

# **A Knowledge Centre for the Community: A New Role for the Public Library**

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## Introduction

### What is the topic?

In recent years there has been increasing discussion on the role of the public library. The discussions have ranged from the defining of the role of the public library to more recent moves to incorporate the public library as a key player in the learning society.

Major reports in Australia and Great Britain have indicated that unless public libraries are prepared to accept that they have arrived at a critical moment in the development of their services, and accommodate the new knowledge economy and globalisation of knowledge, they will face declining usage and uncertain funding.

This paper will look at the role of public libraries in lifelong learning and the opportunities that they have to capitalise on the options that the new technology gives them to augment the traditional and still valuable services provided by the public library.

### Why is the issue important?

Public libraries need to prepare themselves to participate in the knowledge economy and to move quickly to supply the existing client base and the potential client base with the skills and opportunities to use the new technology that provides the infrastructure for the gateways to the new knowledge economy.

Public libraries have always been the door to learning for a great majority of the populations that they serve. There is no need for public libraries to abdicate the role that they hold in society because of the new technologies which have brought different access points to knowledge, self-help and learning. What public libraries need to do is to look at the products that they offer the public and to the potential that the new technologies bring for them to expand their services.

The issue of public libraries becoming knowledge centres is one that needs to be addressed by library managers and their funding bodies so that public libraries can continue to contribute to the lifelong learning of the population. A role that has belonged to public libraries since their inception. If people are unable to use the new technologies that are being developed to access the information they need to survive and to make their lives more enriched, then the new knowledge economy will be open only to those with the financial capability to exploit it.

## The vision

The vision is that the models discussed in this paper incite public library managers to explore opportunities for their service to participate in the knowledge society, and for their public libraries to envision a model that will be relevant to their community.

As politicians become aware of the role that public libraries can play in assisting their nations to take advantage of the global knowledge economy and in ensuring that citizens have the means and the knowledge to use the new technologies to their advantage, the position and funding of public libraries will be more secure. If public libraries can position themselves as vital links in the emerging learning, economic and knowledge society and can forge strategic partnerships to enable them to provide the services that are essential to the community, there will be a strong and vibrant future for their services.

## Who will be the beneficiary?

The beneficiaries of strong and innovative public library services will be both the libraries and the population as a whole. If a nation has access to information through a strong network of public libraries, then it has the basis for an informed citizenry, a sound democracy and the foundation of a strong, informed work force. Thus it becomes more competitive in the world economy.

# Background

## The role of the public library

The theory that the public library is all things to all people and that it must now refocus and listen to what its customers want has been espoused by public library managers around the world. They try to keep public library services relevant and competitive in local authority environments that demand efficiency and customer driven services.

In the United States, Kenneth Shearer,<sup>1</sup> Professor at the School of Library and Information Sciences at North Carolina University discussed the theory of Lowell Martin<sup>2</sup> that the public library was in danger of being ineffective because public librarians were attempting to play too many roles simultaneously. Martin's analysis resulted in major work being undertaken by the Public Library Association (PLA) on implementing the planning process in public libraries. Although the PLA has moved away from the role model to a new planning model, this work is still relevant when considering roles for the public library.

The second edition of the PLA's *Planning and role setting for public libraries*<sup>3</sup> identified eight roles that the public library could emphasise.

These are:

- Community activities centre
- Community information centre
- Formal education support centre
- Independent learning centre
- Preschooler's door to learning
- Reference library
- Research centre
- Popular materials library

In *Planning and role setting for public libraries*,<sup>4</sup> library planners are told that no more than two of the roles should be selected as primary roles for the service and no more than two secondary roles should be undertaken.

Shearer relates the results of research undertaken by George D'Elia, in which the general public and opinion leaders were polled to find how they ranked the priorities for public libraries. The results were as follows:

#### General public

- Formal education support centre
- Independent learning centre
- Preschooler's door to learning
- Research centre
- Community information centre
- Reference library to the community and business
- Popular materials library
- Community activities centre

#### Opinion leaders

- Formal education support centre
- Preschooler's door to learning
- Independent learning centre
- Community information centre
- Research centre
- Popular materials library
- Reference library to community business
- Community activities centre

Unfortunately D'Elia modified the role of the reference library and called it the 'reference library to business' in his survey which gave it a much narrower interpretation than the role described in the *Planning and role setting for public libraries*, which probably led to a different interpretation by those polled. However, despite this, it is clear that the public perception of the most important role of a public library relates to lifelong learning. The top three roles emphasised by those polled related to education from that of the preschooler to the role of the public library in lifelong learning as the people's university.

Shearer went on to look at the roles emphasised by American public libraries and studied the *Public library data service statistical report* published by the PLA in 1992 as the basis for comparison of the roles being emphasised by public libraries at the time.

He found that public libraries emphasised the following roles:

#### Primary emphasis

- Popular materials library
- Reference library
- Preschooler's door to learning
- Community information centre
- Independent learning centre
- Formal education support centre
- Research centre
- Community activities centre

#### Secondary emphasis

- Preschooler's door to learning
- Independent learning centre
- Reference library
- Formal education support centre
- Community information centre
- Popular materials library
- Community activities centre
- Research centre

#### Roles on which public libraries place primary or secondary emphasis

- Popular materials library
- Preschooler's door to learning
- Reference library
- Independent learning centre
- Formal education support centre
- Community information centre
- Community activities centre
- Reference centre

Shearer found that the majority of public library manager respondents saw "popular materials library" as the most important role of the public library. This is no different in Australia at the present time and I would guess that this holds true for public libraries in many countries.

It is from this traditional perception that the public library is now being seen by decision-makers in Britain and Australia as playing a new role. That of a centre for lifelong learning and self-directed learning, utilising the new technologies and making them available to the general public.

#### A new role for the British public library

A number of reports have come out of Britain in the past two years that offer great opportunities for the public library. The first report is *New library: the people's network*,<sup>5</sup> commissioned from the Library and Information Commission by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

This report has the potential to take Britain's public libraries forward to the new millennium as transformed and vibrant centres of learning and communication and as community hubs for the people to access a networked Britain. At the same time, the report confirms the role of the public library as the access point for books, browsing, quiet contemplation and study. It states:

“Public libraries complement formal education by providing a resource base and platform for people of all ages to participate in lifelong learning.”

The second report is a British Government Green Paper entitled *The learning age*<sup>6</sup> which relates to all learning that is neither school-based nor compulsory. It highlights the economic, social and individual purposes of learning and states that:

“Investment in human capital will be the foundation of success in the knowledge-based global economy of the twenty-first century.”

This report emphasises flexible learning and from it, public libraries can evaluate the opportunities that they have in facilitating lifelong learning for the British public.

