

Making news around Australia

Selected reprints from newspapers and magazines in recent months

ACT company involved in major database deal

The Canberra Times, 8 November, by Nick Gentle

tSA Consulting, combined with a United States software developer, will supply web-enabled software to the National Library of Australia. Under the agreement the National Library will use Blue Angel Technologies' MetaStar Enterprise software suite to provide standards-based metadata repository and search services.

Censors are getting on the line

The Age (Melbourne) 2 November, by Jenny Sinclair

The Australian Broadcasting Authority has set up an electronic complaints system in preparation for the new internet censorship regime. Jon Porter, assistant manager for online content at the ABA, emphasised that the new regime would be complaints-based and the ABA would not initiate action against offensive sites. The ABA is also investigating how to deal with material hosted overseas.

Obituaries — Charles Housden

The Age (Melbourne), 3 November, by Graeme Archer

Charles Housden began his career in education as a junior teacher, but his enthusiasm in establishing a school library led to forty years' fruitful association with school libraries. Housden was appointed to the Brunswick Primary School in 1940. In addition to his classroom teaching responsibilities, he was given the opportunity to establish a library at the school. His enthusiasm for the task led him to undertake formal library training.

He became the Education Department's school library service officer in 1951 and held the position until 1968. During his time as school library service officer he established close co-operation with the Melbourne Teachers College in training teacher-librarians, he helped create a career structure for teacher-librarians, a course of study for libraries in primary schools was introduced, and a form of central cataloguing of a school's collection became a reality.

On his retirement he continued his association with school libraries through his involvement with the Commonwealth's primary and secondary

school library committees as a consultant.

Copyright owners warned on 'serious loss'

The Financial Review, 1 November, by Annabel Hepworth

Australia's copyright owners could suffer a 'serious loss' because libraries are increasingly entrepreneurial and have become rivals to publishers and distributors, according to a discussion paper written by the Australian Copyright Council. The report warns that the potential for copyright owners to create markets for digitised versions of their material would be jeopardised if libraries and educational institutions were given special exceptions in the Copyright Act.

\$900m bill feared from copyright laws

The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 October, by Ardyn Bernoth

The Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee has received legal advice that the proposed changes to the copyright laws would leave Australia's universities open to claims for payment each time a student browses copyright material online. The committee estimates that the universities would each be liable for between \$20 and \$30 million a year in copyright payments.

The committee is urging the government to change the copyright legislation so that the fair dealing provisions relating to hard copies of material are extended to material online.

Commission calls for net nasty law review

The Australian, 25 October, by Tim Blue

According to a recently released report from the Productivity Commission, the controls on internet content planned by the Federal Government should be reviewed after two years of operation. Commenting on widespread concerns about the effect of the controls, the report said it was too early to judge whether they would prove efficient and cost-effective in achieving the government's aims.

Northern Regional Library sets the standards in NSW

Moree Champion, 22 October

Students from the Purrimaibahn Aboriginal unit from the Newcastle TAFE

recently visited the Northern Regional Library as they say it has one of the most extensive family research units in New South Wales. The students are studying Family and Community research. At the end of their visit they donated copies of their family histories to already extensive range in the library.

Kerri Books US study trip

Community News (Mooney Valley) 26 October, by Ainslie Gowan

Kerri Pleydell, children's services librarian at Flemington library was awarded the Margery C Ramsay Scholarship. The award consists of a \$15 000 grant which Kerri will use for a study tour of American public libraries. Her trip, set for early 2000, will focus on how American libraries market and promote their services to encourage public awareness and education, and will coincide with the American Public Library Conference and American National Library Week.

Uproar over secrecy on ban lists

The Age (Melbourne), 26 October

The latest draft of the Internet Industry Association's code of conduct suggests that lists of banned websites would be used to censor Australian internet access. The lists would be used by filtering software companies to block sites, but users and ISPs would not know what sites were shut out.

According to the code, ISPs would have to offer customers filtering software or filtered services — however the code does not say that filtering software of services must be used.

Rural students face rocky academic path, forum told

The Canberra Times, 28 October, Aban Contractor

Students in rural areas are facing an uphill academic battle with inexperienced teachers, limited subject choices, and fewer resources than their city counterparts. Director of Charles Sturt University's Centre for Rural Social Research, Margaret Alston, told delegates to a regional forum that declining populations had seen the withdrawal of vital services, including schools.

Dr Alston said that rural schools had high drop-out rates, taught fewer subjects, and had limited library resources and little access to information technology. ■