BAUDY BITS... COLUMN OF ONLINE NEWS

I am pleased to report that a meeting was held in Adelaide on 15 January to discuss the formation of an online users group. Response was promising and they are hopeful of getting off the ground. A committee was formed consisting of Margaret Thompson (Reference Librarian, South Australian Institute of Technology) as the co-ordinator, plus Neil McKellar-Stewart (Department of Mines and Energy) and Stephen Cramond (Housing Trust). We wish them all the best of luck for the new group.

Predicasts is a group of both bibliographic and non-bibliographic databases made available through Lockheed's DIALOG Service. The files include company, product and industry information, as well as historical and forecast statistical information. As well as the files themselves, there is also available a statistical package for the manipulation of data.

To help users find out more about the Predicasts system and how to use it effectively, there will be Predicasts Training Seminars in March in both Sydney and Melbourne. These seminars will consist of one and a half days, with the first afternoon being a free introductory overview of the system and how to access it through DIALOG, and the second day as a training session conducted by the Predicasts consultant Dr Gross, and will include hands-on terminal practice. Registration for this second day will be $50.00 and will be limited to 25 participants. For further details see the announcements in 'Happenings'.

It has long been recognised in all parts of the world that technology transfer is a necessary and desirable element of agricultural and economic development. This need for the exchange of technological know-how grows more urgent as the world's population increases and its resources dwindle.

The TECHNOTEC Technology Exchange Service provides a medium for bringing together persons interested in exchanging technology, know-how, processes, patents, ideas and expertise. The Techno-Bank stores technology offers and demands. A comprehensive computer program allows customers to efficiently search the Techno-Bank to locate items of interest.

People use TECHNOTEC to locate a needed technology, to evaluate marketability of a technology, to co-ordinate and plan marketing of a technology, to reduce time spent searching for a technology already developed, to decrease research and development costs, to generate new business and to market technology at a low cost.

TECHNOTEC has been available for some years in the US and in other countries through the Control Data Corporation and is now also available in Australia through Teknosphere Management International. Those interested should contact Peter Peterson, 20 Milham Crescent, Forestville, NSW 2087; phone (02) 452 5591.

Since the introduction of online services there has been a dramatic increase in both interest and demand for these facilities, as well as a concomitant demand for demonstrations, user education and training.

'Live' demonstrations online can be both expensive and unreliable, so an alternative is to use a multimedia teaching package such as the Mediatron, developed by the Central Information Service of the University of London.

Mediatron is based on a stereocassette tape recorder which is capable of simultaneous recording of digital signals to control display on a VDU, voice commentary and pulses that trigger photographic slides. Thus an exact replica of an online search can be set up, displayed on a VDU, accompanied by a voice commentary and with the added feature of visual slide images displayed on a screen. All three media are fully synchronised in the system.

The viewer watches a real online search with its actual speed of input and response. Component stages of the search are explained by means of the voice commentary and the impression of realism is amplified by the slides which show, for example, a page from a thesaurus, a list of the search codes, a close up of the equipment etc.

Complete beginners in online searching may never have seen an actual search, and without this background may find it difficult to understand what is really happening online. A simple recorded search played at the start of a training session gives the participants the feel of online so that further instruction may be more easily assimilated.

There are at present 28 prepared cassettes covering DIALOG, ORBIT, NLM and BLAISE, with subject oriented examples. The tapes are £25 each. A separate recording unit will be available for those who wish to make their own tapes.

Further information on Mediatron can be obtained from an article by A. Vickery and A. M. Batten, 'Development of multi-media teaching packages for user education in online retrieval systems' in *Online Review*, vol 2(4), 1978, pp 367-373, or contact Katie Blake.

The collected papers of the 3rd International Online Information Meeting held in London, 4-6 December 1979 have now been published by Learned Information, and cover all the familiar issues facing librarians in the 1980s, such as to charge or not to charge and how much to charge, education and training, copyright, evaluation of different bibliographical sources, and the reference interview. There may not be a lot of answers in this collection of papers, but the questions being asked reaffirm that librarianship is alive and well and online. *Katie Blake*

Computer user needs

THE AACOBS Working Party on Systems and Communications is assisting the Data Communications Consultative Group, established by Telecom last year, to develop plans for the data communications needs of computer users.

The objectives of the Group are: Obtain a better understanding by Telecom of the present and future needs of its customers; enable Telecom to assess the overall performance of existing services and identify areas where improvement may be needed; and inform customers of Telecom's future plans and policies. The Group will be concerned with matters of general concern and not specific customer problems.

The next meeting of the Group is to be held on 12 March 1980. If there are any matters which you feel should be brought forward at this meeting please contact Denis Richardson, Convener, AACOBS Working Party on Systems and Communications, c/o PO Box 158, Parkville, Vic 3052.

LEG people

A Library Employment Group (LEG) has been formed in South Australia in response to a need expressed at a public meeting held in late November 1979.

At the meeting, about 90 unemployed people, with a wide variety of library skills, asked for a temporary register to be set up of those looking for work. This register would provide a pool of potential employees for employers to easily tap.

Meanwhile, the SA Branch of the LAA was asked to investigate longer-range options for job placement and job creation, particularly the formation of a co-operative to serve these purposes.

The temporary register has become the Library Employment Group, with $200 support from Branch Council and a generous offer of accommodation by the School Libraries Branch at 101 Flinders Street, Adelaide.

The group is maintaining files of members seeking all types of library work and is now in the process of circulating potential employers, seeking opportunities for members. Several positions have been dealt with, both voluntary and paid, in professional, assistant and clerical areas.

At present there are 34 members, almost half of whom help to run the group's operations on a non-profit, voluntary basis, nine to five each week day. Modest fees are charged to cover costs: $5 joining fee for members, with a $2 monthly continuation fee; $15 for employers when a successful placement is made.

At the moment the group is in a trial period after which time both LEG and the SA Branch will be able to review the group's operation with longer-term activities in mind.

To the best of the group's knowledge no similar scheme has been set up on a voluntary basis in the Australian library employment field. If this is wrong, or if you have any opinions or advice, particularly in the area of job creation, please let us know.

Interstate members or job offers are welcome. Anyone wishing to join, offer a job or exchange information contact LEG, c/o LAA SA Branch, PO Box 47, Rundle Street Post Office, Rundle Street, Adelaide 5000 or ring (08) 227 3209.

Kathleen Wenger

Footnote: The Library Association of Australia headquarters has a free job placement service available to members who wish to work in the Sydney metropolitan area.

Fee based services

THE next edition of a *Directory of Fee-Based Information Services* is to include an Australian section.

The Directory, published by Information Alternative in the US, lists freelance librarians, information specialists, information brokers and others who provide library and information services for a fee. If anyone would like to be included in this Directory contact Stephen Wall, 482 Bourke Street, Surry Hills, NSW 2010. Phone (02) 31 9693. There's no charge for the listing.

WHO said senior staff meetings were boring? This doesn't seem to be the case at the State Library of NSW. During their last meeting, a film entitled *How not to exhibit yourself* was shown.