In the News

Training techniques

Sharron Hunter describes a valuable initiative by the Information Science Section

Last November a capacity crowd of 70 attended the *Training Techniques for Electronic Resources* seminar in the Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide. Dr Tony Holland from the School of Adult and Vocational Education at the University of Technology, Sydney was there to speak on specific techniques of training, through the good will and generosity of our NSW Information Science colleagues. The event had been run successfully by the NSW section earlier in the year, so it was a great opportunity for cooperation.

Tony is a senior lecturer in instructional design, assessment and computer based learning in the School of Adult Vocational Education at UTS. He asked: Who are your audience? What do you want them to be able to do? Where are you going to train the person? What methods are you going to employ? How?

Learner characteristics and learning styles were described with particular reference to adult learners. Fluid intelligence (the intelligence we use to solve puzzles, match shapes, determine numerical sequences) was compared with crystalline intelligence—the intelligence that utilises stored information and its manipulation. Anecdotes and illustrations were interspersed throughout to support specific research findings and also the theory that the average adult can only actively listen for 20 minutes before having a mental wander! (Did you know that our fluid intelligence peaks around 25 and diminishes each year after this?).

Tony encourages the use of multimedia in training to cater for different learning styles. He also discussed literacy and numeracy assumptions, concluding that you should keep the literacy levels at an acceptable level for the audience once you have ascertained what they know and what they need to know. Don't assume that everyone has good literacy skills just because they've reached tertiary education! And in the training arena, practice is the key to success.

At the end most people were satisfied with the seminar and felt that Information Literacy problems could benefit from the techniques described. Some were disappointed that the course didn't show them how to teach specific resources such as CD-ROM and AARNet. The Information Science Section intends to remedy this in 1994. A big thank you to all who laboured to make the seminar happen. There'll be more in '94. ∎

SWOT's wot gets you there in the end!

Linda Whitford

Linda Whitford is the first successful graduate of the ALIA *Marketing Strategies for Library and Information Agencies* self-education course.

As a Divisional Librarian at CSIRO in Sydney, Linda sounded out her reasons for doing the course. 'Our library had a low profile amongst the research and administrative staff, which I wanted to raise. I realised I had to gain a better understanding of how to market what we have to offer—to all staff.'

Linda cited the practical aspects of the strategic planning process as the most useful part of the course for her, and is currently putting this knowledge to good use. 'Going through the process of doing a SWOT analysis and receiving progressive feedback from the tutor was especially helpful,' she said.

And what is a 'SWOT analysis', you may ask? Enrol now for the *Marketing* course and find out! ∎

SilverPlatter and Aldis hit the road with Strategic Information Delivery Days

SilverPlatter Information, the leading publisher of CD-ROM databases, and its Australian distributor, Aldis, a division of Geac Computers, are touring Australia during the month of February.

Called *Strategic Information Delivery Days*, this road show will present SilverPlatter products and services to the Australian library community.

Senior managers from both SilverPlatter and Aldis will visit six major cities conducting daylong seminars. These sessions will cover WinSPIRS, SilverPlatter's search software for the Windows environment, new information products, new technology, networking policy and pricing and training services. The six cities on the tour include Perth on 8 February; 10 February in Adelaide; 14 February in Melbourne; 16 February in Canberra; 18 February in Sydney; and 21 February in Brisbane.

SilverPlatter was the first company established to solely concentrate on publishing and distributing CD-ROM products.

These programs will make its training sessions more widely accessible across all of Australia. For further information about these programs please contact: Aldis, A Division of Geac Computers Pty Ltd, 275 Normanby Road, Victoria 3207, Australia. Telephone (03) 647 9724, or fax them on (03) 647 9799. ∎