



SCIS

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connections

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OPAC Searching

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The Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) of a library system is critical to ensure the school community is able to quickly and easily locate the most appropriate resources for their needs.

The OPAC represents a huge investment in staff time, training, equipment, technical support and ongoing system requirement, networking and updating. It is pivotal in encouraging staff and students to maximise their use of the library, but is often under utilised and in some schools is little more than an inventory of the school's holdings. The automated library system should be managed to enhance the school's teaching and learning programs and to ensure that the online catalogue is integrated into the school's cross-curricular information skills and ICT programmes.

The OPAC serves as an index that is an access point to full-text information. In the same way students are taught how to use indexes, dictionaries and encyclopaedias, they need instruction on using the OPAC's index of several thousand resources. When using the OPAC, students may have difficulties with spelling; using appropriate search terms; modifying search strategies; displaying, sorting and interpreting the retrieved records; and understanding the meaning of system messages. Students need to know about database organisation and how to evaluate search results. Using increasingly sophisticated OPACs can be a frustrating experience that requires the assistance of library staff to ensure students and staff find the information they want.

Integration of the OPAC into the curriculum

While different OPACs require different search strategies, the successful search strategies that students use in schools are likely to be reused in public and/or tertiary libraries. Instruction on the use of the OPAC is just one step in database searching, and the skills learned will assist students when they search other databases. To ensure a natural integration of the library OPAC into the information skills program, library staff and teachers should design search activities in tandem with classroom assignments. The OPACs should be positioned close to the information desk to enable students and library staff to interact so that the dedicated search terminals are promoted as a first port of call.

Since the advent of automated library systems, library staff have adapted their traditional skills to an automated library environment and subsequently come to understand the importance of these systems in enhancing information literacy. The increasingly sophisticated OPAC has a crucial role to play in providing access to both school and Internet resources that promote literacy and reading in the curriculum. Teaching staff must be confident OPAC users if they are to teach their classes how to search for resources.

Some library staff may seldom use the OPAC because they enter the data and know the location of most resources. Some things that seem obvious to frequent library users need to be spelled out to others. The system may seem user-friendly and intuitive to some, but

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OPAC Searching (cont.)

not to others. To assist different groups, it is important to have instructions available on how to use the OPAC. These could be in several forms – online, a brochure, a search manual next to the OPAC, and formal lessons when the class is studying a research unit. Three levels of instructions are needed – one each for the students, teachers and library staff.

The search method instructions for students and staff should be intuitive and provide expected outcomes. They should avoid library jargon where possible and not be complicated by the mechanics of the library automation system. They should also be related to the research units that the class is studying. Teaching staff will need a higher level of instruction than students, and the instructions for the library staff should be detailed so they are able to assist all library users when other search strategies have failed. Library staff must keep up with developments and stay ahead of users in database searching.

Documenting your school's OPAC

Ask your software vendor if there is an OPAC manual available and check that it relates to the version of the system that you are using. Work through the manual and adapt it to suit your school. Check that the parameters or configuration you have set in your system enable the library user to search as intuitively as possible, for example which fields do keywords search? The parameters you set for the OPAC and for data entry affect OPAC searching. Before altering the parameters, the library staff entering the data need to understand how this data is displayed in the OPAC and how it is searched, so that it is configured in the most user-friendly way for OPAC users.

If your software vendor does not have a search manual available, contact one of the library listservs as someone may already have written one. If you decide to adapt search manuals, you may like to document how some of the following questions impact on searching the OPAC. The answers to the questions below will be dependent on the degree of modification and refinement of the initial search term your system supports and whether you have the ability to select a term(s) that match your

search from authority files. In other systems, the initial search term takes you directly to a list of hits.

System

- How do the command buttons (icons) work and what do they mean?
- Are there shortcut keys?
- How useful are the Help screens?
- How do you retrace the searches and return to the main menu?
- How are hits displayed, sorted and scrolled through?

Searching

- Do searches in each field truncate in the same way?
- How many letters need to be entered before the truncation occurs?
- Can you use variant spelling of words by using wildcards?
- How exact do searches have to be in different fields?
- Does using apostrophes, brackets, commas and hyphens make a difference to searches?
- How does the system cope with misspellings? Are searches bringing up seemingly unrelated hits?
- What is the difference between a keyword and subject search?
- Does the subject search word-by-word and term-by-term?
- Does your system have a subject reference structure which displays as the network of references of *see* and *see also* references and how does it work?
- Which fields does keyword search? Are keywords automatically and/or manually entered in the cataloguing module?
- What is the relationship between stopwords and keywords in your system?
- Are some stopwords customised?
- Can you search using one word, two words and phrases?
- What search limits and/or advanced searches does your system have?
- How does the Boolean search work?
- How are multimedia and virtual resources searched?
- Can borrowers locate the resources using the codes you have entered for different locations?

Library staff must have a detailed knowledge of how the library OPAC works and how the data entered is searched on the OPAC. This detailed knowledge of the OPAC and search strategies will enable library staff to involve students and staff in the research process in the library, as well as to suggest changes to software packages to library software vendors.

Although an OPAC is a powerful tool, the way it is used needs to be guided by the library staff who are the library's human, ultimate search engines. For a school library to be truly effective, the students and staff need to be motivated to want to search. Successful use of the OPAC is a skill that will enable students to become independent researchers and lifelong learners.

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Bruce Moir has worked as a secondary school teacher, a Polytechnic Librarian and in public libraries, including 5 years as a Children's and Young Adults' Librarian at Dunedin Public Library and 11 years as Mosgiel Public Librarian. He worked as a library automation software consultant before taking his current position as Library Adviser with Schools Services, Christchurch Service Centre, National Library of New Zealand.

In New Zealand, National Library School Services Library Advisers give schools free advice or assistance with developing and managing school libraries. Advisers offer regular courses and seminars to schools, including professional development courses for principals, teachers and library staff.

Check <http://www.natlib.govt.nz> for contact details and more information.

SCISWeb Handy Hints

1. Cached pages when accessing SCISWeb

SCIS Customer Support staff occasionally receive telephone calls from customers advising that they are having trouble accessing *SCISWeb*. This problem is often due to caching.

A cache is a temporary storage facility. Any files that are automatically requested by looking at a web page are stored on the hard disk in a cache subdirectory. When a user returns to a page that has been recently viewed, the browser can retrieve that page from the cache rather than the original server. This saves the user time and saves the network additional traffic. Computers include caches at several levels of operation on the local computer or on the school's network server.

Curriculum Corporation IT staff have provided a test site that can be used to determine if customers are actually viewing a cached page.

It can be located at <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/cgi-bin/wwwtest.cgi>. When this page is first accessed check that the date and time are current. Then click on *Check again*. If date and time have not changed then customers will know that they are accessing a cached page. They should follow the instructions located at <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/manuals/hints-before.htm> to clear the cache.

If customers continue to have a problem accessing *SCISWeb* they should ring SCIS Customer Support or speak to their local network support staff.

2. Selecting resources using SCIS OPAC

SCIS OPAC can be utilised as a selection tool to generate a list of resources that can be used for collection development purposes. There are several ways of doing these searches. If looking for non-fiction resources on a particular subject, library staff can use the following search strategy in the *SCIS OPAC*.

The example illustrates how to produce a list of non-fiction resources about racquet ball games.

