



## BOOK REVIEWS

**AUSLOAN**, Australian Inter-Library Loans Manual. A joint publication of the Reference Interest Group/Interloans Working Party and the Library Association of Australia. ISBN 0 86804 016 9 \$15 (\$10 to LAA members)

Along with other librarians, staff in Fisher Library, University of Sydney, were asked late in 1981 to comment on Draft No. 3 of the publication which was launched at LAA22. It is gratifying to note that our suggestions have been included. To consult with colleagues is a wise move when embarking on a manual intended for practitioners in a wide range of differing work situations.

Manuals of this type are more usually in-house documents containing working procedures pertaining to the situation in a specific place. Where applicable they incorporate information from and about other institutions and generally are of little or no use to anyone outside the system for which they were intended. They are seldom up-to-date!

The first chapter reproduces the complete statement of the revised AACOBS Australian Inter-Library Loan Code, February 1982. In spite of the previous AACOBS code, anyone who has been involved in Inter-Library Loans services is aware of the enormous differences that exist between libraries, firstly in interpreting policies and secondly in the application of those policies.

To attempt to produce guidelines which will standardise these variations is indeed a formidable task. The compilers have successfully avoided the particular in favour of the general. At the time of printing, random checks of the information revealed that it was both accurate and up-to-date.

However, by the very nature of the information, a large amount of it is subject to change and herein lies the real problem for the compilers: to produce a manual introducing general Australia-wide procedures to staff working in specific libraries, with varying procedures and to ensure that the information remains up-to-date. I would support an assumed but unstated aim of the compilers that the publication is intended as a replacement for a large portion of what previously would have been a local product.

The introduction includes a definition of an Inter-Library Loan and from that beginning one assumes that the manual is intended for staff who are totally unfamiliar with Inter-Library Loans systems.

I have no doubts that in collecting, collating and producing in a logical and concise manner basic information regarding location tools, telex-operating instructions, and record-keeping among other procedures, together with clear guidelines as to response times for requests, how urgent is urgent, copyright and other matters which are necessary for the system to operate effectively that the compilers have done us a great service, not only for the staff for whom it is basically intended but also for managers who will

no longer need to produce and collate this information themselves.

Despite the difficulty of guaranteeing that the information will remain up-to-date, especially in an area of our profession about to undergo policy changes, I expect that this publication will come to be regarded as an essential working tool in the majority of libraries in Australia and among our overseas users.

*Marea Terry*

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