

# 10<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary 1995-2005

## Was it only that long ago?

Ten years ago, a bunch of enthusiastic professionals put their heads together, called up a few favours, and ALIANet was born. Only ten years — a little over 3650 days — and how much do we remember of it?

Well, not much, if Tony Barry, Linda O'Brien and I can be believed. About the only thing that we can immediately agree on is that Ivan Trundle did all the work. He got a bit of help from the IT people at the University of Canberra and the National Library of Australia, but his was the hand on the tiller, and his was the face full of sea spray.

But certain things do stand out in our faulty memories: the debates at the ALIA ACT meetings about how much money we should continue to contribute towards buying modems and anything else that the operation may need; questions of whether those members conducting a business from an ALIANet account should pay more for the privilege; the pile of floppy disks (surely

you remember floppy disks!) comprising the package that you had to get to install the software (including Trumpet Winsock) on a Windows 3.11 system; the utter joy of finding that Windows 95 had support for dial-up networking built in; and the hunt for people who knew how to specify the connection for Macintoshes.

It has become easier in the last few years, although it is only a year or so since the last time I got a call from a member who was still using Windows 3.11 and wanted just a little help. But one thing has not changed — Ivan and his elves continue to work hard to keep the system going, especially with innovations like the Webmail service.

And guess what? There's just a little bit of the history of ALIANet on the internet, after all, at <http://web.archive.org/web/19970111021859/alia.org.au/alia/sponsors.html>.

*Kerry Webb*

### Keeping in touch, ALIA e-list style

When I first heard of the ALIANet service and the possibility of e-lists, I thought it would be a great opportunity for the then ALIA Victorian Branch to expand its communication mechanism.

There was also the added incentive of setting up an ALIAvic list, before NSW, as the (friendly) rivalry between Helen Mandl (as then Victorian Branch president) and I was just taking off.

ALIAvic began with the Branch executive and section office bearers as subscribers, and grew from there. At its peak the e-list had around 400 members, still far short of the actual ALIA Victoria membership but one thing I noted and got back from the country list members — Warnambool to Gippsland — was that they felt 'part' of the information process and got library news.

My initial hope was that the list would spark discussion and debate but it soon became apparent that it was just going to have to settle on being a 'here's the news according to Trevor' which seemed to have kept most (?) happy. Certainly the responses to the posts were more positive than negative — though the April Fools joke that I was to be appointed ALIA executive director following Virginia Walsh's departure increased list traffic and raised the ire of a few.

The other memorable list debate was the State Library of Victoria's reorganisation of VicNet. Other than that it was pretty quiet, with ALIANSW list often 'pinching' ALIAvic news. Of course there was the odd blooper when a response was sent to the entire list and not just to the intended recipient. The excuse from one member for not being able to attend the Branch Christmas Party caused considerable embarrassment!

I often wondered whether the 'free' access to ALIA information, via the list, meant people didn't bother joining and just took the information, so I ended up closing the list to non-members. The increased load of doing member checks finally convinced me to open it to all. I am still not sure if that open access is a plus or a minus as I am aware of one list in particular that has at least three times list members as it does have ALIA members.

However, as a quick and timely tool for dissemination of information, the ALIA e-lists have been a very useful tool. Happy 10th birthday ALIANet...

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