

## NEWSLETTER

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*"OSALL aims to link and support everyone interested in Law  
Librarianship in South Africa"*

### FROM THE CHAIR

The first quarter for the new committee has been one of learning the ropes and taking over. We want to say thank you to Danielle Botha for still helping with the final arrangements of the SLIS/OSALL conference that took place on 20 October at the CSIR in Pretoria. And on this conference note ... what a wonderful day it was. Thank you to SLIS for making us part of such a big and joyous event.

The committee recognises the need to involve OSALL members from afar in the wonderful activities being presented during the year and have therefore decided to award 2 full sponsorships to the conference. Thank you to Academic Marketing Services who contributed towards this sponsorship.

The sponsorship included: Conference registration fees; return air fare to the O.R. Tambo International Airport; return transportation to the conference venue; breakfast, lunch and a late afternoon cocktail function and the opportunity to meet, chat and mingle with all the other law librarians and members of OSALL and SLIS.

The two lucky winners were Lucky Mosia - Xaba, Law Librarian at the KwaZulu-Natal Law Society, Pietermaritzburg and Varsha Sathianand, Law Librarian at Shepstone & Wylie, Durban.

Congratulations to our two winners and we hope you have enjoyed the day with us.

### EDITORIAL

I apologise for the delay with publishing but editor's block and number of other issues intervened.

Firstly, Diana Riley writes about her recent trip to London where she attended the BIALL Conference.

Mary Bruce provides us with very vital information in her new regular featured column titled: Dotting the i and crossing the t.

In this issue Mary discusses why and how RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds have changed her life. She also briefly makes reference to LibraryThing.com

Nico Ferreira supplied a list of new books and journals articles recently published.

Please remember that OSALL is your organisation and the newsletter belongs to you so don't forget to send me interesting articles and news.

Many thanks to those who have contributed to this newsletter.

## NEWS

**British and Irish Law Librarians (BIALL)  
37<sup>th</sup> Annual Study Conference & Exhibition Hilton  
Brighton, Metropole, London  
15th & 17th June 2006  
Diana Riley, Bowman Gilfillian Attorneys  
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It is with great pleasure that I report on my attendance of the Annual Conference of the British and Irish Law Librarians (BIALL), held in Brighton in June. Attending the Conference was certainly a richly rewarding experience and I would like to thank Academic Marketing Services, Sweet & Maxwell for their generous sponsorship and the OSALL Committee for awarding the sponsorship.

This year was also the first time in OSALL's history that a second South African delegate, Charmaine Bertram attended the BIALL Annual Conference. I thought that this was sure to add to the experience and fun! I departed from Cape Town on a direct overnight flight to London Heathrow, whilst Charmaine departed from Johannesburg. We agreed to meet at Starbucks in Heathrow's Terminal 4 to travel to Brighton together. The bus to Brighton very conveniently departed just outside Terminal 4 so we were on our way with a minimum of fuss. I was pleasantly surprised by the hilly green countryside, the 2 hour journey sped by and by early afternoon we were in Brighton. Our hotel, the Hilton faces the Brighton sea front and hosted BIALL's 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Study Conference. After a quick check-in we were off to find lunch and explore Brighton! We had quite a few hours to explore Brighton that afternoon before I, as the official South African delegate, had to attend a pre-Conference dinner.

The Conference took place over three days and was attended by approximately four hundred law librarians which I found pretty amazing considering the modest number of South African law librarians. The conference attendees included delegates from Australia, Canada, France, Germany and the United States. The Conference Programme was full, but included numerous tea breaks, lunches and two dinners. These allowed plenty of time to meet people and build future contacts. At the request of my attorneys I had contacted some of the delegates prior to the Conference and arranged to meet. The dinners on Friday and Saturday evening took place at the Hilton Brighton Metropole and proved to be memorable experiences. The BIALL Annual Dinner was spectacular with entertainment provided by the ABBA UK Tribute Band and the antics of the delegates on the dance floor.

Challenging invisibility: practical ways to raise your profile  
(Louise Myatt)

The following steps to raise the visibility of the information centre:

- Understand and meet customers' needs and get to know your customers, *including the non-users!*
  - Communicate with your users, including giving users a say in how the service is run as this will create a sense of ownership
- Brand your information centre as your brand influences the way your users and non-users perceive you and the library
  - Question names and titles – for example library vs information centre and librarian vs information manager
- Communicate your value which involves promoting your worth
- Market yourself as 'you' are the service
  - Think about how you present yourself as people do make judgments about how we look
  - Concentrate on tasks and skills rather than on your title
  - Keep your skills and knowledge up-to-date

Chargeback, surveys and statistics: identifying and maximizing the value of online resources (Fiona Durrant)

Chargeback should be seen as an opportunity to meet some or all costs of an online resource and the need to justify expenditure and identify poorly used resources are probably the main reasons to implement chargeback.

