

DOCUMENT DELIVERY SUMMIT

The highly successful document delivery meeting was held at the Australian National University on 19-20 November. Members will be aware that, following the presentation of the report of the LAA Working Party on Document Delivery in Australia, General Council had offered to host a conference of interested parties before the end of November 1984. In doing this the Council had quite deliberately decided not to take a position on the report itself, but to circulate it widely for comment.

Among those attending the meeting were members of the Australian Libraries & Information Council, representatives nominated by CAUL, ALCAE, AACOBS, the Association of Parliamentary Librarians in Australasia, and

the supply of all classes of material and was not restricted to photocopies of articles.

On the need to improve the existing system of document delivery the following resolutions were made:

1. Resolved that in the opinion of the meeting:
 - (a) the objective of improving document delivery among Australian librarians would be likely to be forwarded by the development of an effective central service from Canberra in which the National Library of Australia would play a major part;
 - (b) the service should be operated without prejudice to existing regional and/or city arrangements;



A bevy of well-known faces from the library world enjoying a break for sunshine from the Document Delivery Summit meeting.

the National Library of Australia. The representatives of those library services named in the Working Party's report had also been invited to attend, together with representative special and public librarians.

The meeting discussed fully the report of the LAA Working Party on Document Delivery, as well as considering other models such as the centralised and distributed models which were not considered viable by the Working Party, and concluded by passing some very positive resolutions which will enable the establishment of a successful document delivery system in Australia.

There was general agreement that the term 'document delivery' was defined as covering

(c) the service might have associated with it a central agency outside the National Library to operate, organise and monitor the service, and to provide the opportunity for users to effect it;

(d) similar arrangements to (c) might prove valuable also at the regional or city level.

2. Resolved that a detailed study should be undertaken as soon as possible into the detail and the feasibility of the proposals.

The meeting, having noted that ALIC was aware of the probable availability of funds for a CTEC evaluative studies grant to investigate the interlibrary lending system in Australia, then resolved that it be recommended to ALIC:

That the brief for such an investigation be in two stages:

Stage 1: 6 weeks

Stage 2: to be decided.

1. To determine the criteria for the ILL system which would meet the broad objective, namely to maximise the benefit of the total national resources at minimum cost.
2. To describe the existing ILL system.
3. To identify the weaknesses of the present system in meeting the broad objectives, particularly in relation to —
 - response time
 - cost/value
 - maximising existing resources
 - equity.
4. To describe and evaluate, including indicative costs, suggested alternative solutions to these remedies which should be investigated in Stage 2.
5. To present a report on the findings of Stage 1 to ALIC who would convene a consultative meeting to consider the report and make recommendations for Stage 2.

There were a number of principles on which the meeting was in general agreement:

1. That the present document delivery system will remain a basis used at least for the present to service a substantial percentage of day-to-day interlibrary loans.
2. That the developing improvement of the national data base and ABN as a location device should be recognised.
3. That the importance of systematic, rational development of the total national collection as held in the National Library and other libraries cannot be overemphasised. The National Library is the pivotal collection in such developments.
4. Publicly funded libraries which have significant resources have an obligation to have their holdings included in the national union list. Other libraries which wish to borrow documents through the document delivery system may also be expected to include their holdings.
5. That efficient document delivery operation requires both requesters to accept obligations as defined in an agreed ILL code and suppliers to accept obligations for prompt efficient responses.
6. That the autonomy of individual institutions with respect to document delivery operations must be respected.
7. That additional resources are needed to improve the document delivery system.
8. An efficient document delivery system requires funding based on its workload. It is likely that this will require supplementary government funding and/or fee for service payments based on cost recovery.

The meeting identified a number of problems in document delivery where immediate action might be possible, but did not have time to discuss these in detail. They are set out below.

Problem 1: Identification of items by borrowing libraries.

Suggested action: Positive education of requesting libraries by:

- (a) Better distribution of the AACOBS code, eg by lending libraries.
- (b) The LAA's education program should address libraries of this kind.
- (c) Big libraries should identify problem requesters and take steps to inform and assist them.
- (d) Sponsor libraries in regional or similar groups of inadequate libraries.
- (e) Subsidy of access (eg by differential pricing) for union lists.
- (f) Lending libraries may refuse requests.

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BOOKS IN THE BED

by Robin Robertson

Illustrated by Gordon Bain

Problem 2: Ability to identify a location where an item is held.

Suggested action:

- (a) Active encouragement of more union catalogue contributions from both ABN and non ABN libraries.
- (b) Libraries and the ABN network should give priority to the correction and upgrading of serial records in the ABN data base.
- (c) The feasibility of libraries identifying in ABN the standard of performance they offer should be investigated.

