

# ALIANet developments

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There is rarely a dull moment on ALIANet. New pages, new e-lists, and loads of feedback from all over the world keep the site vibrant, newsworthy, and a strong focus for communication amongst members. Looking at the logs of browser activity, it is pretty clear that our ALIAappointments section invokes the most interest. Consequently, we have updated this section of ALIANet to offer a great deal more. We have added links to most of the significant jobsearch websites, and with a review of each. We were tempted to rate them with stars, but decided to hold off for now. The difficulty we have had is that the sites change, as does much of the content. We are keen to have feedback on our developments in this area — it is one key area of ALIANet that can be expanded greatly with your input.

## Need to communicate with peers?

ALIANet is not just a website. In the previous months we have been methodically adding new electronic lists to serve various special interest groups, and in the coming few months — once we have ironed out a few operational difficulties — a greater proliferation of lists will be offered (the operational difficulties refer

to the need to update components of our mail server software to cope with various new forms of junk e-mail — or spamming). Our list server software has been upgraded too, and now automates much of the work that either the list administrator (me) or the list owner previously had to do (such as removing people from lists if their e-mail address changed).

## How to get your webpages posted onto ALIANet

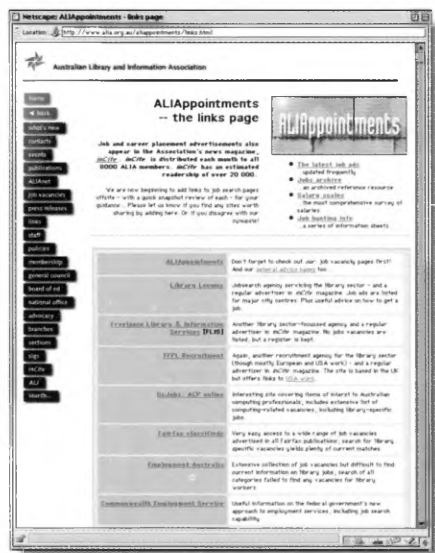
We are often asked what it takes to add pages to ALIANet, and the simple answer is 'very little'. The simplest way of placing content onto ALIANet is to send an e-mail to updates@alia.org.au with an indication of who you are, who you represent, and how we can get in touch with you if we need to talk things through — and don't forget to add in what you want posted! We don't need html'ed work (in fact, it is better if it is plain text most of the time) — just the words you want to add. We can guide you through the steps involved if you wish to make a regular contribution, or just a single page. To make

life even simpler, we also offer a web-based form on ALIANet for posting of updates and new information [http://www.alia.org.au/update.html].

A few of the more html-literate contributors have asked why it is that they cannot add formatted pages directly, without intervention from the ALIANet web team. Indeed, we once offered this option in the early days of ALIANet [back in 1995] but have since discovered that it is not only impractical in the longer term, but is also a severe security risk. Even the most enthusiastic divisions of ALIA that publish often and regularly on ALIANet are well aware of the difficulty involved in having to appoint a new ALIANet liaison officer every time the committee changes, and from this end keeping track of who is responsible across the entire site was an almost impossible task. Apart from the security issues involved, the level of co-ordination required between divisions and across ALIANet is so high that we have discovered, the hard way, that the work is better co-ordinated from a permanent and localised position. However, we trust that all contributors will understand the need to co-ordinate activities across the site, and that they can see the benefits in being able to focus on content alone. This process is obviously having a significant effect on ALIANet — the feedback we get is universally extremely positive, a testament to those who contribute so much to the content.

## Justice Department 1, Bill Gates 0

A great deal has been made in the US and elsewhere about the recent decision by the US Department of Justice to file both federal and state antitrust lawsuits against Microsoft. Even president Bill Clinton has weighed in with a comment that the antitrust case, citing an abuse of power as maker of the popular Windows operating system, could have a significant impact on the US economy. Bearing in mind that the last major antitrust case took over thirteen years to resolve (with the government dropping out of the race due to fatigue), this one is likely to extend well beyond the expected release of at least three or four iterations of Windows. Microsoft may not even be a key player in computing at all by this time, if the activities of IBM (and others) in a similar timespan are taken into consideration. This case will not be a landmark case (they have been and gone), but will certainly be shaped into something much larger by the media and those who wish to support or deny Bill Gates' drive to dominate ninety per cent of the industry. Microsoft's economic muscle (as foreshadowed by Clinton) may well make this case much bigger than Ben Hur (or the break-up of Standard Oil Company more than 80 years ago). ■



ALIAappointments on the web is leaping into new territory with the inclusion of links to and reviews of the major jobsearch websites, and in the coming months we anticipate adding even more: tips and tricks for job seekers, how to negotiate an employment contract, and all about workplace agreements...

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