

FINALE

The meeting was brought to a close by Joyce Kirk with reference to research collaboration and ALIA's REAP program.

[*J Kirk*] There will also be a PhD workshop for about twenty-five students at the 2006 conference on information seeking in context, hosted in Sydney by UTS.

[*J Kirk*] We can take account of a view from abroad. Bob McKee from CILIP's library and information research group, which looks at LIS research in UK, recently presented a very optimistic view of LIS research in the UK. The British Library funds LIS research quite generously, but past levels have reduced somewhat. With respect to reflective practitioners, McKee spends time talking about barriers to practitioners when they do research: lack of time, support from employers, in-house skills and expertise in research, complexity of funding bids, and lack of a critical mass of LIS researchers.

[*J Kirk*] We need LIS research to increase knowledge and understanding, provide evidence to underpin decision-making and policy development (organisationally and nationally), and to advance professional practice, underpin service development and new processes.

There is a need for three kinds of LIS research: that which is valid in the academic context to add to the knowledge base; that which is of value in the practitioner environment; and that which provides evidence to inform policy.

There should be a national approach to determination of research priorities, including government, professional associations, the academic community, and leading cultural institutions, such as the National Library of Australia. It should address bridging the gap between needs of academic and practitioners, how we evaluate the impact of research and the difference that it makes to professional practice, how we sustain the academic research community, and how we maintain the cycle of research, reflection, practice and policy development.

The challenges uncovered today include what is written up in the literature about the divide between academic and practitioner researchers. It could be that divides are psychological and attributed to others. Moving to evidence-based approaches is one way to address the issue of a divide.

On setting up partnerships, partners need to be clear on the value of the partnership. They need to identify this, as it may be different for each partner. Gibbons' notion of model knowledge may be of use – new knowledge is created in practice in the real world, as well as in academic institutions. Knowledge is judged by its usefulness in practice and ability to make a difference. Partnerships scale up the resources available both financial and in terms of expertise.

Development of an appropriate research culture is a priority should be inclusive of practitioners and researchers, with a focus on innovation, new ways of doing things, and making a difference.

ALIA's REAP initiative consists of like-minded people undertaking research to improve practice but is yet to be very active. Research can be deposited at the ALIA's repository (<http://www.alia.org.au/research/e-prints/>) or in institutional repositories. ALIA also provides grants and awards for research.

