



David J Jones

So many questions, so many answers

Who can take care of a snake lurking on your verandah? How can you get rid of some toxic chemicals in your garden shed? Where is the nearest childcare centre? Where can you get free legal advice? Just a few of the millions of questions which get asked, and answered, by community information workers across Australia every year. How do you train people to provide such information services? What are the principles and practices of which they will need to be aware.

A number of community information organisations in South Australia have worked together to produce a valuable training resource, entitled *Ask me another*. Consisting of a 25-minute video, showing community information in action in a local centre, a council office and in public library setting, and a learning guide and reference manual, this is a thorough treatment of the subject.

It can be used by individuals, working at their own pace, or by groups. Sections deal with different varieties of resources, from published directories to computerised databases, networking and cooperation (keys to successful community information provision), and methods of handling enquiries—including the importance of active listening, body language and being non-judgemental. The program is based on South Australian resources, but the principles and practices, and the framework for learning, has much wider relevance.

Ask me another: A community information training program was developed by a working group representing the Community Information Support Service of South Australia, the Community Infor-

mation Networkers of SA, the Chief Librarians Association of SA, the State Library of SA, and the Centre for Applied Learning Systems at the Adelaide College of TAFE. Despite its committee origins, it shows no camel-like propensities, and is highly recommended.

Copies have been distributed to all public libraries and community information services in SA. Other interested parties may obtain copies of the kit from Marie Manning at the State Library of South Australia, GPO Box 419, Adelaide SA 5001. It costs \$95 plus \$6 postage (no ISBN).

Soap, sitcoms and the rest

It is now almost thirty years since *Homicide* was first screened. Was there Australian television drama before then? What landmarks have there been since? What nuggets amid the dross?

We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Albert Moran, not only for his intestinal fortitude, in preparing *Moran's guide to Australian TV series*, which was published by the Australian Film, Television and Radio School earlier this year. Not only does Moran provide the titles, credits, dates and an outline of the subject matter of hundreds of series of Australian soaps, dramas, children's shows and situation comedies—on every network since 1956—but he also provides a readable commentary on each series. How it developed, what was its appeal or lack of appeal, how to place it in the pantheon of Australian media history?

Moran also includes a well-turned essay on the development of Australian television, a chronology of the series described, typical program schedules from 1957 to 1993 and a good index. Recommended.

...a new serial from Haworth Press which 'will endeavour to combat traditional biases against popular culture held by many academics as well as library users and students.'

Albert Moran's *Moran's guide to Australian TV series* was published by the Australian Film, Television and Radio School in 1993, and costs \$24.95. It is available direct from AFTRS Direct Sales, and is distributed to the trade by Allen and Unwin. (ISBN 0 642 18462 3).

Welcome reappearance

The mass of official documentation residing in the Archives Office of New South Wales becomes even more readily accessible with the publication of the long-awaited second edition of the *Concise guide to the State Archives of New South Wales*. Issued on microfiche, with an accompanying printed introductory handbook, the new edition of the *Concise guide* replaces a 1970 edition and a number of subsequent supplements.

Not only does the handbook provide a key to the contents of the 22 fiche, but it also gives some vital clues to the searcher: which government body would have been responsible for a particular function during a particular period? What professional registration bodies were there in the 1920s for example? The *Concise guide to the State Archives of New South Wales*, which is number 13 in the series *Guide to State Archives of New South Wales*, are available from the AONSW, 2 Globe Street, Sydney NSW 2000. The price is \$45, plus \$7.50 postage (NSW, VIC and ACT), \$10 postage (other states). (ISSN 0155-1272; ISBN 0 7240 8198 4).

Life after Dawkins

The amalgamation of tertiary institutions posed some exquisite challenges for library managers. Not the least among them was the challenge of marrying technical services sys-

- tems which may never have been designed to link with each other, and other equally stimulating issues.

At a seminar held in Melbourne just over a year ago, fourteen speakers tackled the implications of amalgamation for technical services functions, outlining the cases for and against centralising, and provided six illuminating case studies. Other speakers addressed the impact of changes on staff, on reader services and on users, and spoke from the view point of library suppliers.

Papers from the seminar, edited by John Thawley and Philip G Kent, have now been published under the title *Amalgamations and the centralisation of technical services: profit or loss*, by (wait for it) ALIA University, College and Research Libraries Section (Victorian Group), Cataloguing Section (Victorian Group) and Acquisitions Section. Copies are available from ALIA National Office at \$38 (\$25 to ALIA members), postage \$3 (ISBN 086804 494 6).

Borrowers at home and abroad

What are the essential data when requesting an interlibrary loan? What performance measure would be useful for interlibrary loan transactions? What is Ask*IEEE? Is there a model of good interlibrary loan procedure?

Don't panic. Reach for *Australian guide to interlending and document delivery*, which has recently been published by the Australian Council of Libraries and Information Services (ACLIS).

Intended as a procedure manual for anyone whose work involves interlending or document supply, this well-designed 65-page work will be a welcome addition to the tools of the trade in libraries large and small. It is well-written, and very clearly set out, with diagrams as well as words, showing procedures. International and Australia-wide interlending and document delivery are both covered.

Australian guide to interlending and document delivery was prepared for ACLIS by Glenn Sanders. Copies are available from Sales and Distribution at the National Library of Australia for \$15 (\$10 for ACLIS) (ISBN 1 8753 51 116).

Software, hard decisions

There are over 140 known multi-function library management systems for library managers to choose from. Not to mention several hundred computer software packages for specific purposes. To help you find your way around this treasure trove, Laurel A Clyde has produced *Computer applications in libraries: a directory of systems and software*, which was published earlier this year by ALIA Thorpe.

Clyde provides an overview of automated library systems, and identifies a number of trends in her introduction, and then gives directory-type information on the systems and software. Who supplies it? What hardware is needed? How much does it cost? How widespread is it? Needless to say, with over 600 to choose from, Clyde does not herself attempt to

evaluate the packages, but provides references to relevant articles. This is a valuable contribution to the international literature, and will be invaluable to anyone trying to sort the sheep from the goats in an otherwise rather unruly flock.

Laurel A Clyde's *Computer applications in libraries* was published in 1993 by ALIA Thorpe. It is in the very promising *Technology in the Library* series, and costs \$30 9 (ISBN 1 875 589 33 3).

Haworth down under


Australian and New Zealand experience with serials, including electronic journals, is the focus of two monographs which were relatively recently published by our prolific friends at Haworth Press.

The electronic journal: the future of serials-based information, edited by Brian Cook, is based upon a seminar held at Bond University in May 1992. It tackles a whole range of issues, from the rights of authors and publishers, to the economic benefits of electronic versus print subscriptions. It was published by Haworth in 1993 and costs US\$24.95 hardback, US\$19.95 soft. It appeared simultaneously as *Australian and New Zealand journal of serials librarianship*, (vol.3 n° 2). (ISBN 1 56024 453 4).

Serials management in Australia and New Zealand: profile of excellence, edited by Toby Burrows and Philip G Kent, presents a series of papers on the way serials are licked into shape in a range of academic, research and special libraries around Australia and New Zealand. It was published by Haworth in 1993 and costs US\$29.95 hardback, US\$23.95 soft, and appeared simultaneously as *Australian and New Zealand journal of serials librarianship*, vol. 3 n°s. 3 and 4). (ISBN 1 56024 452 6). ■

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