

March 1994

National Newsletter National Newsletter National Newsletter

Competency Standards: ALIA says "Beware..."

Librarians should be wary of potential problems raised by the move to a competency based training system. "Once a standard is nailed down, it will be difficult to un-nail it", according to Phil Teece, ALIA's Manager of Personnel and Industrial Services.

The best way for librarians to see that problems don't arise, he says, is to take an active interest and become involved in the Competency Development process.

Speaking at a meeting at Sydney's Prince of Wales Hospital, Teece was sceptical about the attitude of some employers to competency standards. He told the meeting that ALIA was concerned that

some organisations were rushing into the move to competency based training. ALIA believed very strongly there was a danger in some areas that narrow, enterprise-focused requirements would be emphasised to the exclusion of broader professional education.

"If this happens the pendulum will have swung too far away from the current training systems and the end result will be less, not more, skill among the workforce," Teece warned. He considers the Arts Training Project for library workers is an ambitious program because, unlike the case in many industries, all levels of workers in libraries will be covered by the standards. Because of this there

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Watch this space...

The National Minimum Standards for Hospital Libraries are being updated and will be completed soon. The previous edition of this document was issued in 1988. The document currently being worked on aims to provide health librarians with a benchmark upon which to measure their libraries and services.

The new standards are being compiled by a committee,

chaired by Paul Davies from the Central Coast Area Health Service (NSW), with input from Health Library Section members from all States.

The minimum standards are intended to be measured against the size of your institution, rather than simply how busy your individual library may be. As all institutions have differing conditions, they are meant to

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President's Column

About a half of our members do not use electronic mail for sending inter-library loan requests. There are various reasons for this and many of them are no longer valid.

Most health libraries that do use electronic mail tend to use ILANET and find the system satisfactory. To start with, it takes two days off the average turnaround time.

Recently, I had a chat with Howard Amos, the amiable network manager of ILANET, and he told me a few things which might interest HLS members.

ILANET have completely revised their system in the last few months using their own computer at their headquarters. They are now a peer on the INTERNET, which means that they can provide better access and a range of additional services. However, you have to be in it to benefit.

Through ILANET you can access TELNET to look at more than 400 major library catalogues, with most of the logging-in and passwording done for you.

Since January 1994, ILANET users can communicate freely with all users of the INTERNET, now that the mail system is fully compatible with the INTERNET standard, often referred to as RFC822. This means that messaging to AARNET members and access to discussion groups served by mailing lists and listservs is now available to ILANET users.

The new file transfer protocol (FTP) allows users to transfer files from one INTERNET connected computer to another. Files can be documents (word processing files, reports, search results, electronic journal papers, etc.) images or software.

Consider some of the electronic teaching materials available. A particular type of FTP is called "Anonymous FTP" which allows you to connect without specific password and login to systems holding publicly available files. Software to provide access to publicly available files via a searchable database is found across the INTERNET.

Additional file transfer services will be provided to integrate FTP services

with the management of files on the ILANET system. This will include the interface to download files from the ILANET machine to your local PC as well as the provision of compression/decompression software.

There are further plans to add to the wide services already available on ILANET. These include an interface to allow access to discussion groups and multimedia mail on the INTERNET, as well as the existing access to Gopher servers at ANU, the University of Maryland, and LC.

If you looked at ILANET six months ago and decided not to join, I can only say that a lot has happened since. You might like to reconsider the excellent value ILANET offers and the ever increasing facilities to do more of our work.

For more details contact Howard Amos on 008 801 659 or fax on (02) 232 4816.

HLS National Executive 1994.

The Vital Link 1994 ALIA's directory of staff and office bearers failed to update the HLS National Executive in its latest issue. The office bearers listed on p.13 of *The Vital Link* should be changed to:

President, Ian Stubbin, Ph:
(02) 399 4902 Fax: (02) 398 9782

Secretary, Virginia Staggs, Ph:
(02) 736 6936 Fax: (02) 736 6707

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(02) 488 0180 Fax: (02) 449 6973

Newsletter Editor, Grahame Manns Ph: (02) 977 8642 Fax:
(02) 977 8098

From the Editor

The ALIA Health Libraries Section National Newsletter may look different but we are still committed to the same ends, providing members with as much information as possible about what is going on and how it affects you.

Thanks go to Cheryl Hammill and the WA Section who have edited the newsletter for the past two years. All concerned can hit the beach and relax.