Log onto *SCISWeb* and select *SCIS OPAC* option. On *Basic Search* screen select *Command* search from *In:* box. In *Find:* box, type in the Dewey number that relates to the chosen topic, for example "796.34". SCIS recommends customers select *Last 5 Years* or *Last 2 Years* in the *Limit by:* box.

This type of search will generate a list of current resources related to a very specific topic.

Once library staff have determined a subject area of the collection which needs development they should note the relevant Dewey classification number. This can be done by locating another similar resource in the collection or by checking a copy of Dewey Decimal Classification.

Connections Newsletter

Connections is a quarterly newsletter produced by the Schools Catalogue Information Service (SCIS), a business unit of Curriculum Corporation. SCIS is committed to publishing informative and useful material for the benefit of library staff in schools. Our focus is on helping library professionals keep abreast of the latest in information services and information technology relevant to school libraries.

Connections is distributed free of charge to all schools in Australia and New Zealand. All prices quoted in *Connections* are in Australian dollars.

Connections contributions

SCIS welcome submissions of work or articles to be published in future issues of *Connections*. Of interest are articles that may relate to the management of information or resource management in schools.

Length

Articles may range in length from 500 to 1500 words, however work outside these specifications will be considered.

Submissions

Contributions and correspondence are welcome and should be forwarded to scisinfo@curriculum.edu.au. Please include contact details.

Connections online

<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/connect/connect.htm>

Free SCISWeb Trial

The free trial will give library staff the opportunity to preview the *SCISWeb* product over two days of your choice. As part of this trial, you may download up to 20 catalogue records to import into the library system. You can also view catalogue records on the SCIS database by performing one of the many search options in *SCIS OPAC*.

This trial opportunity will enable you to experience the time saving capacity of downloading cataloguing records rather than doing original cataloguing.

To take advantage of this great offer, contact SCIS customer support:

Tel: 1800 337 405 (free call within Australia outside Melbourne metropolitan area), +61 3 9207 9600

Fax: 1800 337 405 (within Australia) +61 3 9639 1616 (international)

Email: scisinfo@curriculum.edu.au

Stick to the Subject!

With the recent release of *SCIS Subject Headings Fifth Edition*, many schools have already placed an order for a copy. Margaret Quill, a Teacher Librarian, explains why she believes it is an essential tool for all school libraries.

How did 11 September 2001 affect you? After the initial shock of that terrible day had subsided a little, library staff soon faced a barrage of requests for material relating to the terrorist attacks or the subsequent War on Terrorism. In the isolation of our own school library setting, it is not always easy to decide on the most appropriate subject heading – hence the value of utilising *SCIS Subject Headings*.

The primary purpose of identifying subjects is to assist our clients (whether teachers or students) to locate material pertinent to their requirements. In many school libraries budgetary and/or staffing constraints have led to situations where personnel with varied library qualifications (or none at all) have produced databases with a myriad of different entries for each topic. This can lead to a most frustrating experience for our clientele as they retrieve none or only a small selection of the material actually available. This lack of consistency is compounded if *see* and *see also* references have not been kept up to date, or as in the case of some libraries, none exist at all! Library staff usually end up searching the system for the client to try to track down the

elusive heading.

A typical example might include a student typing in the subject *Cars* and is rewarded with a list of multiple items because one particular cataloguer used the term *Cars*. However, access is denied to the other twenty items entered by a different person using the terms *Automobiles* or *Motor cars*. Had all the cataloguers used the recommended heading *Motor Vehicles* and inserted separate *see* references from *cars*, *automobiles* and *motor cars* to *Motor Vehicles* the student would have had access to all the available resources on this topic. In addition, a *see also* reference suggesting a check be made under the names of individual makes like Holden, Ford and Jaguar would ensure all access points were covered whether the student was seeking a general book on cars, or more specifically, a manual for a Ford Falcon.

Most library systems allow for searching on contents notes and while keyword can be a very useful search type, it does require second guessing the cataloguer's thoughts as to whether *War on Terrorism*, *U.S. conflict in Afghanistan* or *Coalition forces wage war on terrorism* was chosen as the entry. Unfortunately some school libraries have seen the ease of using any format for contents notes as a way of avoiding the rigour of selecting a standard subject heading, to the detriment of the user in the long term.

I can, however, hear many librarians saying 'But we don't like that particular heading and our clients would always expect to find it under a different heading'. Well that's fine! Using

locally preferred heading and directing clients with *see* and *see also* references has always been an available option and should be used when appropriate.

Accountability is demanded in all types of business, including education, and the productivity gains are obvious when cataloguing records are downloaded. This releases library staff for more productive pursuits such as literature enhancement and teaching information skills. In the same way for items that require original cataloguing, selecting the appropriate headings from *SCIS Subject Headings Fifth Edition* can save valuable time.

As most school libraries already take advantage of *SCISWeb* to download catalogue records from the SCIS database, it also makes sense to utilise *SCIS Authority Files* in order to maintain consistency.

SCIS Authority Files may be used to automatically generate the *see* and *see also* references depending on your library system, further enhancing the accuracy, consistency and increase the retrievability of resources from your database.

The ultimate aim of all school libraries is to provide the best possible service and an accurate and consistent catalogue will go a long way in ensuring that your clients' expectations are met and that library staff are providing a truly professional service.

Margaret Quill
Freelance Consultant Teacher Librarian

SCIS Subject Headings Fifth Edition

SCIS Subject Headings is a continually evolving list that reflects the curriculum needs of the Australasian primary and secondary school sector. The use of Australasian terminology is a strength of the list. Use of the headings ensures relevant results are obtained when searching school library catalogues, metadata repositories and bibliographic databases. Important features are:

- revised and enhanced subject headings specific to New Zealand and the Pacific islands
- a revised headings structure, with more scope and indexing notes
- terms and phrases updated to reflect changes in technology, trends and attitudes

- detailed guidelines on how to add more specific headings
- inclusion of more natural language terms reflecting contemporary searching strategies
- extensive cross referencing from non-allowed to allowed terms and from allowed terms to related terms for inclusion in library catalogues
- an extensive introduction and revised guidelines for cataloguing or indexing.

An order form is located at
<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/handouts/handouts.htm>.

1. Price increase SCISWeb and SCISCD subscriptions 2003

Information about SCIS subscriptions is available on our website. We wish to advise that there will be an increase in the subscription prices for 2003, which will be the first increase in five years. At this stage, we have not finalised arrangements for all government bulk subscriptions (NSW, SA, WA, NT) for 2003. As further information about subscriptions becomes available we will place a notice on our website at <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/subscrib.htm>.

Invoices will be despatched in October 2002. Payment is due within 30 days of receipt of the invoice. **However, if payment has not been received by the 7 February 2003 access to SCISWeb will not be available after that date.**

2. Access to SCISWeb

Access to *SCISWeb* will be available until 5 pm EST Friday 20 December 2002. The service will then become available again at 9 am EST on Monday 13 January 2003. You will be able to use the same password in the year 2003 as for 2002.

Contact SCIS to reset passwords that have been misplaced or are unknown.

Email: scisinfo@curriculum.edu.au,
Fax: 1300 780 545 (within Australia)
or +61 3 9639 1616 (international),
Tel: +61 3 9207 9600
or 1800 337 405 (free call within Australia outside Melbourne metropolitan area).

3. SCISCD for 2003

Customers subscribing to *SCISCD* will receive the first edition for 2003 by 14 February 2003 **if payment has been received by 7 February 2003. Edition 5, 2002 will expire on 28 February 2003 to coincide with the delivery of the first edition in 2003.**

4. Free websites on SCIS database

Over 3500 websites have been catalogued to date. Click on the *cat* icon on the *SCISWeb Message Centre* page to quickly download catalogue records for websites. This method will save significant time in locating suitable websites.

