, selection decisions have become infinitely more complex. Factors such as increasing user expectations of service, a larger number of format ranges, and increased competition (Jones, 2001) mean making the right decisions is imperative. While the traditional criteria remain relevant, electronic resources have created the need for a new set of criteria. Norman's study (1997) shows that traditional criteria like quality, scope, currency, uniqueness, relevance to the library community and cost are still used in selection decisions, however new criteria like network capability, ease of use, retrieval, hardware and software capability and licensing restrictions have now become a part of the decision making process too. The International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC) acknowledges these added complexities in its *Statement of Current Perspectives and Preferred Practices for the Selection and Purchase of Electronic Information* (1998). The ICOLC considers that increasing expectations and stable budgets, difficulties in archiving electronic information and difficulties in adequately measuring the effectiveness of electronic resources are the primary problems facing collection development in this area.

### **Collection development policies**

It is clear from the literature that collection development policies are recommended. Gregory (2006) discusses them at length seeing them as a blueprint for library operations, as they guide the tasks of acquiring, organising and maintaining a library's collection. Harte (2006), however, outlines some arguments against written policies stating that they are static, unlikely to be referred to by experienced selectors and that in libraries where there is a defined user group (e.g. law libraries), a written policy may not be of much value. There is little indication in the literature as to the preferred position in libraries. Norman (1997) surveyed 15 academic libraries about their electronic resources policies – 8 of the 15 had a collection development policy for electronic resources while 7 did not. Harte (2006) surveyed 7 law libraries in Australia, only 1 of which had a collection development policy.

The increasing use of electronic resources in libraries has also meant that the collection development policies themselves have had to change. Gregory (2006) emphasises that collection development policies written for print materials will not be suitable for the selection of electronic resources, as they will not consider issues specific to the electronic format. Gregory outlines three approaches to including electronic resources in policies:

- making electronic resources selection fit into the patterns of traditional policies.
- creating separate policies that deal only with electronic resources.
- mainstreaming electronic resources into an integrated policy.

Again there is little indication in the literature as to the preferred option, however Norman (1997) found that of the 8 academic libraries which were using policies half had separate policies and half had integrated policies.

## **Selection criteria**

A wide range of literature was surveyed in order to ascertain the range of criteria recommended for selecting electronic resources. Five broad criteria categories were identified, with associated subcategories:

### **1. Content**

- subject relevance – is the subject coverage relevant for the library? (Gregory, 2006; Holleman, 2000; Jasco, 2001; Mitchell & Surratt, 2005; Norman, 1997).
- accuracy – is the content accurate? (Jasco, 2001; Mitchell & Surratt, 2005; Tenopir, 1992).
- consistency – is the data entry consistent? (Jasco, 2001).
- coverage – what is the breadth and depth of the content? (Holleman, 2000; Mitchell & Surratt, 2005; Sharma, 2004). What is the date range it covers? (Jasco, 2001; Tenopir, 1992). What is the extent of full-text coverage? (Brooks, 2006).
- authority – is the content scholarly/peer-reviewed? (Gregory, 2006; Holleman, 2000; Kirkwood, 2000; Mitchell & Surratt, 2005; Norman, 1997).
- currency – what is the frequency of updates? How up to date is the content? (Jasco, 2001; Mitchell & Surratt, 2005; Norman, 1997; Tenopir, 1992).
- uniqueness – does the resource provide unique content? (Gregory, 2006; Norman, 1997).
- duplication – does the resource duplicate material already held by the library? (Gregory, 2006).

### **2. Usability/Functionality**

- ease of use – is the resource easy to use? (Metz, 2000; Norman, 1997; Tenopir, 1992).
- accessibility – is the resource accessible for people with special needs? (Mitchell & Surratt, 2005; Sharma, 2004).
- search capabilities – does the resource have the required search functions like Boolean operators, truncation etc? (Metz, 2000; Mitchell & Surratt, 2005; Tenopir, 1992).

- retrieval performance – are relevant results supplied? (Norman, 1997; Sharma, 2004; Tenopir, 1992). What is the response time like? (Metz, 2000).
- results display, manipulation and output – can results be sorted, printed, emailed etc? (Mitchell & Surratt, 2005; Sharma, 2004).

