



## INFORMATION BROKER

## SWITCHES OFF

# INSEARCH — AHEAD OF ITS TIME?

**I**NSEARCH DIAL SERVICES ceased operations on 29 May 1981. It had become obvious that the service was not, and was not likely to be, economically viable.

Rising staff costs coupled with the range of subjects covered and the irregular nature of requests were all factors contributing to its closure.

Insearch DIAL Services was established by the Council of New South Wales Institute of Technology in May 1978 and provided information services to industry and individual consultants.

### Difficult requests

It was found that easy requests were dealt with by the client's own staff, leaving Insearch DIAL Services staff to handle the 'too hard basket'. Despite the success of Insearch DIAL Services staff in answering such requests, the cost was hard to recoup. Unfortunately success led to even harder enquiries being received more frequently, thus exacerbating the problem.

The concept of Insearch DIAL Services proved difficult to market because potential clients were often unaware of how their organisation obtained information or that they had an information problem. They could not cost their information needs or judge the value to them of an information brokerage service.

The necessity of marketing on a personal basis proved too expensive for an undercapitalised operation like Insearch DIAL Services. The idea of 'free' information is deeply ingrained in our community and there continues to be an overall lack of appreciation of the librarian's skills. Perhaps the concept of Insearch DIAL Services was ahead of its time. Other attempts may be more successful in the future.

Although Insearch DIAL Services has closed down, Insearch Limited will continue to be the Australian and New Zealand representative for the DIALOG service — a service which appears to be flourishing. Details of the new DIALOG team can be found elsewhere in this issue.

## ACI INTO ORBIT

**A**CI COMPUTER SERVICES are now marketing ORBIT — SDC's Search Service.

When ORBIT was launched in Sydney on 25 May, Tony Klingender, the General Manager of ACI said that although many people still think of ACI as the 'Pink Batts' company, the organisation had come a long way since it began operations over 100 years ago.

No newcomer to online text retrieval, ACI has operated the AUSINET service on Australian and foreign databases since 1977.

Under the new agreement, ACI will continue to offer its domestic databases, as well as more than 80 databases offered by SDC. The firm will also provide customer support through an established network of sales and service personnel in Australia and New Zealand.

It was announced at the launch that Katie Blake (employed previously by that 'aircraft manufacturer'!) will begin duties with ACI on 15 June. Katie will be the person to contact if you have any queries about ORBIT or AUSINET.



Tony Klingender, ACI's General Manager

## CSIRO/NLA TEAM UP



Harrison Bryan . . . 'stimulating experience'

**T**HE NATIONAL LIBRARY of Australia and CSIRO have agreed to a new framework of co-operation for the provision of library and information services in the science and technology area.

The framework will include a formal consultative committee comprising: The Director-General of the NLA, Mr Bryan, and the Assistant Directors-General for Reference and Technical Services respectively (Mr Thorn and Mr Yates), and from CSIRO, the Director of the Bureau of Scientific Information, Mr Lattimore, the Director of the Central Information Library and Editorial Section, Mr Judge and the Chief Librarian, Mr Dawe.

The Committee held its first meeting on 7 May and found the experience 'stimulating and constructive'. The matters discussed at this meeting included collection development and use, the creation, access to and use of Australian data bases and the exchange of staff.

After the meeting the Director-General said 'I am sure I speak for both institutions in saying how much we welcome the establishment of this machinery which will not only enhance the possibility of more effective resource sharing but also demonstrate publicly the determination of the two institutions to pursue that possibility together'.

The committee plans to hold its next meeting on 17 July.

## AID TO SOUTH PACIFIC

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY of Australia is providing aid of \$6000 to the University of the South Pacific, in Fiji, to assist with the establishment of the first stage of a Pacific Regional Bibliographic Centre.

The aid is being provided from a Federal Government allocation to contribute to co-operative library projects in the South-East Asian, Pacific and Indian Ocean regions.

The centre is to act as a forum for national and regional bibliographic activities, to produce regional bibliographies in printed and computer readable form and to promote appropriate standards for the collection of bibliographic information.