

The established professional: will I ever be one?

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Earlier this year I received an email in my university inbox about a student scholarship from the Australian Law Librarian's Group Inc. (ALLG) to attend 10th Asia Pacific Special, Health and Law Librarians' Conference. On a whim, I thought, "why not have a go at that, you never know..." I was right. You never know.

In July, whilst in Brisbane during a fieldwork placement, I received an email from Roz Davidson informing me that I was the winner of the scholarship to attend the conference.



"So here I am, at a conference! Me! At a conference!" I remember thinking. However, running in parallel with this thought was a conflicting emotion, one of feeling out of place.

I spent a considerable amount of time watching various qualified and employed people delivering papers, meeting new people and catching up with those that they already know. I felt a burning desire to be like that, to be employed, to have finished my graduate diploma. For the entire duration of the conference all I could think was "Will I ever be like that? Will I ever have a job in a library that gives me enough hours to support myself and be financially independent?"

As much as I enjoy being a student, I am finding increasingly that I gain more enjoyment from professional development and networking opportunities, such as attending the conference and my involvement with SALIN and the 2nd New Librarians' Symposium committee.

From the concurrent sessions I attended (digital libraries, service level agreements, training lawyers, knowledge management and customer service) and the keynote speakers I gained a wonderful insight into the profession. I was able to find out who was working on what type of projects. In particular I found the paper on the National Library of Australia's digital library projects very motivating.

One of the most beneficial aspects of my attendance at the conference was being able to meet such a wide variety of people. I was fortunate enough to speak with people from a range of special, health and law libraries to discover what their jobs were and the pathways they took to arrive there. I believe that a successful career as an Information Professional depends not only on what I know, but also on whom I know.

Attendance at the conference gave me the chance to highlight relevant aspects of my education in Library and Information Studies and relate them to current issues within the Information Industry. I am now able to utilise the knowledge gained in further academic pursuit.

Thank you ALLG.