### **3. Technical considerations**

- hardware requirements – are there any specific hardware requirements for the resource? (Gregory, 2006; Norman, 1997; Sharma, 2004).
- software requirements – are there any specific software requirements for the resource? (Gregory, 2006; Norman, 1997; Sharma, 2004).
- network capability – how does the resource perform in a networked environment? (Davis, 1997; Mitchell & Surratt, 2005).
- remote access – is remote access available? (Davis, 1997; Norman, 1997).

### **4. Cost/Licensing considerations**

- pricing structure – what type of pricing structure is involved and is it within budget? (Metz, 2000; Mitchell & Surratt, 2005).
- licensing restrictions – is remote access allowed? (Davis, 1997; Norman, 1997). Can material be used for inter-library loan? (Gregory, 2006). What access to the archive is allowed? (Rupp-Serrano, Robbins & Cain, 2002). Are there specific limitations on which users can access the resource? (Davis, 1997; Metz, 2000).

### **5. Vendor support**

- reputation – does the vendor have a good reputation? (Davis, 1997).
- customer support – is reliable, efficient customer support available? (Sharma, 2004).
- manuals and help aids – does the vendor supply good support material? (Davis, 1997; Sharma, 2004).
- training – does the vendor supply training? (Sharma, 2004).
- usage statistics – does the vendor supply usable usage statistics?

While the literature is very thorough on suggested criteria for electronic resources it is less clear on what criteria are actually being used in real libraries. Tenopir (1999a, 1999b) completed two surveys, one in the academic sector and one in the public library sector, asking librarians to speculate on what they thought influenced database selection among their users. In both instances, it was clear that the librarians felt that the most important factor was content – its usefulness and quality (Tenopir, 1999a, 1999b). Tenopir states that uniqueness was also an important factor, with respondents saying that the lack of other comparable databases had some or great influence. After content, ease of use was seen as the most common reason why patrons would choose one database over another (1999b). What this reveals is that librarians in both the academic and

public sectors saw content, usability and convenience as the factors that were important to their users – these same factors are, therefore, likely to be important in any selection decisions they make themselves. Tenopir does caution, however, that while librarians may have faith in the importance of content that may be more to justify their own selection decisions than anything else - users themselves may have different reasons for choosing a particular database (Tenopir, 1999b).

The most relevant and significant study in this area, however, is Norman's 1997 survey, as it gives a much clearer indication of the specific criteria actively used in selection decisions. The intent of the study was to investigate the effect of electronic resources on collection development in 15 academic libraries. Norman produced a list of 12 traditional criteria and 10 emerging criteria, and asked respondents to select which of the criteria they used. The study showed that most of the criteria, both in the traditional and emerging categories, were used by at least some of the respondents and indicated that most of the criteria listed above were used in making selection decisions, though not necessarily by every library.

## **Research Methodology**

A survey resource called Free Online Surveys (<http://freonline-surveys.com>) was used to create a short online survey of open and closed questions, a link to which was emailed to the relevant email discussion lists for the research population. Following Norman's methodology the survey asked librarians to describe their collection development policies and select the criteria they use from a list of specified criteria (informed by the literature review above). These closed questions were analysed quantitatively in order to ascertain a frequency of use for each type of policy and each criteria. Respondents were also given open text boxes in which to comment on why particular criteria were used and what difficulties they faced when making selection decisions. These questions were analysed by content analysis in order to identify any common themes.

## **Research Findings**

While the results of this study are not generalisable due to the low response rate (25 responses) they do provide some insight into the selection of electronic resources in New Zealand special libraries. As the survey was anonymous respondents are simply referred to as a number (e.g. R1 etc) in the discussion below.

