

## Your voice

### ALIA's e-publishing agenda

How interesting that I have chosen the approach of the ANZAC day weekend, a time when many of us steep ourselves in Australian military history to honour those who have represented us in times of conflict, to comment on ALIA president Imogen Garner's Frontline: 'To print or not to print ...' (*inCite*, April 2005). How are our diggers' stories preserved? Why is it that many of us seek to learn about our past and how is it that we do it? We go to the written word, preserved on paper in diaries, published tomes, archives and records.

What has this to do with ALIA? Lots. Where is our history? Who will know about us in the years to come if we do not preserve our past by taking care of it now? Tell it to someone who cares, you say? Well, I care and so should many of you. And so will some historians of the future. I have been asking the Association about our occasional papers. I have been asking the Association to consider an occasional release of a paper-based handbook to record the changes in the Association's business (its Constitution, its by-laws, its executive, its awardees, its policies).

The e-domain is moving fast and unless the Association takes considerable care and time to preserve the pages of history it has

on ALIANet, much of it will be lost as we move from e-platform to e-platform. The ease and alacrity with which the library profession has embraced e-publishing have been astounding. In the case of e-subscriptions, much of the decision making has been based on the actions of others rather than the state and university libraries about which Imogen writes. We are being asked if we should move to e-copies of ALJ and AARL. We are informed that they are 'high-quality scholarly print publications, both editorially and in terms of production'. I beg to differ when it comes to academic acceptance. Neither is on the much-touted Thomson ISI journal listings for capture of citations in the academic world, even though each title might be well produced. Yet many of the papers in them make a valuable contribution to Australian library and information scholarship.

We are being asked if we should produce both aliaNEWS (e-copy) and *inCite* (hard copy) as if they contain the same information, because they are resource-intensive. I find them both useful for different reasons and I particularly appreciate *inCite* because of the photos, snippets, often thoughtful comment, advertisements

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## Omission

In the April 2005 issue of *inCite* we failed to acknowledge the author of an article entitled 'A uniquely Australian thesaurus' on page 15.

The item was submitted by Allison Kingscote, Australian Pictorial Thesaurus co-ordinator at the State Library of New South Wales. ■

*Who will know about us in the years to come if we do not preserve our past by taking care of it now?*

## Search APAIS through Libraries Australia

Are you a small\* library? Is an APAIS subscription beyond your budget? Now you can search APAIS through Libraries Australia and pay only for the searches you do. APAIS is the Australian Public Affairs Information Service, an online subject index to scholarly articles published in Australia since 1978 in the social sciences and humanities.

The National Library and RMIT Publishing have recently signed an agreement offering small libraries the opportunity to search APAIS through Libraries Australia and pay on a per search basis.

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\*A "small library" means small libraries located in Australia, which use Libraries Australia. The term "small library" does not include academic libraries, state libraries, the National Library of Australia or any of the libraries who are part of NSW.Net.

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and product news. I don't want to scroll through pages of .pdf for this. Plus, I read it in bed.

The annual report (enclosed with same *inCite*) shows that 'Other publishing' (including AARL?) is in deficit. *inCite* is also in deficit (although it does recoup considerable costs) and ALJ makes a profit — which is wonderful. The bottom line is that the Board may decide to stop some of the existing publishing efforts (including *inCite*) on the basis of these losses. It gets more complex: ALIANet and governance and other matters also run large deficits. Will these be stopped? I hope not.

I urge you to seriously consider what you expect from your Association in the way of publications and how they might represent us in the years to come. Please let ALIA know.

**Kerry Smith, FALIA**

*ALIA is deluding itself if it thinks that the readers of ALJ, AARL and conference papers etc want to read them on a computer screen.*

### More on ALIA publishing...

The president's article in the April *inCite* on future publication policy raises important questions. I exclude from what follows the more ephemeral 'newsy' media such as *aliaNEWS*, for which an electronic format seems quite appropriate.

Publication of professional journals and conference proceedings, etc has two rather different purposes — informing members and others of new developments, new thoughts, new theories in our profession; and recording these matters for the benefit and use of future readers. Immediacy and history are both well served by print on paper, but I suggest that neither is as well served by electronic publication alone.

ALIA is deluding itself if it thinks that the readers of ALJ, AARL and conference papers etc want to read them on a computer screen. These are, by definition, the meaty, serious articles which people want to read at their leisure in a comfortable chair perhaps with a cool drink at hand. Most will simply stop reading these sources if they are only offered electronically. Yes, electronic articles can be printed out for reading in more congenial ways, but is that really a responsible use of scarce resources? And what is to become of members and others who lack ready access to the internet?

Electronic publishing is in its infancy and is presently reasonably under control and accessible. Will that be the case a century from now? Printed publications will be here in 100, 200 and more years — who knows what will have happened by then to today's electronically created works? There seems to me to be a real possibility that if it is not cost-effective or profitable to keep them, they will not be kept. Our eggs should not all be entrusted to the electronic basket.

I argue, therefore, for a continuation of the printed versions of our professional publications of record, particularly ALJ, AARL and conference proceedings, with parallel publication in electronic form for those who prefer this format.

Finally, a comment on the present policy of issuing the electronic versions of ALJ and AARL six months after the print publications. If the library one relies on has cancelled the print versions, its collection, once up-to-date, is now at least six months behind. Farewell immediacy, hello frustration and annoyance. Why aren't the two versions available simultaneously?

**Neil A Radford, FALIA**

*Your letters on any issue of relevance to the library and information sector are welcomed.*

*All letters should be addressed to the inCite editor and may be e-mailed to [incite@alia.org.au](mailto:incite@alia.org.au), or faxed to 02 6282 2249, or posted to: Your voice, ALIA, PO Box 6335, Kingston 2604. Please include your name and postal address with your letter or e-mail.*

*Letters will be accepted for publication until the 18th of the month.*

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Australian  
Library and  
Information  
Association

## ALIA's Ray Choate scholarship

Nominations are now being called  
for the following premier awards of the  
Australian Library and Information Association

### Ray Choate Scholarship

The Ray Choate Scholarship is a biennial award which enables the recipient to investigate a particular aspect of reference or information services that will lead to improved practice in the area. The research topic should relate to the Objects of the Association.

Applicants are required to be financial members of ALIA.  
This award is self-nominated.

### Nomination forms

Nomination forms and further information:

<http://alia.org.au/awards/>

ALIA National Office, PO Box 6335, Kingston 2604  
[awards@alia.org.au](mailto:awards@alia.org.au) 02 6215 8218

**Nominations close 31 July 2005**