The first Asia Pacific Region all of country seminar was held at The University of Auckland in New Zealand on Friday 5th February 2010.

The seminar was free of charge and ran from 10am to 4pm so that participants could fly in from all over New Zealand and not have any accommodation costs for attending, just travel costs. Lunch was provided by OCLC.

Over 100 people attended the seminar from 40 different libraries and library-related organisations from across the country.

Key staff from New Zealand's National Library attended as well. New Zealand libraries virtually all belong to the National Library hosted National Union Catalogue service (which is called Te Puna) and National Library of New Zealand has a contract with OCLC to share all New Zealand data with WorldCat on a daily basis. For libraries like UofA Library that catalogue directly on WorldCat there is also a transfer of that data back to Te Puna by OCLC.
Vic Elliott, the incoming Chair of Asia Pacific Regional Council, who is the Director of Scholarly Information Services & University Librarian at the Australian National University, was able to join us in New Zealand too. Vic started the seminar with a presentation outlining the evolution of the OCLC governance model up until the latest development of the Regional Councils. Vic also outlined the issues being considered in the context of the Record Use Policy.

Karen Calhoun, VP WorldCat & Metadata Services, was our star attraction. Karen was a keynote speaker at a major Australian conference and I was delighted when she agreed to re-route to come to New Zealand first to speak at the seminar. Her presentation "Library as Place, Place as Library: a dialogue on duality and the power of cooperation" was very well received and resulted in some lively discussion in the half hour before lunch. Karen's presentation is on the OCLC website as are the other presentations.
One fascinating fact was the statistic at June 30 2009 that the language composition of WorldCat was 46.2% English and 53.8% non-English. With all the recent national additions from non-English speaking countries I am sure this percentage will be even smaller for English - a real indication of the global cooperative that OCLC now is.

One of the issues that was raised in discussion with Karen was the opportunity OCLC has to put more pressure on all e-book publishers to create standardised metadata of a certain quality rather than libraries having to load poor quality e-book records from publishers in order to ensure there is at least some access via the catalogue to e-book collections that are bought as a set. It was understood that OCLC already has relationships with a number of publishers but it is hoped that there will be considerably more.
In the afternoon Chris Thewlis, OCLC Regional Manager for Australasia, spoke about web scale management services even though WorldCat Local is not yet marketed in Australia or New Zealand.

There may well however be an opportunity to do so in these markets as there are already a range of consortiums operating. Many New Zealand public libraries are also looking to invest in a shared system to reduce their costs.

Ksenija Obradovic, the University of Auckland Cataloguing Manager, spoke next on the Osmosis initiative across a group of university and public libraries in collaboration with the National Library of New Zealand. Osmosis is software created by TMQ in Florida so a true international collaboration. It is software and workflow that assists in improving the accuracy of records and holdings for items and ensures that the records match across the individual library, the national union catalogue for New Zealand and WorldCat. This results in improved quality in the catalogues, improved search results using faceting and FRBRisation, more effective resource sharing, improved work flows, etc.
One of the issues you take for granted until you start talking with colleagues internationally is the use of US Marc. New Zealand made the decision in the 1970's to go with the US standard and not to develop their own version. This has made collaboration via OCLC that much easier for us than it is for many other international libraries. I guess this only happened because US software was the predominant software and this orientated NZers to US standards.

The final presentation was from two National Library of New Zealand staff, Linda Hall and Andrew Prout, both of whom have been involved in the changes flowing on from New Zealand’s legal deposit laws which mandates electronic as well as print deposit. This has opened up the opportunity to embed links to New Zealand’s National Digital Heritage Archive which provides access to a wide range of New Zealand electronic publications that are freely available.
We look forward to the opportunity to hold another whole of country seminar in 2011 if feasible and we would welcome the opportunity to host another speaker from OCLC as well.