### **To policy or not to policy?**

From the results of this study, it is clear that opinion on this issue is fairly divided. Of the 25 respondents, 14 used a policy to make selection decisions for electronic resources, while 11 said they had no policy and these results are in line with Norman's 1997 study of academic libraries. Hart's (2006) conclusion, that contemporary issues like the challenges associated with electronic resources had not made a big difference to the number of policies in law libraries, is at odds

with the findings of this and Norman's study. The current study would tend to suggest that, at least among New Zealand special libraries, the incidence of policies is higher than Harte's results would indicate. The reasons why 11 respondents operate without a policy was not the focus of this study, however it may be that in special libraries where the focus is on a well defined set of users, some organisations do not feel that a policy is necessary. It may also be that, as most special libraries operate with small staff numbers, and that selection decisions are made by specific individuals every time, selector consistency and experience negates the need for a formal policy. Certainly, in this study, only one respondent of the 11 with no policy mentioned that the lack of a written policy was a factor that made selection decisions difficult (R19).

Of the 14 respondents who had a policy, 11 used an integrated policy and three used their existing print resources policy. While the number of respondents with a policy was similar to Norman's findings in 1997, the types of policies used in the academic sector were different. Of Norman's 8 respondents with policies, four used a separate policy and 4 used an integrated policy. No respondents to this current study used a separate policy, and the integrated option was by far the preference. This difference could perhaps reflect the small sample size of the studies and be a reflection of an increasing trend towards more integrated policies since Norman's study in 1997. With the number of electronic resources steadily growing over the last decade, and as electronic resources constitute a far bigger part of library collections today than in the past, the tendency may be to have one policy that deals with all formats, rather than several separate policies. That only 3 respondents used their print resources policy for selecting electronic resources shows that there is an acceptance that the electronic environment has meant that selection decisions now include considerations specific to this format.

Both Gregory (2006) and Harte (2006) state that collection development policies commonly provide guidelines to making selection decisions, and stipulate the criteria to consider. This is reflected in the policies used by the respondents in this study. Most of the policies included specific criteria, and most of the criteria listed in the survey were in at least some of the policies. Of the criteria included, cost and content considerations were the most frequently selected by the respondents. In general respondents used more criteria in actual selection decisions than were specified in their policies. The average number of criteria specified in the respondents' policies was 6.3 whereas the average number of criteria actually used was 11.7. Only 1 respondent used less criteria than were specified in their policy (R7) and only 3 respondents used the same amount (R15, R21, R24). So while most of the policies used by the respondents do specify criteria, they do not cover all the criteria that the respondents actually use when selecting electronic resources.

### **Criteria – comparing apples and oranges?**

From the review of suggested criteria above, a list of criteria was created and respondents were asked to indicate which criteria they used in selection

decisions. The following table shows the criteria used by the respondents in this study:

<i>Criteria</i>	#	% (n25)
Cost	25	100%
Subject relevancy (e.g. to the organisation's business)	24	96%
Coverage (e.g. date range, fulltext)	21	84%
Authority (e.g. peer reviewed)	20	80%
Accuracy, consistency of data	19	76%
Currency of content	18	72%
Ease of use (e.g. navigation, suitable for end users)	17	68%
Search features (e.g. keyword, Boolean, wildcard, limits etc)	15	60%
Licensing restrictions (e.g. whether interloans are permitted, access to archives, number of users etc)	15	60%
Results display, sorting, printing, emailing etc	14	56%
Hardware requirements	14	56%
Networking capabilities (e.g. whether it is compatible with your network if it needs to be)	14	56%
Vendor reputation	14	56%
Frequency of updates	13	52%
Software requirements	13	52%
Amount of unique content	13	52%
Vendor customer support	13	52%
Relevancy of content retrieved (e.g. whether relevant results are supplied)	12	48%
Remote access	9	36%
Vendor training available	8	32%
Manuals, help aids	3	12%
Promotional value	1	4%
Other – aggregator/non-aggregator....do they own the content	1	4%

It is clear that all the criteria listed were used by at least one respondent, and most were used by over half the respondents, showing that the criteria suggested in the literature are commonly used in practice. Generally, the criteria to do with content (subject relevancy, coverage, accuracy, authority, currency etc.) were used the most often. Cost, however, was the only criteria used by all the respondents. Usability/functionality issues were the next most frequently used, with technical issues (hardware, software, remote access etc) and vendor support criteria being the least used. This trend was also reflected in the results of the criteria importance ranking question where, on a scale of 1 (most important) to 5 (least important) respondents were asked to rank criteria by importance. Content received a 1.44 average ranking, cost/licensing issues a 2.16 ranking, usability/functionality a 2.84 ranking, technical considerations a 3.8 ranking and finally vendor support a 4.72 ranking.

