

Public Library News



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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to our first issue for 2011. But don't read it in the dark! We feature the very scary summer reading program, and (possibly even scarier) Library Lovers Day roundups from across the state. And a host of stories and photos that give just a taste of the great things you are all doing out in your communities. Thank you to all the contributors – we wouldn't have a newsletter without you.

VICTORIA ANDERSON
Editor



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Front cover image: Library Lovers Day at Canada Bay (see story page 9)

iBIMS at Willoughby

Staff at Willoughby City Library were delighted to receive the 2010 Australian VALA Award for the implementation of their innovative Chinese OPAC, iBIMS™. This prestigious award, made biennially, is presented to the Australian library or information centre judged to have made the most innovative use of information technology during the previous two years.

In June 2010 Willoughby City Library introduced this new library service – a Chinese OPAC (iBIMS™) available via the Internet. iBIMS™ the Intelligent Book Information Management System is a bilingual OPAC for non-romanised script languages. It can be accessed from any PC, handheld device or Smartphone with a web browser and Internet connection. Users can retrieve bibliographical information about the Library's Chinese collection in three different ways, by writing the Chinese characters on a handwriting recognition pad or through any Chinese character inputting software, by inputting the Pinyin (romanised script) or by typing in the English titles. iBIMS™ analyses the stroke count of an author's surname and displays it in the form of an organised matrix. With this outstanding feature, users who are unable to write characters can now simply hit the Stroke Search button and easily find the author they want.

Willoughby City Library enjoys a reputation for providing excellent multicultural services to the community. With 35% of the Library's total membership speaking a language other than English, the library has built a Community Language collection in 12 different languages. The loan figures for this collection are high, with Chinese loans reaching 121,575 loans last year, an impressive 16% of the total library annual loans.

The Chinese community is the largest ethnic group in the Willoughby area with 13% of the population speaking a Chinese dialect at home. Over the years, the Chinese language collection has expanded vastly and become the largest language collection in the North Shore area. It has been very popular among the local Chinese as well as visiting patrons from other areas. To improve our service to this group we introduced iBIMS™. It shows the familiar original script; allows users to search anytime, anywhere on the web; establishes a bridge between Chinese customers who don't speak English well and library staff who don't know Chinese by using dual language display on screen; and it increases user awareness of



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01 MADAM LI YANDUAN, DEPUTY CONSUL GENERAL, REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND CLR REILLY

02 THE AWARD



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new items and forthcoming events of interest within the library.

Connecting to the Library main system, iBIMS™ shows the real time status of an item, such as whether it is on loan, overdue or on the shelf. There is a growing trend towards customers searching iBIMS™ at home before coming to the Library to borrow the items they want. Customers and Library staff were delighted to find that the new system provides a communication link. Staff can now recommend titles to Chinese customers by clicking the Category button, or use a barcode search to identify the item when an overdue notice is received in romanised script.

Willoughby City Library is very proud to introduce iBIMS™, the first truly bilingual OPAC, to our Chinese customers. Three weeks after the launch the access log recorded over 7,600 hits on the Book Information page, proof of its popularity and usefulness among Chinese users. The system will help to increase item turnover by bringing the library's collection to a much broader user base in the Sydney metropolitan area.

Willoughby Mayor, Pat Reilly, congratulated Library staff, saying that the award was not only a recognition of innovative technology use, but a celebration of services that meet the needs of Willoughby's diverse population. *Willoughby is the City of Diversity. Accolades like the VALA Award highlight the way in which the library and other areas of Council embrace our differences and yet find ways to bridge gaps so that all Willoughby community members can access and benefit from local services,* Mayor Reilly said.

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