I know that you have all heard this before but it does bear repeating - we need your input. Have you written any articles, reviewed any books, gone to any conferences, changed jobs, been promoted or downsized? Tell us about it. Call or Fax Grahame Manns on Tel: (02) 977 8642 Fax: (02) 977 8098.

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Conference Update

NZLIA/ALIA Joint Conference Wellington, New Zealand, 1994

It may seem that the last ALIA national conference in Albury has only just passed, but it is national conference time again. The national ALIA conference will be held in conjunction with the New Zealand Library and Information Association. It will run from 26 to 29 September, 1994, in beautiful Wellington.

Speakers and topics are still being confirmed, but health librarians can look forward to a number of sessions, chiefly on Wednesday and Thursday in the concurrent sessions, that will be of particular interest.

Topics will range from general management issues to the effects of economic rationalism on the workplace, and will encompass other issues such as libraries in the public sector, marketing, resource sharing, indigenous issues, education and services for the ethnic communities, information technology and heritage.

The conference will last one week, the formal papers being delivered from Tuesday to Thursday, while Monday and Friday will be given over to meetings of the various Special Interest Groups of both Associations.

Over the coming months you will be hearing a lot about the conference and, as details of speakers and panellists are confirmed, they will be published in *Incite*.

Should you have any questions about the conference please contact ALIA in Canberra on 06 285 1877.

Carolyn Cherrett, ALIA Membership Services Manager

Specials, Law and Health Librarians Conference Synergy in Sydney 1995

Planning for the conference is well under way with the planning committee and some of the subcommittees already appointed.

The conference will run from Sunday 27 August until Wednesday 30 August, 1995. The conference theme "Synergy" has been chosen to reflect the coming together of the three sections and reflects a vision of the energy generated and the "beginning", ie. the start of the next two years. The philosophy is that there will be something to take away and work on until the next conference in 1997. "Conference and Exhibition" reflects the broader range of trade stands to include photocopiers, computer software and other products not usually seen at a library conference.

Waal Foda of Australian Convention Management Services has been appointed as the conference organiser. Waal has had extensive experience in organising ALIA events and is well known as the organiser of the Online and On Disc Conference held in Sydney.

If you put your name down for a place on any of the conference committees and have not heard from us yet please do not think that your offer has been overlooked. There are more appointments to be made and you can be assured that we will be in contact with you soon. If you have not yet volunteered it is still not too late to help us organise one of Australia's leading library conferences.

Kay Vincent, Liverpool Hospital (NSW)

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will need to be very careful attention to the differing roles of professionals, para-professionals, and other staff.

The enterprise bargaining process will also add further complexity by increasing the number of separate arrangements in the various sectors in which librarians work, Teece believes.

A critical factor will be how to make sure the competency standards are able to accommodate changing requirements, he says. "If they are not sufficiently forward looking, the standards could be out of date before the ink is dry."

In short, the National Training Reform Agenda aims to lift workforce quality and end the previous divergence of the different parts of the country in training and education.

Teece says that competency standards to date have concentrated on trade and middle level areas with few, if any, professional occupations yet subject to approved competencies.

For the library and information sector, national competency standards are being put together through the Arts Industry Training Advisory Board, operating under the trading name Arts Training Australia. A project task force representing employers, unions and associations has been working over the past year to gather information from library staff around Australia as the basis for the proposed standards. The taskforce expects to present draft standards for endorsement by the National Training Board around the middle of this year.

The development of competency standards is very much the first step in implementing the Federal Government's Training Reform Agenda. Much will remain to be done if they are to contribute meaningfully to the increase in workforce skills which is the industry's ultimate aim.

It is vitally important that ALIA continues to get information from the field on what is happening in your workplace. Members who wish to provide information or who need information about the competency development process should ring Phil Teece at ALIA's National Office on 06 285 1877.

In the next issue of the *HLS National Newsletter* we will publish a model enterprise agreement for libraries produced by ALIA.

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serve as a baseline guide only. The standards cover critical areas such as budgets, staffing, resources, services and facilities, and collection expenditure ratios.

Once the committee's work of consultation and writing is completed the document will be presented to the executive committee of the Health Libraries Section for ratification and subsequent publication by ALIA.

Copies of the draft are available from your State HLS and from the National Executive. Any further comments should be addressed to Ruth Mitchell, Royal Ryde Rehab Centre, 227 Morrison Road, Ryde NSW 2112, Fax: 02 809 6017, by 15 April, 1994.

(advertisement)

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For more information contact
DA ELECTRONIC MEDIA,
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