As mentioned above, the only study that gave a clear indication of the criteria used by libraries is Norman's 1997 study. The small sample size of both these studies, and the 10 year gap between them makes it difficult to estimate how significant any differences between the studies would be, however it is worth commenting on the criteria that showed the biggest variances. Technological aspects like network capabilities and hardware/software requirements were used comparatively less often by the respondents of the current study than by Norman's respondents. This may indicate that in the years since Norman's study, the technology platform has stabilised somewhat, and technological requirements have become more standardised. Special libraries may be dealing with a limited set of publishers (e.g. law libraries in New Zealand deal with three main publishers), so requirements for running their various resources would often be the same. Academic libraries, on the other hand, may deal with a greater spectrum of publishers with a greater variation in platforms. Licensing restrictions were also considered less frequently in the current study. This may again be due to special libraries using standard agreements with a few established publishers. A special library may also have limited choices of where to get relevant content as their subject areas are specialised. This may mean that restrictions imposed by a license may sometimes be accepted in order to secure a needed resource. Finally, remote access was used a lot less frequently by the respondents in this study than in Norman's, with only 36% of respondents citing it as a criteria. This may reflect the fact that special library users are generally working within the corporate network, and have less need for remote access.

### **Content is king! (Tenopir, 1999b)**

It is clear that the criteria involving content were the most important to the respondents in this study. Not only were the content criteria the most frequently used, but content issues were ranked by the respondents as the most important. These findings are in line with Tenopir's survey of both academic and public libraries (1999a, 1999b) discussed above. The main concern for respondents in this study was the relevance of the content, with this being the most frequently used of the content criteria (96%). When respondents commented on the reasons

why they used the criteria they had selected, they emphasised the importance of having relevant resources. Comments like this were common:

*“we need to ensure that our resources are suitable, relevant...” (R16)*

There was also an indication that respondents were selecting resources for a small user group with a set area of interest. This is clear from responses like this:

*“Our clients have a very clear / defined area of interest.” (R21)*

While subject relevance was the most important of the content criteria, the respondents also looked at accuracy, coverage, authority, and currency with each of these criteria being used by over 70% of the respondents. Many of the comments on why specific criteria were used focused on these aspects and the respondents seemed fully aware of the many different ways the content could be evaluated. However, 2 of the content criteria were used noticeably less than the others – frequency of updates and uniqueness of content. That the frequency of updates was used by only 52% of the respondents is interesting, as the currency of the content (72%) was obviously very important to them, and these two criteria have to be linked. Comments frequently focused on the importance of currency:

*“It is important...for information to be very current, very accurate...”(R17)*

That uniqueness of content was only used by 52% of the respondents as a criteria may reflect that in special libraries librarians are already dealing with quite specific, specialised products. Resources might therefore already be unique, and respondents may see this more as maintaining subject relevancy than assessing a resource's uniqueness.

Ultimately, content (most notably its relevance) was tied to what the respondents felt was of most importance to their users. This is summed up by the following comment by one of the respondents:

*“Because the mission of our information service is to support our clients to the best of our abilities,...we need to ensure that our resources are suitable, relevant and add the most value possible to our users.” (R16)*

It would seem that content is king to these respondents, just as it was to Tenopir's respondents in 1999. And while the advent of electronic resources has added a new raft of criteria to consider, content remains at the top of the selection criteria list. Metz (2000), comments that new formats will not change the basic purpose of libraries, which is to support their user community with relevant, quality resources. The respondents in this study would seem to agree.

### **Increasing costs, tightening belts!**

Gregory (2006) comments that due to the large growth in publishing and a decrease in library budgets there is an increased pressure to not only find the best resources but to find them at the lowest price. This pressure is certainly reflected in the findings of this study. Not only was cost the only criteria used by all the

respondents, but cost/licensing issues were ranked the second most important criteria after content issues. Respondents also commented on the cost of the products themselves – that they were expensive (R5), or they cost significant dollars (R11). Coupled with this were comments relating to the limited budgets the respondents were working under – budgets are small (R13), funding is limited (R21). Due to this issue respondents were often concerned with getting value for money. Respondents typically mentioned that they needed to weigh up the cost of the resource and relative value of the content (R1) and make sure resources were cost effective (R12).

