



Exemption recommended

It was disappointing to hear that the AACOBS Standing Committee has not recognised the need for an investigation into the likely impact of interlibrary loan charges on public and other small publicly-funded libraries (as requested by General Council and by many public librarians). This is research which should have been done before decisions on charges were made.

AACOBS NSW State Committee has, however, had more vision than Standing Committee and has taken into account the extent to which local libraries have eased the problems of tertiary libraries in assisting to fulfil student needs for general material (which greatly affects the availability of this material for browsing by the general public). The unique network, the Sydney Subject Specialisation Scheme, serving both city and country libraries has assisted in trying to meet the increasing demands on public libraries (over 31,000 loans in 1986 from a stock of over 533,000).

The Metropolitan Chief Librarians' Committee (the Committee responsible for the SSS Scheme) informed AACOBS NSW State Committee that charges will not be imposed within the SSS Scheme and sought exemption from charges for all public libraries. In return an undertaking was made that:

- The libraries would first exhaust the public library system network, including the State Library of NSW to satisfy ILL requests, before resorting to libraries outside the network.
- Public libraries will try to avoid seeking material on interlibrary loan from tertiary institutions for undergraduate students.

AACOBS NSW State Committee has agreed to recommend exemption as has ALCAE (with the exception of one College

still considering). The matter of photocopy charges is to be decided next meeting.

The decision was made after a learning process which involved an appreciation of each other's problems and consideration of factors such as the effects of some public libraries (particularly those in the country) having to pass on charges because of the crisis situation that many are facing and recognition of the backup service provided to tertiary students by their local libraries.

D. Oliver
Sutherland Shire Libraries
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Support for the 'Specials perspective'

Special libraries are a very diverse section of the membership of the LAA and it is very difficult to write on behalf of all special libraries. Nevertheless, it is true to say that we will all be seriously affected by the increase in interlibrary loan charges to come into effect in July and some comments from a Specials perspective may be pertinent.

Many special libraries (not all) are net borrowers and it seems easy for some of our larger libraries to perceive special libraries as parasites in the information network. Justification of increased charges seems to assume that all libraries should be self-sufficient for all their needs and that wherever they are not this is a result of failure on the part of the funding body of the special library to provide sufficient financial resources. On the contrary, it may well be that a special library that can fulfil all of its needs is either collecting too broadly or searching too narrowly!

The information network in Australia consists of big libraries and little libraries and *all* of those libraries have a role to play. Even the smallest special library often has materials that are not available in the larger, generalist collections. These are available to libraries, great and small, through the voluntary interlibrary loan network and this section is recommending to specials in this state that they report their holdings as widely as possible to make sure that these resources are available to all.

Charging more and more for interlibrary loan requests, however, will squeeze purchase budgets and reduce the overall availability of materials in all libraries. Difficult as it is in times of economic hardship, we must all try to take a longer term view of the needs of the in-

formation system as a whole as well as the short-term interests of our own organisation. If charges rise too steeply, we may well find that instead of one general interlibrary loan system, we have a multitude of 'special arrangements', 'sweetheart deals' and so on.

Is this the way to go? We are talking to governments about librarians' involvement in the formulation of a National Information Policy and at the same time we seem to be heading towards dismantling our own interlibrary loan system. Surely this will damage our credibility as an example of a pre-existing information network. How can a network survive if all components seek only immediate and short-term goals at the expense of the system as a whole?

Lynne Carmichael
President
LAA Specials Section (SA Group)

Changes to Charges

The University of New South Wales Library welcomes AACOBS' moves towards establishing a more realistic fee for interlibrary loans and supply of photocopies. In response to AACOBS' recommendation of a standard \$6 charge, the Library has reviewed its ILL charging policy in consultation with the members of the Office of Library Co-operation (OLC).

From 1 July 1987, the UNSW Library will charge \$6 for supply of all photocopies. Also from that date, the Library will charge \$6 for loan of items to all other libraries except those which are OLC members, the other NSW university libraries and the State Library of NSW, who have agreed to continue providing each other with loans free of charge. This arrangement may also provide a mechanism for serving public libraries' interlibrary loan needs. The current charges will continue to be in force until 30 June 1987.

The Library will endeavour to maintain rapid supply of items. This will be facilitated if the item's call number is included with the request.

Requests requiring special treatment, for example urgent handling, fax transmission or extensive bibliographic checking, may attract an additional charge. For further information, please contact interlibrary loan staff in the following: Social Sciences & Humanities Library (02) 697 2669; Physical Sciences Library (02) 697 2671; Biomedical Library (02) 697 2651; Law Library (02) 697 2664

Allan Horton
University Librarian

Computers explained

I would like to report on an excellent short course I recently attended at the Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education. Organised by Harry Singh, from the School of Education, and funded by the LAA National Continuing Education Program, the course was entitled 'Automation in Libraries' and was an excellent introduction for librarians to the mysteries of computers, and their place in the library.

The course ran for 10 weeks, with one two-hour session per week. Topics covered included basic introduction to computers, AACR2 and MARC coding, database searching, DIALOG, AUSTRALIS, library automation systems, telecommunications and installing systems. The Institute facilities, including the microcomputer laboratory, provided excellent opportunities for hands-on experience.

Participants included school, public and special librarians, and all found the course offered them a great deal in evaluating the

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