5. SCISWeb Manual

The *SCISWeb Manual* is particularly relevant for new users as it allows library staff to quickly learn how to use the product. It is also advisable for regular users of *SCISWeb* to access the manual to ensure that they are gaining maximum benefit from their use of the product. A print version of the manual can be purchased from SCIS for only \$15 (plus postage). It is also available free online.

6. SCIS Authority Files

Customers subscribing to *SCIS Authority Files* will receive the first edition for 2003 by 28 March 2003 if payment has been received by 7 February 2003. Invoices will be despatched in October 2002. Payment is due within 30 days of receipt of the invoice.

7. Tell us about your library competition

Thank you to all those people who submitted articles telling us about their school library. Congratulations to Tibooburra Outback School of the Air which is the next lucky winner of a \$100 voucher for Curriculum Corporation products. The winning article titled *Tibooburra Outback School of the Air* can be found on page 14.

8. Professional development

Many organisations in Australasia offer a variety of courses that are suitable for library staff. Many of these institutions also offer distance education programs. Details about courses can be located on our website at <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/links/libschl.htm>.

9. Thank you

SCIS would like to thank the many people we have been involved with during 2002:

- schools who have subscribed to SCIS in 2002. We look forward to your continued support next year
- government organisations who arrange bulk purchase of SCIS subscriptions
- cataloguing agencies who have endeavoured to catalogue resources as quickly as possible to ensure that the catalogue records are available when schools access the SCIS database
- library staff who have provided us with feedback by completing product surveys, contacting us by email, telephone or fax and attending conferences and SCIS demonstrations
- library automation system vendors who support SCIS products and work with us to ensure compatibility with our products.

10. Customer satisfaction survey

The SCIS team has included a customer satisfaction questionnaire with the all schools mailout (this edition of *Connections*). Please take a few minutes to fill in your answers and post back to SCIS. The information you provide will help us plan and prioritise improvements to the SCIS service and products.

11. Voyager upgrade

The Voyager system, which supports the SCIS database, will be upgraded. We are currently working on an upgrade schedule and when this is complete we will notify you in *What's new* on our Webster at <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/catalog/webupdat.htm>. It is likely that this will occur early in 2003.

Teaching and Learning at the State Library of Victoria

The State Library of Victoria is undergoing an exciting transformation as technology and learning become increasingly prevalent. While traditional spaces for quiet research, reading, reflection and learning will remain central to the State Library's ambitions, a new era of interactive, engaging and thought-provoking programs will abound.

The State Library of Victoria is an important *whole of life* resource that offers a wealth of material not only for the education sector but for all Victorians at all stages of life. One of the State Library's aims is to promote lifelong learning to all Victorians. Through the School Services Unit, the Library strives to work with school and education communities to provide greater access to the vast resources of the State Library collections.

Role of the School Services Unit

The School Services Unit has three key objectives:

- to develop education programs for the State Library of Victoria's permanent and touring exhibition galleries that will provide a dynamic and accessible resource for all Victorian schools
- to successfully deliver a range of resources through various mechanisms to the Victorian educational community
- to develop partnerships with internal and external sources that increase the access to State Library of Victoria collection materials.

The State Library of Victoria's School Services Unit has delivered educational services to the Victorian school community since 1991. School Services provides student programs and professional development for teachers and other educators, as well as authoritative advice for school resource centres. The Unit's aim is to provide exemplary programs and support materials and related high-quality, innovative professional development and training that promote the lifelong learning objectives of the State Library.

School Services currently offers the following services:

- library orientation programs aimed at senior secondary students
- exhibition-related programs designed for Years 3 to 10
- practical workshops targeted for middle years students
- professional development programs for teachers and librarians
- online resource delivery for all sectors of the school community.

The scope of School Services is set to expand dramatically. The State Library of Victoria is nearing the completion of a major building and redevelopment project in the heart of Melbourne. Several heritage buildings are being refurbished and new buildings constructed to provide Victorians with state-of-the-art library facilities and services that will enhance the access of all Victorians.

New exhibitions and programs

The State Library's major redevelopment project has been in progress for over ten years. The result will be the improvement of traditional library spaces and services as well as the development of new and exciting exhibitions and programs. Library users will benefit from more innovative displays with greater access and heightened interaction to collection material.

A highlight of the redevelopment will be three new exhibition galleries – one is already complete and two are due for completion in 2003 – that will house the treasures of the Library's vast collections. The great colonnade hall formerly known as Monash Hall has been transformed into an exhibition gallery. Opened in 2001, it is named the Keith Murdoch Gallery and is used for temporary exhibitions.

The other two exhibition spaces will be located in the upper levels of the Domed Reading Room, which will be opened in 2003 as the La Trobe Reading Room (Australiana). Known as the Dome Galleries, they will house two major exhibitions. *Views From the Dome: A History of Victoria* will tell the story of Victoria's past from a range of perspectives, while *Beyond Words: The Story of Books* will

examine the history of the book and the culture of reading. Drawing from the Library's unique collections, the galleries will showcase many of the treasures as well as some of the surprises to be found within the Library. These exhibitions, although designed with all Victorians in mind, will be of particular relevance to school groups and will relate specifically to both the CSF II and VCE. There is no doubt that they will attract great interest in the wider community, but also specifically within the education sector.

Experimedia

Experimedia, an exciting concept in content and information delivery due to open in 2003, has been conceived to take advantage of the technological opportunities of the 21st century. This new area will provide increased opportunities for students and teachers to interact with, and gain access to, the vast wealth of the Library's collections. While remaining a public space, Experimedia will be a hands-on interactive experience where new media technology can be used by school groups to access the Library's collections in innovative ways.

The education sector is a key target group for Experimedia and its associated resources, and School Services will provide a range of services within this space while assisting with the provision of multimedia programs, staffing and funding for this space. Experimedia will feature a games pod, a demonstration and experimental pod, digital art installations, a media wall, and an *in-residence* new media producer, all of which will contribute to making Experimedia an amazing resource not only for schools but for all Victorians.

Dome Education Studio

In addition to its activity in the shared spaces of the Library, School Services will have access to a single purpose-built studio near the permanent exhibitions in the La Trobe Reading Room. The Dome Education Studio will be devoted to practical and innovative educational programs for groups of no larger than 30 students. These sessions will be specifically related to the contents of the permanent exhibitions within the Dome, taking

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Island Journeys: A Quest for Inspiration

A joint conference of ASLA and CBCA

Wrest Point Convention Centre
Hobart, Tasmania

2–5 October 2003

<http://www.islandjourneys.com.au>

Have you been promising yourself an overseas journey recently? Why not make it one that will delight the intellect as well as the senses? Fly, sail or swim to Tasmania in October 2003 when Hobart will host the Island Journeys Conference. The Australian School Library Association (ASLA) and the Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) have combined to present a national conference so this truly will be one with something for everyone. The Tasmanian committee has been planning a program that will challenge delegates and be a lot of fun. The subtitle is a *Quest for inspiration*. By the time you depart our island, you will have been inspired by Tasmania's lovely scenery, our superb food and wine, and of course, by our stimulating program.

