OUT ON THE EDGE: USING A PERSONAL LEARNING NETWORK FOR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Teresa Bennett, Curtin University of Technology, WA
Constance Wiebrands, Edith Cowan University Library, WA

In the current fast-changing information environment, it is essential that library professionals are able to navigate and interpret the world of information overload effectively and efficiently, and ensure that our understanding of the information environment is both credible and meaningful. There is therefore an urgent need for supportive ways of learning beyond training that can be provided in the workplace. While formal training is important, it can be limited and expensive, and ongoing support for learners is often non-existent after the training.

The paper describes the concept of the Personal Learning Network (PLN), and argues that the use of a PLN can empower learners by enabling them to identify and focus on areas of need, and take control of their own learning. The authors’ experiences in starting and maintaining their own PLNs are described. A number of online tools that can be used for ongoing learning are examined, and strategies for library professionals interested in ongoing learning and setting up their own Personal Learning Network are proposed.