

The ABN column

This new column will appear at intervals and hopefully not too infrequently. It gives a chance for all *inCite* readers to keep in touch with ABN developments.



Linda Groom

ABN users who attended meetings in 1990 to comment on the statement of requirements for a redeveloped ABN may be wondering what has happened to the redevelopment proposal. The preferred redevelopment proposal involves a project of 3 to 4 years to replace completely ABN's hardware and software. The proposal is now about to enter the RFI (Request for Information) stage. Though this does not mean the redevelopment proposal has been endorsed by the National Library, it does mean that the library wants to proceed to the next stage of discovering whether the systems marketplace can offer a solution to all or part of ABN's requirements.

The RFI is scheduled to be issued in July. It will be intentionally broad, covering suppliers to database management and text retrieval systems, as well as suppliers of library automation packages which could be enhanced to run on a network.

The National Library expects to spend around 2 months receiving and evaluating

responses to the RFI, so look for a progress report in this column around October.

Whether ABN should make a profit, and what to do with the money if it did, have always been controversial questions. The National Library Council has recently weighed in on the debate. The Council, which consists of prominent Australians appointed by the Governor-General, passed the following motion on 19 April:

Council reaffirms that the Australian Bibliographic Network makes an essential contribution to the efficiency and effectiveness of its member libraries and the Australian library system as a whole; and that, in operating a network built up through the contributions of its member libraries, the library should not seek to generate revenue in excess of that seen to cover the full costs of operation, including retained earnings for service development.

ABN users have been voting with their keyboards in support of one of ABN's recent enhancements, the 'clone' command. 'Clone' allows a user to make a copy of an existing ABN record for, say, a 2nd edition and turn it into a new record for the 3rd edition with a minimum of keystrokes. Statistics show that cloning is now a popular passtime in many Australian libraries, especially in law libraries where works like Archbold's *Pleading, evidence and practice in criminal cases* are now in their 43rd edition. In March and April around 6500 records were cloned each month, pushing the ABN original cataloguing statistics up past the 16 000 mark.

ABN has always had some conspicuous non-members. The National Library was delighted to receive an application for Full-service membership from one of them, Technilib, in May. Technilib's community language data will make an extremely valuable contribution to the National Bibliographic Database, and will be a boon to many of the public libraries which use ABN as a source of copy cataloguing. The ABN Office hopes to load Technilib's retrospective records for non-English language material during 1992.

Linda Groom

Exchange sought

Canadian couple, both librarians, would like to contact same in Australia, with a view to jobs and house exchange, located in Kingston, Ontario. John is the Chief Librarian of Gananoque Public Library, 18 km east of Kingston and Barb is the Reference Librarian at St Lawrence Community College, Kingston.

Duration is (probably) from September 1991 or January 1992 for one year (negotiable). *Both* would like to exchange jobs, either with an Australian couple or two librarians who wish to exchange together, and would prefer to be in an urban area of WA, NSW, or Vic.

For more information contact: John and Barb Love, 193 Indian Road, Kingston, Ontario, CANADA K7M 1T3, telephone 613 542 3063 or Janice Shea, 24 Radbourn Street, Marmion, WA 6020, telephone (09) 448 4443 (for curriculum vitae, details, or discussion).

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