Location, Location, Location
a librarian’s guide to isolation

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Aims of this presentation

• Explore issues associated with developing leaders and leadership potential in geographically remote regions

• Examine specific leadership programme at the University of Western Australia Library
Leadership challenges for librarians

• Anticipated retirements in the next 10-15 years is significant
• Lower numbers enrolling in library degrees
Leadership opportunities for librarians

- Assuming ‘acting’ roles
- Arranging secondments
- Attending relevant training
- Undertaking formal continuing education
Western Australia – some background

- WA covers 2,532,400 sq kilometres (1,573,560 sq miles)
- And has 12,500 kilometres (7,765 miles) of coastline

The United Kingdom, Texas and Japan could all fit inside its borders!

Perth - the capital city - is the most isolated capital city in the world, closer to Jakarta than Sydney!
Leadership challenges for WA librarians

• For employers – recruiting and retaining staff
• For employees – combating a sense of isolation and distance from colleagues and training opportunities
Individuals combating geographic isolation

- Communication is the key
- Peer support
- Develop and maintain professional contacts
- Formal courses of study
- Actively support the professional association
Organisations combating geographic isolation

- Develop a profile of the library
- Co-operative activities
- Using technologies e.g. Teleconferencing
The UWA Library
Leadership development at the UWA Library

- One strategy adopted by the University of Western Australia Library
- The University requires leaders to be innovative and committed to high performance in their own work and encourage it in others
Taking the Lead

- Identified management skills
- Delivered training to address skills gap
- Utilised 360-degree feedback instrument and a behavioural style inventory
- Incorporated ‘Leading into the Weekend’ programme
In summary

• Anticipated number of retirements
• Lower numbers of library students
• Overcoming the ‘tyranny of distance’
• Let’s be audacious in our approach to succession planning
• Proactive rather than reactive; let’s create the future we’d like to see
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