

# The Source

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## Demystifying micros

So many models. So much software. So many salespeople. So many opinions and so much conflicting advice. And so many textbooks and manuals. What makes Kerry Webb and Christine Frey's long-awaited *Microcomputers in Australian libraries* special, however, is not just that it is written by Australians for Australian conditions, but that it is so well written.

The authors provide clear, concise and readable accounts of the basics of microcomputers, general and library-specific software and applications in a varied selection of Australian institutions, drawing on Webb's wealth of experience in systems at the National Library of Australia and Frey's special interest and expertise in micros in libraries. The case studies presented are especially useful, ranging from an integrated system in a high school to a Standard Address Number database at the NLA, and include contact names and phone numbers.

In an appendix the authors answer 100 common questions uncommonly well, shedding welcome light on buses, boots, bits, bytes, backups, bauds, boards and bugs. Another appendix gives you a framework for justifying, selecting and implementing a system. Yet another appendix lists library management software suppliers and user groups, and there is a mercifully small and well-annotated bibliography. This is a terrific book for people dipping their toes in the shallow end, floundering round in the deep or merely watching from the poolside. Kerry Webb and Christine Frey's *Microcomputers in Australian libraries* was published in 1991 by ALIA Press and costs \$29.95. (ISBN 0 86804 455 5)

## Political potpourri

'He'll double-cross that bridge when he comes to it', Oscar Levant once said of a politician. 'In Mexico an air conditioner is called a politician because it makes a lot of noise but doesn't work very well', wrote Len Deighton. 'I heard his library burned down and that both books were destroyed — and one of them hadn't even been coloured in yet' — thus spake our own John Dawkins of a political colleague. Low opinions mingle with noble sentiments in Daniel B Baker's *Political quotations*, which Gale published in 1990.

In this lively collection, Baker presents 4014 quotations from antiquity to 1989, from Aristotle's 'political animal' to the memorable (and much-rehearsed) one-liners and quips of more recent political

phenomena. Baker has drawn from 14 books of quotations, and has added many quotations along the way, cross-checking contradictions and picking up misquotes.

There is very full coverage of American figures, as one would expect, but the catholicity of his sources ensures reasonable coverage of world figures, including a sprinkling of Aussies. Entries are arranged under broad categories, if you are looking for a quotation on a particular theme, and there are subject and author indexes. The author index also tells you a little about the author: dates, occupations and offices held — very useful. Seductive and entertaining, and, on my sampling, pretty reliable.

*Political quotations*, edited by Daniel B Baker, was published by Gale Research in 1990. It is available locally from Corporate Impacts Publications, 95 Rose Street, Chippendale, NSW 2008 at \$89 plus \$5.50 postage and handling. (ISBN 0 8103 4920 5)

## Cast of thousands

Who was Brutus Jones, and why did people give him their loose change? What was Ivan Denisovich's last name? Who was Holly Golightly's best friend? What was Lucky Jim's surname? These are a few of the questions which *Characters in 20th-century literature* will answer with ease.

Containing synopses of over 600 works by the 'major' novelists, dramatists and short story writers who are now living or have died since 1899, this work also provides comments of themes and styles, and on the context in which the characters operate. Two hundred and fifty writers are represented, drawn from all over the world. It's obviously a very select group — Australians included are Thomas Keneally and Christina Stead. Entries are arranged alphabetically by author, and include references to further reading, and there are the title and character indexes necessary to make this a useful, if rather expensive, addition to your reference shelf.

Laurie Lanzen Harris' *Characters in 20th-century literature* was published in 1990 by Gale Research. Review copy supplied by Corporate Impacts Publications, 95 Rose Street, Chippendale, NSW 2008, from whom copies are available at \$105 plus \$5.50. (ISBN 0 8103 1847 4)

## Marginal notes

*The great deeds of heroic women*, by Maurice Saxby, is a worthy companion to his *The great deeds of superheroes*. The Greek myths, the Bible, folktales of many nations, Saints and holy women: familiar figures rub shoulders with the neglected in these 25 tales, beautifully illustrated by Robert Ingpen. Published by Millennium Books in 1990 at \$26.95. (ISBN 0 85574 983 0)

*The decisive factor: air power doctrine* by H N Wrigley is an edited and annotated collection of essays and notes by 'one of

Australia's greatest airmen' who was also our first authoritative commentator on air power. Fascinating insights into military theory and practice from 1915 to about 1928, including some items in Wrigley's own meticulous hand. Published by AGPS Press in 1990, at \$24.95. (ISBN 0 644 12770 8)

*Two-way Aboriginal schooling* by Stephen Harris explores the concept of 'bicultural schooling' in Aboriginal communities, in which Aboriginal language and culture are taught as legitimate ends in themselves, not merely as a means to more effective learning of English. Published in 1990 by Aboriginal Studies Press, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, PO Box 553, Canberra, ACT 2601, at \$19.95. (ISBN 0 85575 218 1)

*Guide to specification writing* by Bryan Kalms tells you how to make sure you get what you want right from the start, defining functional and performance requirements. Prepared by the Department of Administrative Services Purchasing Reform Group, this is set to become the standard specification manual for Australia. Full of good practice, helpful hints (like archiving specifications in a library, and avoiding acronyms), crisply written and well-indexed. Published by AGPS Press in 1990 at \$19.95. (ISBN 0 644 12013 4)

*Parish registers in Australia* by Nick Vine Hall is already in a second edition, after only 1 year. A remarkable 107 per cent larger than its predecessor, the 1990 edition is a tribute to Vine Hall and his small army of contacts around the country. Copies are available from the compiler at 25 Mills Street, Middle Park, Vic 3206, for \$16.95 plus \$3 postage within Australia. (ISBN 0 9597208 4 7)

*Index to journal articles on Australian history for 1983* appeared in 1990. In his introduction, voluntary indexer Victor Crittenden explains how this valuable index has fallen behind schedule because of lack of funds and looks forward to happier times: the National Centre for Australian Studies at Monash hopes to produce a cumulated 1788-1988 index. Meantime get this for the usual excellent coverage of 723 historical articles and 488 book reviews published during 1983. Available from Australian Reference Publications, PO Box 9, North Balwyn, Vic 3104, at \$22.50 plus \$3.25 postage. (ISBN 0 9587876 3 8)

*New books from Indonesia* is published every 2 months by the library of the Australian National University. Titles, imprints, prices and synopses of commercial Indonesian publications received by the library. Useful selection of ILL too. \$20 per annum, from the library (Asia and Pacific Division), Australian National University, GPO Box 4, Canberra, ACT 2601. (No ISSN) ■