



ALIA Access 2010 Conference
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre
Wednesday 1 – Friday 3 September 2010



INFORMATION LITERACY IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES: A COVERT? OPERATION

Louise Pieper, Gold Coast City Council, QLD

The participative and collaborative technologies of web 2.0, are being utilised by libraries in their information literacy programs. Supporting independent learning and literacy are core public library roles, along with providing physical and virtual places for social and community interaction.

This paper considers the application of web 2.0 tools to furthering these roles of public libraries, under the aegis of reader development. Specifically, the potential of a blog to assist in reader development is investigated, with the Gold Coast City Council libraries' book club blog serving as an example. This paper will consider how a blog supports reader development, including by the provision of information and advice; by encouraging reading with recommendations, reviews and competitions; and by facilitating access to library and information resources. The relevance of reader development to information literacy, through the web 2.0 environment, is enunciated with discussion of fostering lifelong learning, writing and digital citizenship skills; encouraging reflection as part of community; and assisting deep learning, despite the often casual and relaxed environment of social networking technologies.

This paper also considers the reasons for the creation of "another" online book club. Public libraries aim to form connections with the local community, while facilitating broad access to library services. A blog, as a virtual community place, can have meaning for a geographically local community, as well as for the wider online community. Information literacy is commonly seen, within the library and information profession, as the concern of academic libraries. However, lifelong learning is both an integral element of information literacy, and a core concern of public libraries. Professional staff in the public library sphere are therefore well placed to recognise and use reader development opportunities, especially those utilising web 2.0 tools, to support the building of their customers' information literacy skills.