

One set of footprints

Thank you Trung and ALLA so much for inviting me to be here today.

Whilst I don't claim that my experience is anything out of the ordinary, nor that my journey has been extraordinary, one thing I can claim is that I have been lucky enough to work in different cultures, and to visit with colleagues in many countries, and I have taken away ideas and experiences that have influenced the way I worked.

I started in law librarianship nearly 30 years ago, on 08-08-1988, an auspicious date in the Chinese calendar - how many of you were born after this date? A lot of what I will say may seem ancient history, though it feels quite recent to me!

The greatest change in how libraries are perceived has been that of size; a great law library was once judged by the size of the collection, now it is by the quality and relevance of its services.

It is with a heavy heart that I read articles such as these: **SLIDE 2 & 3** (and Jean O'Grady's in late April)

However I sense that not all is doom and gloom. I'm not sure how often, when you are working full time and dealing with the matters that occupy most of the work day, you get the luxury to take a helicopter view of what you do. **SLIDE 4** You will not be doing everything on this view, and I am sure I have left out something important, but let's have a run through:

Go through each area of expertise, and then the audience

Teaching & reference/research:

Legal research, Info Literacy

Copyright, plagiarism

Business intelligence

Technical

LMS – data entry, maintenance, standards

Moys or other subject classification

Professional associations

Membership

Conferences

Papers, blogs

Publishers

Negotiation

Budgets – materials

Resources and the constant interface changes

Management – organisation

Staff management

Budgets - staff

Space management

Building design

Collection arrangement

Audience:

Judges, barristers, solicitors, law firms, law societies, academics, students, researchers, law reformers, judge's associates, graduates, etc

Often however we only see a narrow part of each one of those areas of expertise, because we find ourselves confined to our own workplaces **SLIDE**

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Yet there are commonalities across each of the silos **SLIDE 6**

These apply to all of us wherever we are based:
Service based approach – though I think this improved in academia over time, learning from law firm practices

Education is important – teaching at the moment of need is often the best way for people to learn

People – we like working with people; most of us are not the back room escapee from life that others use at time to characterize our profession

Technology – again, most of us enjoy the wonderful strides made by technology in our work places, broadening the scope and reach of resources and systems we could only dream of in the past.

Change – this is something we face daily as the world of work changes around us, and adapting our service to the cut of the cloth we are dealt is vital to being relevant and valuable to our workplace

Collaboration – where would we be without our professional collaboration?

It is important to realise these are not just common to us all, many aspects of what we do is unique to our profession. In my career I have tried other professions, or been close to them. Whilst one or the other of these commonalities can apply

to other roles, it seems to me that they converge most neatly in one job. So if we move from one type of law library to another, these will still be the fundamentals of what we tackle/manage/enjoy every day in our work.

I have experienced different workplaces in my careers **SLIDE 7**

My biggest career mistake – Practice Development Manager

My fear – going to academia, especially second time

My weakness – once I had achieved my goals, I tended to get a bit bored and look around

My learning curve – LawSauce

Commonalities: **SLIDE 8**

I was always keen to embrace change, and enjoyed new challenges

I liked to work somewhere where I could respect my manager, and where I had pride in my workplace

What were some of the things I did that helped bring about my ideas?

Involve and empower the staff!

Bring people along with you as you have new ideas and proposals – no one likes surprises that impact on their role

No-one's perfect!

Allow people to learn from mistakes, move forward – my example of rota change

Be judicious!

Balance management demands; don't drown in administration. That's not why you became a librarian. Spreadsheets, statistics, reports – learn how to be succinct and efficient so you are not doing this work to the exclusion of interaction with your readers. No-one remembers me for my spreadsheets, things of beauty though they were!

Be adventurous!

Let your thoughts range widely, to the 'what if', 'how about', 'what can we do to make xyz better?' . Don't accept the status quo! And don't sell yourself short.

Bring previous learnings

Whatever you have done by way of work, you have learned skills and knowledge by way of absorption; stop to think about how what you know is relevant and applicable in a new situation. I think you will be surprised.

Be adaptable!

