

Fantastic futures: virtual, and in the flesh

This is the first of regular features which will appear in *inCite* on behalf of the RAISS (Reference and Information Services Section) of ALIA. It replaces the *References* newsletter and contributions from RAISS members and others are encouraged. We would like to include items of interest to reference and information services personnel throughout Australia, whether they be short articles, summaries of new books or articles or reports on RAISS events. Contributions for 1994/5 can be forwarded to Karen Karykis, National President, c/- Telecom Australia National Information Resource Centre, Locked Bag 1730, Adelaide 5800 or fax (08) 231 3837 or email kkarykis@sconthf2.telecom.com.au.

The National and South Australian sections of RAISS have been busy organising the National RAISS Conference which will be held in Adelaide from 12-15 September, 1995, at the Ramada Grand, a 5-star hotel complex on the seafront. The theme of the conference will be *Fantastic futures*, with the subtitle being 'virtual and in the flesh'. Whilst we are looking at new technologies (the virtual component), we are also keen to develop the theme that the root of 'good' reference work ultimately lies with the human touch (hence the 'in the flesh' component), especially in the areas of effective communications, teaching, organisation and retrieval, and marketing skills. The conference program is almost complete and will consist of a number of keynote, plenary and some parallel sessions, a trade exhibition and demonstrations to showcase important new products and technologies. Optional tours to Technology Park, the MFP, Barossa Valley wineries and

the Adelaide Hills will also be offered.

One of the two overseas keynote speakers is Dr Michael Spring, an Associate Professor in the Department of Information Science at the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His research involves the application of technology to the workplace and he is the author of numerous books and articles in the areas of virtual reality, text and document processing, human-computer interaction and information technology standardisation. He is giving two addresses at the conference. His opening keynote address is titled, *Exploring the notion of a virtual library* and deals with the question of what is meant by the terms digital library and virtual library. To quote Dr Spring:

'It looks at evolution of library services in the information age and at the technologies of virtual reality. Particular attention is paid to the implications of digital versus analog information stores. Selected current efforts in the library community to increase access to electronic information resources via such efforts as wide area information servers are reviewed. The potential of new tools being developed to navigate electronic networks are explored in terms of how they contribute to reference and information services.'

Profiles of other speakers will follow in forthcoming *inCites* and again we would encourage contributions to this column from other RAISS state groups and individuals in order to make this a good communication vehicle for reference issues and the results of activities around Australia. ■

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