Cost was also one of the major factors that respondents felt made applying their chosen criteria difficult. Respondents commented that they struggled to know what weight to place on the cost criteria (R3) and that price was a bigger component in the decision to purchase or subscribe than they'd like it to be (R12). While some writers argue that cost shouldn't be part of selection decisions (Case, 2000), it was obviously a very important consideration for the respondents in this study. One respondent commented that:

*“cost is always an issue – we consider it, but sometimes needs must and the publishers have the monopoly;...” (R5)*

This shows that cost did not always stop a resource from being purchased, however, it was clear from other comments that cost did sometimes either prevent the respondents from getting the resource they wanted or prevented them from getting a resource at all. One respondent commented that:

*“Cost is another – no point trying & wanting new resources if there's no money to pay for it, even if the need is there.” (R11)*

and another that:

*“Cost – the things that most fit within our subject area are really expensive so often we go with second best or nothing” (R21)*

Not many respondents offered any strategies they used to deal with this difficulty, however one mentioned using the usage statistics of databases already owned to get budgets increased (R11), and another played the company politics by getting an advocate to champion the resource to a funder (R14). Another respondent said they pointed out to managers the risks of not having up to date resources for their staff (R11). The literature does advocate the use of collection development policies as a way to make a case for funding (Harte, 2006). While not mentioned by any of the respondents here, the development of a collection development policy could help in dealing with funding issues when they arise.

## **Being digital**

The intent of Norman's study (1997) was to show how the electronic environment was changing collection development in academic libraries. The results of his study clearly showed that the libraries involved were using the full breadth of criteria when evaluating electronic resources. This is also the case

with the respondents in this study. Issues like ease of use, search features, results display, hardware and software requirements and network capabilities were all used by over half the respondents, indicating that the criteria specific to the electronic format were being considered in selection decisions. That 11 of the 14 respondents who were using collection development policies had an integrated policy also indicates that new selection criteria have been added to the traditional criteria used for print resources.

When asked why the respondents chose particular criteria, functionality and IT issues were mentioned as important to assess. Responses commonly mentioned ease of use (R11) and that resources needed to be seamless and intuitive to use (R7). Respondents also mentioned the need to make sure the product worked in their specific IT environment (R3), and that hardware and software requirements were investigated (R21). It is interesting that while respondents acknowledged that these factors needed to be assessed, these criteria were not used as frequently as the cost and content criteria. How this impacts selection decisions is hard to know. Metz (2000) certainly emphasises the importance of functionality in swaying selection decisions, as users are increasingly accessing resources remotely, meaning opportunities to train on site are often lost. Davis (1997) adds to this, stating that having great content is negated if the product is complex to search. Case (2000), however, comments that even though the literature says functionality and ease of use are essential, they are often not factors in selection decisions. It would be fair to say that while usability/functionality and technical considerations are considered by the respondents in this study, it is ultimately the content and cost of a product that really impact on the selection process. The respondents may in fact subscribe to a product that has a less than adequate search interface, or does not allow remote access, if the content and the cost are right. It may also be that if a special library is dealing with a set of specific vendors, they need not check these factors every time, as interfaces and platforms will be the same as resources already within the collection. This would often be the case in law libraries.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of this study clearly showed that the majority of respondents were either using an integrated collection development policy or no policy at all. For those respondents without policies, it may be that due to the small staff numbers of their libraries and the clearly defined user group being catered for, policies are not seen as essential. For those respondents using policies it is clear, due to the popularity of integrated policies, that the issues specific to the selection of electronic resources have been acknowledged, and policies updated consequently. It is clear also that the respondents commonly used more criteria in actual selection decisions than were stipulated in their policies.

