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Feedback to your Board of Directors

Do you have an idea, compliment or concern about your Association? Contact any director and ideas will be reviewed at each Board meeting.

E-mail to feedback@alia.org.au will be automatically forwarded to all Board members.

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One of my favourite things in the New Year is to carefully read those lists that they publish in newspapers and magazines about what's hot and what's not for the coming year. So dear reader, to ensure that you are up to date with what is in and what is out for libraries for 2004, read on.

What's hot

1. Reading is so cool it's hot. Reading to your children (thanks Mr Latham); reading programs based on one book one city; reading while you are on the loo (good work Victoria.) Just don't get caught without a book in 2004.
2. Likewise book clubs, if you don't belong to at least two, you are so not happening. The popularity of book clubs may have been helped by that great TV show — although it did seem to have more to do with soap than books (but it was fun!)
3. Bright and funky librarians — and you don't even have to be young. But you do need a certain sense of style, especially at cocktail parties, and sensible shoes are not permitted.
4. Self service for customers — checking out their own materials, checking them in and putting on their own reserves and renewing their own books. They love it and we can move past the checkout chick syndrome (see 6 below).
5. Robots that sort books and radio frequency identification tags that track all your stock for you. Yes Virginia, robots can learn Dewey.
6. Librarian action dolls that shush and represent our demographic so perfectly (maybe this is in the wrong column...).
7. Smart OPACs that are catching up with Amazon, and offer users book reviews and author biographies and tell you how long you have to wait for a book.
8. e-zines to keep in touch with borrowers and let them know what is happening at their favourite library — new books, CDs, DVDs, internet training, story times, book talks, feng shui classes, short story competitions, summer reading programs, karaoke, paper making — what an amazing place your local public library is!
9. Single search options that mean you don't have to enter your borrower barcode every time you want to use a different database.
10. ALIA — 2004 — the year of the monkey and the year for ALIA! There is heaps happening and you will be so glad you are a member.

What's not

To avoid social embarrassment and to ensure you commit no faux pas — what's not hot...

1. Pink library shelves. I'm sorry gen Xers, but I hope I won't be around when the

80s come back — an 80s retro look is too scary to think about

2. Mission statements — guess who read Don Watson's excellent tome over the holidays. It is called *Death sentence, the decay of public language* if you haven't caught up with it. Oh dear I cringed, constantly. My new year's resolution is no more vision statements and no more turgid corporate glug. Plain English rules.
3. Calling libraries educational resource centres or intergenerational learning centres or information commons or anything else that ignores our proud and noble 2000-year-old tradition. I like being a librarian working in a library!
4. Baby boomer bashing, not confined to libraries but getting so tiresome (and face it kids, we were the brightest and the best).
5. Sticky tape and blue tack attaching home made signs to doors and walls especially, when they are a litany of what you can't do — no eating, no drinking, no mobile phones, no skateboards, no roller blades, no children — get over it!
6. Comparing librarians to check-out operators, plant nursery workers, waiters and garbage collectors — shame on you *Australian Financial Review*.
7. Politicians and other funders who just don't get it — the internet has not taken the place of libraries and it never will.
8. PowerPoint presentations — aren't you so over them — especially the ones that audibly whoosh. Important thoughts and concepts reduced to dot points — urchh.
9. Related to the above — technology — laptops and data projectors being set up for meetings while you wait and wait and wait ... Even worse, you are the one that is poking and prodding and pulling and quietly blaspheming trying to get it to work ... while the rest of the meeting makes encouraging noises all the time wishing you would just get on with it.
10. ALIA whingers — if you are reading this, and you are one of these species — do something about it, don't sit there and wait for 'them' to!

So that is my list and I would love to hear of any additions — I am sure there is lots more! Please send yours into *inCite* — and we might be able to find a prize for the best contribution.

On a sad note, we lost three eminent librarians at the end of 2003 — Warren Horton, Allan Horton and Ena Noël. Our profession and our association are very much the richer for their significant contribution to librarianship, and on behalf of the Board I offer our condolences to their families and friends. ■