The third report was also published by the Library and Information Commission and is entitled *The role of libraries in a learning society*.<sup>7</sup> This report relates the results of a research project undertaken at the Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research at the University of Warwick to investigate the role of library and information services in promoting lifelong learning. It states that:

“Library services are part of a triangular relationship with education and learning in which new kinds of information transmission and retrieval are being developed to assist in individual and collective lifetime perspectives that promise social integration and economic success.”

The major part of this report that relates to public libraries is the section entitled “The learner in the learning city.” It proposes the introduction of ‘learning places’ in public libraries with PC’s, a range of software, CD ROMs, distance and open-learning packages and courses for those who need to learn how to use the technology.

### A new role for the Australian public library

Two reports have challenged the role of the Australian public library. The first, *Navigating the economy of knowledge*,<sup>8</sup> prepared by Colin Mercer for the Libraries Working Group of the Cultural Ministers’ Council, reports on the results of the first ever national survey of state and public library users and non-users.

The report stated that:

“We note ... high uses of the library for formal and informal educational purposes to the extent of functioning as an additional arm of the national education system.”

And:

“Our findings, particularly those relating to marginal users and non-users with high rates of computer literacy, indicate that the library, when combined with the growing information and communications-based competencies of the Australian population, is and will be a crucial part of the creative infrastructure needed to take Australia into the new knowledge economies and the new economic relations of the 21st century.”

The second report, also prepared for the Libraries Working Group by Colin Mercer, with Margaret Smith, entitled *2020 vision: towards the libraries of the future*<sup>9</sup> stated that:

“Libraries are functioning as an important – indeed essential – arm of the national educational infrastructure ...libraries are no longer confined to local providers for informal and adult education. They can enhance their local role precisely by becoming brokers, navigators and gateways to regional, national and global resources for education and enlightenment.”

## A redefinition of the role of public libraries

It would appear then, that there is a new role being enunciated for the public library that is based on lifelong learning and education. My own perception is that this is not a new role for the public library. The public library has always occupied a place in education since its beginnings as a mechanism to foster reading habits in the urban working classes in the nineteenth century. The self-improvement model of the Mechanics Institutes and Carnegie libraries has been carried through to today's public libraries.

The role of public libraries in information literacy is well-documented in literature. There has always been a conscious effort by public libraries to undertake programmes themselves or to work with other agencies to provide the venue, resources and impetus to ensure that their local communities had access to information literacy training.

In the survey results of *Navigating the economy of knowledge*,<sup>10</sup> it was found that the majority of the Australians surveyed, both users and non-users, would automatically use the library as a source of information if they wanted to ‘find something out’ and that a major role of the library was in education and lifelong learning.

Neither of these are new roles for the library. Learning is something that most people do every day. They learn to cook, repair the car, prune the roses, find their way to new places, find out where the best concerts and art exhibitions are and how to do crafts, hobbies and special interest projects. People learn everyday and the public library is where many of them find the materials to enable them to learn new skills that they probably do not even think of as lifelong learning.

## What has changed in the role of public libraries?

So why all this talk about public libraries creating new roles and taking on different services that relate to training and learning?

What has changed is that public libraries are in the vanguard of the new information technology revolution. What has also changed is that people need to be taught how to navigate the new information in order to get the same knowledge they previously obtained from the printed word.

As the world's system of information becomes digitised and far more accessible through the new technology, it is the new role of public libraries, not only to provide access to the networked information, but to teach people how to get the most value from it and to be discerning in the use of the information they access.

The choice for public libraries is not books or information technology. They must now supplement the printed word with the huge resources available electronically. In so doing, public libraries need to become trainers and learning centres enabling the public, who come to them for information, to access the increasingly wide range of electronic information.

# Examples of Libraries that have become Trainers in Information Access

## 1. City of Stirling Libraries, Australia: The Mirrabooka Library and Information Technology Centre

### **Background**

In late 1995, the City of Stirling commenced planning for a new public library in a depressed socio-economic area of the City. This was to be a Branch Library to serve the local population.

The library had commenced life in a Recreation Centre owned by the City. The Library Manager had convinced Council that it would be strategically wise to move out of the Recreation Centre and to rent a shop front in a new shopping centre that was being developed close by which had better access to public transport. This was agreed to and following the move, usage grew by 50.9 percent in the first year of operation and 32.5 percent and 38.2 percent in the following years.

Rentals increased and the City had land close to the shopping centre that was set aside for community use. Nine years after the move into the shopping centre, and with usage still rising, Council agreed that a new library building was warranted and planning for the new library on this community property commenced.

In planning the new library, library management were aware of the role of the library in today's society as a safe haven for the community and also as a social hub. In a planning session for the City's library service, staff had coined the phrase 'social hub in the community' as a description of each of the Branch Libraries. They perceived libraries as safe gathering places for the residents who used them. Places where social contact was made, where community groups could meet, where young people could gather to study or relax, which became the 'common ground' for people who lived in increasingly isolated situations. People in urban Australia are becoming more and more isolated as both partners work, children are in school and families increasingly undertake solitary activities such as watching television or using the home computer.

What so many communities now need is a place other than the shopping mall where they can meet, learn and socialise. The vision was that the Stirling Public Libraries would fulfil some or all of these needs.

Thus the design of the new library emphasised that it is a place where people can go to learn new skills in a pleasant environment and a place which offers community groups in the area office space and meeting rooms. The aim was to attract a lot of community use to limit vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

It was with this in mind that the construction of the new Mirrabooka Public Library was approached. The Mirrabooka area has a low socio-economic population together with a high indigenous population and people born overseas, mainly in Vietnam and other Asian countries.

The land set aside for the library was between the main shopping area which houses a wide variety of discount stores and a sub centre which houses the largest Department of Social Security office in the State, a pawn broker, video centre and a wide variety of State and Federal Government agency offices catering for the unemployed and migrant population.

The land was adjacent to an open space named the 'Mirrabooka Town Centre', which is situated between two shopping centres and which had deteriorated into a lake filled with shopping trolleys, graffitied buildings, hot paved areas with derelict buildings and gardens that were continually abused and which offered shelter for glue sniffers, alcoholics and those involved in other anti-social activities. Yet it was an area that cost the Parks Department more dollars on an annual basis than any other reserve in the City. What was designed to be a pleasant area of man-made lakes and parkland had become a target for vandalism where the community disliked going because of the delinquent activities taking place there.