It was clear from the responses that most of the criteria suggested in the literature are used in practice to varying degrees and that even though electronic resources require evaluation on many different levels, content and cost remain as the most

important criteria, just as they are in the selection of print resources. The lesser importance of IT issues could reflect the fact that some special libraries may be dealing with a small set of publishers whose delivery platforms and search interfaces are already working within the library's IT environment. That these decisions have become more complex is obvious as librarians continue to struggle with expensive products and limited budgets, needing to balance the relative value of the resource with the cost to the organisation, as well as taking into account all the technological issues involved.

There is no doubt that electronic resources have had a huge impact on collection development and have created new pressures for those librarians involved in this process. Still & Kassabian (1999) possibly offer the best advice for these librarians:

*“Plan for the worst, hope for the best. Continue to strive to provide... solid, well-rounded access to the major literature of various fields. Assume nothing.”* (Still & Kassabian, 1999, p. 65)

## **Bibliography**

Allison, D., McNeil, B., & Swanson, S. (2000). Database selection: one size does not fit all. *College & Research Libraries*, 61(1), 56-63. Retrieved August 29, 2008, from Library Literature and Information Science Fulltext.

Brooks, S. (2006). Evaluating evaluations. *Library Journal*, 28(Netconnect, Winter). Retrieved December 3, 2007, from Library Literature and Information Science Fulltext.

Case, B. (2000). Love's labour's lost: The failure of traditional selection practice in the acquisition of humanities electronic texts. *Library Trends*, 48(4), 729-747. Retrieved December 12, 2007, from ProQuest 5000.

Davis, T. (1997). The evolution of selection activities for electronic resources. *Library Trends*, 45(3), 391-403. Retrieved December 3, 2007, from Academic OneFile.

Gregory, V. (2006). *Selecting and managing electronic resources: A how to do it manual for librarians*. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers.

Harte, K. (2006). The case for a written collection development policy: the Community Legal Centre library. *Australian Law Librarian*, 14(2), 31-39.

Holleman, C. (2000). Electronic resources: Are basic criteria for the selection of materials changing? *Library Trends*, 48(4), 694-710. Retrieved December 3, 2007, from ProQuest 5000.

International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC). (1998). *Statement of current perspectives and preferred practices for the selection and purchase of electronic information*. Retrieved December 23, 2007, from <http://www.library.yale.edu/consortia/statement.html>

- Jasco, P. (2001). *Content evaluation of textual CD-ROM and web databases*. Englewood, Colo: Libraries Unlimited.
- Jones, C. (2001). Development strategies for library collections in a digital environment. *Australasian Public Libraries and Information Services*, 14(3), 101-107. Retrieved December 3, 2007, from Library Literature and Information Science Fulltext.
- Kirkwood, H. (2000). Academic issues in e-journal selection and evaluation. *Serials Librarian*, 38(1/2), 169-174. Retrieved November 17, 2007, from Haworth Press Journals.
- Metz, P. (2000). Principles of selection for electronic resources. *Library Trends*, 48(4), 711-728. Retrieved December 3, 2007, from ProQuest 5000.
- Mitchell, A.M., & Surratt, B.E. (2005). Thinking about the organization of digital resources. In *Cataloguing and Organizing Digital Resources* (pp. 1-40). New York: Neal-Schuman.
- Norman, O. G. (1997). The impact of electronic information sources on collection development: A survey of current practice. *Library Hi Tech* 15(1-2), 123-132. Retrieved December 12, 2007, from Emerald Insight.
- Rupp-Serrano, K., Robbins, S., & Cain, D. (2002). Canceling print serials in favour of electronic: criteria for decision making. *Library Collections, Acquisitions, & Technical Services* 26, 369-378. Retrieved December 6, 2007, from ScienceDirect Journals.
- Sharma, M. (2004). Is it “accessible” online? Evaluating the quality and accessibility of online databases. *Current Studies in Librarianship*, 28(1/2), 59-80. Retrieved December 1, 2007, from Library Literature and Information Science Fulltext.
- Still, J., & Kassabian, V. (1999). Selecting full-text undergraduate periodicals databases. *EContent*, 22(6), 57-62, 64-65. Retrieved January 3, 2008, from ProQuest 5000.
- Tenopir, C. (1992). Evaluation criteria for online, CD-Rom. *Library Journal*, 117 (4), 66-67. Retrieved December 17, 2007, from Australia/New Zealand Reference Centre.
- Tenopir, C. (1999a). Database use in academic libraries. *Library Journal*, 124(8), 36, 38. Retrieved December 28, 2007, from ProQuest 5000.
- Tenopir, C. (1999b). Influencing database use in public libraries. *Library Journal*, 124(10), 40, 42. Retrieved November 17, 2007, from ProQuest 5000.

