

Letters

Space invaders

With reference to your front page article on electronic games in libraries (*Incite* no6, 17 April 1981) I would like to comment that if librarians spend their time debating the pros and cons of something like *Space Invaders* they will be completely missing a much more important issue.

What should really be given the most careful consideration, in my opinion, is the extraordinary potential of a 'personal computer system' to meet many of the information, educational and recreational needs of a library's clients — from the very young to the very old.

Consider just one system, for example, the Atari 400. Its educational library of pre-programmed cassettes includes more than 70 hours of instruction in over 20 subjects ranging from Algebra to Zoology. It can help with income tax preparation, preparing a domestic budget, tax planning and investment. It can teach touch typing, modern languages and basic programming and will also chart your biorhythms and cast your horoscope.

The more elaborate 800 system is planned to assist you in the fields of musical composition, electronic art and security control, while also handling — are you listening, librarians? — mailing list maintenance and printing. And, oh yes, both systems also like a little fun now and again and will play games with you — chess, backgammon, business and stockmarket simulations, for example.

In the light of all this, *Space Invaders* means rather less to me than *Hecuba* — and, besides my reactions are slow. Full marks to Sue Campbell for already offering a speed reading program and showing what can be done in this area. I sincerely hope that other librarians are following her example.

David Poulson
Nedlands, CAE

Verbal hysteria

With an AV supplement to the ILL code now available for criticism, librarians could begin by asking for the supplement to be expressed in simple, correct English.

The supplement is riddled with phrases such as 'in its entirety with no deletions whatsoever', 'completed accurately and fully', 'strictly on time', 'clearly identifiable', 'clear understanding', 'strictly observed' and 'great care'.

In addition it contains statements such as 'Acceptance of delivery ... must be signed for' (ie on delivery, ILL's must be signed for), 'collection ... should be effected' (ie it should be collected), 'In the event of damage or loss ... this must be reported' (ie damage or loss if any must be reported).

Surely librarians deserve better than this pompous document? Given that the AV supplement has taken 18 months to prepare, can't we get someone with a command of the language to spend half a day correcting the English?

In conclusion, may I advise AACOBs, in its own language, that the AV supplement, in its entirety and with no deletions whatsoever, while it may be strictly on time, has not been completed accurately and fully. In particular, the code cannot, even with great care, be strictly observed: a clear understanding of it is impossible, because the intentions behind it are not clearly identifiable.

In short, it is imperative, not to mention essential, that, in general, and without prejudice to such parts of it as may be strictly correct, the code should be scrupulously rewritten by a thoroughly competent, relevant, authorised, person whose name must be clearly identifiable, and who is not particularly prone, or particularly vulnerable, to especially rare forms of verbal hysteria.

Stephen Due
Learmonth, Vic

Erratic records

Regular users of the publications that record the literature of librarianship, such as *Library and Information Science Abstracts*, *Information Science Abstracts*, *Library Literature* and *CALL* may have noticed the late, and erratic, inclusion of Australian material.

This appears to be due in part to the fact that Australian library periodicals and monographs are forwarded surface-mail, and in some cases only in response to a subscription or an order.

The suggested remedy, which would not be costly is:

1 For editors of periodicals and producers of seminar proceedings and other items to identify the appropriate indexing and abstracting services.

2 To airmail their publications at no charge immediately after publication.

3 To include an abstract with each element of the contents. In particular it is a deficiency that no Australian periodicals preface articles with an abstract.

This would not only be useful to the Australian reader, but could be of use to abstracting publications endeavouring to meet copy deadlines.

The indexing and abstracting services are the international shop-window for the literature of librarianship. It seems a pity if we have to depend on the vagaries of shipping and a subscription to place our wares before our colleagues overseas.

Alan Bundy
Footscray Institute of Technology

A wristy business

Over the years in the Library I have developed very strong wrists tearing up books that are worn out in subject matter being 20 years old but are still very far from being worn out physically.

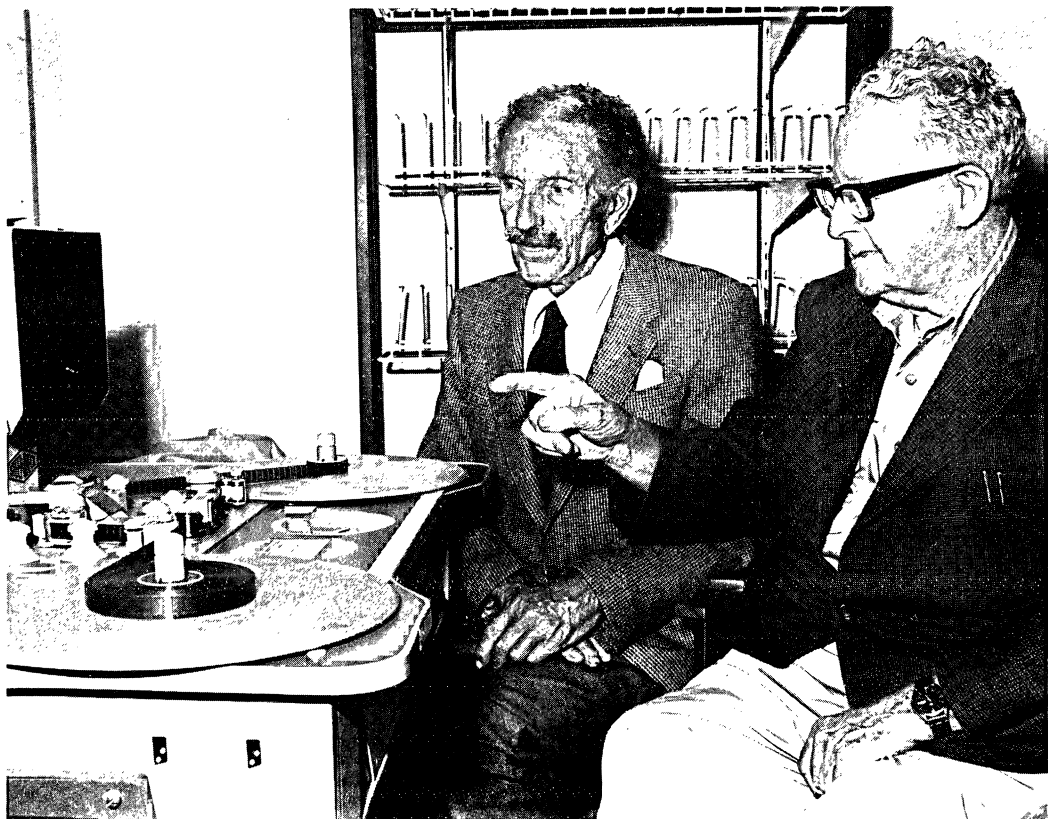
However, lately I have seen my very precious, small book vote dwindle considerably in the library by the expense of throwing out or trying to repair books bound by so called perfect binding that last no longer than three-12 months.

I do wish the Library Association would approach the publishers and ask them to stop using this binding on their books for library use. If the publishers really think their books are worth publishing and therefore worth us buying, why, oh! why, don't they bind them so that as large an audience as possible can read them.

I would prefer to pay \$1.00 extra for a stitch bound book that will last seven or eight years than \$15.00 for a book that doesn't last one year. I realise this is the 'throw-away society' but this is ridiculous. Once publishers were so proud of their works they really made them to last.

Judy Thornton
Parkes Shire Library, NSW

PNG film given to National Library



Retired District Commissioner, Jim Taylor, 80, of Mt Hagen, PNG (right), draws the attention of his former patrol officer friend, Jim Black, 70, South Australia, to one of the reels of film Mr Taylor presented to the NLA.