

Stakeholders discuss future of digital objects

The future of hand-held digital objects such as CD-ROMs and floppy disks is rapidly emerging as a major national challenge for collecting institutions charged with preserving their contents for future generations.

Capturing, preserving, and providing access to the often significant cultural content being published in these new media is presenting many challenges. These issues must be addressed and overcome if we are to save a permanent record of 'the Australian story' being published in these formats.

A recent two-day national consultative meeting, convened in Canberra by the National Library of Australia, brought together major stakeholders, including publishers, content providers, and the state and national libraries, to examine, for the first time, key principles relating to the management of hand-held digital publications.

The ground-breaking forum also sought to determine responsibilities

and establish mechanisms to facilitate on-going co-operation and collaboration relating to the long-term preservation of digital publications in physical formats.

During the conference, the forty industry and library representatives discussed a broad range of issues including legal and voluntary deposit, copyright, access, licensing, collection development, cataloguing, and preservation paths.

Key elements of the plan to develop strategies for the long-term preservation of access to significant Australian publications on CD-ROM and disk were discussed. These elements included: a national policy on the



Forty publishers, content providers, state and national librarians met in Canberra to discuss hand-held digital publications

management of Australian publications on CD-ROM and floppy disk; and a standard agreement covering conditions of use for all deposit libraries.

Meeting reports, presentations and survey results are available on the National Library of Australia's website at <http://www.nla.gov.au/niac/meetings/physical.html> ■

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