The Manager of Libraries had sat in on meetings of the Mirrabooka Advisory Committee which comprised representatives of the City, the public housing authority, the shopping centre management, the public transport company, the Police and Australia Post for years. The bus station was plagued with problems that resulted in Security Guards (with Rottweiler dogs) being employed to help people to feel secure. The shopping centre employed Security Guards to patrol the car parks and the staff of the library, which was housed in the rented shopfront, were escorted from the building after their late night-shift. The area faced problems that some people said could only be solved by a permanent Police presence.

When the time came for announcing the plans for the new library, a full picture of the problems that were faced in the area was known. The Manager of Libraries believed that if the City could build a library and other community facilities that brought more people into the area and which gave the people of Mirrabooka pride in a new building, some of the social problems inherent in the area could be overcome.

Work with the architect then commenced to design the library as the "social hub" of the community.

### **Planning for a community**

The library was planned as part of a community precinct that housed community offices and meeting rooms. The library was to have a City of Stirling Customer Service Centre

as part of the library and an information technology centre. The meeting rooms, community offices and library are all entered off a main foyer, which also houses a small coffee shop as part of the complex. The foyer can be entered from two sides and the coffee shop leads to a small open air terrace overlooking the relandscaped Mirrabooka Town Centre and ornamental lakes. Paths around the lakes give access to the bus station and both the main shopping centre and the subsidiary shopping centre that houses the government offices and medical facilities.

The library and community offices and the coffee shop terrace all overlook the area that had been the target for vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Much of the anti-social behaviour and vandalism has been eliminated because those involved in delinquent activities now feel that the area is surveyed and the general public have commented on how much safer they feel in the area.

The role of the public library as a catalyst for lifelong learning and as a training agency to enable people to access the new technology was considered essential to those who used the library in this area. Because the library service was unable to appoint additional staff as a result of budget constraints, the Information Centre charged fees for training. This was seen as an opportunity to enable the appointment of an Internet Trainer who could use his/her skills to provide instruction to clients on a payment basis. That person would also conduct other courses and seminars across the City that would be free to patrons who were unable to afford full training.

At the same time, it was decided to offer the people of this area, many of whom could not afford information technology in their own homes, access to a free Internet service as well as word processing facilities in the library. This service was about to commence in all the City's libraries and has proved to be most popular.

During the planning stage for the building, it was also decided to incorporate the information technology centre and to operate it as a business unit. This was the first time that the City would be building a new library that had room to incorporate a facility of this kind.

### **The Mirrabooka Library Information Technology Centre**

This Centre is a new dimension of public library services in that it is specifically set up as a teaching centre. It is taking the new role of the public library seriously and following one of the recommendations in the Australian report *2020 vision: towards the libraries of the future*<sup>11</sup> which stated:

“Libraries and librarians are navigators, charting and guiding the way on the information superhighways.”

Many Australian libraries are providing access to the Internet and the assistance of trained staff to give assistance to clients using the Internet. Some libraries make several terminals available for Internet training, but currently only a few offer a fully operational training centre.

## **Setting up the Information Technology Centre**

In planning the IT Centre, it was decided that it should be a definite part of the library and that entry to the IT Centre should be through the library. This was to ensure that people saw the IT Centre as part of the library service and were not intimidated by what could have been seen as a commercial operation that was not part of the community facilities provided by the City.

The room housing the IT Centre can be seen through glass doors in the library. This means that interested library users can see classes at work and when the facility is not operating, can go in and talk to the trainer or look at the IT Centre and equipment provided. With hindsight, there should have been an external door so that evening classes could be run independently of the library hours. However, security was the main priority at the time of planning and an external door was seen as a greater security risk to both the computing equipment and as a non-controlled exit point from the library.

The Centre also has its own small kitchen facility hidden behind folding doors so that participants can take a break and enjoy tea and coffee without needing to use either the library activity room facilities or the staff kitchen. This makes it quite self-contained.

Twelve desks are arranged in a U shape facing white boards and a projector screen. There is also a TV/video unit which can be used to show the whole class screens from the Internet. A thirteenth desk, for the trainer, is at the front of the room. Each workstation/desk includes an IBM compatible Pentium 133 computer, an ergonomically designed chair and a desk with lockable drawer in which attendees can store personal items during training. Participants can adjust both the keyboard, monitor and chair to ensure comfort during classes.

Each terminal is arranged so that other participants cannot view directly the activities of another. This enables first timers to feel more at ease because they often fear that others will see them 'making mistakes'.

## **Equipment**

The Centre is equipped with thirteen IBM compatible PC's running Windows 95. The specifications of each PC are as follows: Pentium 133, 16 Mb RAM, 1.2 Gb HDD, 1.44 MbFDD, Network adaptor, 16 Bit sound card, 14 inch monitor and PS2 mouse/keyboard.

Each computer is linked to a Local Area Network Hub and twisted pair cable allowing for 10/100 Megabytes.

Two DEC Laser printers using HP Jetdirect are also part of the Local Area Network, connecting directly into the LAN hub.

The Local Area Network utilises both IP for Internet access and printing and Netbeui (protocol for networking) for internal file sharing protocols.

The Local Area Network connects to a Router and ISDN cable which provides access to the Stirling Wide Area Network and Internet access via the City of Stirling main administrative centre some ten kilometres away.

The internal library network also makes use of this access to the Wide Area Network, sharing the local hub, router and ISDN cable.

The use of a direct link cable removes the need for modems and the problems that may arise from using telephone lines. Administration of the system can be achieved remotely and access speed is greatly increased, which means that an extremely efficient system can be operated.

### **A strategic partnership to operate the Centre**

Without a strategic partnership in the form of the Internet Training Institute of Australia (ITI), the Centre would not operate as effectively as it does.

The Internet Training Institute was set up by visionary librarians to assist in the training of library staff in the use of the Internet and with a view to encouraging libraries, including public libraries, to offer Internet training as part of their services.

ITI believed that there was a role for public libraries to play in training the public to use the Internet effectively as an access point to information. It believed that by instituting Internet training in public libraries, they would be able to generate revenue for the library, assist Internet users to be more efficient, maximise existing library resources and lead the way in electronic information access.

As the fastest growing industry in the world, the Internet allows instant access to a wealth of information which was previously unavailable or slow to arrive. As more information was being produced and made accessible on the Internet, ITI believed that it would become increasingly difficult for people to understand how to locate the information that was available.

ITI believed that this scenario was almost the same as people faced when they were looking for a particular book and that this was when people sought the assistance of a professional librarian. The only change in this scenario was that the information was available on line rather than in printed form and that librarians were ideally placed to assist people to access this information.

The Internet Training Institute was established to provide libraries with the tools to train Internet users on how to access and use the Internet in the most efficient way. However, ITI also believed that although libraries could charge for this service, they should also maintain a basic service accessible to clients who could not afford to pay.

