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NSW.net User Group Meeting

The next NSW.net User Group Meeting will be held at the State Library of NSW on Friday 19 March 2004. Further details of the meeting will be announced shortly. Please forward any items for inclusion in the agenda to:

Roger L. Henshaw
Convenor, NSW.net User Group
Phone: 9806 5151
Email: rhenshaw@parracity.nsw.gov.au

NSW.net Consortium News

• Free databases – available to all libraries

The free databases provided through NSW.net are available to every NSW public library service and all of their branches irrespective of whether or not those libraries/branches, or the councils use NSW.net services for Internet connectivity.

Some libraries have been under the mistaken impression that access was only available to "members of NSW.net", i.e. institutions which used Internet services brokered through NSW.net. This is not the case, so feel free to log on to the databases and make full use of them. They can be accessed via:

<http://www.nswnet.net/libraries>

• Content Evaluation Working Party Meeting

The next meeting of the NSW.net Content Evaluation Working Party will take place on

Friday 20th February 2004 at the State Library. Please contact your Zone representatives if there are issues that you would like discussed.

• Website changes

Some important changes have been made to the NSW.net website. The main one is that a "For Library Staff" page has been created. This can be accessed from links on the "eResources" and "Free Trial Offers" pages, or accessed directly from the following link:

http://www.nswnet.net/libraries/for_lib_staff.cfm

The "For Library Staff" page provides the following features and facilities:

- Links to training documentation for the four free databases.
- Links to information about obtaining statistics for the four free databases.
- Access to a "Change IP address" form where libraries can report on-line, changes that have been made to IP addresses within their organisation.
- Access to "Add other subscription databases" form.
- Links to other useful SLNSW on-line services

The "Add other subscription databases" form allows libraries to customise the content of the eResources page and add links to other databases to which they subscribe. Libraries can also add a link to their on-line catalogue. For further information on using this facility contact Chris Hannan via email on channan@nswnet.net.

We have also improved the navigation between the "eResources", "For Library Staff" and "Free Trial Offers" pages. Feedback on how we can continue to improve access to the online databases is very welcome.



ALIA Seminar and VALA Conference

ALIA Forum on Purchasing Agreements and Licensing

This Forum was held on Monday 2 February before the VALA conference. It was well attended with some 80 delegates from around the country and New Zealand. It started with a panel presentation from representatives of various consortia and "buying groups", followed by a panel presentation from a number of vendor representatives. Then there were breakout sessions to discuss the issues raised.

Some of the key points to emerge were:

- The vendors see definite advantages for them in dealing with consortia like NSW.net.
- The larger vendors were looking at providing more flexible product offerings. These are likely to be based on bigger "product sets" offering greater flexibility and more tailoring options but they would come at a premium.
- The trend seems to be for state, academic and research libraries to buy more on-line content, and as a consequence less print.
- Licensing agreements are likely to remain an issue.
- Copyright and protection of intellectual property remain key concerns, particularly in the academic and research sectors, but not solely confined to them.
- Libraries who are unsure about agreements they are being asked to sign can seek advice from their consortia representatives, alternatively ALIA/CIPS will undertake negotiations with vendors on their behalf for a fee.

VALA 2004 12th Biennial Conference

There were two key themes repeated across most of the keynote addresses, and a number of other papers. They were:

- The state of scholarly publishing, copyright, and alternatives to traditional publishing models, and
- digitisation/digital preservation on a large scale – where it's at, and where it is likely to go.

These were in fact convergent issues with solutions for both built around digital repositories managed by Open Source software products, in particular the dSpace system. Information about some of these developments can be found at:

<http://www.dspace.org/>

<https://dspace.mit.edu/>

<http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/dspace/>

Other topical themes were:

- Use of on-line reference services. One interesting development was the partnership between Macquarie and Murdoch Universities which allows the two institutions to time-shift their on-line service and give their users a much wider window of service.
- e-Books. The papers on this topic concentrated largely on their useability. Some of the conclusions were: e-books are more successful where the users are seeking small chunks of information rather than looking to read a whole book; reading them is slower than reading print by a factor of 25-40%; most users will print out large documents rather than read them on screen.
- Digitisation programs in libraries.

The VALA 2004 programme and all of the papers excluding the keynote addresses, can be found at:

<http://www.vala.org.au/vala2004/2004pprs/prgm2004.htm>

Report From A Mortal In The Portal - Ian Greenhalgh, Armidale Dumaesq Library



DotNetNews



The theme of the conference and exhibition this year was *Breaking Boundaries: Integration and Interoperability*. The speaker list of 80 included three Public Librarians. There were six plenary sessions, and 42 other papers presented (three at a time in different rooms). So one could realistically attend 20 talks, plus up to 8 out of 40 vendor presentations on the second morning of the conference. There were 54 exhibitors spread over 78 stands in the central showcase area.

