

that Allen does not know what he is talking about. It happens now, but at least the Australian copyright owner has legal redress if he wishes to take action. Once the market was deregulated, the Australian copyright owner would have no redress at all.

The case put by the publishers is that the present arrangements allow books to carry the same recommended retail price, which is not a net price as in UK, whether it is on sale in Sydney or Marble Bar. It allows them to hold in Australia a much wider range of stock than would be possible in a deregulated market, and to supply retailers on a sale or return basis. This allows many booksellers to carry stock which they could not afford to hold if they had no opportunity to return unsold copies. A deregulated market would undermine these arrangements, with large chain stores like Myers importing large quantities of best-selling titles directly from overseas and taking away many of the most profitable lines from ordinary booksellers.

The present system, say the publishers, allows them to invest the income from publishing overseas titles into publishing books by Australian authors. Without that income they would not have the capital with which to foster new authors or publish many books of Australian interest with a limited readership. Many specialist services, such as those offered to schools by educational suppliers, would cease to be viable if part of their market was undermined by cheap imports from overseas.

Australian publishers also point out that there are unusually high costs in servicing the Australian market, with a comparatively small population scattered across a large continent. Their market power in purchasing Australian titles is limited because of the small quantity involved, and the cost of advertising and distribution is quite different from that in densely populated countries like Britain and the USA.

One does not have to accept all of the publishers' arguments before having some concern about complete deregulation. Obviously most industries would like to have market protection of the kind offered by territorial copyright. At the same time there are sufficient differences between publishing for the Australian market and publishing for large overseas markets to warrant some caution before throwing the market open. The proposals of the Copyright Law Review Committee substantially, but in my view overcautiously, adopted in the 'Bowen proposals' represent a middle way between the present overprotected market and the

complete deregulation proposed by the Prices Surveillance Authority. In the classic phrase, they avoid throwing out the baby with the bathwater.

It is fine for new right economic theorists to pontificate about the values of the free market. But realists have to weigh the possible impact of lofty theory on Australian business and the Australian public.

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Linos report

Dear Editor,

I have recently been informed that the Australian Library and Information Association intends to publish the report of the former project of National Significance, the Learning and Information Needs of Schools (LINOS). Your Association's intention to publish the report is of concern to the Education Department of South Australia for a number of reasons.

Although this Department was represented on the Project Steering Committee, the final version has not been seen either by the Steering Committee member or by the Head of School Libraries. It is our belief that, while parts of the version which we have are useful, the philosophical stance of the document is at odds with the South Australian view with regard to the role of school libraries and resources in student learning and curriculum development. The document cannot be seen, therefore, as representative of the national viewpoint.

Because the initial purpose of the Project was to produce a publication to replace *Books and beyond*, the previous national guidelines, it would seem likely that the new publication will assume the status of *Books and beyond*. Since the current document apparently has neither the support nor the endorsement of the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET), its credibility nationally must be highly questionable.

Our specific concerns are:

- Throughout the document, there is no evidence of an understanding of the necessity for students to be effective users of information. The document focuses on the information resource themselves, not on the process of accessing the information contained in the resources.
- There is very little about the role of technology in accessing information.
- Meeting the needs of students with special needs is almost entirely ignored.

- In the proposed evaluation procedures, there is no attempt to assess the effect of the library services on student learning. The dangerous conclusion to be drawn is that the two are unrelated.

I urge your Association to reconsider the decision to publish the LINOS report. In the document's present form, the Education Department of South Australia is unable to endorse it or support its use by schools in this state.

Garth Boomer
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Education Dept of SA

A question of standards?

Between its Sydney and Melbourne Information Centres, Standards Australia answers over 200 enquiries a day from exporters, importers, manufacturers and consumers who need to know about Standards relating to a wide range of products and services. Standards Australia holds an up-to-date reference collection, the only one of its kind in Australia, of Standards and related publications from Australian, International and overseas organisations. Staffed by professional librarians, the Information Centres provide an expert specialist reference service to clients. This service, handled mostly by telephone, is available to both members of Standards Australia as well as to the general public.

Standards Australia is the point in Australia through which Standards from any of the 65 countries in the International Standards Organisation Network (ISONET) are available for purchase.

A recent acquisition is Perinorm — a CD-ROM database which has resulted from the cooperative efforts of the British (BSI) German (DIN) and French (AFNOR) national Standards organisations. This database, up-dated monthly, brings together bibliographic information on the current Standards from these three countries as well as International and European Standards.

For assistance with Standards enquiries contact your closest Standards Australia Information Centre: Sydney — (02) 963 4263, Melbourne — (03) 347 7690.

