

EdNA launched in Queensland

Jillian Dellit, Open Learning Technology Corporation

The Commonwealth launch of the EdNA Directory Service took place on 28 November and was presided over by senator Christopher Ellison at Mitchelton High School in Brisbane. Each state and territory held separate launches throughout the first two weeks of December. The launches were the culmination of months of work by education systems to raise awareness of the service, and encourage teachers and students to submit sites for inclusion in the directory.

The idea of an on-line education network

Initiated by the Commonwealth Government in 1995, EdNA is an idea, a belief that together educators can do things that are bigger than the efforts of separate units.

In 1996, all Australian ministers of education, employment, training and youth affairs affirmed their investment in EdNA as a network for fostering collaboration and co-operation between key education stakeholders in the use of the Internet as a tool for the delivery of education in Australia. All Australian education sectors, schools (government and non-government), vocational education and training, higher education and adult community education have been involved.

The EdNA Directory Service

The visible sign of the EdNA collaboration is the EdNA Directory Service. This Internet site at <http://www.edna.edu.au> provides information and services to the whole education community. It is the Australian education aisle in the Internet supermarket.

EdNA presents an Australian perspective for educators and trainers, students, parents and industry. In the period between April and November 1997, the number of evaluated sites linked to the directory rose from 1000 to more than 5000. In the same period, there were more than two million hits to the site.

From the EdNA Directory Service schools can choose on-line resources to support any area of the curriculum, knowing that they have been selected by Australian teachers for use with Australian students; vocational education and training students and teachers can find course information on-line, as well as accessing the increasing number of courses that can be delivered via the Internet; university students can locate research, making many links to industry. All students and teachers can find a discussion group to talk to others with similar study interests, and continue learning, after formal education.

The place of librarianship in EdNA

Information and information services management is at the heart of the EdNA Directory Service. EdNA has developed a metadata standard (to be found on the site) based on the Dublin Core, and the schools sector in particular, has done a lot of work on content and management standards. Metadata on EdNA has attracted some attention both in Australia and overseas.

At the classification end, there is significant liaison between the Open Learning Technology Corporation, the EdNA Schools Advisory Group and the Curriculum Corporation in relation to SCIS subject headings, EdNA metadata and related cataloguing issues.

Of particular interest is the way, as EdNA has evolved, that the collaborative structures have drawn, not only on all sectors of education, but on a range of expertise in the decision making and consultative processes. The Open Learning Technology Corporation Board and the committees which advise that Board, contain a mix of Information Technology, curriculum, administrative and information management expertise quite unique in national education bodies.

The potential

EdNA presents exciting possibilities for the Australian education community. It was conceived and articulated before the announcement by Tony Blair's government of the National Grid for Learning and the British library network. These British initiatives incorporate telecommunications and ISP's which EdNA does not.

The Australian education community has been involved in and committed to the conception and development of EdNA to an extraordinary degree. There is no other country in the world where all sectors of education and all governments, have collaborated in developing an on-line framework. In an on-line global society, with an on-line economy, the Australian education community can use EdNA to present a coherent image to the world, to leverage services, gain synergies and achieve economies. Australian students gain more transparent services and faster access to them.

Find out more

We expect EdNA to continue to grow. You can visit the service at <http://www.edna.edu.au>, provide us with feedback, register for weekly e-mail alerts to 'What's new' and suggested sites. ■

Community networking

A major conference on low-cost electronic community networking will be held in Melbourne in February 1998.

The Third Communities Networking/Networking Communities Conference is being hosted by the Victorian Association of Community Information Centres and the Victoria University of Technology. It is being held on 27-28 February at the St Albans Campus of the Victoria University of Technology.

Dale Spender, consultant, educator, and author of *Nattering on the net*, and Randy Stoecker from the University of Toledo, Ohio, a community networking action researcher and social theorist will present the keynote addresses.

The conference will cover prac-

tical and theoretical issues in electronic community networking; and an on-going electronic forum on the world wide web will be established as part of the conference.

Themes to be explored include gender and electronic networking; training for electronic access; the role of public libraries in electronic networking; government, community and business partnerships; content regulation and management of community networks; and policy, planning, research and evaluation issues.

Further details are available from the Victorian Association of Community Information Centres, 4/136 Exhibition Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000; phone 03 9650 5322; fax 03 9650 5817; e-mail vacic@vicnet.net.au ■