Suggested strategies to deal with poor usage and boost the usage of electronic databases include:

- Marketing the use of the resource
- Creating a regular alert using the content of the database
- User training
- Access through a portal / single search engine – so that the user can search several online resources at once
- Changing the subscription model
- Cancelling the subscription

The Challenges of project management (Barbara Allan)

The session focused generally on the challenges of project management and highlighted the importance of people involved in a project. Allan suggested that one of the greatest challenges on a project come from the people involved and involves working with team members and the different stakeholders.

Has Knowledge management had its day? (David Byrne)  
During this session it was suggested that librarians need to focus on their skills and not on job titles and that the focus on skills would allow librarians to become involved in the knowledge management field. Librarians' involvement in knowledge management generally centres on the acquisition of information, storing and organising

information as well as the retrieval of information. The speaker considered people more important than technology in the knowledge management process.

The **third and last day (Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June)** of the Conference consisted of five plenary sessions and included the following sessions:

Implementing content management for web sites, intranets and extranets (Martin White)

The speaker highlighted the importance of the currency and quality of the content.

The Reform of legal services: facing the challenge (Andrew Holroyd)

Although this particular session focused on the reform of legal services in the UK it is likely that some of the issues raised will also impact on the legal profession in South Africa. The issues referred to included changes in the market, the impact of regulatory changes on law firms, new models of practice (such as multi-disciplinary practices) and the growth in the outsourcing of back office functions to make use of cheaper environments. It is likely that the changes faced by the legal profession will also impact on library and information services.

How to get what you want: top tips for making a business case (Lucy Dillon)

Dillon defined a business case as a description of the reasons for a particular project and the justification for doing it based on an appraisal of the costs, benefits and risks. Thus the making of a business case provides a framework for informed decision-making. She suggested that the library's annual budget is an opportunity to make a business case and that the appointment of new and more staff, new premises or the expansion of existing premises all warrant a written business case. A business case should also be seen as an opportunity to promote the library team and services.

A well prepared business case links investment to the business objectives of the firm and involves lateral thinking with regard to the impact on other stakeholders. The business case should cover the reasons for the investment, the options considered, the expected business benefits, *the option of doing nothing* and the expected costs, timings and risks of the investment. Finally a business case should have a strong conclusion and recommendation. There are many benefits to making a business case that it should be made even if is not a requirement.

## NEWS

### SLIS/OSALL Bi-annual Conference 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> October 2006, CSIR International Convention Centre, Pretoria, Gauteng

The conference highlighted various topics and workshops of vital important and interest to the information industry.



Karen Schneider (pictured above) was the Keynote Speaker, her workshop titled "Library 2.0 Cookbook" looked at technologies (e.g. blogging, RSS, podcasting) that are available to best enhance and modernize your services to your users, but also share advise on how to get started. This was a very practical, hands-on workshop sharing best practice and the latest trends. For a copy of this presentation and information on all topics and workshops of this conference, go to: <http://www.slis.co.za/home.asp?pid=870>



**Varsha Saithanand** (left) and **Lucky Mosia Xaba** (right) were sponsored by OSALL to attend the above mentioned conference, below are their thoughts :

#### **Lucky Mosia Xaba**

I was one of the two law librarians from KwaZulu Natal to be awarded a sponsorship to attend the Slis/ Osall conference that was held in CSIR International Conference Centre, in Pretoria. This was my first professional conference, I felt like I was in heaven with all the angels around me. We arrive at the Airport early in the morning. Lydia Craemer and her husband Henry, generously offered to transport us for the day. When we reach the venue of the conference, we were greeted with only the warmest welcome by all. Thank you to Salome Vranas, Selma Savitz, Danielle Botha, Sharon Pather-Nagy and all other ladies at the helpdesk, it really felt like home.

The conference was a well planned event. The speakers were well prepared. All the workshops that I attended were extremely worthwhile and very informative. I learned so much and will differently implement these new ideas in my work environment. Breakfast, lunch and the cocktail were all delicious. Thanks to Slis/Osall for giving me a chance to explore and to meet other librarians and make new friends. Hope to see you all, next year.

#### **Varsha Saithanand**

Thank you to the OSALL Committee for all their hard work in organising a successful event and for selecting me as one of the lucky candidates for the sponsorship to the conference. I have brought a whole lot back with me and the experience has really benefited me.