This was also the policy of City of Stirling libraries. The City provides free Internet access in all libraries, but also planned the Internet Training Centre to provide training for people on a fee for service basis, to enable them to access the Internet more effectively for both business and pleasure. By charging those who could afford to pay for this service, the funding produced would hopefully support the Centre and enable the libraries to also offer some training to those who could not afford to pay for specialist training, through public workshops and information sessions.

The City of Stirling joined the Internet Training Institute because it believed that the services that the Institute offered would enable the City to better operate its Information Technology Centre and to have access to a pool of expertise and marketing that it would

be unable to provide itself. The cost of ITI membership is \$2000 joining fee and an annual fee of \$2000 plus a 15 percent commission on training sessions.

### **What services does the Internet Training Institute provide?**

The Internet Training Institute provides the following services for its member libraries:

- Train-the-Trainer programme
- Manuals to assist in the running of training sessions
- An update service on Internet resources and developments
- Marketing and promotional activities
- A link to Telstra Big Pond, the Australian Internet provider, which advises clients of the availability of training at registered ITI centres
- An offer of free hours on Telstra Big Pond for clients who attend the centre and do not have access to an Internet provider, to enable them to try out the service from their own home computer
- Help desk facilities

### **Internet Training Institute Train-the-Trainer courses**

ITI offers library staff the opportunity to participate in Train-the-Trainer classes offered by librarians with extensive expertise in Internet training and online use. The courses offer staff the opportunity to learn how to present training for library clients and cover issues relating to management, hardware, software and content issues.

In addition to the IT Centre Trainer, one person from each library was sent to this course.

### **Appointing and training a trainer**

Whilst one option was to take one of the existing library staff and put them through a train-the-trainer course, the second preferred option was to advertise on the open market for an Internet trainer who would take full responsibility for the Centre. With the assistance of the Internet Training Institute, a duty statement was drawn up and an advertisement was placed in the daily state newspaper.

An excellent response was received. The variety of applicants was interesting. Those who expressed interest in the position had expertise ranging from information technology specialists who were looking for a change in career, to librarians with some Internet expertise. Interviews were conducted and the chosen candidate was a person who had been operating a training centre for a local university. The training centre had been closed down as the university reengineered its operations and the chosen applicant had great experience in a centre that had operated as part of the university's training arm.

However, our chosen applicant was offered another position at a rival university which paid more than was offered for our position. Naturally she accepted the other position. Our next preferred applicant was teacher-trained and had operated a regional network for the education department which also had a training centre. It taught school teachers how to operate networks and trained them to use the Internet in schools. He was looking for a career change and had excellent teaching qualifications as well as experience in writing curriculum materials, operating networks and creating web pages.

Upon appointment the Internet Training Institute conducted Train-the-Trainer classes for our new trainer and one staff member from each of the libraries in Stirling. These classes were well-received by staff and very useful for the new trainer as it enabled him to establish a working relationship with Internet Training Institute personnel who are located in Melbourne, on the Eastern side of Australia and with staff from each of the Stirling libraries.

### **The first eight months of operation**

The Centre commenced operation in October 1997, with the first three months being concentrated on setting up the programmes and generally organising procedures and directions. Since then over 300 people have undertaken paid training courses. The majority of the people trained in the first eight months were City of Stirling staff and library staff from other Local Authorities who came to learn how to search the Internet in order to provide better service to clients in their own libraries. The rest were people who learned about the IT Centre through Telstra Big Pond, their Internet provider, or who had learned about the courses provided at the Centre from advertising in other City of Stirling libraries, through articles in the press or from the free Internet-information seminars conducted in the libraries.

A total of \$8231 was earned in revenue for the first eight months, which included sales of Manuals and room hire to several groups. Operating expenditure for the IT Centre, including the Trainer's salary and payments to ITI, was \$42,100. The net operational cost for the eight months was \$33,869.

The major problem that arose was how to market the IT Centre effectively and find a price that suits the market. Standard charges have varied between \$30 to \$125, with the most common charge being \$79 for the 'Searching the Internet' course. One of the problems has been the perception that because the training is held in a public library it will be free or very cheap.

Another problem we were aware of when the Centre was planned is that the Centre is located in an economically and socially disadvantaged area. However, if there was to be a Centre, it had to be where the new library building was being constructed. Some people who contacted the Centre did not want to travel into the suburbs, or North of the Swan River, which in effect creates a perceived barrier between those who live in the Southern suburbs and those who live North of the river.

## **Marketing the Centre**

One of the things that has been hard to do is to market the Centre effectively. Each of the City's libraries has flyers available and has held information sessions and seminars about the Internet at which people have been handed information on the Centre.

The City has regular meetings with the principals from the schools in the local authority area, and one meeting was held in the IT Centre to allow the principals to view the Centre and meet the trainer. However, schools have very low budgets for training and all hoped that the Centre would offer free training to their staff.

The IT Centre has sent numerous press releases to local newspapers and an increasing number of clients have come as a result of these. An advertisement in a specialist newspaper aimed at the elderly provided a number of clients. The Centre is currently making contact with the local business association in order to let its members know of the service it offers. There have also been a substantial number of clients who found out about the Centre through the advertising on Telstra Big Pond by the Internet Training Institute.

Aggressive marketing is something that libraries do not do. The marketing for the IT Centre will have to be more aggressive than usual. As an experiment, the IT Centre took a stand at a local Women's Health and Lifestyle Expo and attracted quite a few interested people who wanted to have a 'surf' on the Internet and find out more about it. The Centre offered a discount to people who presented a flyer from the Expo and thus will be able to track down the number of people who come to the Centre as a result of this advertising tactic.

The Manager of Libraries has recently applied for a grant being offered by the State Department for the Aging. The grant funds are available during the Year of the Elderly. The application requested funding to underwrite the majority of the cost of teaching fifty older people how to use the Internet and for them to become Internet Buddies for other Seniors. Results of the submission are not known at this time.

## **Courses offered by the Centre**

The courses offered by the Centre are gradually increasing as time permits the preparation of new course content. The Centre started with the following offerings:

- Introduction to the Internet
- Internet basics
- Searching the Internet effectively
- Using electronic mail effectively

It then expanded to offer:

- Genealogy on the net
- Health resources on the net

At the present time there are also requests for other computer-based training such as Word for Windows, Excel and Mind Your Own Business. New software has been purchased to enable these modules to be introduced. A course on Troubleshooting for PC's, sorely needed for library staff, is almost ready.

### **Who is using the Centre?**

The first clients of the Centre were staff of the City of Stirling. These people came from all Departments in the City, as well as from the library. As the City was networking all City offices and giving many of its staff access to the Internet, they needed to know how to use the tool effectively.