Take setbacks and use them as ways to review your plans and be adaptable as needed – example of building project at the Bod, segue to the Koln Concert

SLIDE 9 The Koln concert

SLIDE 10 Some examples of things I was proud to initiate:

- > Pathfinders for each subject in my school at Emerald, and our own unique Foxpro catalogue of the library books, 1986, and design of new build library
- > BRS Search – concatenated databases of unique materials – books, journal articles, precedents, CCH summaries – had them send me electronic versions of these at ARH back in 1992!
- > First web page for ARH – 1995, and design of new build library at 550 Collins
- > Introduction of legal research teaching by librarians, first website and redesign of Melb Uni Law Library for new building
- > Knowledge management – integrating library and precedents roles across Australia/NZ at PF
- > Working on a more global stage at the Bod – IALL, Legal Info literacy, teaching legal research in the curriculum, developing Law Sauce, redesigning the refurbished law library and seeing it through

So as far as a varied career goes, I was able to make the most of every opportunity that presented itself because I was willing to allow myself the discomfort of being a little scared at the start of each new role..

SLIDE 11 These are observations I've made in looking back over the past 45 years of my career. I think as long as you are learning something new, and seeing what you can improve, you will be rewarded with a satisfying working life.

SLIDE 12 BLL: Sometimes you need to take a step backwards to move forward...

SLIDE 13 I am now looking at the technical changes I have seen. This slide only deals with changes post internet. People of my vintage remember punchcard programming, Apple IIe, Wyse terminals, fordigraph reproduction, wet paper photocopiers, above-rod catalogue card filing, Fox-pro databases, UNIX, 300 baud phone couplers, brown and reverse brown book borrowing systems, and much more.

SLIDE 14 Global game change with cell phones

SLIDE 15 Meanwhile in Myanmar - Map

Background to another career change (You're never too old!)

- Myanmar people had been given limited access to computers, and the internet, in 2012.
- Our colleagues in Myanmar came to the new technology and web via **cell phones**. They missed the CDROM, the video disc, the millennium bug, clunky LMS systems.
- But they also missed the transition we have all undertaken, sometimes imperceptibly, from being organisers and custodians of books, journals, etc, to providers of services beyond the dreams of many librarians of the past.
- Their work practices have been firmly set in the 1960s, with no knowledge of the world of eresources which evolved as we worked, and

thus we take for granted. Little to do in the past other than maintain journal and book collections.

SLIDES 16 My involvement – At Oxford – story of ASK at honorary degree ceremony, and promise by Oxford to help, role of Law School, and us sending books in Dec 2013, my visit no.1 in 2014.

Re-visit in 2015, training. Advice to EIFL re legal resources.

SLIDE 17, 18 group work VIDEO , and then show the **SLIDE 19** book catalogue

SLIDE 20 EIFL – what it is, what it aims to achieve. Explain Open Societies Foundation aims.

SLIDE 21 Training extends from IT Literacy, through Search, using eresources, plagiarism, etc through to management issues – org charts, job descriptions, collection policies.. This is an org chart that was in use, based on 1960's chart; yellow slots have been vacant for over 30 years....

SLIDE 22 - with the EIFL Myanmar team last November.

What have we achieved?

1. Exposed academics and researchers to eresources that the west has taken for granted for decades
2. Educated and empowered librarians –a rise in their status among the academics
3. Introduced institutional repositories

4. Created LibGuides
5. Advised on websites
6. Introduced to email, facebook, etc.

SLIDE 23 Phase 3 of the project, six new libraries, extending the resources, having set up the MALC, and Institutional Repositories in original group of universities.

SLIDE 24 Later in the year I will be back in Myanmar working with the Denmark- Myanmar Programme on Rule of Law and Human Rights to provide legal research training to the law faculty at two law schools in Yangon at Dagon, and East Yangon Universities.

What do I get out of it?

I am fortunate to have enjoyed my law library career during the halcyon days, when firms and scholars valued scholarship, expertise and research without the constraints faced by all today. I now can work with an NGO that does good work in part of the developing world.

I get to work with enthusiastic librarians who want to learn, absorb, implement.

I feel as though I am helping give back to the profession which has served me so well over the past 40 years.

And I get to share some of the things I learned
along the way from and with wonderful colleagues
like you!