Technology parks WA style

In your report (Vol. 9 (5), p.6) of the award to Linda Luther to study the provision of an information service to a technology park, you state 'to date available literature concentrates on the links between companies and academic staff, but does not comment on the role of the library.' This latter statement is patently incorrect.

In 1983, Bryan Kelman, then Information Retrieval Librarian at WAIT, was granted study leave to visit technology parks in Britain, Sweden and the USA. His report, of 107 pages, was published by WAIT Library in 1985. Subsequently he also undertook a major study on the information needs of industry in WA, and although this was not specifically aimed at technology parks it was motivated by the knowledge that the development of a technology park adjacent to the WAIT (now Curtin University) campus was underway. The results of that study were published in a preliminary, 'popular' short report, and a full report in 1986. I cannot say why Miss Luther should be unaware of this work, although one is always aware of the inadequacy of the bibliographic control of the documents of our own profession.

However it may be an appropriate time to comment upon our WA experience of an emerging technology park.While the initiative for a technology park adjacent to WAIT came from our then Director (Dr Watts) and Associate Director for Applied Science and Engineering (Dr de Laeter), the land involved is Crown land and in consequence the State Government took it upon itself to set up the managerial structures. Further, both the University of WA and Murdoch University made bids to get in on the act, and were given representation on the controlling committees.

Mr Kelman's work, and the strong interest of the WAIT library in the venture, were made known to the technology park authorities. Indeed we were consulted about what sort of space and facilities should be provided in the administration building. Subsequently there was some discussion between us and the two or three successive 'information officers', all non-librarians, appointed to deal with the information issues. To my present knowledge nothing has been achieved in the way of an ongoing information service to the industries that have established in the park. Although Curtin University library is within walking distance of the park, and we offer both general library facilities, and online services and document supply, on a commercial basis, we could as well be on the moon for all the custom we have attracted.

While this lack of development may seem to reflect Mr Kelman's findings on the relationships, or non-relationships, between academic libraries and technology parks in the UK and USA, the reason is not, as there, that our library has been disinterested. My personal view is that the difficulty lies in the bureaucratisation of the technology park management, whereby the control is in the hands of career public servants and senior academics, none of whom has any practical appreciation of either the problems of information provision, nor of the potential to aid innovative and emerging industries. While that is probably too simple an analysis, it may serve as a warning to Miss Luther not to expect to find too much positive interest overseas, nor to expect an open-arms welcome on her return. But I hope I may be proved wrong, and wish her the best of luck.

G. G. Allen
University Librarian
Curtin University of Technology

INDUSTRIAL NEWS

NSW Branch employment service

From 1 May 1988 the LAA NSW Branch employment service will be operated by Gail Robertson, the librarian at the Principal Registry, Federal Court of Australia.

The service will continue to operate in the same way and will maintain a list of people who are seeking employment in library or information positions in the Sydney metropolitan area. Prospective employers contacting the service will be put in touch with suitable applicants for their positions. This service is operated free of charge by the NSW Branch of the LAA.

Library staff wishing to register with the NSW Branch employment service or employers seeking staff may contact Gail on (02) 230 8236.

LINOS project

During the period 6 March to 5 April, the Learning and Information Needs of Schools (LINOS) project team visited the ACT and gathered information from a variety of interested parties. These included the Chairman of the Schools Council; senior staff from the ACT Schools Authority, National Catholic Education Commission, Catholic Education Office and National Council of Independent Schools as well as parents, students, ancilliary staff and teacher-librarians; the National Librarian and staff from the ACTLibrary Service; the Curriculum Development Centre; and academics.

Team members have also been following up on their visits to other states and analysing the documents collected.
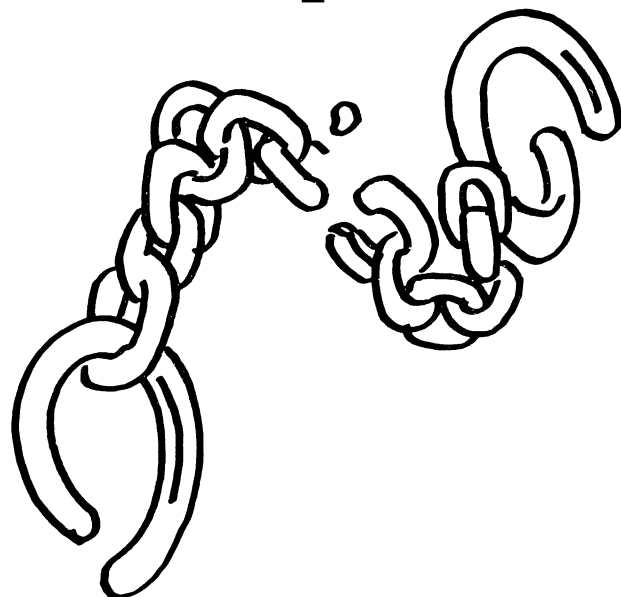
Local Government labour markets

The National Review of Local Government Labour Markets has produced a research paper 'Local Government in a changing Environment', which it is distributing for discussion. The paper covers topics such as local government functions and responsibilities; changing functions and responsibilities; current issues in organisation, management and staffing.

Copies of the paper are available from Louise Wilson at the National Review of Local Government Labour Markets, GPO Box 241E, Melbourne Vic 3001, (03) 669 3918.

Louise Lansley
Manager
Educational and Industrial Services