

# Electronic technology and the book trade

THE Joint Standing Committee for the Book Trade, which comprises representatives of the Library Association of Australia (represented by Bill Cations and Pam Trier), the Australian Booksellers Association and the Australian Book Publishers Association, recently established a Sub-committee to consider developments in electronic technology of common interest to the three constituent bodies.

The Sub-committee held its first meeting on 23 November 1983 in Melbourne. After a wide-ranging discussion, the following three areas were focused on as being of immediate importance and realistic in scope: bibliographic information; stock holding information; and on-line or teleordering and distribution.

The Sub-committee agreed that:

- (1) A number of major Australian libraries, booksellers and publishers have already established computer support systems which (with varying degrees of success) meet their individual needs.
- (2) A large proportion of those without significant computer support will be examining the matter or making commitments in the near future.
- (3) A clear indication NOW of areas of potential compatibility with obvious economic benefits would assist many to avoid 'dead-end' approaches and to participate in some common goals.

The following are seen to be realistic directions, are achievable (given reasonable support) and should be actively promulgated.

## A. Common access to essential bibliographic data bases

Most booksellers and librarians have discovered the benefits of monthly airmailed microfiche of Australian, British and American Books in Print, over the earlier annual printed editions.

The next technological stage is on-line access to bibliographical data. Already, the library community has, in the Aus-

tralian Bibliographic Network, on-line access to over 3 million catalogued titles. There are clear operational advantages to libraries and booksellers if economical access to this data could be made widely available to both groups, and if similar access could be provided to information on titles in print, as is increasingly happening in North America and Europe, and indeed to pre-publication information as well. For booksellers such access, if economical, could replace print and microfiche versions to permit identification of information via one operation for both customer service and purchasing details. For libraries, pre-order searching would be greatly assisted.

## B. Stock Holding Information

Provision for Australian publishers and distributors to have 'gateways' into the bibliographic data bases so users may determine: that they are distributors in Australia for a given title; whether at the moment of enquiry the title is in stock in their warehouse; the Australian recommended retail price; and if not in stock, a status report symbol.

For Australian publishers and distributors, the facility would provide enormous cost saving on present methods of answering enquiries re stock status, by mail or telephone, and would provide the most powerful of all incentives to channel library (and bookseller) orders via their warehouse.

Similar cost savings would be gained by booksellers, librarians and their suppliers in giving paperless instantaneous stock status reports for the use of themselves and their customer/borrowers.

The principal problem for publishers would lie in the degree of complication or simplicity with which their internal systems could communicate with the system to flag the four areas of interest to their consumers. It is assumed that ISBNs would be the linking key.

## C. ON-LINE or TELEORDERING

Growth of a common network to access the distributed or common data base should be structured in a way which permits using the network for actual placement of orders (by librarians to booksellers and booksellers to publishers/distributors) as the technological re-

sources of individual participants permit.

These matters will be raised at the 1984 Annual Meeting of the ABPA, ABA and the LAA Biennial Conference in Brisbane.

Your thoughts, ideas and suggestions are needed by members of this Committee now. Without wishing to restrict the scope of any comments you may have, ideas on the following issues would be particularly welcome:

1. Possible appropriate host systems for trade bibliographic data bases;
2. Acceptable cost structures;
3. Ideas on technological options to pursue the directions listed in A, B, and C above.

Please direct your comments to any of the LAA representatives on the Sub-committee, viz:

*Bill Cations*, Institute Librarian, Phillip Institute of Technology, PO Box 179, Coburg 3058. Tel: 350-4222 Ext: 334.

*George Eichinski*, Systems and Technical Services Librarian, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, 124 La Trobe Street, Melbourne 3000 Tel: 341-2065.

*Alan Green*, Systems Librarian, National Library of Australia, Canberra ACT 2600. Tel: (062) 62-1111.

## InCite deadlines

Please note that there have been some changes made.

Issue no.	Deadline date	Mailing date	Cover date
5	Mar. 20	Apr. 2	Apr. 6
6	Apr. 10	Apr. 26	Apr. 27
7	May 1	May 14	May 18
8	May 15	May 28	June 1
9	May 29	June 12	June 15
10	June 12	June 25	June 29
11	June 26	July 9	July 14
12	July 10	July 23	July 27
13	July 31	Aug. 13	Aug. 17
14	Aug. 14	Aug. 27	Aug. 31
15	Sep. 4	Sep. 17	Sep. 21
16	Sep. 18	Oct. 1	Oct. 5
17	Oct. 2	Oct. 15	Oct. 19
18	Oct. 16	Oct. 29	Nov. 2
19	Oct. 30	Nov. 12	Nov. 16
20	Nov. 13	Nov. 26	Nov. 30
21	Nov. 27	Dec. 10	Dec. 14

Keep this schedule for reference throughout the year.

## SEMINAR ON INDUSTRY, INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION

Manly Pacific Hotel, Manly NSW, June 6-8 1984

### Topics

- manufacturing industry's access to information about the new technology
- computers, telecommunications and productivity
- patents and innovation
- improvement of Australia's technological health
- provision of innovative information services

### Speaker

Professor T.J. Allen, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

### Application forms and inquiries

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# LASIE SEMINAR