Letters

AUSINET confusion

I GUESS most readers would have had the same difficulty as I had attempting to reconcile the 'threatened' AUSINET on page one of *Incite* (no9, 6 June 1980) with the same system announcing new training courses, new documentation, new databases and new software functions three pages later in Katie Blake's column.

The cause of the confusion is the National Library's *For Information* 264/80, which states that '... the number of users has not increased sufficiently to meet the costs of the data bases and the National Library is no longer able to use its trust funds to continue the purchase of data bases specially for the network', and further suggests that ANBIBNET might be the vehicle for information retrieval as well as for cataloguing.

In relation to the first point, the National Library buys Chemical Abstracts and the Arts and Humanities Citation Index specifically for AUSINET's 86 participants. In May 1980, these two files accounted for 2.5 percent and 1.5 percent of total connect minutes respectively. Their non-availability would hardly threaten AUSINET.

The National Library also supplies ERIC (40 percent of total connect in May 1980) and SSCI (9 percent), which are used within the NLA for SDI's and current awareness bulletins. Neither file is purchased 'specially for the network'.

ANBIBNET is as its name suggests – the Australian bibliographic network. AUSINET is Australia's information network and contains non-bibliographic as well as bibliographic data. Washington Library Network describes a software package designed to provide on-line shared cataloguing. The AUSINET software provides for database creation and interrogation. Software for the bibliographic network and for the information network differs in both design and application.

AUSINET's future lies in access to all types of Australian data and discussions are taking place to ensure that this future is not jeopardised by any inability to meet costs. *For Information* 264/80 is not a constructive contribution to the current debate. No doubt future issues will be less idiosyncratic.

Ian McCallum
ACI Computer Services, Clayton,Vic

Not amused

I SHOULD like to complain about the item on 'British Tits' in the latest issue of *Incite* (no10, p7). This is an unintelligent, sexist joke insulting to women.

There is nothing funny about the female anatomy except to those who have no respect for it. Such cheap humour is not worthy of the newsletter of a professional association, and I hope will not be repeated. By all means include amusing material in *Incite*, but not at the expense of women please.

M.E. Crawford
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Computerised catalogues — who reaps the benefits?

WITHIN five to 10 years, on-line catalogues for public use may be the norm in Australian libraries. Access points to the records held on file will undoubtedly be as varied as those available to many data bases today. The problem of locating library items by content may well be solved.

While on-line catalogues may still be in the future, the production of catalogues from computer held files is common in many libraries yet little has been done to use this technological development for the benefit of the user.

The main justification for the switch from card to COM seems to be for the benefit of the library – reduced costs, routine workloads and the production of circulation files.

It is timely to consider if this interim development is capable of producing any major user benefits at minimal cost particularly in regard to subject access.

This is of particular importance when considering the fact that:

1 The standardisation of cataloguing practice and the acceptance of MARC records from USA and UK produces added difficulties for the Australian user;

2 Classification schemes are no longer capable of producing common shelf location for common subject matter in a large academic library; and

3 The Library of Congress Subject Headings are far from ideal for use in Australian libraries and fail to keep up to date with the growth of knowledge.

Is it possible to reorganise computer files where the entries are stored sequentially so the user may gain increased access? Could a key word in title entry be cheaply added?

Why not produce an author catalogue and combine subject headings and titles with a key word in title catalogue. Surely something better than a catalogue card in miniature is possible.   *Fran Hegarty,* QIT Library