Charting the history of Australian LIS education
from 1959-2008: Problems and issues arising from data sources

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LIS[2] practice has undergone substantial change as computers, telecommunication and a more global society have developed. Not surprisingly LIS education has also experienced change – not only in content of courses or programs, but also in the methods of delivery. In Australia the past 50 years have witnessed the introduction of tertiary institution based professional LIS education and a growth in and decline of the number of schools offering LIS programs. The academic 'homes' of LIS programs within tertiary institutions (currently in universities) have also changed along with the academic staff profiles. This seems to be an appropriate time to look back and evaluate the history to date of tertiary institution based LIS education in Australia.

As the history of LIS tertiary based education in Australia is relatively recent (1959+), a great deal of data is available and can be assembled to address the task. For example, we are fortunate that the professional association, which like tertiary based LIS education had as a major player in its foundation John Metcalfe, has kept records of schools, programs and their staff profiles. Additionally, more detailed information is available through the handbooks and calendars of tertiary institutions and through books, articles and short news items in publications such as the Australian Library and Information Association's (ALIA) *InCite*. To understand the environment from which Australian LIS education arose, information about changes in government educational policies and other external factors need to be gathered. So, while a great deal of data is available, gathering, interpreting, integrating, organizing and presenting the data pose considerable challenges. Not surprisingly, there are gaps and discontinuities over time in the data collected and archived by particular organizations. This paper will discuss the identification of data sources and the gathering of the data as well as discuss issues which have arisen as this process unfolded: for example, definitional issues, number, identity and duration of LIS programs, and LIS educators over half a century.

Generally there are gaps in coverage over the years as well as discrepancies within one source or within several sources. Specific problems discussed involve: Changing institutions and/or closures of LIS programs; changing and different listing practices for academic staff; different listings in different media with often poor quality microfiche sources and lack of 'permanency' in e-sources; uncertainty in exact year when staff list is valid, etc. Hence, a great deal of cross-checking between and among sources had to be done in order to compile a near-complete picture of Australian LIS institutions and LIS educators responsible for teaching and research over a fifty-year period. The assembly of this information provides the base from which an evaluation and history of tertiary institution based LIS education can proceed.

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[2] LIS will be used in this presentation as the 'generic' acronym to indicate, *inter alia*, [(Library or Librarianship) and (Information or Knowledge) and (Science, Studies, Services, Stewardship, Management)]. Hereafter, LIS subsumes LIM (Library and Information Management), used widely in Australian university schools and/or programs.