

CONFERENCE NEWS



**Profile on
DENIS
RICHARDSON**

Denis Richardson, University Librarian at the University of Melbourne, will speak on the theme of Information Technology at the LAA-NZLA Conference in Brisbane from 27-31 August, 1984.

Mr Richardson's qualifications include a Bachelor of Arts degree with honours from the University of Sheffield (1948), and Librarianship qualifications from Leeds School of Librarianship (1951). In 1951 he was awarded the Svensman Prize (International Federation of Library Associations).

A distinguished career in libraries began in the Leeds Public Libraries where he was employed as a library assistant and then Branch Librarian from 1951-1953. From 1955-1959 he was Librarian at the Claremont Public Library in Western Australia. His next appointment was Regional Librarian at the Glenelg Regional Library in Victoria (1959-1960) where as Foundation Librarian he was responsible for the design of the Regional Library headquarters and for the introduction of a bookmobile service. In 1961-1964 he was City Librarian at Toowoomba, Queensland, and from 1964-1970 Chief Extension Librarian at the National Library of Australia, and Canberra Public Librarian.

As Canberra Public Librarian Denis Richardson was responsible for the development of a totally autonomous library service appropriate to the growth needs of Canberra. In 1970 he was appointed Deputy National Librarian at the National Library of Australia, remaining there until 1974 when he left to take up his current position. While Deputy National Librarian, he was concerned with all aspects of the library's operation, in particular areas of network development and systems application.

Denis Richardson has had and continues to have deep involvement in professional activities. As a member of the LAA he has served as President of the ACT branch (1972-1973); President of the Victorian branch (1976); and National President (1980). His involvement in AACOBS has included serving as a member of the National Council (1975-1982) and convenor of the Working Party on Systems and Communications (1979-1982). He has also been involved in the Library Council of Victoria (1976-1981), National Book Council, CAVAL Ltd, and Victorian Institute of Colleges Library Committee.

PROTECTION FOR COMPUTER SOFTWARE

PARTICIPATION WAS invited from a wide range of groups interested in the issue of legal protection of computer software arranged by the Attorney-General's Department. A symposium for interested parties to hear and voice disparate views, was arranged at the Australian Academy of Science recently in Canberra.

The pleas for exemption from the constraints of copyright for educational institutions were given by Professor Edwin C. Webb, Vice-Chancellor, Macquarie University, who spoke as a representative of the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee and Principals in Advanced Education. This view was countered by participants who felt that no exemptions should be allowed in the educational sector, and that to do so would jeopardise the viability of some kits aimed at a school market. Judy Benson, representing the Australian Book Publishers Association, spoke cogently for this view.

Representatives from software houses unanimously supported the view that computer software should come under the category of a 'literary work' in the existing copyright legislation, and that this should be put into force as an immediate short-term measure to stop the inevitable erosion of the software industry in Australia.

Consumer and other groups basically called

for a public enquiry into the whole issue of legal protection. The most persuasive speaker on this angle was Roland Everingham, a lawyer representing the Australian Federation of Consumer Organisations. Other lawyers who spoke gave a more traditional view that essentially supported the computer software argument.

Predictably, the most radical views were expressed by Albert Langer, who was a participant in the afternoon panel session. But perhaps the most useful all-round view was given by Roger Clarke, Reader in Information Systems, Department of Commerce, Australian National University. His view was that the computer software house claims were overstated, that no one has addressed the technical aspects e.g., when does a program become firmware, become part of the hardware, that the law needed to be more adaptable than it was, and that the whole area was one where long-term solutions, in keeping with the technological developments, needed very thoughtful consideration.

Participants will have a further opportunity to discuss issues at a one-day seminar on international developments concerning legal protection of computer software on 5 April in Canberra.

Virginia de Crespigny

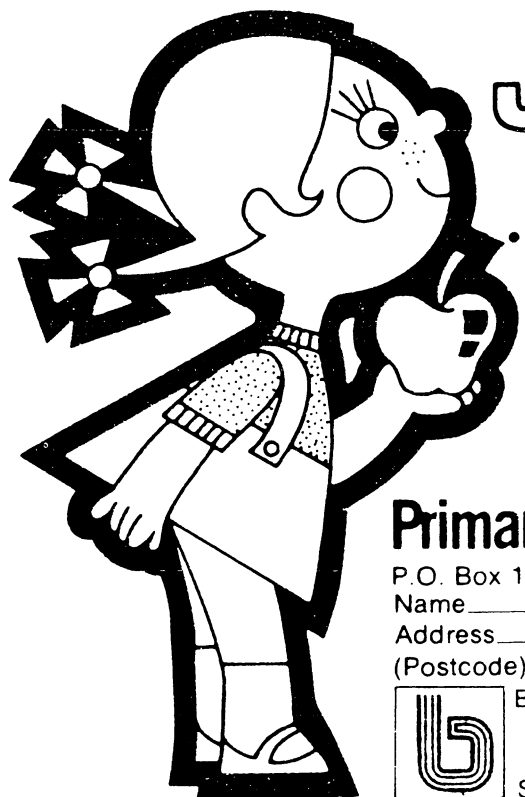
Systems Projects Librarian, Toorak Campus. (NOTE: Virginia put in a submission to the Attorney General, as a private individual, on the issue of legal protection for computer software. Senator Gareth Evans invited her to attend the seminar as a result, and Virginia participated in a private capacity.)

HAPPENINGS NOTICES

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