Your Island Journey

The journey can begin whenever you like as the dates have been chosen to suit school holidays for all states except Tasmania. Why not take advantage of the free car transport on the fast ferries and bring the family for your own island journey first? A pre-conference program is being planned to combine a journey to some of our literary landscapes including Chauncy Vale, Flinders Island, the Antarctic Division and Port Arthur. The accompanying authors will be a bonus.

The shape of the conference will reflect the interests of potential delegates. Four trails will be possible on your Island Journey. You can criss-cross paths (perhaps take a *road less travelled*), or follow a single trail. The choice is yours. The trails of Leading & Managing, Literacy, Technology & Teaching and Literature will all have inspiring speakers and workshops to stretch your boundaries and demonstrate best practice. As we confirm speakers, the website will enable you to customise an individual program.

Conference speakers

Speaking of speakers ... the committee is excited by the degree of interest shown by potential speakers. It seems that Tasmania's *edge of the worldness* has immense appeal. At this stage we can confirm Christina Doyle (Director, Learning Technologies, Kern County and Superintendent of Schools California) whose definition of information literacy is almost *the* definitive one. Fresh from the White House summit, both Keith Curry Lance (school libraries *do* make a difference, and he proved it with the Colorado Study) and Gary Hartzell (who knows everything there is to know about advocacy) are both keen to meet again in Hobart. Arrangements with these two luminaries are still in negotiation, but they are both eager to come and we will do everything we can to get them here. Joy McGregor, whose work on student thinking has been groundbreaking, will give the SCIS Oration. We are most grateful to Curriculum Corporation for the support they give to this Oration.

Lisa Forrest, Olympic swimmer and young adult author, will be here as will acclaimed British author Anthony Horowitz and noted illustrator Bob Graham. Negotiations with publishers are under way to bring as exciting an array of authors and illustrators as possible to Tasmania. We will be showcasing literature in a special event on Saturday morning called Saturday @ Salamanca where the buzz of our famous market will add a unique ambience to a dazzling display of authors and illustrators talking, conversing and presenting. You can see why we are excited. There are lots more names to add and the website will keep you informed as the acceptances are confirmed.

We can't let you leave our state without enjoying some of our famous hospitality. Those of you who have been before will know about the Taste of Tasmania – that extravaganza of food and wine that coincides with the finish of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht race. The Conference Dinner will be a mini Taste of Tasmania. Even better, the cost of the Taste is included in your conference registration and there will be plenty of Tasmanian delicacies and fine wines for all to enjoy. Keep Saturday night free!

Registration and payment options

The committee is aware of the costs associated with attending a conference, and is therefore offering the facility to pay in two stages. A \$300 deposit can be made now, with the balance payable prior to the conference. There is a registration form on the website and facility to pay online. We hope that this initiative will assist many potential delegates.

A range of accommodation options has been secured, ranging from quality backpacker to five-star. The website has a full listing of what is available, and distances from the conference venue. If you would like to secure your accommodation, you can do so by completing the registration form, and paying one night's deposit in advance. In fact, bookmark the website at <http://www.islandjourneys.com.au> as you will want to return frequently to have your questions answered, play our games, and find out the latest news.

Your journey

There is one thing we would like from you first. Please send us a postcard from the starting point of your Island Journey. From Dallas to Darwin, we expect that delegates will be making this trip from all over the world to Australia's island state to share in our conference. Send us a postcard of your home and when we all meet in October 2003, we will have a renewed sense of the many journeys that have led us all to Hobart. The address is on the Island Journeys' website.

So pack your bags and your sense of adventure and join us in Hobart in 2003 on your quest for inspiration. We look forward to welcoming you and receiving your postcards.

*Sharron Hewer (ASLA) and
Judy Moss (CBCA)
Co-Convenors and the Island Journeys
Committee*

Essential Connections: Connecting School and Public Library Professionals

Anne Spelman M.A.Info., Grad. Dip. Info., Dip.Teach., ALIA is the convenor of Australian School Library Association's Children and Youth Services in Queensland (CYSQLD) and the Consultant for Young Peoples Services at the State Library of Queensland. The main purpose of CYSQLD is to develop library services for young people in Queensland through professional development activities for library and information specialists who work with young people. In her role as consultant, Anne manages the young people's collection for the Country Lending Service and provides advice, support and training on library services for young people to public libraries throughout Queensland.

Anne Spelman's article highlights some of the ideas Dr Alan Bundy presented at *Forging Future Directions XVII* conference of the Australian School Library Association held at Twin Waters Resort, Sunshine Coast, Queensland on 30 September – 4 October 2001. A shortened version of this paper was included in the previous issue of *Connections*.

On 5 July 2002, a one-day seminar was run jointly by State Library of Queensland and CYSQLD ALIA Children and Youth Services. The seminar, which is the main annual activity of CYSQLD, explored ways in which Public and Teacher Librarians can work together to provide a comprehensive information service for young people in their communities.

One-day seminar

The inspiration for the format and content of this seminar came from Alan Bundy's paper *Essential Connections: School and Public*

Libraries for Lifelong Learning. As well as providing an historical overview of the development of cooperation between school and public libraries, the paper also included the results of a national survey he conducted to identify the current level of interaction between public libraries and Teacher Librarians. As well as providing quantitative data to five key questions, participants were also asked to provide *perspectives*, specifically examples of cooperation, suggestions and issues. Many positive comments were made by both sectors, but unresolved and longstanding issues were also aired. One Teacher Librarian made the astute comment, *time is needed to think tank concerns and ideas*. Providing Teacher and Public Librarians with the opportunity to do that became the driving force behind *Essential Connections: Connecting School and Public Library Professionals*.

After Alan's address small groups comprising equal numbers of Teacher and Public Librarians were asked to focus on a scenario, seven of which were developed from Alan's paper. These scenarios introduced some of the major concerns and issues raised by librarians. Groups were asked to develop a future scenario that provided a positive way forward for librarians. A member of each group then presented their scenario, future scenario and the strategies they used to reach the future scenario. This article will focus on these scenarios and Librarians' responses to them.

Workshop

Scenario one

While the variety of resources available in school libraries is restricted by curriculum priorities and limited by budgets, Teacher Librarians often possess in-depth and current knowledge of current fiction trends and homework requirements. Public libraries generally offer a wider range of leisure materials and some homework support materials, but a continuing decline in the number of Young Peoples Services Librarians employed by public library services has led to a lack of familiarity with the content of young people's collections.

How can we work together to exploit these strengths and address these weaknesses?

Future scenario

Teacher Librarians and Public Librarians collaborate in the interests of students to gain and maintain skills levels and promote and to share literature resources.

Strategies to reach future scenario

Collaboration is the key for Public Librarians to take advantage of the in-depth knowledge and expertise that Teacher Librarians often possess of children and youth specific materials.

It was suggested that Teacher Librarians could provide Public Librarians with lists of resources on specific themes and age and interest levels. This could happen online.

It was recommended that Teacher and Public Librarians:

- form network groups – online and people – identify strengths and weaknesses, share basic information about each other, for example library operating hours and contacts
- explore funding to hold joint seminars for parents, professionals, students in, for example sharing author visits
- joint promotion of resources in both locations – school and public library, for example reciprocal borrowing rights, making Young Peoples Services information available to teachers and Teacher Librarians.

Scenario two

As a general rule public libraries are not set up to support homework and assignment enquiries.

What strategies could public and school libraries implement to help meet young people's information needs?

Future scenario

School and public libraries will endeavour to help support homework and assignment enquiries through greater communication.

