

# Online Circulation System that works

**H**ornsby Shire Public Library changed from a photocharging system to a fully online computer circulation control system in December 1978.

The photocharging system was introduced six years previously when circulation was 300,000 per year. When circulation reached 950,000 per year the system had become almost inoperable.

Council's Computer Department was phasing out punched cards in favour of discs and two members of the Library staff were fully occupied typing overdue notices and attending to related procedures. Book reservations, using a visible index system, were time consuming and inaccurate.

The Library was faced with the choice of employing additional staff, which would only partly solve the problem, or finding a circulation system adequate for requirements. After examination and rejection of currently available alternatives it was decided to design a circulation control system.

At this stage it may be appropriate to give a few details regarding the Hornsby Shire Library, in the northern suburbs of Sydney, serving a population of 108,000 from four service points. Total bookstock is 140,000, registered borrowers number 40,000, circulation is 950,000 per year, and the staff number 26.

Fortunately, Council's computer department is situated next to the Central Library and had a staff of three programmers, two operators, and three key-punch operators. Council had already installed an IBM 312 system computer. After many consultations it was decided that with some enlargement of Council's computer, a circulation control system was feasible.

The system has been operating successfully for a year, and my confidence and enthusiasm have not diminished - it really works!

The Central Library has three terminals containing a screen/keyboard and an OCR scanner directly linked via co-axial cable to the computer. The branch libraries each have one or two terminals (depending on the size of the branch) linked to the computer by Telecom land lines.

Each book and borrower has been identified with a unique number printed in OCR-B font for scanning at the terminals. Scanning of borrower and book number updates computer files with the transaction. Check digits prevent errors when keying-in information when not using the scanner.

The terminals have access to 13 programs which give information about the whereabouts of books (whether on normal or extended periods of loan, returned, at a branch, or at the bindery, etc) and can also 'hold' books which have been reserved.

Information about borrowers, such as name, address, lost cards, banned, changes of address, new borrowers, is all accessible through the new system.

Statistical information can be given daily or as required. Author and title master lists of stock are kept at each library. These lists are able to be scanned at the terminals for reservations and provide an author/title catalogue of the complete library holdings.

Response times vary from two to five seconds per borrower (assuming four books per borrower).

The costs of installation and operation of the system are largely related to the size of the library and the number of branches. Recurring costs include the lease of terminals and

Telecom land lines, stationery and, if applicable, an after-hours computer operator.

Council is currently finalising arrangements with Adaps Ltd who have already established expertise in marketing and installation of library systems (Libramatic), for the granting of marketing rights to the computer system software, at a price which will be aimed to be attractive to public libraries of all sizes.

I realise this description is very brief, but it is only meant as a basic outline. Any interested person may contact me for more details or communicate with Adaps direct - they have offices in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

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# For arts librarians

THE Crafts Board, one of the seven Boards of the Australia Council, is seeking the help of arts librarians in identifying papers relevant to the crafts in their collections. The material could be in the form of articles in journals, magazines, newsletters, newspaper reviews, unpublished papers and theses.

The content would be such that it would assist in placing contemporary crafts and the philosophies, ideas and practices of today's craftspeople in historical, social, cultural and philosophic context.

At the end of the research period the Crafts Board will publish the bibliographical information.

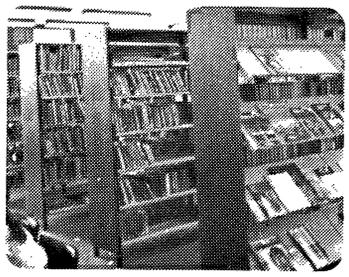
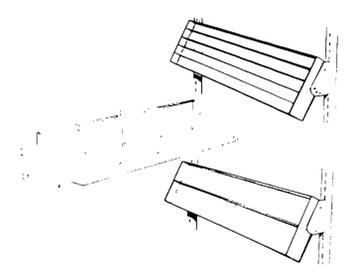
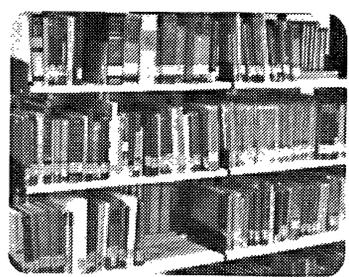
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