



Kerry Webb

## Looking ahead ...

Last year at this time, I ventured into some prophecy about what 1996 may hold. If you're really interested in how I scored, you can hunt through your old copies of *inCite*, or maybe check them out on the ALIA web site, where they'll be archived. As usual with such efforts, I got some right and some wrong, and with some others, well the jury is still out.

So what about 1997? It's probably not worth trying to make specific predictions, mostly because things happen so quickly. We are seeing that the Net has become such a part of the scenery that we don't much notice when a URL appears in an ad or on a can of soft drink. But does that mean that we don't have to do anything more about it?

Remember that for many Australians, the Internet is still something that they only read about (or studiously ignore). Most people have not used the Internet, and this is also the case for many library workers. We still have the opportunity to introduce the community to the Internet and let them know what it can do for them, by establishing public access terminals in our libraries, by making sure that our collections feature useful books on the subject, by arranging public presentations about the Internet.

The theme for Australian Library week in 1997 is *Libraries — a web of information*. It's not just about the Net, but it does give us an opportunity to promote what we have to offer.

### New list on university issues

Uni-Issues is a new list, providing an open forum on the social, political and administrative forces impacting on Australian universities. To subscribe, send an e-mail message to [uni-issues-request@scholar.nepean.uws.edu.au](mailto:uni-issues-request@scholar.nepean.uws.edu.au) with subscribe uni-issues your-e-mail-address in the body of the message. Uni-issues will be only moderated to the extent that truly personally abusive and offensive flames might ban the poster from access to the list, and only if a complaint is made.

### ABA Chairman's speech

The Chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Authority, Peter Webb, gave a speech to the Electronic Commerce Australia National Conference in November. The speech and a subsequent press release titled 'International basis emerging for Internet regulation' has been put on the ABA's site, together with other documents relating to its investigation into the content of on-line services at <http://www.dca.gov.au/aba/invest.htm>.

### Committee transcripts on Hansard

The Federal Parliament's Hansard Internet service at <http://hansard.aph.gov.au> now includes House of Representatives Committee transcripts. They are being progressively added and will eventually provide final transcripts for committee hearings from the beginning of the 38th Parliament (30 April 1996).

This new service adds to the existing House of Representatives and Australian Senate Hansards, and transcripts of Senate Committees and some Joint Committees.

### A couple of notes on Netiquette

The recent appearance of a variant of the 'Good Times' virus reminds us that it's easy to try to be too helpful to our fellow Net-citizens. The 'Good Times' virus emerged a couple of years ago in an e-mail message that warned readers not to open e-mail bearing the subject 'Good Times' because it contained a virus that would erase your hard disk. It was of course a hoax, although it did spark a lot of discussion about whether it was possible to damage a disk merely by reading an e-mail message. Many people on receiving this warning assumed that it was genuine and sent it to their friends and to the lists that they subscribed to.

The new variant warns people about messages with 'Penpal Greetings' in the subject line. Like 'Good Times' it's a hoax and should be ignored. The problem is that new people are coming on to the Net all the time and they don't have the experience to know about this sort of thing. The simple rule to remember is that before you send a message on to other people (and especially to lists), whether it's about a virus, or a little boy who's dying and wants business cards, or a petition to save Sesame Street, spend a few minutes checking out whether it's genuine. A good way to do this is to search DejaNews for the subject line. If it's been around a while it will have been discussed and probably debunked on many newsgroups.

There is a site, maintained by a reputable organisation (the US Department of Energy) where you can check up on things like this. It's at <http://ciac.llnl.gov/ciac/CIACHoaxes.html>.

Another annoying occurrence on the Net is spam, which I wrote about in the December column. Opinions on how to deal with this vary — some say just ignore it, others prefer to try to hit back. For those who really do want to respond, there are packages available which do things like analyse the offending message, prepare a list of postmasters to whom you should complain, and prepare a generic or customised complaint. It seems like overkill to me, though.

On the subject of spam, the multinational firm which produces the wholesome meat product after which junk e-mail is named, has started taking action against the excessive use of the term, especially where publications are using a picture of a tin of Spam® in their copy. Be warned!