The next largest group of people to utilise the Centre have been librarians from other local authorities who were connecting their libraries to the Internet. These people needed to know how to use the Internet effectively as a reference tool and to assist clients in their libraries who were using their public access Internet terminals. Because the 'Searching the Internet effectively' course covered all librarians needed to know to assist them in their work, this course became exceptionally popular with library staff.

The Centre also hosted librarians from the State Parliamentary library for training and was used by ITI to conduct Train-the-Trainer classes for another local authority that was opening an ITI Centre in the Southern part of the metropolitan area.

The Centre has been hired as a training venue by several organisations who want to train staff in computer software, as there are very few training centres where 12 people can be trained together, each with access to their own terminal. There is a set fee for the hire of the Centre that includes morning or afternoon tea and access to our trainer if required.

### **Assessment of the success of the Centre**

As a training Centre, the provision of such a facility in a public environment has been a success and offers the opportunity of creating further opportunities for innovation as a training centre.

The total revenue for the fifteen months of operation has been \$14,840 and classes are filling more quickly now. However, more aggressive marketing and a widening of the range of courses should see an improvement in the situation.

The question of operating fee-based services in public libraries, and the opportunity to make money on these is still a vexed one. However, the aim of the Centre was to bring the opportunity of learning about the information potential of the Internet to the public. In this mission, the Centre has proven itself effective.

## 2. Kirkaldy Public Library, Fife, Scotland

### **The project**

The population at Kirkaldy is 55,000. The project at Kirkaldy was based on the premise that whilst there was not funding or resources to offer Internet-training to library users through the library's public access PC's, there was another way to offer training. One of the branch libraries set up a 'buddy' system to offer assistance to those who required training.

The librarian conceived the idea that local unemployed people might be attracted to a scheme whereby they would be trained to a certain level in PC applications and Internet use. As part of the commitment to undertake training, they would also commit to donating a guaranteed amount of their time to training or assisting an identified novice with whom they would form a 'buddy' relationship.

### **Who gives the training – a strategic partnership**

The librarian approached the local community education centre to provide the training. The community education centre agreed to the programme and committed to provide training to the level of SCOTVET in computing studies. SCOTVET is a national modular learning competency. The training is provided by the community education centre at no cost to the library. This centre is aided by government grants based on the number of people who earn Certificates, so the scheme also boosts their funding. The Fife Council agreed to pay travel expenses for the travel of the 'buddies' to training courses and for travel to appointments to meet the novices.

### **What was the outcome of the project?**

Having organised the dates for training with the community education centre, one branch of the library at Sinclairtown, which serves a population of approximately 12,000, advertised for 'buddies'. The response was excellent with twenty-one applicants. The surprising part of this was that twelve were computer professionals who required no training, but were prepared to give up some of their spare time to assist others.

The remaining nine applicants underwent training. After training they were paired with novices with whom they commenced to work together.

### **The benefits of the Kirkaldy project**

Everybody gained in this project. The 'buddies' gained qualifications for their CV as well as training and practical skills in dealing with people. They also have a further reference for any job applications they make, as the library is prepared to vouch for their

work in the project. The novices gain computer skills they can put on CV's, as well as a new interest and skill in PC management and new information access to the Internet.

This is an innovative programme that any library could undertake in partnership with local community education colleges and other training agencies that may be prepared to assist in some way. The programme places the library in the public education role that many people see it has.

### 3. The West Lothian Project, Scotland

This project has been based in the Kirkaldy project of which the details are given above. The Library Manager from West Lothian visited Kirkaldy on two occasions to discuss problems, operations and opportunities with the staff responsible for the programme.

Having obtained enough information to plan how a similar programme could be run in West Lothian, he then put the idea to the Council and convinced them to proceed with a similar concept.

#### **Difference in social conditions between Kirkaldy and West Lothian**

In contrast to Kirkaldy, West Lothian has a very high percentage of the population engaged in the microprocessor industry and therefore, a high level of computer literacy amongst the community. It also has a very low unemployment rate and was therefore able to seek volunteers who were currently employed and who had existing IT skills. However, they did offer to top up IT skills with training for those volunteers who felt that they needed it.

#### **Training provision**

The local community education service agreed to provide "people skills" training for all volunteers, as it is essential that all volunteers learn to deal with handling people in the training situation. Two local high schools provided computer studies teachers as consultants who would be available when library staff began talking to volunteers. Through the interview process, skills gaps among the volunteers were identified and training was offered to fill those gaps.

The West Lothian Council has a volunteer policy and one of the requirements is that all volunteers must go through a formal 'appraisal' meeting before commencing any voluntary work.

As community education were unable to provide the time to make this appraisal, the Library Manager had to undertake this himself. There were forty confirmed volunteers from the advertisements and meetings, and even more offering their services on a daily basis. This appraisal interview added to the Manager's already heavy workload, even though the systems administrator managed to undertake some of the meetings on behalf of the manager.

## **Assessment of learning**

A checklist for the three main applications being offered – MS Word, MS Excel and Internet – was provided by the two teachers. Buddies also agreed to learn how to use the library system's new WebPac which has a range of self-enabling options such as reservation, renewal, and Internet access. These checklists became the benchmark for successful training. Once the learners became competent in all the points in the checklist, it was agreed that they would be competent to use the application on their own.

It was also agreed that the buddy/learner relationship would terminate by mutual agreement once all the points on the checklist had been completed. The buddies would then make themselves available for another match with a learner.

Regular meetings were also planned every three months where buddies could exchange notes, learn from others' experiences and hopefully eliminate any feelings of isolation that they might feel from being in the one-on-one relationship of teacher/pupil.

## **Response from advertising for volunteers**

West Lothian started to advertise for volunteers in mid-October 1998 and by mid-November almost sixty names had been put forward. These people were invited to a public meeting to discuss how the scheme might work. Thirty-five people came to the meeting and a range of discussions were held and decisions made on how the scheme might operate. The volunteers proved to be very highly qualified, with fifteen people at the first meeting proving to be IT trainers with their own companies.

In January 1999, seventy-eight volunteers had registered to be IT Buddies. Each was sent a letter and application form. These are attached to this paper as an Appendix.

## **Implementing the programme**

The West Lothian libraries finalised their Creatis project in January 1999. This project gives Internet and desktop application access via forty two PC's in each of the library service's full time branches. No one is permitted to use the terminals until they are competent to do so and there are no staff trained to assist users. However, everyone is guaranteed access to a free buddy.