The speakers at the plenary sessions were from France, China, Belgium, Ireland and the United States. Only the French and Chinese speakers worked in their home countries - the remaining four were contributing to the development of integrated and interoperable futures in the United States. They spoke of awesome projects - trying to promote sharing on the internet against the overwhelming pressure of intellectual property considerations; trying to preserve digital collections in "institutional repositories" under the banner of Dspace; stressing the need for standards to help facilitate digital interoperability; and reflecting about the impacts of digital networking on future library services, space and collections.

There were other great presentations about co-operative and consortia-based initiatives, digital books and other resources, virtual reference, electronic publishing, software issues (including open source software and Unicode), information literacy, portals, extending the Integrated Library Management System, user behaviour, user authentication, strategic information planning and technical aids to information access. The preparation by the presenters and the organisers was of a high standard - all papers were made available on CDROM in the conference satchels at our initial registration, and technical backup and communications were

professionally maintained by the venue for all events.

Many of the papers described advances which are being achieved in academic, State and National Libraries. But the speed of technological change means the advances will soon be at our level too. Our need to think clearly about how we can best implement those changes, for the future of our communities and the shape of our Public Libraries, was thrown into high relief by hearing those papers at first hand. I am grateful to the State Library for their general offer of subsidising attendance at the conference, and urge others to take it up if offered again in two years' time.

Publications of interest

Public Access Internet Services in Public Libraries: a report

ALIA has recently published a survey of Internet use in public libraries. A detailed report is available at:

<http://alia.org.au/members-only/advocacy/internet.access/report.html>

Australia on-line: small country towns digitally disadvantaged

Small country towns were the least likely to have used home computers and the Internet according to a new study, based on 2001 Census data, released on 12 January 2004 by ABS.

The study, by Rachel Lloyd and Anthea Bill from the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM), University of Canberra, found that small country town usage was well below the national average for home computers (32% compared with 42% nationally) and the Internet (25% compared with 37% nationally).

In contrast, people living out of town in rural areas (the rural balance), enjoyed higher



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home computer usage (41%) only marginally less than the national average. Internet usage in these areas was 32%.

Details of the study can be found at:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/3160D70E0D77B094CA256E18007DDAEC?Open>

Internet Connectivity

Sites recently upgraded to ADSL are Wellington and Griffith Councils and Broken Hill, Nambucca Heads, Macksville, Alstonville, Brunswick Heads, Murwillumbah, Mullumbimby and Tweed Heads Libraries. Wollongong Library is currently in the process of upgrading their managed ISDN connection to ADSL.

If you are still using a managed ISDN connection and are in an ADSL enabled area, please contact Joyce Azzopardi for information about upgrading your site to ADSL. There are considerable benefits from converting to ADSL including cost savings.

If you have recently upgraded your managed ISDN service and have not yet cancelled your ISDN service, please send your cancellation by email to jazzopardi@nsw.net

Extending Public Library Based Internet Access to the Community – Project Update

In January 2004, all applications received for funding (provided by OICT) to extend public library based Internet access to the community were evaluated by a selection working party consisting of members from the NSW.net User Group.

A total of 88 Library Services in 154 LGA's were eligible to receive funds to the amount of \$2,345 per LGA. **Please note that this amount excludes GST.** Funds were transferred into all nominated bank accounts on 12 February 2004.

A Report on the Expenditure of Funds is to be completed by *each Library Service* that received funding. Once completed, the report is to be faxed to Joyce Azzopardi on (02) 9273 1266 by 30th April 2004. If you can't find your copy of this form contact Joyce for a replacement.

Clarence Regional Library Network Upgrade

The upgrade of the Clarence Regional Library network was completed in January 2004. No major issues were experienced during the upgrade which has resulted in improved performance, a more cost effective and easier to manage network for Clarence Regional Library. For more information, please contact Joyce Azzopardi or Richard Nicholls as this solution may also be applicable to your library.

Rural Link

All remaining installations were completed in December 2003. Exceptions occurred in buildings in Robertson and Bombala where local partners are still finishing construction or renovations. Commissioning of recently installed towns will be completed shortly. The Rural Link network now covers 180 buildings across 75 towns.

We are currently planning a schedule of visits to towns to cover a range of matters required to wrap up the project. Dave Walmsley and John Heath, our technical coordinators, will:

- check that connections are operating well,
- ensure that all documentation is available,
- cover any technical training needs,
- provide information on the Rural Link User Group,
- gather user feedback and
- cover a range of other matters.

DotNetNews is the occasional newsletter of NSW.net

NSW.net is the online information services network of the State Library of NSW

NSW.net assists public libraries and community institutions across NSW with Internet Services

NSW.net
Phone: 1800 679 638 (1800 NSWnet)
Fax: 02 9273 1266
Email: enquiries@nsw.net

For problems connecting to the network:
UUnet - Customer Service Help Desk
Phone: 1300 368 811