

Serials in the distributed national collection

A recent ACLIS project has provided fresh insights, here reported by Derek Whitehead

HOW MANY serial titles are held by one or more Australian libraries? How many of them are listed in the national bibliographic database on ABN? How much reliable information do we have about the collective national collection of serials?

The answers to these questions are, of course, not known. They may have come a little closer as a result of a recently-completed ACLIS research project. *Serials in the distributed national collection* is the report of the ACLIS Serials Practices Survey conducted by Derek Whitehead and Helen Garth of the State Library of Victoria. The research was mainly carried out in 1990 and 1991, and was substantially funded by a research grant from ACLIS.

The survey had its origins in concerns of the ACLIS Resources Subcommittee in Victoria that serials union lists were not adequately updated by libraries. The objectives of the survey were to:

- survey the practices of Australian libraries when acquiring, cancelling or changing serials holdings;
- identify current practices and the reasons for them;
- test support for various options to improve the notification of serials holdings; and
- recommend appropriate

procedures and changes.

The main goal of Australian libraries is to maximise the number of useful serials holdings recorded centrally (in union lists), and especially on the Australian Bibliographic Network (ABN).

The survey asked libraries about their serials practices, and tested their response to some possible ways of improving the situation. There were some surprising results. For example:

- only 31% of libraries consulted ABN online before cancelling a serial
- only 6% of libraries claimed to notify ABN of proposed changes to serials holdings
- only 26% of libraries routinely notify serials changes to ABN
- but 32% notify serials changes to other union lists, but only 6% to both
- under 50% believe that they have any serials listed on ABN
- about 30% have all or most of their current serials on ABN
- there was strong support for merging other union lists with ABN

The report makes a number of recommendations to ACLIS, chiefly relating to ABN. It has been sent to all ACLIS members and will be considered at the next meeting of the ACLIS National Council. In the meantime, copies are available from Margaret Henty at ACLIS. ■

Good news for the N. Territory

Further distance education links now forged between CSU and NTU

A FOUR-year agreement has been signed between the Dean of Business at Northern Territory University, Len H Greenwood, and the Dean of Science and Agriculture of CSU, Jim E Pratley, for the School of Information Studies to provide ten subjects from a choice of fifteen in librarianship from CSU's BA (Library and Information Science) for each student undertaking NTU's award Bachelor in Library and Information management. Teaching will be in distance education mode, with a part-time tutor employed by NTU, and NTU will meet all the costs of telerutorials and residential schools in

Darwin with CSU lecturers, as well as teaching costs for each student.

The agreement recognises that 'mutual cooperation between the two institutions is an efficient way in which courses relevant to the needs of the Northern Territory can be provided by using available distance education packages.'

An agreement is already in force for seven subjects in teacher librarianship to be provided in the distance education mode by the School of Information Studies to students in the Faculty of Education at NTU, as part of the B.Ed requirements.

Maxine Rochester ■



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