Issues identified were:

- from a public library perspective it is difficult to support schools due to budgetary constraints
- schools do topics at the same time, so there are not enough resources
- a lack of communication between schools, parents, children and public libraries.



Internetting Corner

The following websites can be easily accessed on the Internet via the links found on the Curriculum Corporation's Connections website for Issue No. 43 at <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/connect/connect.htm>

Aboriginal Languages of Australia

<http://www.dnathan.com/VL/>
Annotated links to around fifty Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are the focus of this award-winning website. Language resources can be viewed by type, language or state.
SCIS 1034658

ATSIC Classroom

<http://www.atsic.gov.au/classroom/default.asp>
Part of the large Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) website, this section offers K–12 students and teachers the opportunity to investigate statistics, games, quizzes, arts and crafts resources, project information and HSC material.
SCIS 1098780

Australian Coastal Atlas

<http://www.ea.gov.au/coasts/atlas/>
Developed under the auspices of the Natural Heritage Trust this interactive mapping site provides a plethora of data on Australia's coastal environment. Users can select information on states and territories or an overall national node that is integrated to the *Australian National Resources Atlas*.
SCIS 1098790

CGFA – A Virtual Art Museum

<http://sunsite.dk/cgfa/index.html>
Many of the world's past and present art masters are showcased on this extensive website. Their works have been scanned and then indexed by name, nationality and date.
SCIS 1098661

Classical Music Archives

<http://www.classicalarchives.com/>
Boasting the largest selection of classical music available on the Internet, this site offers searchable access to thousands of pieces of music which can be played and downloaded in a number of ways. Detailed biographical information and timelines are other features.
SCIS 1098649

National Mapping – Fab Facts

<http://www.auslig.gov.au/facts/>
At last, a reputable site to answer all those reference questions relating to the geography and dimensions of Australia. Using this website students will be able to discover the answers relating to the highest mountains, longest rivers, climatic extremities, land tenure and even place names.
SCIS 996043

National Software Evaluation Project

<http://www.edna.edu.au/sibling/nsep/>
An initiative of all the Australian States and Territories, NSEP reviews software for use in Australian schools. The site features guidelines for the selection of software, associated links and a forum for users.
SCIS 1092157

New Zealand Children's Authors' Interviews

<http://library.christchurch.org.nz/Childrens/ChildrensAuthors/>
This site offers short, quirky interviews sure to appeal to students looking for information on a favourite author. Links are available for those wanting further material or bibliographies relating to New Zealand children's literature.
SCIS 1074135

Plate Tectonics

<http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/geology/tectonics.html>
The history, theories and mechanisms of plate tectonics are presented for secondary geology students. Fascinating animated sequences of plate tectonics are available, although they can be slow to download.
SCIS 1098726

Resources for Educators

[http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/c311215.NSF/20564c23f3183fdaca25672100813ef1/75f9fe79d5691b77ca256a69001d1304!](http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/c311215.NSF/20564c23f3183fdaca25672100813ef1/75f9fe79d5691b77ca256a69001d1304!OpenDocument)
OpenDocument
The Australian Bureau of Statistics has selected a variety of statistical information suitable for teachers and Teacher Librarians to use with secondary classes. The subjects covered are diverse and are complemented with teaching tools and activities for the classroom.
SCIS 1098736

Rulers

<http://www.rulers.org/>
Information on all the present heads of state and government (including de facto leaders) of every country is available here. Historical data on the rulers of most countries dating back to the 1700s can also be accessed.
SCIS 1098730

Story-Go-Round: A Guide to Children's Books by Lorraine Orman

<http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~l.orman/>
Authored by a prominent librarian, this children's literature website has listed the top 100 New Zealand children's book from the last 100 years. Also included on the site are recent reviews, news, author information and associated links.
SCIS 1098766

Welcome to Astro-Venture!

<http://quest.arc.nasa.gov/projects/astrobiology/astroventure/avhome.html>
This innovative and absorbing science site encourages senior primary students and junior secondary students to use their knowledge of biology, astronomy and geology to undertake specific NASA roles to help a mission search for and develop a habitable planet for humans.
SCIS 1098771

World Climate: Weather, Rainfall and Temperature Data

<http://www.worldclimate.com/>
By using historical weather averages, the overall climatic conditions of tens of thousands of locations around the globe are available to students studying geography. Both major units of measurement are used for all statistics.
SCIS 1098733

Reviewed by Nigel Paull, South Grafton Primary School, paull@turboweb.net.au

The Internet sites abstracted in Internetting Corner are often of a professional nature and should be initially viewed by teachers and library staff to determine suitability for students. The links, content and address of sites reviewed may not be permanent.

Resources

Online resources made relevant

myinternet at <http://www.myinternet.com.au/edu/ccorp>

myinternet Limited is a leading Australian education Internet software provider to many Australian and international schools. Curriculum Corporation and myinternet are working together throughout 2002 to provide a reference point for teachers and students to access valuable teaching resources through the Internet.

A series of four special projects will provide a focus for using the online environment in a relevant way to enhance class activities. As each topic in the series goes live on the site, previous activities will be archived and therefore still available. The second project, the ANZACS, went live in April to coincide with ANZAC Day.

Our identification with the values and the people who created the symbolism of the

ANZAC tradition is explored in resources, weblinks and activities. These free resources have been sourced by Curriculum Corporation and myinternet to provide practical, online classroom activities and show how the Internet can be used to achieve educational outcomes.

The last term of 2001 featured the first project in the series, *Year of the Volunteer*, linking a volunteer program run by a primary school to support East Timor schools and their pupils. Links to classroom activities related to volunteering showcased the *Discovering Democracy website*. Activities to support Reconciliation Week will follow later this year.

We Solve It! Approaches to Information Literacy

Teacher and Teacher Librarian resource, 176 pp.

Editor: Marianne Punshon

Publisher: School Library Association of Victoria (SLAV)

RRP: \$75.00

SCIS No: 1098863

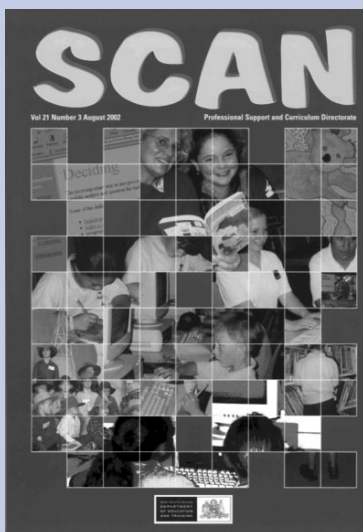
ISBN: 0 909978 23 9

Developing information literacy skills is a task for all teachers and Teacher Librarians.

Students who can locate, evaluate and use information with confidence have the skills necessary for learning using any format, past, present or future. They are equipped to become lifelong learners, able to use information critically and creatively.

We solve it! is essential professional reading combining thought-provoking theoretical discussion with tried and tested practical classroom ideas. Written by practising Teacher Librarians, *We solve it!* is separated into two sections. Part one outlines theories, methods and comments from Teacher Librarians and part two offers an array of practical applications using the formula Wonder, Explore, Select, Organise, Link, Vivify, Evaluate and Reference.

About Scan



Scan is a quarterly journal that focuses on the interaction between information and effective student learning. Published by the Library and Information Literacy Unit of the Professional Support and Curriculum Directorate, NSW Department of Education and Training, *Scan's* articles and reviews explore the use of curriculum resources within the learning environment.