# Parliament's Library: 150 years

By John E. Martin

Reviewed by Amanda Cossham

[amanda.cossham@openpolytechnic.ac.nz](mailto:amanda.cossham@openpolytechnic.ac.nz)

Parliamentary libraries occupy a unique position in the library world. On the one hand, they are 'merely' special libraries, serving and supporting one organisation. On the other hand, that organisation – parliament – is at the centre of a nation's history and development. Sometimes parliamentary libraries have functioned as de facto national libraries (as the Library of Congress still does for the USA). Their scope and collections are as broad as a public library, albeit with a focus on politics and law, and they are substantial collections, especially of print materials.

Martin's history of 150 years of New Zealand's Parliamentary Library (originally the General Assembly Library) is a lively account of the development of this library from its origins in a small room in the General Assembly building in Auckland ('a broom closet' of 6 by 8 feet), with no staff, and almost no budget, to its current situation today in one of the four buildings that make up New Zealand's parliament, with more than 60 staff and extensive collections of print and electronic resources.

His evaluation of the developments through the 19<sup>th</sup> century show a library that struggled in many ways to achieve its reputation as a substantial and significant library, described in 1884 by C.W. Holgate of the British Library Association as: " 'the finest and most important' in the country, a 'first class reference library'... with good collections in history, biography and travel, an excellent collection of New Zealand newspapers, and large holdings of parliamentary and other official papers." Guided in its development by a Library Committee, it was nonetheless set in a highly divisive environment, and struggles for power were played out in the context of the Library Committee no less than in any other area of political life.

Martin covers the practical difficulties of such a library: the distance from England, and the problems of supply of the books; the heating and its dangers (open fires and gas lighting were ongoing risks, as were the Members' smoking habits); the damp, pests, mildew; the problems of who should have access to the collections and when, and of 'wandering stock'; the difficulties in compiling printed catalogues before the days of card catalogues; the lack of staff, and the frequently inadequate pay of the staff; the generally poor and cramped conditions. Members did not have individual offices, and so the library served as

their meeting and working area, equipped with letter-writing materials, and with a post office as one of the library's functions.

The building of a new library was achieved after considerable effort and much political controversy. Thomas Turnbull's original design, altered by Government Architect John Campbell, was opened in 1898 but not occupied until 1900. As in the previous century, tensions between Chief Librarian, Speaker, Clerk of the House, Library Committee and Minister responsible for the library were a significant and ongoing factor in the development of the library and its services.

In 1926, Guy Schofield was appointed as Chief Librarian. This was seen as a political appointment, and there was considerable outcry from both politicians and librarians who felt that he was unsuitable for the role. Schofield added responsibility for archives and a consequent increase in salary to the position, which also irked many. However, he proved to be a 'meticulous and hardworking' Chief Librarian, in 'an enviable position of subtle but effective influence' on politicians. The twenty or so years that he spent in charge of the library were a time of significant change. Under him, the first women were employed in the library and qualified staff increased. Reference services were developed during the 1930s so that Members could request information, rather than requesting books or scanning the periodical and newspaper literature themselves. Greater use was able to be made of the resources by researchers external to parliament, and an official documents section was added in 1934.

There is a considerable amount of New Zealand's library history and development throughout the book, especially in relation to the development of a national library during the 1930s and later, and the development of national archives and research collections. Some thought that the General Assembly Library would be ideally suited as the central core of a national library service (John Barr and Ralph Munn among them). Following the election of the rather more pro-library Labour Government in 1935, a Country Library Service was established, led by G.T. Alley, but under the oversight of the Clerk of the House rather than the Chief Librarian. The development of a national archives was championed by Schofield, and although this did not eventuate before his retirement in 1947, his efforts kept this vital part of New Zealand's documentation in the forefront of discussion.