The first buddy/learner matchings will take place after the first buddies have been trained – expected date is mid-February 1999. Learner lists are being compiled at each branch library. Buddies will be given the name and contact details of the learner assigned to them and it is up to the buddies to make the first contact. The first session will be free and after that, the normal charge for lessons will apply. Once learners are assessed to be competent, the buddy will report back to the branch manager and will have a new learner assigned to them. The competent learners will be able to use the terminals on their own and thus a group of competent people will have been trained to use the library's online facilities as well as PC applications.

### **Success of the programme**

At the time of this paper, the programme was only just commencing. However, George Kerr, Customer Services Manager at West Lothian and member of the International Network of Public Libraries can be contacted by email at [gkerr@libhq.demon.co.uk](mailto:gkerr@libhq.demon.co.uk) for further information.

## An Example of a Strategic Partnership to deliver Access to Education and Information through Public Libraries

### The Accessible Lifelong Learning Project (ALL)

The Accessible Lifelong Learning (ALL) Project is a joint venture between the Macquarie University and the State Library of New South Wales in Australia.

This project was set up in response to the New South Wales State Government's *Information and Technology Blueprint* for the New South Wales community and is part of the NSW.net strategy. The focus of this innovative partnership is to develop ways to provide equitable, cost-effective access to education and information, regardless of when people wish to access information or where they may be located.

The State Library of New South Wales is developing a high-speed computer network, linking all 97 public libraries in the State of New South Wales. The State of New South Wales is 801,600 square kilometres in area and has a population of 6.5 million people. Many people are located great distances from tertiary education institutions and access to this type of learning is an important development for those isolated people as well as people who may be isolated by circumstance such as caring for others or working hours that preclude them from attendance on campus.

Macquarie University has exclusive rights to deliver higher education across this network. This means that any local library user will be able to access Macquarie's online courses, without having to buy their own computer and without being charged connection time. People wanting information and flexible access to education will have a new gateway opened to them through the ALL project. It is through the vision of the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Bernard Carey, towards flexible learning options at Macquarie University, that this project has come to fruition.

Participation in the project will provide the following benefits to members of the community, Regional Councils and the Public Library network:

- Access to a variety of educational opportunities regardless of geographic location.
- Development of regional online identities with community control.
- An opportunity to be at the forefront of an extension of library and information services to customers.
- A very concrete way of building further relationships between Macquarie University and the other partners.

A number of exciting alliances have been formed to facilitate the delivery of accessible and innovative online material. These include the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, through an innovative regional information project. The Central West Regional Gateway, a regional Internet access link, through their Internet pages, is piloting a new means of delivering local and regional information to members of the community.

SUN Microsystems Australia Pty. Ltd. are a technology partner in the project and are contributing technical resources and expertise as part of the creation of new service paradigms. In particular, the application of Java technology is seen as important in terms of developing new teaching and learning technologies.

The ALL project will offer information and education at three levels. The following is a model of how one way of learning might be accomplished through online means.

*Level One*, offering to all users free general information, which will include the growing range of information available from the State Library and Macquarie University, as well as special projects and learning experiences, all offered online.

A specific example is a free course in learning to use the Internet – a learning session available online called *World Wide Web Walkabout*. It is offered through Macquarie University and utilises examples from online information to teach people how to use the Internet/Web at the introductory level.

*Level Two*, providing quality professional education, resource material and skill development programs for those accessing the ALL site. An example is the course *Using the Internet for Business Purposes*, which will be online later this year. Participants would use the Internet to learn specific skills in planning, informing and researching their business practices and decisions.

*Level three*, providing access to an online Macquarie degree course. An example is the online courses within Organisational Psychology, in the School of Behavioural Sciences, dealing with aspects of Human Resources Management. Participants have access to all the benefits of a formally recognised degree program, without the necessity of regular classroom attendance. This would include online opportunities to discuss issues, raise concerns, debate with your peers, return assignments – all through a medium where location is not important and the organisation of time becomes more flexible.

## Current options online within ALL

There are extensive free educational resources and reference materials currently available through the ALL site. These include items as diverse as:

- A journey through the environmental impact of deforestation via the Environment & Science option in Online Learning.
- An online insight into Burial Customs of Ancient Egypt, currently showcased in the 'What's New' at ALL pages.
- An award-winning lesson in using Hypertext Markup language, created by Macquarie University's Mark Gregory, available through the ALL site, together with a growing list of other online education options.

- An extensive Job Application online session, providing access to the latest information on how to compile the very best job application, relevant to your experience and the requirements of the position. There will be the option of Macquarie University's Career Development Office checking and providing commentary on your documentation.

## Coming developments

The ALL Project is continually planning new developments. Examples of new packages are:

- *Brewarrina-Mission Life: a case study*. An online teaching and information resource package, exploring life at Brewarrina Aboriginal Mission in the context of the political climate of the time. (July 1998)
- *Information Technology online*: User-friendly sessions to develop your online computer skills in areas as varied as: Y2K – The Millennium Bug: issues and implications for business and what can be done about it, databases, spreadsheets and a variety of introductory courses.
- *Early childhood topics*: including atypical behaviour in children through to science, technology and learning for the pre-school learner.
- *Environmental issues*: presenting information on land and resource management.
- *Management and business skills*: a variety of generic management and self-development skill packages.

The ALL Project is an example of strategic partnerships that are taking place all over the world to enable the public to have access to lifelong learning and training via their public library system.

## Obstacles to Public Libraries becoming Knowledge Centres

The role of the public library as a training agency is one that has been under discussion for many years. Connie van Fleet, writing in the publication *Adult services*,<sup>12</sup> states:

“Although the basic qualities of the public library make it uniquely suited to assume the role of leadership in the learning society, it is possible that this opportunity will go unfulfilled. Four basic obstacles may prevent effective participation in lifelong learning: (1) librarians’ reluctance to assume a non-traditional role; (2) poor public perception of the library’s function; (3) lack of resources; and (4) the absence of an underlying philosophy to serve as a basis for coherent planning. Librarians tend to be uncomfortable with a role that requires advising and counselling...the profession tends to accept services that require a minimum of involvement and interaction.”

Current thinking about the role of the public library is increasingly giving the library a role as a facilitator in the education of the public, particularly in the use of new technology. This is especially true in countries which are assigning public libraries a new role as their governments increasingly adopt a focus on lifelong learning through the networking of educational institutions and public libraries. This is being done in order to increase their nation’s opportunities to capitalise on the economic benefits of new technology.

This is the time when public library managers need to overcome the four basic obstacles referred to by van Fleet and make the most of the opportunities for strategic partnerships with other organisations to enhance the role of the public library and continue to make it an essential part of the community, thus ensuring continued funding for public library services.