Articles in *Scan* reflect best practice in *Teaching and*

learning, emphasising an outcomes approach and the benefits of collaboration between teachers and Teacher Librarians. Of interest to all educators, the journal is also a component of the statewide support for Teacher Librarians.

A regular feature is *Research columns*, in which recent Australian and overseas educational research findings are presented. The research is refereed, and highlights important implications for teachers and Teacher Librarians.

Every *Scan* contains over 80 Internet site reviews and approximately 200 resource reviews. Written by a team of practising teachers and Teacher Librarians across NSW, these reviews are invaluable to schools.

Each 88-page issue of *Scan* also contains:

- effective integration of ICT in all key learning areas
- collaborative approaches to teaching and learning
- information about, and strategies for, implementing NSW Department of Education and Training priorities
- new Departmental curriculum resources
- accurate, up to date, information on OASIS Library issues for Department of Education and Training schools as appropriate.

The journal also has a presence on the Departmental web site. To view information about *Scan* online, including abstracts of articles in current and past issues, go to *School libraries: empowering learning* at: <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/schoollibraries>

Scan is published four times per year. To receive a Subscription form/Tax invoice, please contact The Subscription Clerk, Scan, NSW Department of Education and Training, Private Bag 3, Ryde, NSW 2112, or Fax: 61 2 9886 7413

Essential Connections: Connecting School and Public Library Professionals (cont.)

Strategies to reach future scenario

All stakeholders will communicate and work together to establish effective homework and assignment help mechanisms:

- information literacy sessions for parents and young people
- develop pathfinders, for example what to read after Harry Potter
- homework help clubs and centres
- free photocopying and printing of reference materials where there are no lending resources available
- establish a database of people with special expertise, for example University of the Third Age, retired teachers
- mentoring of younger students by older ones
- school libraries to lobby local councils for money for public libraries
- use the same terminology, for example schools using ILPO to make sure their public libraries are aware of the ILPO terms
- public libraries to keep lists of popular assignment topics and when they will be in demand
- public libraries reserve books on popular topics and/or place a limit of two books per family on any topic
- school libraries ensure that public libraries are made aware of changes in curriculum
- public libraries make extra staff available at busy times.

Scenario three

School and public libraries share many common goals and related missions. We have a shared vision of our young users as information literate, independent lifelong learners.

How can we successfully collaborate to ensure that:

- young people are information users
- we provide access to a wide range of current resources
- we motivate young people to successfully use library materials for information and recreational needs?

Future scenario

Collaboration will lead to successful use of public and school libraries. This will increase the motivation of young people to use the wide range of resources available to them in the community.

Strategies to reach future scenario

Combined regional network meetings with the express agenda of establishing and implementing partnerships. A wine and cheese event could be a good starter, possibly slotted into a week when schools are having exams, which is a quiet time for Teacher Librarians.

Continued contact via:

- region specific email groups
- phone contact

Provide documents to Public Librarians that are used in schools for assignments:

- assignments planners and organisers
- information literacy programs
- bibliographic formats
- actual assignments

Public library resources – share more information:

- catalogue
- databases

Scenario four

In Norway cooperation between school and public libraries is mandatory.

How much greater cooperation between school and public libraries would there be in Australia if it were mandated and what benefits are likely to emerge? What key elements would be necessary to bring this about?

Future scenario

Formal and informal networks will be established between public library and the community of school library staff they service. These networks will establish the frameworks for future cooperation with the backing of governing bodies in relation to funding and staff support.

Strategies to reach future scenario

Formal and informal networks to be set up on a regional basis.

Difficulties to be overcome:

- levels of government and what government departments need to be lobbied
- funding needed to facilitate cooperation, for example funding for relief staff for Public and Teacher Librarians while they attend liaison meetings
- timing – how to meet and when, for example different hours when Teacher Librarians and Public Librarians are available and busy

It was noted that there is at least one instance where this kind of cooperation is mandated. It is incorporated in the Young Peoples Services' Librarian's position description in Townsville.

Scenario five

Zobec contends that a minimum of three years is needed for cooperative patterns to be established.

Are we tempted to dismiss cooperation as too time consuming and costly, particularly given the high turn over in staff in both sectors? Can you suggest realistic ways in which these barriers can be overcome?

Future scenario

A collaborative approach should be taken to any future projects thus utilising combined resources, skills and facilities to the maximum benefit of the community.

Strategies to reach future scenario

Partnerships between the public library and schools need to be given a higher public profile. The aim is that partnerships produce visible outcomes.

Collaborative actions:

- Teacher Librarians to visit public libraries and vice versa
- Public Librarians to attend Teacher Librarian network meetings – locations to alternate between sectors
- run joint projects, for example Bookweek, author visits
- public library to be used as a venue for school and community literary functions
- online discussion groups

Scenario six

Seventy-one per cent of Public Librarians assessed their knowledge of school library issues as low; sixty-three per cent of Teacher Librarians assessed their knowledge of public libraries issues as low. Issues of funding, time, attitude and access seem to be the major constraints on cooperation between the two sectors.

Is it fair to conclude that these reflect professional narrowness and/or self-satisfaction?

Future scenario

All librarians will have the time and the financial support and training to enable them to network with the other library professionals.

continued on page 12

Essential Connections: Connecting School and Public Library Professionals (cont.)

Strategies to reach future scenario

Development of all kinds of networks – people and online:

- easier access for library professionals to discover one another's networks (websites, directories, listservs)
- invitations to network meetings, professional development events, social events, school based professional development, pupil free days
- staff visits and exchanges, sharing resources
- flexible lending policies
- online catalogues

It is important to make the time for this to happen and to involve all staff.

Scenario seven

An aim of librarians working with young people is to get the right resource into the right hand at the right time. As Public and Teacher Librarians, what steps can we take to ensure that this outcome is achieved?

Future scenario

All students and young people have physical and intellectual access to the resources they need.

Strategies to reach future scenario

Establish needs by surveying on a regular basis:

- our clients
- their needs
- language and multicultural needs

Determine skills needed to access information:

- information literacy programs
- technological skills programs
- specific reference help given
- approachable, warm, welcoming atmosphere of client-based service

Physical access to information:

- community catalogue and interlibrary loans
- sufficient budgets, well-administered according to needs and trends
- collection development: maintenance, current trends
- basic standards of budgeting, staffing, for example that one picture book and one non-fiction book be purchased for students in Years 1–3, and one fiction book and one non-fiction book be purchased for each student in Years 4–7

Evaluation of seminar

Feedback from the seminar and suggestions for future sessions also provided further insight into the importance of networking between Public and Teacher Librarians.

- An excellent opportunity to meet with library professionals from the public sector. The workshop was great – our group generated lots of ideas, on-task and off-task.
- Thought provoking and has inspired me to create better partnerships/relationships with all the Teacher Librarians who are near me.
- As a teacher it was very interesting to hear the concerns, issues and developments of Public and Teacher Librarians.
- The only way we can grow is to talk with each other.
- Will return to the isolation of my library, with lots of new ideas, revived enthusiasm and a commitment to better communication with Teacher Librarians.
- Please have more days like this. I love the chance to meet people and get new ideas and challenges. I don't get enough professional development opportunities now and crave more as a Teacher Librarian.

- We must lobby politicians from the three levels for more funding to put all ideas and plans into practice. Resources must be put to more practical use – pursue the *Smart State* motto, that is, throw it back into the State Government's court.

