

ALIANet developments

Ivan Trundle, manager, systems and publishing

Last month I reported on the major makeover that the ALIANet webpages have undergone to provide members with a web-based service that offers even-greater ease-of-access. The process is still underway (and may take some months to completely revise all 3500 pages) and we are in the throes of adding some extra functionality to ALIANet on the way.

One initiative that will be more-fully developed in the near future is an online polling mechanism, which we have been tinkering with for some time, but should be completely operational in time for participation in the Online Australia Day scheduled for mid-November.

This polling mechanism will allow us to ask questions of visitors to ALIANet on a wide range of topics, and will offer visitors the opportunity to see the results of the poll instantly. These 'voter surveys' or 'online polls' are a way of gauging the pulse of the nation (or at least the pulse of visitors to ALIANet!). Look for links from our regular home page and the what's new pages.

An important initiative developed in the past month is aliaNEWS, an e-mail broadcast service that will provide subscribers with regular updates of a range of activities, from developments and initiatives from ALIA National Office, news of interest to the sector, to a regular snapshot of the additions to and updates of the various areas of the ALIA website.

Membership renewal forms, and all future membership application forms, will have a checkbox included to allow those with e-mail addresses to indicate if they would like to opt in or out of the aliaNEWS service. By default, all new members (and renewing members) with e-mail addresses will be automatically subscribed using the address shown on their membership form.

Those eager to subscribe now can do so in the normal manner, following instructions found in the e-list section of ALIANet's webpages. Note that this list, like all other public lists hosted by the ALIANet list server, is open to members of the public. ALIA membership is not a prerequisite to subscribe. ■

Howard's GST mandate

The prime minister, John Howard, has announced that he has a mandate to proceed with the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax following the return of the Coalition in last month's federal election.

ALIA distributed a 'Members' brief' about the GST's impact on the library and information sector with the October edition of *inCite*.

The brief stated that public library services and education library services are GST-free but they do not escape the GST net completely.

A GST will be charged on commercial activities such as photocopying but, due to the lack of detail the Government has officially issued about the GST, there is still some uncertainty about which activities will be included.

ALIA will continue to liaise with government ministers and members of parliament to highlight the impact a GST will have on the library and information sector.

In a reshuffle of portfolios and departments, Senator Richard Alston has retained the Ministry of Communications, the Information Economy and the Arts but has been given the extra responsibility of Information Technology — which was formerly with the Department of Finance and Administration. The new ministry will now be known as Communications, Information Technology and the Arts.

Other portfolios of relevance and interest to us include: John Anderson, Minister for Transport and Regional Services; Daryl Williams, Attorney-General; Dr David Kemp, the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs; Ian Macdonald, the Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government.

The opposition leader, Kim Beazley, has also announced his shadow ministry. It includes: Stephen Smith (Communications); Michael Lee (Education); Cheryl Kernot (Regional Development, Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Services); and Duncan Kerr (Arts). ■

Charting the information universe

13th National Cataloguing Conference

The 13th National Cataloguing Conference will be held in Brisbane from 13–15 October 1999. Under the theme, *Charting the information universe*, the conference will provide the opportunity to explore the role played by cataloguing, and other methods of information organisation, in contemporary resource discovery.

The theme implies that cataloguers and other information organisers are the map-makers of the information universe, who make possible the effective navigation and discovery of information resources.

A feature of the program will be a keynote presentation on the impact of technological change on cataloguing principles and practice, to be delivered by Tom Delsey, director general, corporate policy and communication, National Library of Canada. He will also deliver a paper on the application of a modelling technique to analyse the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules.

The primary audience will be those involved in library cataloguing. Attendance is also encouraged from those working in related fields, such as indexing, information systems, metadata creation, and records management.

The call for papers will be advertised shortly. Queries should be directed to the conference e-mail address: cat99@im.com.au.