

Direct Line



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ALIA Executive Director

The third issue of *inCite* for 1992 will focus upon the broad aspects of the national education and training agenda.

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THE THIRD issue of *inCite* for 1992 will focus upon the broad aspects of the national education and training agenda, and the role which the Association has mapped out for itself within that agenda. This agenda is spoken of as though it has been clearly prescribed, and that everyone is aware of each of its strategies, and what is to happen next. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

This agenda is being unfolded before our eyes; with new pieces being added as a need is recognised by the Federal Government and its advisers. This approach makes it extremely difficult for the Association to plan for the future. But what we do hope to achieve is an understanding of the current situation, and how this fits with the Association's objectives, and then to take appropriate action, knowing full well that a new piece of the jigsaw is about to unfold.

Positioning the Association in this evolving education and training agenda is proving a challenge for the National Office staff and the Board of Education. Articles in this issue aim to identify the overall role of the Association in the national education and training agenda, and the scope of activities and programs being implemented in support of this role.

Future system of payments for inter-library loans

In November 1990 representatives of the library sector attended a meeting to consider future systems of payments for inter-library loans.

There was general agreement that developments in information technology, and communications networks in particular, should enable a more efficient system of payments to be developed for inter-library loans.

However, it was also recognised that there were gaps in our knowledge of the volume of inter-library loans, the proportion of that traffic which uses electronic mail, and the proportion of that traffic which is charged for. In addition, little was known about the costs of the potential alternatives available.

The November meeting invited the Association, the National Library of Australia and the State Library of NSW to explore the possible use of ABN and ILANET transaction data as the basis for the settlement of inter-library loan payments, and to investigate costs and benefits of this approach and to prepare proposals for the consideration of ALIA and ACLIS.

A Steering Group, comprising Warwick Cathro (ABN), Janette Wright (ILANET) and Sue Kosse (ALIA), and more recently Tom Cochrane (ACLIS), have developed a strategy to meet this objective.

A report on the size of inter-library loans traffic, its use of ABN and ILANET, and the proportion of this traffic which was charged for, was commissioned by the Steering Group. The results of this report encouraged the Steering Group to proceed to the next two stages of the investigation:

- firstly, to identify and calculate the costs to libraries of using the present inter-library loans voucher system, and
- secondly, to identify the available software and hardware required to take data from electronic networks such as ABN and ILANET to facilitate payments for inter-library loans.

The National Library of Australia, the State Library of NSW and the Queensland University of Technology Library are currently seeking information regarding the internal library costs of using the voucher system. The Steering Group has developed a specification for a consultant to provide a report on the computer options available. A consultant is soon to be engaged and will report by the end of May 1992. ACLIS has agreed to finance the work of the consultant.

Each of these reports will then be considered by the Steering Group, which will develop a final report for the consideration of both the Association and ACLIS.

It is expected that this report will be completed in June or July 1992.

The Association and ACLIS will then need to determine jointly what follow-up action, if any, is required.

If you would like further information on any aspect of this project, please contact me at the National Office.

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