Problem 3: Speed of transmission of text.

Suggested action: Experiments of studies should be carried out, eg

- (a) by the University of Melbourne and its partners on telefax.
- (b) all cities on the performance of their local couriers.

Problem 4: Slow response to requests by suppliers.

Suggested action: Institutions should be asked for more precise statements identifying their own standards of performance.

Problem 5: Possible new technology solutions need investigation.

Suggested action:

- (a) An ILL module should go up on ABN.
- (b) The implications for ILL of even newer technology should be referred to the AACOBS/LAA Joint Committee on Information Technology.

Problem 6: Special relationship of state to public libraries.

Suggested action: Both state and public libraries should make public statements about what they believe to be their special responsibility towards a relationship with the departmental libraries of their jurisdiction.

State libraries should do the same with requests for public libraries, including a clear statement of their funding relationship. (eg is it covered by general subsidy?)

Problem 7: Need for a 'fast-track' system as well as 'normal'.

Suggested action: A special working party be set up to consider possible 'fast-track' systems. Eric Wainwright to organise this.

Problem 8: Do net lenders require greater funding support?

Suggested action: A positive attempt to redirect traffic may alleviate some problems.

Borrowers should be provided with information about which libraries are over-loaded, which are net lenders.

Borrowers should be encouraged to go to the smallest available library, eg choose a net borrower.

Problem 9: Does the whole system require greater subsidy?

Suggested action: Funding should not be provided from the recurrent costs of interlibrary loans for infrastructure, upgrading the system.

It is planned to distribute these resolutions and statements widely throughout the Australian library community.

A feasibility study on the establishment of an independent central agency to operate, organise and monitor the service will begin almost immediately.

Jenny Adams
Executive Director

I love reading in bed. In fact, it's the only way I can get to sleep. I must read something — a paragraph or a page — and then I drift into an intellectual slumber.

But, first, I must be comfortable. I climb into bed, switch on my bedside lamp, plump up my pillows, tuck the quilt under my chin and turn my electric blanket down to simmer.

Then I'm ready. The only thing missing is a good book . . . I can't find one I'm strong enough to read. For instance, I was reading *The Anzacs*, a fascinating book by Patsy Adam-Smith, but I had to stop because it was too heavy. Not in content, but in weight.

It was a quarto-size book with thick glossy pages and a bullet-proof cover. Every night I'd open it, lean it on my stomach and start reading. Somehow, I just couldn't relax . . . especially when the book was so heavy, I had to stiffen my abdominal muscles to prevent internal injuries.

open. Its natural state was closed and it simply refused to open, let alone stay open while I read it. So, I decided the binding was too rigid, and I loosened it. I bent both covers behind the spine, and the pages fell on to the bed, in random order. I lost the thread of the story.

I didn't do that to my next paperback. It didn't want to open either and I respected that. I would prise the cover ajar, and stop when I heard a splintering sound. This created a narrow opening between the pages, and admitted enough light for me to peer in and read the print on the outer edge of the page.

I was half-way through the book when it slipped out of my hands and snapped shut, leaving no trace of where I was up to. I read a few pages, trying to find the thread of the story, but again it was lost. However, I kept the book. It made an excellent mouse trap.



Because I wasn't very fit, I could only stiffen those muscles for a few minutes before they'd tire, and the book would gradually subside out of my view. I'd lift it in the air, and while it hovered uncertainly over the quilt, I'd read on, knowing that my arm muscles would soon turn to jelly, and again I'd have to lower the book on to my stomach . . . For a short time, I'd go to war with my Aussie comrades. They would march across Egypt carrying 50 kilo packs, putting me to shame, because I couldn't carry a two-kilo book while reading.

Finally I'd have to turn on my side, and rest the book on the mattress. I'd lean one cover on my arm so the book was open at a right-angle, and I could read the page facing me, but not the page facing the ceiling. Gradually, I lost the thread of the story.

The next book I tried to read was a paperback. It wasn't heavy. It just didn't want to

Next, I tried reading a newspaper. This caused some marital discord because my husband, who was also in bed, couldn't sleep in a newspaper tent. The rustling of pages woke him and when he opened his eyes he saw words like 'axe murderer', 'earthquake' and 'train strike', hanging like omens over his head.

This unsettled him so he went into the kitchen, and came back with a big crisp Granny Smith apple. He sat up in bed and ate it. Mercilessly. Every bite was a loud crack, like dry wood breaking. Every chew sounded like someone walking through very wet mud. Every swallow . . . no, I can't bring myself to tell you . . . it's enough that I heard every squelch, even with my fingers in my ears, and two pillows over my head.

And — you guessed it — I lost the thread of the story.