However, the chances of the library becoming the National Library seemed slight in the years following the Second World War, as the Country Library Service was thriving, and on a much grander scale. With the formation of the National Library service in 1945, the General Assembly Library was effectively side-lined, although the process of establishing a National Library was a slow one, with many twists and turns. The advantages and disadvantages of various ways of combining Turnbull, the General Assembly Library and the National Library service were explored at length, and in 1966, the General Assembly library became part of the National Library. Administrative structures changed, and there was a considerable period when both libraries were working to accommodate their differing needs and practices.

During the 1960s and 1970s the library grew and developed its reference services in particular, reflecting the growing needs of the Members and of the party research units. A statistician/economist was appointed, and a current information service (CIS) established. The documents collection continued to grow, and was eventually designated as a public collection. In 1987 the library became known as the Parliamentary Library. From the late 1970s, computers began to be used, and the services available through them increased quickly, with substantial overseas databases being available. The library eventually closed its card catalogue and participated in NZBN, and later established its own in-house electronic catalogues using DB/Textworks.

The refurbishment of Parliament buildings in the early 1990s entailed moving the library to three floors of Bowen House, and putting much of the collections into storage areas elsewhere. The second major fire to afflict the library struck in October 1992, although fortunately the building was empty of people and books, and the stained-glass windows and many of the fittings had already been removed. Damage was considerable, but not irrevocable. The library building was renovated to return it to its former glory and with a considerable improvement in its earthquake-worthiness, but not always with sufficient consideration of the needs of a library heading into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The library today has the equivalent of 60 full time staff, and more than half a million items in the collection, and access to extensive on-line resources. With the appointment of the current Chief Librarian, Moira Fraser, as Group Manager Information and Knowledge, the Parliamentary Library's role expanded considerably across the wider parliamentary environment with involvement in the provision of electronic parliamentary resources and records and information management.

This book is a pleasure to read, and provides a thorough and carefully researched account of the development of one of New Zealand's main libraries. It is interesting for those (considerable number) who have worked there, but also for those with an interest in library history and service development in New Zealand, and as a reflection on the work of Parliament.

Steele Roberts Publishing in association with Dunmore Press

978-1-877448-43-0

Price \$59.99

Publication Date: 2008.

[www.steeleroberts.co.nz](http://www.steeleroberts.co.nz)

# Guidelines for Contributors

We welcome all submissions of original material for upcoming issues of the New Zealand Library and Information Journal.

## Journal Content

Material in NZLIMJ is essentially of two types: (1) peer-reviewed research-based articles containing original work relevant to libraries and information management in New Zealand; (2) feature articles or columns which are not peer-reviewed but which nevertheless reflect high standards of scholarship or insightful reflection on issues of current interest to the New Zealand information community.

## Contributions

NZLIMJ welcomes original contributions on any topic or field relevant to the library and information professions in New Zealand. Such submissions must: include the author(s) name, affiliation and email address; include an abstract of no more than 200 words; be no more than 6000 words in length, including references; use the APA (name, date) referencing style and include full bibliographic details in the list of references; be submitted to the Editor as a Microsoft Word document.

The Editor reserves the right to edit copy from contributors to conform to standard English and stylistic conventions for quality publications. Any other changes will be made in consultation with the contributor. If a submission is peer-reviewed, the contributor must make such amendments and changes as required by the reviewers and resubmit the revised contribution to the Editor. The final content of peer-reviewed articles must be agreed by the reviewers in consultation with the Editor.

For contributions which are not peer-reviewed, the Editor may make changes which remove jargon and make the story more easily understood to a general audience. In cases where publication of material may be considered potentially damaging to the reputation of LIANZA, or of an individual, the Editor reserves the right to edit the material or to refuse its publication.

Copyright over material remains with the author at all times, though if accepted for publication it should not appear in any other publication for six months following publication in the NZ Library & Information Management Journal. LIANZA reserves the right to re-publish articles on its website or in other publications, with due credit being paid to the author.

**Please submit all contributions electronically in MS Word format to the Editor:**

Alison Fields

Editor of the New Zealand Library and Information Management Journal

[Alison.Fields@openpolytechnic.ac.nz](mailto:Alison.Fields@openpolytechnic.ac.nz)

