

HEALTH  
LIBRARIES'  
SECTION  
NATIONAL  
NEWSLETTER

*The Health Libraries Section  
National Executive  
Would Like to Wish You a  
Very Merry Christmas & a  
New Year that Brings Much  
Happiness & Contentment*

*Special Good Wishes and Welcome to the New  
National Executive Based in New South Wales*



Farewell from the 92/93 National Executive: Cheryl Hamill, Editor, HLS National Newsletter;  
Elizabeth Hides, Secretary; Anne Batt, Treasurer; Brigitte Glockner, President.

## CASEMIX

In the last issue of the Newsletter, I advised that contact with casemix developments could be maintained through a variety of networks. Most of these are fairly indirect for health librarians and I wondered whether others have interest in maintaining a closer watching brief and would be interested in forming an informal network of our own.

I am the HLS WA representative on a recently formed WA Allied Health Casemix Working Group. This Group grew out of the Combined Health Professionals Association and has links to the National Allied Health Casemix Committee. I am sure similar groups exist in most states.

The objectives of an informal network of health librarians would be to share information and keep each other up to date with developments in other states. This could be as simple as sharing around relevant minutes of meetings. As stated in the last Newsletter, it is unlikely that casemix is a major issue for us presently but it could develop very quickly into something we need to be involved with and I am concerned that we have no mechanism in place to react quickly.

I think we need a representative from each state. I am not sure how this is best managed nationally. The new national executive in NSW may well have views on how they would like to run the network. My initial thoughts are that we would circulate minutes and any other information to members of the network and to the national executive. This should be a circulation list of no more than 8 names and therefore manageable.

Anyone interested in being part of such a network, please liaise with your state Health Libraries Section (to coordinate activity and ensure only 1 representative from each state) and contact me with the following information: name, address, phone and fax numbers. Any other comments on the planned mode of operation also welcome.

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## VIDEO NASTY FROM WA

## ESCAPED AND NOW FEARED FERAL IN MANY PARTS OF AUSTRALIA

The WA HLS was considerably embarrassed when alerted to the content of this video by a member in Queensland. The video is called "Performance Management: Communication in the Workplace". It was produced by the Health Department of WA in 1991 and runs for 15 minutes (15 minutes too long). It is accompanied by a 7 page booklet.

The video shows an overworked ward clerk who is due for a regular performance appraisal. She is overworked because she has to *catalogue* the ward library and establish and maintain a loans system. There was in fact a ward clerk who claimed this function as justification for a reclassification but it was rejected when the Health Department Library clarified that professional library responsibilities were the

province of the Library and that all ward clerks were responsible for was the simple operation of established loans systems. The video makers have either ignored the advice received or the timing of communications was unfortunately too late to have effect. There is nothing in the booklet or on the cover to indicate that a ward clerk is also claiming to be a "librarian" and it has completely escaped notice by librarians in WA.

It is very disheartening to have our profession portrayed in this manner. The WA HLS is attempting to have it withdrawn from sale or at the very least edited, and negotiations continue with the Health Department of WA. If it has found its way into other library systems, we strongly recommend that it be "deselected" and disposed of.

## FROM THE LITERATURE

Blythe, Jennifer & Royle, Joan A. Assessing nurses' information needs in the work environment.  
Bull Med Libr Assoc 81 (4) Oct 1993: 433-5

Henry, Barbara J. Continuous quality improvement in the hospital library.  
Bull Med Libr Asso 81 (4) Oct 1993: 437-9

Coggan, Janet M. Funding a patient education collection.  
Bull Med Libr Asso 81 (4) Oct 1993: 435-7

McConnell, John Medicine on the superhighway. [The Internet]  
Lancet 342 27 Nov 1993: 1313-4

Eldredge, Jonathan D. Accuracy of indexing coverage information as reported by serials sources.  
Bulletin of the Medical Library Association 81 (4) Oct 1993: 364-370

Maddox, John Electronic journals are already here.  
Nature 365 21 Oct 1993: 689

Haynes, R. Brian Where's the meat in clinical journals?  
ACP Journal Club 119 (Suppl 3) Nov/Dec 1993: A22-23

Roper, Fred W. & Mayfield, M. Kent (eds) Symposium: Platform for change: medical library education in the information age.  
Bull Med Libr Assoc 81 (4) Oct 1993: 394-432

Stone, D. H. How to do it: design a questionnaire.  
BMJ: Brit Med J 307 (6914) 13 Nov 1993: 1264-6

REPORT FROM THE 10th NATIONAL CATALOGUING CONFERENCE, FREMANTLE,  
4-6 NOVEMBER 1993

You do not expect to see many health librarians at a boring old cataloguing conference! But, surprisingly, this conference got well away from the nitty gritty of AACR2 and MARC to focus on clients and subject access. Below are some of my impressions. (The full proceedings will be published in the next issue of Cataloguing Australia.)