### Summary of Web search engines

Bob Bocher and Kay Ihlenfeldt presented a paper at the Wisconsin Educational Technology Conference in October about 'Effective use of web search engines'. The paper is online at <http://www.state.wi.us/>

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agencies/dpi/www/search.html. It contains a description of the concept of a search engine, searching tips, features to be found in search engines, a bibliography, and links to search engines. For giving instruction to new users or learning more about these facilities, it's highly recommended.

### Discussions on NetLinkS

The NetLinkS project has launched a program of discussions led by 'guest speakers', to take place in their discussion list — nls-forum. To join nls-forum, send a message to [mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk](mailto:mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk) with join nls-forum firstname lastname in the body of the message. All the discussions in this series will be archived at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/~np/>.

### Kiosks

If you're considering installing public kiosks for network access, or just want to find out more about them, have a look at <http://www.kioskstore.com/>. You'll find background information on the concept, information on the features of a good kiosk, and information on some of the products available.

### List on electronic journals

ARL-EJOURNAL is a discussion list concerned with all aspects of the management of electronic journals. Some of the issues to be addressed are archiving, pricing, indexing, security, privacy, and the changing concept of the 'journal'.

To join, send a message to [listproc@cni.org](mailto:listproc@cni.org) with subscribe arl-ejournal your-name in the body of the message. If you have any questions about the substance of, or policies related to, the postings on the list or requests for technical assistance, send them to Dru Mogge at [arlmggr@cni.org](mailto:arlmggr@cni.org).

### Conference on subject access

The Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign will be conducting the 34th Annual Clinic on Library Applications of Data Processing: 'Visualizing subject access for 21st century information resources' from 2-4 March 1997 at the Urbana-Champaign campus.

The Clinic will be examining topics such as what tools may help to improve subject access, what are the roles for more traditional library classification schemes and thesauri, new tools exist to improve browsing and searching, how will new systems handle multi-vocabulary systems. Details of the program are at <http://edfu.lis.uiuc.edu/dpc/index.html>.

### NPC presentations

The National Press Club in Canberra has recently featured presentations from Raymond J Lane, chief operating officer and president of Oracle Corporation and Scott McNealy, president of Sun Microsystems. These speakers represent companies which are major players in the information industry, and both have been promoters of the 'thin clients' or inexpensive computers which they hope will transform the computer industry, Oracle with its Network Computer and Sun with the JavaStation. Transcripts of these presentations can be found at <http://www.acs.org.au/president/1996/atm/npc/>.

### Buildings, books, and bytes

The Benton Foundation 'promotes public interest values and non-commercial services for the National Information Infrastructure through research and policy analysis, outreach to non-profits and foundations, and print, video, and online publishing' according to their Web site. At the request of the W K Kellogg Foundation, it has published the report 'Buildings, books, and bytes: libraries and communities in the digital age' and it is now available in HTML format from <http://www.benton.org/Kellogg/buildings.html>. A PDF version will be available soon.

The report details visions of the library of the future, based upon the views of library leaders, and upon the expectations of library users and the general public. Interestingly, the youngest group which was interviewed (aged 18-24) were the least enthusiastic supporters of a role for the library in the digital future. If this is so, we have a lot of bridges to build. ■

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The ALIA home pages and the ALIA web service, ALIANet, can be found at the following URL:  
<http://www.alia.org.au/>

**SAVE YOURSELF  
THE TROUBLE OF  
TYPING THESE  
URLS!**

This column (with associated hyperlinks) is on ALIANet, and has the URL of <http://www.alia.org.au/incite/www/>

[Please note that full-stops at the end of any URL or e-mail addresses, or underlines, appearing in *inCite* should NOT be used]

Contributions and suggestions for this column are always welcome. Please e-mail Kerry Webb at [kerry.webb@alianet.alia.org.au](mailto:kerry.webb@alianet.alia.org.au) or via the ALIA National Office, [incite@alia.org.au](mailto:incite@alia.org.au)



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## Just released...

### *Survey report of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in libraries*

In November 1995 as part of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment and career development strategy, a national survey was carried out to determine the level of employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the library and information sector.

The results of the survey provide an insight into the numbers of people employed, levels at which people are employed and qualifications.

The report is **free** and available on request from ALIA national office.  
Ph 06 285 1877 Fax 06 282 2249 URL <http://www.alia.org.au/publications/atsti/>