Suggestions for future seminars

- There does not seem to be anyone from the university sector. It would be really interesting to hear the perspective of university librarians and also staff from teacher training or librarian training bodies. Perhaps they could be encouraged to attend next year.
- Liaison officers should be considered to help facilitate cooperation between school and public libraries but also perhaps TAFE and special libraries.
- A session by a Teacher Librarian on curriculum and other matters Public Librarians don't understand. Perhaps a concurrent session on a topic that Teacher Librarians would like to know more about.

*Anne Spelman
Consultant, Young Peoples Services
Public Library Services
State Library of Queensland*

Xenu's Link Sleuth™ – A Useful Software Package to Find Broken URL Links

With the proliferation of World Wide Web bibliographic records and URLs in many school catalogues an interesting management problem is raised. The ongoing checking and validation of URLs of the websites is an essential and potentially time-consuming task. However, assistance is at hand.

There are a number of models that can be used to regularly check the validity of URLs of websites. One method would be to work from a list of websites that you have in your library catalogue or home page and check each one individually. This may be suitable if you have less than 100 sites but what if you had 200, 500, 1000 or more websites? The enormity of the task begins to sink in, particularly as it should be done on a regular basis like other 'housekeeping' tasks such as authority control.

Over the years, software developers and programmers have developed URL checking software to automate this task as much as possible. This enables time saved to be spent investigating and repairing broken links. One such package is *Xenu's Link Sleuth™* and is available free of charge from their website.

What does it do?

Xenu's Link Sleuth™ is a spidering software that checks websites for broken links including standard URLs, images, frames, plug-ins, local

image maps, scripts and Java applets. The list of URLs is continually updated and a number of different criteria can be set if required. The software supports SSL websites (i.e. those commencing with https://) and reports on redirected URLs.

System requirements

In order to run *Xenu's Link Sleuth™* you will need Microsoft Windows 95, 98, ME, NT or 2000. Unfortunately, it will not operate in a Windows 3.1 or Macintosh system.

To utilise the capability of the software package it is advisable, if possible, to run a report from your library system which extracts all URLs from bibliographical records and saves them to a text file. In most cases the URL will be in the 856 MARC tag field. If this cannot be done then a simple text file can be generated.

Getting into a routine

At a previous library where I worked, we checked on a monthly basis all URLs (over 5000) that were on the library system. We included URLs to conference papers and reports so it was imperative that these URLs were correct. Each month a report was run which extracted all URLs from the library system into a text file that was then loaded into *Xenu's Link Sleuth™*. Any broken links were then repaired. We found that the

software was excellent and extremely functional to use.

Repairing the broken links does take time but the following strategies might be of use:

- Contact the site owner if you have an email address.
- Find the home page of the site with the URL link to see if they have a redirection message and follow that link.
- Use some good search engines to relocate the web page, for example Google is one such example at <http://www.google.com>.
- Post a message on a newsgroup that deals with the topic of the website as others may have located the new site address.
- If you are still unsuccessful, delete the link and try again in a few months.

Further information

You can download the current version of the software 1.1f from the home page of *Xenu's Link Sleuth™* at <http://home.snafu.de/tilman/xenulink.html>.

Steven Haby is Manager, Metadata Initiatives, in the SCIS Unit at Curriculum Corporation.

More free link checking software

<http://www.elsop.com/quick/quick.chi>

<http://www.anybrowser.com/linkchecker.html>

Teaching and Learning at the State Library of Victoria (cont.)

aspects of them and value-adding by extracting educational outcomes and creating interactive and innovative programs.

The Dome Education Studio will showcase relevant realia, objects and instructional aids enhancing the learning of students. This area will also accommodate multimedia computers, a permanent data projector with screen, video, electronic whiteboard, and teaching facilities.

The State Library of Victoria is undergoing an exciting transformation as technology and learning become increasingly prevalent. The education sector can expect to be engaged and challenged before, during and after a visit to the Library through a range of services and

resources. While traditional spaces for quiet research, reading, reflection and learning will remain central to the State Library's ambitions, a new era of interactive, engaging and thought-provoking programs will abound. We trust to see you at the State Library to join in the fun!

Upcoming workshops

Beginning in September and continuing until 24 November 2002 is a series of workshops for students based around a National Library of Australia touring exhibition entitled *Burke and Wills: From Melbourne to Myth*. For details, contact gwhite@slv.vic.gov.au.

Gordon White is a History teacher with experience teaching in Melbourne and in various parts of Asia and Europe. He is currently the Manager of School Services at the State Library of Victoria.

Tibooburra Outback School of the Air

Tibooburra Outback School of the Air has won a \$100 voucher to spend on Curriculum Corporation products after submitting this article for the 'Tell us about your library' competition. If you work at a school and think your experience will be of interest to others, please forward an article to SCIS.

Tibooburra is situated 330 kms north of Broken Hill in western New South Wales. It is in the corner of the state, where the boundaries of South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales meet. The school in Tibooburra (population 150) is a dual mode school, meaning the enrolment in each class includes children who are in the classroom each day as well as children who do their lessons at home with their supervisors. The present enrolment is about 40, and slightly more than half are in town each day.

The families of the town children are employed with the National Parks and Wildlife, Police, RTA, the shops and accommodation units, the hospital and town Telecentre. Only one child comes in each day from a nearby sheep station. The on-air children's families live on sheep and cattle stations and one child's parents work on the dog-proof fence. A few children are from travelling families who are constantly on the move. One such family visited the town recently and Ellie was able to join her own class for the few days. Once each term a Mini-school week is held where the non-town children stay at the hostel with their parent or governess and attend the school each day. For variety, this is occasionally held at a sheep station instead. Each local on-air child

receives a visit at home from their teacher at least once a year.

The school has a teaching principal and three classroom teachers. The grades for air-lessons are 5/6, 3/4, 1/2 and Kinder. Each grade has at least one air-lesson and Library lesson a day with a full school, on-air assembly occurring every second week. The air-lessons are delivered via Very High Frequency radio provided and serviced by Telstra. This has a clear signal but not a wide range and is boosted by towers in order to reach the receivers at the homesteads. Prior to 1991, when the school started as a distance education centre, children in this area were catered for by Broken Hill School of the Air. At that time, High Frequency radio signals were used and though they had a very wide range, static (severe at times) made reception difficult. The children who are travelling don't have the radio contact.

The library is well stocked. I have been the Librarian since 1994 and the library loans have been automated since then. The road to having all the library and teachers' resources catalogued and in the OASIS catalogue has been a very long one. With the support of sympathetic principals over the years, extra days and hours have been given. At long last this goal is very close to being achieved.

When library staff began this work, we posted a disk with ISBN numbers to SCIS in Melbourne. As the mail only comes from Broken Hill twice a week it took a long while to get the records back. Later we could order them through a Voyager program where I dialled directly to a SCIS phone number. The records were then posted to me. When *SCISCD* came out it really sped things up. In fact the school had sent a cheque for a subscription to the CD when the NSW

Department paid for the access for all NSW Government schools, so we got our cheque back. The Internet computer in the Library has been connected for some weeks now and I look forward to getting the records online from *SCISWeb*, along with relevant catalogued website records which are now available.

Last week the children were able to use the Internet to look up Ernie Dingo in their Library lesson. A flash of recognition passed over a few faces when I suggested his name as they worked on providing details of the life of a famous Aboriginal Australian. So modern technology has reached our remote library. The grid power took over from the generator in Tibooburra about six or seven years ago, so one advance has made these others possible.