We were told very early on that OPAC access must be as simple as possible. It was also recommended that we give OPAC another name - the speaker suggested something without the word "catalogue" (personally I would prefer to replace the phrase "public access"). Another speaker said that we should no longer be using the card catalogue analogy in explaining the OPAC to clients. I was also interested in the comment that people can cope with large hit rates if the results are presented in sensible blocks.

A more important concern was raised by several speakers: that OPAC users tend to perform subject searches by textword searching in the title and other text fields rather than using the subject field. So enhancing catalogue records with textual data (eg contents pages, abstracts, publishers' blurbs) could be as valuable as more detailed subject indexing. It was noted that this sort of enhancement was useful for assessing relevance as well as for searching. Of course these ideas are not new - is cost the stumbling block? One speaker compared catalogues with journal article bibliographic databases - the latter are made available on a commercial basis and so the cost of indepth indexing and other subject enrichment is presumably justified. She also showed some examples of highly enriched monograph records from BIOSIS and PsychLit which made the corresponding LC catalogue records look very meagre. Another speaker said that it had been generally shown that a mixture of indexing and free text was best.

There were a couple of papers on thesaurus development. One speaker said that descriptive cataloguing should only be done once (and then shared through a network) but subject work should be done locally to suit the local clients. The other speaker commented on the difficulty of establishing hierarchical links for terms with varying definitions (eg "conservation", "environmental protection") - she felt that it was not the librarian's job to solve the disagreements on definitions. During the conference there were lots of comments about the deficiencies of LCSH. I was glad that discussion did not get bogged down on this issue but I wonder if many cataloguers, particularly in large general libraries, feel they are stuck with LCSH and are simply resigned to it. What is the point of copy cataloguing LCSH data if your OPAC clients are going to bypass the subject field and do their subject searching in the titles field?

There was some talk of expert systems to assist in assigning subjects or in searching. It was stated that, while there has been a lot of work done on how to translate a subject analysis into appropriate terminology, the questions of how an indexer decides what a book or article is about has largely been ignored. One project that intrigued me was the use of Dewey classification to assist searching. It was stated that LC classification was not as suitable as Dewey because of its enumerative rather than hierarchical structure. So I wondered if the classification approach was being tried because of the deficiencies in the subject term structure (LCSH does not really have a structure). I would see classification as a browsing rather than a searching tool - the online equivalent of shelf browsing. Towards the end of the conference a statement was made that was very well received: A good Dewey number has 5 digits!

There was an excellent demonstration by the Danish keynote speaker of an icon-based system for a public library. From the user's point of view, you start with a picture of the library building, click the mouse on the door and walk in, choose which room you want to go to, walk in and then choose what you want to look at. It would be a great front end for any online library (including things like colour of cover, picture on cover, location of plot, main characters, happy ending or not) in a way that enabled browsing and searching by analogy.

The University of Canberra's CALCAT package for the teaching of descriptive cataloguing was demonstrated during the conference. It is about 18 months away from completion but the intention is to supply it on CD-ROM for Macs or IBM PCs. I think it could be very useful for special libraries.

At the beginning of the conference there was a comment about cataloguers' "obsession with their craft" and a recommendation that we should concentrate on client needs rather than housekeeping functions. But towards the end, a non-cataloguer who was talking about client focus mentioned the problem of ABN not being clean. So without being too fussy or pedantic, I plan to continue the housekeeping on our catalogue.

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Commonwealth Dept of Health, Housing, Local Government & Community Services

BOOK RECOMMENDATION FROM  
JANE EDWARDS, LIBRARIAN,  
ROYAL DISTRICT NURSING SERVICES

Review: "We need action, not words" - Marguerite Menon, Vivienne Hester, Royal District Nursing Service, 1993.

"We need action, not words" is the report of a major project undertaken by the Royal District Nursing Service (RDNS) with HACC funding 1991-92. The project investigated the barriers between home nursing and people from non-English speaking background communities. While RDNS was the "site" for the project, its findings and recommendations are useful for all Australian home nursing services and indeed all health services which want to truly service one of the world's most multicultural populations - ours.

As well as coming up with hard recommendations this book covers its own methodology, establishes a patient profile, hones in on cross-cultural communication - and miscommunication, and explores effective models of home nursing with ethnic communities.

It would be useful for nursing agencies, in trying to understand their clients better, ethnic communities in trying to understand mainstream services, and community health centres and migrant resource centres in trying to bridge the gaps. Hospitals would find it similarly useful. Medical and nursing education facilities will find it useful as a research and project model. State and local government may see better how to focus on "people not services". Professional developers in health and multicultural education will find the case studies to be great discussion starters.

Lawrence Arnold, Multicultural Consultant for RDNS.

Available from: RDNS, 452 St Kilda Road, Melbourne Vic 3004 for the cost of \$30 (including postage). Contact: Pam Charley on (03) 868 5222.

THANKS TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE NEWSLETTER DURING THE LAST 2 YEARS AND TO ALL IN WA WHO HAVE HELPED IN THE DIY CREATION & DISTRIBUTION PROCESSES.

CHERYL HAMILL, EDITOR, 1992-93



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