### The librarian’s reluctance to assume a non-traditional role

Obstacle one was cited as the librarian’s reluctance to assume a non-traditional role. The last five years have seen many public librarians look further than the traditional role assigned to them. The acceptance of technology in public libraries has required librarians to face a steep learning curve with the introduction of PC-based services at both

the reference desk and in the public areas of the library. Many public librarians have developed skills in training their customers in using the Internet as a matter of necessity. Because public libraries are offering public access to the new technology through CD ROMs and the Internet, librarians have developed these skills as part of their ongoing role.

Many public librarians have undertaken further professional development in accessing the Internet, advanced searching on the Internet and in dealing with the problems associated with the public accessing PC's and other equipment. Whilst many may not think of themselves in a training role, they are already undertaking the training of their customers as they interact with them on a daily basis.

Whilst librarians will never replace the role of and specialist skills of the teacher, educationist or academic, they will increasingly be forming strategic partnerships with the education network to enhance the opportunities for learning in the public library. Public librarians just need to be alert for these opportunities.

## Public perception of the public library

The second obstacle was referred to as the poor public perception of the library's function. However, this may no longer be a major factor in the light of the research that I referred to in the beginning of this paper<sup>13</sup> which concluded that:

“The public appears to be indicating that educational roles for the library are in the first category (of major roles of the library) and popular materials are in the second ...the priority the public library places on formal and informal educational activities seems very low in view of three important facts: (1) the long-standing claim of the public library to be a University of the People, (2) the high percentage of library use by students in pursuit of formal education at all levels, and, now (3) the enormous interest in these roles by the general public and the opinion leaders uncovered by D'Elia.”

The supposed 'poor public perception of the public library' referred to by van Fleet cannot be justified today. Further evidence of this change in perception by governments is also in the reports which were referred to at the beginning of this paper. The British report *New Library* sees public libraries as a key player in the education network that is being made possible by the development of super broadband networks linking the academic institutions, schools, community education providers and public libraries.

Whilst Britain is working on this by developing SuperJanet (Joint Academic Network) and the United States has NREN (National Research and Education Network), other countries are also working on creating networks that will facilitate the high speed transmission of full text and high-quality sound and colour images that enable learners and scholars to work at their desks anywhere in the world and from there to explore the libraries of the world.

It is in the use of these networks and the soon-to-be-realised virtual library that the library profession will play a role that enables more of the population to access the information that will be available online. Public librarians will be the intermediaries and trainers who enable the student, researcher and general seeker of information to use the new technologies and explore the ever increasing content available online.

As public libraries install more public access terminals to enable users, and particularly those who will have other access to the super networks, to take advantage of the new technologies, they will enhance their standing in the eyes of both funders and the public. The Danish and Scandinavian libraries have impressive numbers of free public-access Internet terminals in public libraries. Britain, on the brink of expanding its public libraries through the government-driven vision of *New Library*, is yet to offer such widespread access. Chris Batt's survey of information technology in Britain's public libraries in 1997<sup>14</sup> states that:

“Seventy-four percent of library authorities may have Internet, but only 5 percent of service points in the UK offer public access. Ditto for public access micros and open learning.”

Public libraries in Australia may be at much the same stage or a little further advanced. Wherever possible, public libraries in Australia are offering at least one public-access Internet terminal and many of the large suburban libraries are offering four or more. Batt also quotes the McClure report in the US that cites 70 percent of public libraries offering public access in one or more service points.

### Lack of resources and infrastructure

The figures cited above back up van Fleet's third point which is of the lack of resources in public libraries. It is not because of unwillingness to grasp the new technology that public libraries lack the public access facilities, but the fact that budget restrictions and slow take up of new technologies by some local authorities hampers the development of Internet and network access by public libraries. Public libraries suffer from reliance on Local Authority funds for infrastructure and often have to compete with the perceived top-priority funding needs of waste management, roads, traffic calming and other 'hard' Department needs. Library Managers have to lobby exceptionally well to win the funds for new technology.

Some libraries have overcome this challenge by contracting out these services to an outside provider. In Britain, Batt's survey shows that telecentres in libraries are being tendered out to outside contractors such as the Input/Output group or being facilitated through partnerships with local education centres or colleges. This is probably the best way for public libraries who have neither the staff nor funding for resources. The

formation of strategic alliances or partnerships to enable the library to take a more dominant role in the education and learning activities of the community shows that

library managers are aware of the role of the public library in teaching the new technology and offering access of it to the public.

### The absence of an underlying philosophy of leadership in the learning society

Van Fleet's fourth point was that there was an absence of an underlying philosophy (of the public library's leadership role in the learning society) to serve as a basis for coherent planning. In the publication *Borrowed time*<sup>15</sup> by the British research group Comedia, it is stated that librarians have become unsure of their role and are experiencing an identity crisis. Comedia pick up on the 'all things to all people' vision that public librarians have of themselves and their services and need to focus on what services they will provide to maintain their role as a 'public good' in society.

To enable public libraries to achieve a strategic direction, planning and decisions on the role that the public library will take in its community are essential. Each public library must decide on its primary role and put in place the infrastructure and goals to achieve these roles as best they can, given funding and political constraints. As the trend today enhances the role of the public library as a force in lifelong learning and education, public libraries need to take advantage of this and take this new role into strong consideration when planning for the future.

## Conclusion

Now is the time, given the new technologies available, for public libraries to develop strategic partnerships that will enable them to maintain and enhance their role as education and training agencies in the provision of support skills in the use of technology that will enable more adults and young adults to take advantage of the networks that will enable them to access the hardware and software that is part of the growing network of learning in all countries.

The skills that librarians have in resourcing information and accessing knowledge must be enhanced to include passing to the users of public libraries, the knowledge that they have of the new technologies and of the best way to navigate through them.

In addition, library managers must plan for collaboration with educational institutions and other providers of information to ensure that clients have the best gateways and access points to the learning networks available.

Public librarians can secure themselves an ongoing role that is stronger and more focused by becoming a vital link in the new knowledge economy. This is not to say that they must forgo the role of providers of recreational reading of the printed word and the opportunity to browse and enjoy the reading experience that is provided to so many through their public library.

What public libraries need to do is to look for opportunities to enhance their role in the education of their communities by enlarging and expanding their horizons and planning ways in which to grasp the new technologies and make the role of universal access to the global information economy their own.

This is a way to ensure that public libraries remain vital, essential to the public and worthy of funding. By expanding the role of the public library to enable them to become places where the public can receive training in accessing information, public libraries will ensure their funding base, their ability to adapt to change and their place as knowledge centres in the new millennium.

