

forget that the role of a public library is not solely to provide what the client requests, but also to educate and deliver other alternatives that users may not be aware of – sometimes referred to as unrecognised or dormant needs.

Finally, after understanding and assimilating the users' factual needs, the public library shall set standards and design a collection development plan to reflect those needs.

Setting Standards and Ways to Meet the Established Needs

The Collection Development Plan is like the 'business plan' of the library. Nowadays, all organisations have a business plan, thus the library is no exception. The question is why should the public library have a written Collection Development Plan?

A written Collection Development Plan is essential as it:

- i. acts as a reference point for both the staff and the general public;
- ii. sets guidelines on collection's subject areas and formats - thus facilitating library processes such as acquisitions;
- iii. provides clear allocation of resources;
- iv. motivates the library staff to work as a team towards clearly defined goals and objectives;
- v. illustrates long-term planning and management of the library collection and services;
- vi. sets priorities on library funding and resources, including how to utilise available resources and ways to lobby for more;
- vii. includes a 'weeding and retention' policy;
- viii. presents ways to promote the library collection and its services; and
- ix. includes evaluation strategies of both the library collection and its services.

The Collection Development Plan must be flexible enough to accommodate the changing needs of individuals and the community; while embracing and reaping the benefits gained from the multi faceted world of Information and Communication Technology.

In today's Internet age, information professionals feel that their work is being jeopardised due the large amount of online resources that are available to all. They argue that people are no longer searching for information or other reading resources through the classic inter-mediator, being the librarian. They are instead starting their searches online. Consequently, users are faced with an information overload, which may be rather tedious and time consuming to search and retrieve relevant authoritative information. This may lead to choosing information which may not satisfy their intended information need.

Information professionals must become aware of this issue and take advantage of the situation by thinking more on an individual based library rather than a system based organisation. Moreover, librarians must act as mentors who guide users to search, evaluate and eventually use online information resources effectively. In the library scenario this process is referred to as Information Literacy.

Tackling Challenges in the Public Libraries

One of the primary shortcomings of the public libraries is the issue concerning human