

Dear SAJLIS Readers,

As I mentioned in the previous issue, LIASA has approved the publication of a third issue of SAJLIS. With your support a fourth issue could be considered by LIASA in 2005. In the meantime, we expect to publish in March, June and December. This issue has included articles on LIS education and training, information seeking, information policy, literacy and knowledge management.

Information seeking behaviour by rural communities still raises a lot of research interest, perhaps, because solving the information needs of information starved communities, who are largely unemployed, illiterate, culturally marginalised and living in remote locations, through elite models such as print media and libraries, is still problematic in Africa. Exploration of alternative or supplementary media that is relevant and accessible to the marginalised community continues. The first article on information seeking, by Veli Jiyane and Dennis Ocholla, both from the University of Zululand, is "An Exploratory study of information availability and exploitation by the rural women of Melmoth, KwaZulu-Natal" The study recognises the information needs of the rural women who are extremely marginalised, among other things, in terms of accessibility to reliable information services for development. The second two articles focus on LIS education and training. Jayarani Raju's article on "First level library and/or information science qualifications at South African universities and technikons : a comparative study of curricula", that has invited debates on this thorny item, uses general versus vocational/professional education theory to confirm that technikon National Diploma qualifications and the technikon Bachelor of Technology (LIS) cannot be viewed as professional LIS qualifications. Raju argues that they lack general education as they are qualifications in the hierarchy of paraprofessional LIS qualifications that run parallel to the professional LIS career path such as the Bachelors LIS and Postgraduate Diploma LIS qualifications. She is of the opinion that LIS professionalism and paraprofessionalism are alternative career paths, each with their own career progressions and with valuable roles to play in LIS services. Jayaram recommends that a model on the alternative career paths and progression needs to be constructed in future.

The next article, written by Christine Stilwell, an academic from the University of Kwazulu Natal, is a tracer study on "Alumni perceptions of a post graduate Information and Library Science Education programme at the University of Natal, South Africa". Arguably, tracer studies are essential for determining whether products of a degree programme/qualification meet the market requirements. The common way of obtaining such information is to seek views of the graduates and also the employers. Christine's case study has found that the Programme has broadly attained its anticipated outcomes in preparing alumni for the workplace and that to some extent a balance between the various considerations outlined in the literature has been achieved.

Debates on the formulation of national information policy are still raging. Ingrid shares the knowledge obtained in her senior degree work at the University of Pretoria to report on guidelines and approaches towards the formulation and implementation of a National Information Policy in South Africa in the article entitled "Approach to the formulation of a National Information Policy for South Africa".

One of the major problems encountered in learning institutions in South South Africa is lack of literacy skills that can readily be acquired through support in the home environments. Myrna Machet and Elizabeth Pretorius, both from the University of South Africa, tackle this issue in their article entitled "Family literacy: A project to get parents involved" by recognising and describing family literacy as a strategy to address the problem of a lack of preliteracy skills in preschool children in their family literacy project developed by the Children's Literature Research Unit in the Department of Information Science at Unisa in partnership with Project Literacy. The authors also recognise the role community libraries can play in implementing family literacy programmes.

Knowledge management is a domain that has been gaining significant research attention since the mid-1990's. The last article, entitled "Are enterprise portals – knowledge management?" is written by Marian Cloete and Retha Snyman. The authors provide an overview of the technical and strategic relationship between EPs and KM and illustrate that EPs are only the technology component and should not be mistaken for the essence of KM. They further argue that what is needed for successful KM in an organisation is not technology alone, but also a knowledge-sharing culture, knowledge-sharing policies, organisational processes, performance measurement and business strategies.

We are delighted to present in the General Contributions section three reviews that include the reviews of two books written by African authors. We are certain that our readers will find this issue intellectually rewarding.

Enjoy

Dennis Ocholla
Editor-in- Chief, SAJLIS