Tuesday is my day at the school. I have lived on a sheep and cattle property since 1979. The trip to work takes an hour and forty minutes and is all dirt road. In wet times – not this year however as we have had a drought – I occasionally have to miss taking Library. Everyone in the area has similar problems of remoteness so they are very understanding. Telephone connection (1984), television reception (via satellite), electricity connection (1995) and Internet via satellite (2001) are some of the technological advances made in this area since 1979. They replaced telegrams via The Flying Doctor base through the HF radio (connected to a car battery) a 32 volt (later 240 volt) generator and ... I suppose it must be letters and bookwork in ledgers.

Therese Davis
Teacher Librarian

The Le@rning Federation – The Learning Object Model

The Le@rning Federation – Schools Online Curriculum Content Initiative is a national project to generate online curriculum content and the supportive infrastructure to deliver it to all Australian schools. Curriculum Corporation and *education.au limited* have been assigned project managers and have formed a joint venture to undertake the work over the next five years. A detailed article about the Initiative appeared in the last issue of *Connections*.

The digital curriculum content currently being developed as part of The Le@rning Federation Schools Online Curriculum Content Initiative will be based on a learning object model approach. This model has been selected for the development of online curriculum content as it offers greater flexibility and educational opportunities to engage students in learning in new ways. A learning object must have educational integrity and be able to stand-alone and support diverse teaching and learning activities, rather than dictating modes of use.

Learning objects

A learning object can be seen as a basic *unit of learning*, and is developed to assist students achieve specific learning outcomes. Learning objects will consist of one or more files designed to stand alone or to be a component of a learning sequence that may be created during the development process or later constructed by the end user to suit their specific learning and teaching requirements. For example, an audio file developed to describe a picture is unlikely to make much sense on its own and, therefore would not be searchable as an independent stand-alone learning object. However, the picture and audio

combined, as a learning object, has educational value and integrity: if it doesn't then it probably should not exist.

The complexity of the content will develop over the life of the project as new technologies are realised. Digital rights management schema will also be improved as new technologies are developed and implemented.

Activities will be created for use in a range of contexts and across learning areas. Content development will focus on providing virtual experiences that model and simulate concepts that are difficult to teach or are unable to be easily reproduced in the classroom, for example counting the rings on a fallen rain forest tree, or watching the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra play the Brandenburg Concerto. Collaborative learning opportunities will be explicit to enable students to move beyond their current knowledge, extend the classroom into real world domains and enhance understanding through interaction with a range of people. This approach to content development will maximise the opportunity for customisation of the learning objects by teachers to meet the learning needs of classes, groups or individual students.

Creation of learning objects

Learning object construction is based on a user-centred approach to design and development, which is essential to meet the needs of diverse learners and learning contexts. Users will assist development teams throughout the next four years of the Initiative in determining the treatment of content, based on the published standards and specifications.

It will be possible to develop and deliver educational objects using a variety of media and technologies. The providers of the content will design, develop and integrate these technologies to achieve the best possible educational outcomes. Visit the Initiative website at <http://www.thelearningfederation.edu.au> and under *Resource Centre* you will find *Specifications* for the technical requirements for content development.

Content development

The Le@rning Federation is piggybacking on much of the work that is currently taking place in national and international standardisation initiatives. Such work includes metadata specifications, incorporating knowledge from the IMS Global Learning Consortium (<http://www.imsglobal.org>), the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (<http://dublincore.org>), and the EdNA Online Metadata Standards (<http://www.edna.edu.au>). *The Le@rning Federation* will be utilising a number of other specifications from the IMS Global Learning Consortium, including their content packaging specification. The SCORM specifications from Advanced Distributed Learning (<http://www.adlnet.org>) also form part of the content development model. Advanced digital rights management systems will be developed using the Open Digital Rights Language (odrl.net). The documented objectives for the developed content include educational soundness, accessibility issues, technical requirements, and management of intellectual property.

Educational soundness

Educational soundness is based on exemplary practice in the planning, design, development and use of online curriculum content. It is the critical measure of the pedagogical quality of the Initiative's online curriculum content. The achievement of educationally sound learning objects will be determined through a rigorous quality assurance process. These educational soundness specifications are being developed collaboratively with the Initiative stakeholders.

Each issue of *Connections* this year will feature an article on the project or a related issue. In Issue 44 there will be more information on educational soundness.

To learn more about the project and its progress, visit the project website at <http://www.thelearningfederation.edu.au>.

Margery Hornbrook
Manager, Communications
The Le@rning Federation.



Cataloguing and Database News

SCIS Subject Headings Fifth Edition

SCIS is pleased to announce that the fifth edition of the *SCIS Subject Headings* has been published and is now available for purchase.

The new edition incorporates all amended, revised and new headings introduced since the fourth edition in 1999. New Zealand and Maori headings have been extensively revised and updated.

Space restrictions did not allow the full list of changes and editions in the fifth edition to be published. However, the full list of changes has been placed on the SCIS website at http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/database/amended_list.doc.

If you have any comments, questions or feedback about SCIS Subject Headings Fifth Edition or any issue relating to controlled vocabulary please contact Steven Haby, Manager Metadata Initiatives at Steven.Haby@curriculum.edu.au or telephone +61 3 9207 9682.

What's New

SCISWeb subscribers in Victoria can view lists of recently catalogued items and communicate with Mavis Heffernan (SCIS Senior Cataloguer, Learning and Teaching Innovation Division, Department of Education and Training) by going to <http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/discuss>.

- Click on Enter the Open Discussions.
- Click on New Users and fill in the form to create your profile.
- Click on Teacher Librarian Network.
- Click the title of the message that you wish to read.

Websites for Cataloguers

While the majority of schools download catalogue records from SCIS there may be occasions when library staff would like to gain some further understanding of the cataloguing process to ensure they are gaining maximum benefits from SCIS records. The following websites are excellent sites to use as references when wanting to clarify cataloguing matters.

<http://lcweb.loc.gov/marc/>

The home page of the Library of Congress Network Development and MARC Standards Office: links to the MARC 21 concise formats, announcements and documentation.

<http://catalog.loc.gov/>

The Library of Congress Online Catalog contains approximately 12 million records for books and other resources. The Catalog also displays searching aids for users, such as cross-references and scope notes. The site includes a link to *Library of Congress*

Authorities. This service, which is currently being offered on a trial basis, provides access to authority headings for Subject, Name, Title and Name/Title combinations.

<http://www.oclc.org/dewey/>

Information about the Dewey Decimal Classification system, including frequently asked questions, updates and tutorials.

<http://www.nla.gov.au/libraries/>

Provides access to information about more than 5400 Australian libraries, their collections and services.

<http://www.natlib.govt.nz/en/catalogue/index.html>

A guide and links to the catalogues and web directories of the National Library of New Zealand.

<http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/jsc/>

The Joint Steering Committee for the Revision of Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules develops and maintains the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules according to established principles for bibliographic description and access.

<http://catalogingandclassificationquarterly.com/>
The home page of *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* (CCQ). It provides readers of CCQ with abstracts of articles appearing in upcoming issues, along with special editorials, announcements, book reviews, and other information.

<http://slis.cua.edu/ihy/catmeta.htm>

Cataloging & Metadata Resources is a site that provides links to newsletters, discussion lists, cataloguing aids and tools, standards and documents on organising internet resources.

<http://www.macquariedictionary.com.au/>
The Macquarie Concise Dictionary online.

<http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabulary/tgn/>

The Getty thesaurus of geographic names.