I enjoyed the conference thoroughly and have managed to network and make good contacts with other OSALLITES who had been assisting me since I've joined Shepstone & Wylie. It's good to now have a face in mind to go with voices of the very kind OSALLITES who've been such a great help.

## NEWS

Mary Bruce works as the Website Administrator for the KwaZulu-Natal Law Society, which is based in Pietermaritzburg.

Mary is the new OSALL Listserv administrator. She will also share her vast knowledge with all of us in her regular column titled, **"Dotting the i and Crossing the t "** will be a regular feature in the Osall Newsletter.



**Mary Bruce**

Mary gives us a brief overview of the work experiences:

My interest in information management dates back to my high school years - yes, in the last century. Having been extensively involved in the day-to-day running of that library, it was a fortuitous opportunity that enabled me to work in various departments of the main library on the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg) campus over the following eighteen years. Working on campus in the eighties was an exciting time on the technology front, with constant exposure to new applications, a learning curve that set the trend for the imminent age of the Internet. Seven of those years were spent in the field of desktop publishing and formed a solid foundation when the time came to convert to the field of web-publishing. Although most of my experience was gained in an academic library, I have also worked in the media centre of a private school, a legal deposit/public library and most recently within the specialized field of the legal information sector. My work with the KZN Law Society since May 1999 has largely revolved around using the Internet protocol to find ways to collate and disseminate relevant information and to encourage the development of online communication. I instruct students on a part-

time basis at the School for Legal Practice in Durban in the area of electronic research, and have been a Committee member of the Pietermaritzburg Computer Club since March 2003. I've spoken to a wide variety of audiences, from local to international interest groups, mostly on topics relating to the adaptation of new technologies to meet the requirements of specific communities.

## DOTTING THE i AND CROSSING THE t

Regardless of the largesse of those who control the purse-strings, IT budgets generally absorb phenomenal amounts of money. The purpose of this column is to focus on applications that are easily acquired, low-cost (preferably completely free) and, the crux, time- and labour-saving for the information community.

Most of us have discovered products or shortcuts that have become indispensable in the never-ending cycle of managing information. Here is a forum to share this knowledge with colleagues and to glean tips to make us individually leaner, meaner information brokers.

To kick off, this is why and how RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds have changed my life.

A large part of my working day is spent on the compilation of three electronic current awareness newsletters so I have a particular interest in products or services that facilitate the identification of Internet-based resources of relevance to the legal sector while filtering as much superfluous material as possible.

Scanning individual newsletters is neither time- nor labour-efficient as only a small-percentage of the headlines is relevant and important items from other sources are obviously excluded. Setting up alerts remains an essential element but can also result in a lot of useless email traffic.

So the search continued. Criteria : needed to be free, secure, and filter more effectively than previous solutions.

RSS has been discussed at SLIS/OSALL/SAOUG conferences over the last two years and it is hard to overestimate its value. In brief, one identifies which websites are to be watched and the RSS Reader then reports back whenever new items are added. Only sites that have been RSS-enabled are compatible with this service ; this is usually indicated by the presence of an orange "RSS" button (tip : found quickly by clicking

somewhere near the top of a page and using <control F> to find the acronym).

My first introduction was via Pluck ([www.pluck.com](http://www.pluck.com)). It is an excellent service but for the last three weeks I have made exclusive use of the recently launched **Google Reader** ([www.google.com/reader](http://www.google.com/reader)).

It is appropriate at this point to explain why I find some of Google's services, although no panacea, of definite value. A few IT departments have issues with security/privacy factors. Both matters are important and I regularly delete cookies from my computer. However, the benefits need to be weighed against any risks (more at <http://knowgozone.blogspot.com> / "They're watching what?"). Going beyond the superficial, the scope of Google's indexed resources is the widest and judicious use of appropriate parameters can mine into relatively untouched areas of the Web. I also know of no other search facility that is as up-to-date : both the websites I administer are re-indexed by Google approximately every three days. News items seem to reflect within minutes and changes I make to my blog are reported independently by the Reader within ten to fifteen minutes.

The Reader does require one to have a Google account. This does not have to be a Gmail facility. I have used my own email address that was registered with Google Alerts some years ago (with no apparent dire consequences in the interim). So far 'my' Reader has been directed to automatically search about a dozen parent sites including both news websites and three blogs. It has reduced the number of daily newsletters in my Inbox quite remarkably.