# Appendix

## West Lothian Prospective Buddy Letter

Dear

At a meeting of volunteers for the I.T. Buddy scheme, a number of decisions were taken and this letter will outline these. I am also enclosing a form and S.A.E. which seeks some further essential information. I would be grateful if you could complete this and send it back to me as soon as possible. This form will constitute an application to become an I.T. Buddy for West Lothian Council.

I am sure you will appreciate that once anyone starts to operate as an I.T. Buddy, they are effectively representing West Lothian Council. We have decided therefore, that we need to conduct individual assessments of volunteers to identify their overall suitability. I will assume that volunteers who complete and return the application form are willing to participate in this assessment, and will subsequently contact everyone to arrange a date, time and venue which suits you.

The main points agreed –

1. Completion of a people skills' course is essential for everyone who wishes to become an I.T. Buddy. This course will consist of one 2-hour and one 4-hour session. It will be offered by West Lothian Council, Community Education Department and will be held on several occasions. Please indicate on the accompanying form your first, second and third date preferences for this course. If you will be unable to attend on any of these dates, please indicate preferred evenings and we will try to organise mid-week evening courses. The people skills' course will also involve an element of assessment.
2. Avril McLean from Broxburn Academy and Peter May from Inveralmond Community High School, will jointly draw up checklists for I.T. Learner attainment in each of the 4 areas in which we will offer tuition – Internet (including E-mail), Windows 95, MS Word and MS Excel. The concept is that once the Buddy and

Learner agree that proficiency (as measured against the checklist), has been reached, the Buddy/Learner pairing will terminate.

3. The checklists will also be used by Library Services and Buddies to identify any additional skill training for Buddies. This will be done at the assessment meeting.
4. The checklists will also be used by library staff to identify and filter out any applicants for the service who have any significant existing IT skills in areas where they request a Buddy.
5. As soon as libraries have Internet access, free time will be offered to all Buddies on Library terminals to enable them to become familiar with local differences compared with their own experience (e.g. operating through the I-Gear Internet filtering system).

I will contact everyone by placing a message on the library Web Site. Buddies should then contact their local library to make arrangements.

#### 6. Contact –

(a) Messages will be sent via the library Web Site – with special arrangements for those who are unable to access this. <http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/libraries>

When you access the site, go into ‘whats new’ and any Buddy messages will be displayed there. If you need to send a message back, you can do so to [gkerr@libha.demon.co.uk](mailto:gkerr@libha.demon.co.uk) or phone me on 776325.

(b) A meeting of all Buddies will be arranged some 8 weeks after we start to operate. This meeting will be informal, and will be designed to share experiences, bolster confidence, generally remove feelings of isolation and decide how to proceed.

(c) Further regular (say 6 monthly) meetings will be held if Buddies feel these would be helpful. This can be decided at the next meeting.

7. Some Buddies volunteered to learn the use of WebPac (the library system’s web interface with our catalogue and other databases), and then hold small training sessions with groups of general library users. I will contact these Buddies separately.
8. A complete list of all Buddies, including their telephone numbers, should be circulated to everyone. It was felt that this might facilitate ‘local’ contact groups of Buddies. I will circulate this list as soon as I have a complete update of all volunteers who decide to continue and have completed all assessments.

9. All ‘matching’ of Buddies and Learners will be done at local library level. If either party has difficulties with their pairing, they should speak to the local library manager who will arrange to terminate the pairing and to seek alternative matching.
10. It was also agreed that Learners would be given an evaluation form which they would be asked to complete at the termination of their Buddy partnership. It was felt that this would provide invaluable feedback for Buddies. I will take some advice on the design of an appropriate feedback form and then organise its distribution to all learners when they are paired with a Buddy.
11. If there is a mismatch between Learners and Buddies, there are several potential consequences –
- (a) A waiting list for learners. We will have to keep them up-to-date on how long they might have to wait. When Buddies terminate a training partnership, they should let the local library manager know if they are available for a further partnership or if they wish to cease operating as a Buddy.
  - (b) There may be gaps in the ‘service required’ from Buddies. Again we will try to keep everyone informed.
  - (c) The mismatch may be local. If any Buddy is prepared to coach a learner in another community, please complete the appropriate section on the form.

Yours sincerely

*G. D. Kerr*

George D Kerr  
*Customer Services Manager*

Having read the main decisions about how the Buddy scheme will operate, do you intend to continue?

YES

NO

If no, please send this form back in the enclosed envelope and thank you for your interest.

If yes, please continue.

I wish to apply to participate in the West Lothian Library Service I.T. Buddy Scheme

NAME: .....

ADDRESS: .....

.....

TEL. NO.: ..... EMAIL: .....

**People skills' course**

Course will be Friday evenings 7pm – 9pm plus Saturday 10am – 3pm (lunch provided)

Please mark your date preference below

Date:	Friday/Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup> & 13 <sup>th</sup> February	Friday/Saturday 19 <sup>th</sup> & 20 <sup>th</sup> February	Friday/Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup> & 13 <sup>th</sup> March
Preference no. 1,2 or 3			

Preferred evening of the week: .....

**Contact:**

If you are unable to regularly access the Internet to look out for messages, please tick and I will arrange to contact you by other means.

**Coaching**

Please tick here if you have access to a car and are prepared to operate as a Buddy in another West Lothian Community.

## Notes

- 1 Shearer, Kenneth (1993), *Confusing what is the most wanted with what is most used: a crisis in public library priorities today*, *Public Libraries* vol. 32, no. 4, p. 193–197.
- 2 Martin, Lowell A. (1983), *Public library: middle age crisis or old age*, *Library Journal* 108, January 1, 1983, p. 17–22.
- 3 McClure, Charles et al (1987), *A planning and role setting manual for public libraries*, Chicago, ALA.
- 4 McClure, Ibid.
- 5 *New library: the people's network* (1997), London, Library and Information Commission.
- 6 *The learning age: a renaissance for Britain* (1998), London, HMSO.
- 7 *The role of libraries in a learning society* (1998), London, Library and Information Commission.
- 8 *Navigating the economy of knowledge: a national survey of users and non-users of state and public libraries* (1995), Brisbane, Griffith University.
- 9 *2020 vision: towards the libraries of the future* (1996), Brisbane, Libraries Working Group of the Cultural Ministers' Council.
- 10 Ibid, p. 2.
- 11 Ibid, p. 2.
- 12 Heim, Kathleen M. and Wallace, Danny P., eds. (1990), *Adult services: an enduring focus for public libraries*, Chicago, ALA.
- 13 Shearer, Ibid, p. 196.
- 14 Batt, Chris (1998), *Information technology in public libraries*, 6th ed., London, Library Association, p. 53.
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