

Report on ALRA-organised roundtable discussion

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It has become customary for the Asian Studies librarian group to conduct meetings and discussions in conjunction with the biennial ASAA conference. By far, this year's activity has been the most significant. We conducted two panel discussions. With thanks to the conference convenors, both panels were held on the first day of the conference in the middle of day. The purpose of these panels was to bring together academics and librarians to the table to discuss shared issues. In the attempt to have a meaningful conversation, it was hoped that the topic of discussion would appeal to as large a group as possible. Hence, it was very encouraging to see 30-40 persons in the room, with good representatives from both the academic and librarian communities.

The two panel discussions were organised and chaired by Dr Amy Chan (ALRA President). The presenters were invited to bring to the discussion pressing issues that they were passionate about on the topic of Asian Studies research material. Members of the audience represented both academic and librarian communities, from various levels of academic (professorial, emeriti, Early Career Researchers, and students) across Australia and elsewhere, and librarians from the National Library, Monash University and ANU.

The presentations were brief (limited to 10 minutes each) to allow for maximum discussion time.

Panel 1:

Prof Robert Cribb (ANU) *New directions in Asian Studies and the implications for research method*

Dr Vannessa Hearman (University of Sydney) *Library resources support for academics' research: some thoughts*

Dr Aline Scott-Maxwell (Monash/University of Melbourne Library) *Language and area studies specialists in libraries in a changing resource and budgetary environment*

Panel 2:

Dr Amrita Malhi (ASAA Council) *National cooperative collection development and the collecting of ephemera*

Dr Amy Chan (ALRA/ASAA Council) *Digitising research resources and the need for a national approach*

Dipin Ouyang (NLA) *Challenges in current Web Archiving*

Friederike Schimmelpfennig (ANU) *Cross Asia, a national, subject-oriented virtual platform for Asian Studies resources: access for all to a greater variety of materials*

Diane Costello (Council of University Librarians) Discussant

The ensuing discussion was earnest, lively, passionate and constructive. It was very assuring to hear the vociferous support for the continuing role of the subject-specialist librarians. Many also expressed frustration in their attempts to access Asia-related material, particularly e-resources that appear on their search results on Trove. Their frustration was palpable, and shared amongst many in the audience.

Despite the success of this roundtable discussion, the work is not over yet. In fact, this is only the start. Much work needs to be done. What comes out of this will depend on what Asian Studies scholars and librarians alike will or can do with what was raised in both the presentations and discussion.