Taking the Google Reader Tour ([www.google.com/help/reader/tour.html](http://www.google.com/help/reader/tour.html)) is well worth a few minutes for those unfamiliar with the concept. Others may find the dedicated blog of interest : <http://googlereader.blogspot.com/>.

A bar on the left identifies the targeted sites, enabling one to prioritise one's scanning, and indicates the number of unread items within each (very similar to the way in which an email account indicates the presence of unread messages within folders). The right side of the screen displays headlines and short excerpts from the source. The choices include clicking on the hyperlinked headlines to open each full-text article in a new window, tagging them for various reasons which are not elaborated on in this column, and emailing them directly to individual recipients (note : this does require a Gmail account). It takes a second to identify whether or not to pursue a link and one uses the spacebar to move onto

the next link – extremely user-friendly, especially if one feels like one is working at the pace of the Road Runner.

A big advantage is that this is a web-based service so no installation is required, it is accessible from any Internet-connected computer, cannot be lost through a local system crash, may be 'shared' with nominated friends/colleagues and included in one's own website. For those who already use their cellphones to surf the Web, this service works on mobile phone browsers too.

As with any Internet service, it is faster before 11am (SA time) and can be abysmally slow at times, particularly when the Google servers pause gasping for breath at the side of the Internet highway. However, the product is in beta and it's still way faster than any other alternative at this stage.

While I find the speed at which Google is expanding a bit alarming, its services are capable of interacting quite effectively if one so chooses. At this stage I have chosen to use them separately and keep my personal details to a minimum (so far all that has been submitted are a username, email address and password of choice).

The second service of note comes with a personalised invitation to the South African community. It is **LibraryThing** ([www.librarything.com](http://www.librarything.com)), very loosely described as an online catalogue. Within four hours of blogging about this service, the creator sent me an email asking for input from our country. Tim Spalding is a South African and a librarian and is keen to know which libraries have open Z39.50 connections. He would also like to hear of problems and receive suggestions on improving the site. Please send your comments to [mary@lawsoc.co.za](mailto:mary@lawsoc.co.za) as OSALL will be collating these to forward to Tim.

Back to the service . . .

Mary Ellen Bates describes it as "the love child of Melvyl Dewey and Web 2.0". A classic description that defies improvement.

At this stage it is aimed at the organisation of personal libraries, drawing on existing information from Amazon.com, LC and other major sources. It allows one to share details of one's collection with others and also to benefit from others' personal collections.

A feature that has a lot of potential results from an overview of one's collection, returning a list of suggested reading material that may be of interest to the owner of such a combination of titles. As someone who frequently

doesn't know where to start when visiting the public library or bookshops, what a bonus!

LibraryThing has numerous social networking features : it allows participants to access reader reviews, share information with similar interest groups/individuals and, yes, even access it from one's cellular phone.

It does cost \$10 a year or \$25 a lifetime ; profit-making organisations pay \$50 a year for up to 5 000 titles. A professional version is in the offering.

Take theTour at <http://www.librarything.com/tour/>.

Current statistics imply that almost 36 000 titles were added in the last 24 hours. This service excels in producing an amazing array of stats including top books, authors and tags.

Opportunities to make constructive input into a beta-product are not as frequent as they might be. Here is one begging for attention.

**Columnist : : Mary Bruce**

[mary@lawsoc.co.za](mailto:mary@lawsoc.co.za)

Opinions expressed in this column are my own and not necessarily those of my employer.

## NEWS

### Librarians 'should be sexier'

A shake-up of Britain's libraries has been called for by a senior spin-doctor - including a ban on the word "librarian".

The Westminster council official said libraries should also spice up their reputation by using "good-looking" staff for press and marketing work and by stressing their range of "racy" titles.

The proposals were met with disgust by librarians, who dismissed the idea that they are not glamorous or exciting.

"Librarians come in all shapes and sizes - and that includes the very photogenic," said one library chief, adding that some of his colleagues are "incredibly exciting".

The call for an improvement in the reputation of local libraries came from Westminster head of communications Alex Aiken.

Mr Aiken, a former policy director for the Tories, told a conference of the Public Library Authorities: "The concept of the librarian has to change and perhaps a start would be to abolish the title itself, with its connotations of middle-aged conservatism."

Telling the librarians how to get pro-library articles into the press, he said: "From racy books to photogenic librarians and new services that counter outdated perceptions, media is a powerful tool to shape image."

Source : Published in the Daily Mail, 16 November 2006

CAMBRIDGE

# Legal Information Management

A Journal of the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians (BIALL)

*Legal Information Management* is an invaluable journal for legal information professionals everywhere. This publication provides topical information for all those involved in the provision of legal information in academic and professional environments. Published quarterly *Legal Information Management* features an extensive current awareness section, a regular IT column and extensive coverage of management issues.

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## PUBLICATIONS NOTED

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Evers, S. ed. *Competing jurisdictions: settling land claims in Africa*. Martinus Nijhoff 2005. ISBN 9004147802. USD38.00

Fourie, I. *How LIS professionals can use alerting services for survival*. Chandos Publishing, 2006. ISBN 184334128X. USD78.00

Giesecke, J. *Fundamentals of library supervision*. ALA, 2005. ISBN 0838938950. USD42.00

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Kende, M.S. The constitutionality of the death penalty: South Africa as a model for the United States, in *GEORGE WASHINGTON INTERNATIONAL LAW REVIEW*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2006, p. 209 – 250.

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Contributed by Nico Ferreira, UNISA  
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A Librarian is a keeper of books.  
 - *Anonymous*

The librarian of today, and it will be true still more of the librarians of tomorrow, are not fiery dragons interposed between the people and the books. They are useful public servants, who manage libraries in the interest of the public... Many still think that a great reader, or a writer of books, will make an excellent librarian. This is pure fallacy.

- *Sir William Osler, 1917*

Librarian is a service occupation. Gas station attendant of the mind.

- In *The Gold Bug Variations* p.35, 1991.  
 Richard Powers

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## QUOTES FUNNIES AND MORE .....

Research means that you don't know, but are willing to find out.

- *Charles F. Kettering*

It often requires more courage to read some books than it does to fight a battle.

- *Sutton Elbert GRIGGS (1872-1930)*

"...A library is also a place where love begins."

- *Rudolfo Anaya*

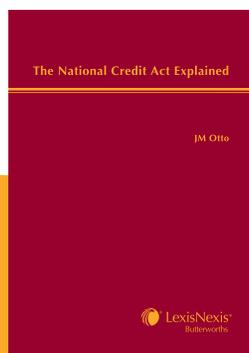
"People can lose their lives in libraries. They ought to be warned."

- *Saul Bellow*

# Latest releases from LexisNexis Butterworths

## The National Credit Act Explained

JM Otto



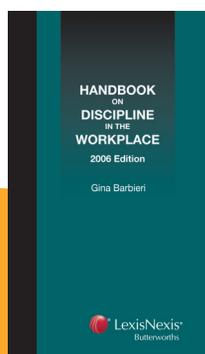
The final regulations to the new Credit Act were passed in June 2006, and now all credit grantors in banks, retailers and cash loans businesses must comply with the Act or their dealings will have no force and effect. This book has been written to provide a practical and systematic guide to what is a very complex piece of legislation.

The content relates to the application of the law and is written in the form of a commentary. It is designed to be a work of first reference when dealing with the Act. An added feature of the book is a detailed index which allows readers to search easily for the information needed.

The name of the author, Jannie Otto, is synonymous with Credit Law, as he has written a wide range of publications on this subject. He is a professor of law and the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Johannesburg and an Advocate of the High Court of South Africa.

## Handbook on Discipline in the Workplace

G Barbieri



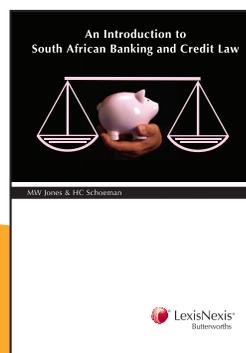
In her professional role as an attorney, the author is often asked for assistance in the disciplinary process, prompting her to write this very useful and much-needed work. The Labour Relations Act is difficult for the layperson to understand and as a result the disciplinary process is often applied unfairly or avoided outright.

This publication provides guidance for everyone in the disciplinary process – employers, employees, trade union officials, human resource practitioners and legal advisors – so as to facilitate the execution of discipline fairly, and in accordance with legislation.

The book is a companion to the author's first book, *Handbook on Discipline in the Public Service*, a similar work on discipline in the public sector – which has been a resounding success.

## An Introduction to South African Banking and Credit Law

M Jones, Heidi Schoeman, N Mlomzale, A van der Merwe, B Haasbroek, J Matshekga



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The variety of subjects covered makes the book a suitable choice for both undergraduates studying at university and students attending business school who have to master all or most of the covered topics in a short space of time. In addition, the book is suitable as a reference for practitioners in banking and related industries who need quick and comprehensible access to basic legal principles in the course of their work.

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(Tweede Uitgawe)

Wyle H Daniels



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