

# THE GRATIS NET

Newsletter of the GRATIS networks

No. 7

September 1993

Note from the Editor



This is my last national newsletter as the GRATISQ committee are taking over the reins as National Co-Ordinator. My desktop publishing software has still not arrived either! The wheels of government (purchasing) grind very slowly indeed. The new editor will be Megan Neumann from the Wesley Hospital (GWES), and further news items should be sent to her or to the state reporters listed below:

GRATIS - Marion Steele  
GRATISACT - Wilma Hewitt  
GRATISSA - Julie Hooke  
VICGRATIS - Bill Freeman

Deadline for the next issue is December 15, 1993.

## CONVENOR'S COLUMN

The GRATISNET General Biennial Meeting was held on Thursday 26th August, 1993, during the Asian Pacific Specials Health and Law Librarians Conference in Broadbeach, Qld.

At the meeting the main item of discussion was the proposed GRATISNET National Code of Conduct, Rules and Objectives document prepared by the GRATISQ Committee. This document was officially adopted at the meeting and Queensland will continue to refine those areas where it was felt that further discussion was still needed. I feel that it is a major step forward in the development of the network that such a document be accepted by members since uniformity in procedures is essential in a network based on co-operation. Those members who have concerns over any of the rules or objectives should address their concerns via their state co-ordinating committee to the Queensland working party.

At this meeting, New Zealand, per Margaret Gibson Smith; requested that the network consider admitting that country as a member of GRATISNET. It was agreed that a trial period of operation between NSW and New Zealand be conducted to test the feasibility of this proposal. The possibility of Tasmania joining the network has been revived and it is expected that Tasmanian members will approach the ACT and national Committees when they are ready to make formal application.

The responsibilities of the National Co-Ordinating Committee were passed to Queensland by predetermined rotation. The South Australian Committee wish them well in their two year commitment.

Our main achievement for 1992/93 has been the production of the combined union list. The launch of the first national GRATISNET union list was hosted by the University Co-Op during the conference. The reception was attended by a large number of guests and proved to be a very pleasant evening. On behalf of the members I would like to thank Carolyn Cherrett, John Oldmeadow, the Co-Op's new Chief Executive Officer, and the team of hardworking staff who made it all happen. By now you should have all received your new fiche and we hope that you find it as fast and straightforward to use as it was intended to be. Many nice comments have so far been received from appreciative users.

I particularly want to thank the members of the South Australian Co-ordinating Committee for their unfailing co-operation over the last two years and the co-ordinators from the other states with whom it has been a pleasure to communicate.

May the network enjoy continued success for 1994. It will be interesting to see where developments will lead us.

Elisabeth Gatehouse

## NETWORK NOTES

## NEWS FROM GRATIS



Congratulations to Don Keast (NLMH) and his wife, Jocelyn, on the birth of their daughter, Louise Ruth on 17th June, 1993.

The CSIRO Division of Radiophysics (NS:RP) have advised that they have a major staffing problem between September and December 1993. They have requested that other libraries avoid sending requests for inter-library loans during that time. However, as they have unique holdings of Surgical Endoscopy, they will make arrangements to continue to supply copies as needed from this title only until their staffing situation returns to normal.

As a result of a transfer of holdings from the Newling Library to the Dixon Library, all I.L.L. requests for NAEA should be sent to the Health Sciences Librarian, I.L.L., Dixon Library, University of New England, ARMIDALE, N.S.W. 2351.

## NEWS FROM GRATISQ

The Department of Family Services libraries in Ipswich (QHS) and Brisbane (QCWS) have centralised their collections. Requests for material from these collections should now be directed to QCWS only.

## NEWS FROM VICGRATIS

The network is pleased to welcome three new Victorian libraries: The Epilepsy Foundation, Caritas Christi Hospital and Cabrini Hospital. Arrangements will be made to have their holdings notified to other GRATISNET libraries. The North East Metropolitan Psychiatric Services Library, based at Bundoora (behind LaTrobe University) have started coding and will be joining shortly.



## NEWS FROM GRATISSA



On 29th September, 1993, the Women's and Children's Hospital Library, now known as the Eric Sims Library, was officially opened by Prof. D. Frewin, Dean of Medicine, University of Adelaide, before a gathering of friends of the library, including 14 local and interstate librarians. The Library is absolutely splendid and worth a look if you're in the neighbourhood! Congratulations to Elisabeth Gatehouse for her 15 years of persistence and to all those responsible for finally achieving such a successful result.



Eric Sims Library

The Royal Adelaide Hospital has decided to have another general close-down over Christmas/New Year. This will occur between December 20, 1993 and January 16, 1994 and will affect availability of inter-library loans from both SSNL and SRAH between these dates. It is probable that library staff will be present for shelf-checking at some time during this period. It would be advisable to ring and make sure that your requests can be attended to before January 16 if a "slow" response is a problem.

Iron rusts from disuse; stagnant water loses its purity and in cold weather becomes frozen; even so does inaction sap the vigour of the mind. *Leonardo da Vinci*

## THE DISTRIBUTED NATIONAL COLLECTION

A post-conference meeting of librarians representing university libraries and the National Library of Australia was held on Friday 27th August, 1993. To the amusement of many, it was listed in the conference programme as a meeting on the "Disturbed National Collection". (Perhaps this was no typo!!!!)

University libraries have been forced to sacrifice large chunks of their periodical subscription lists because of lack of funds, but rather than concentrate on preserving titles at risk, most participants were more concerned with identifying subject collections of excellence to be maintained. Identifying these areas was something of a problem, but it will no doubt ultimately be achieved by the use of conspectus or the Index Medicus listing. Many collections have similar strengths, so identifying which subjects (e.g. pathology, anatomy, tropical medicine) would be chosen for intensive collection was not very clear-cut.

It was not intended that libraries would avoid collecting what they needed purely because another library had a special mandate to collect in that area. However, a library specialising in a subject would undertake to maintain the "hideously expensive" titles which others could not afford. Such an agreement to collect might last for 5 years, after which the arrangement could be renegotiated. No library could be expected to undertake such a responsibility permanently.

Establishing guidelines under which such a scheme would work will be a task for the steering committee, headed by Dorothea Rowse. Apart from devising a method to establish the basic subject allocations, elements for consideration will include:

- Inter-Library loan arrangements
- e.g. 48-hour turnaround from the special collections, with separate fast track provisions

- The need for participants to be on ABN and committed to updating their holdings at least in their special collection area.

- Methods to review and monitor arrangements, and deal with problems arising from changes in collecting ability or responsibility.

- The need to provide reference services from the special collections for external users.

- Long-term or permanent loan of collections between libraries to boost relevant special collections.

Obviously libraries would have to maintain their obligations to their primary users. In many cases this would be well-defined and reflected in the N.H.& M.R.C. grants being received by staff of the institution. This being so, those undertaking to collect in particular areas may be formalizing existing arrangements.

The prospect of including teaching hospitals in this scheme was canvassed briefly. At least some university medical collections rely on the presence of good clinical collections in their teaching hospitals and do not duplicate these subscriptions.

It was decided that a small steering committee should formulate proposals on behalf of CAUL and that the resulting arrangements when approved by CAUL would be put before the Vice Chancellors to solicit their support and commitment. If this were done by June 1994, decisions on journal purchases for 1995 could be made in the light of these new arrangements. Discussions could then begin with non-university librarians with an interest in the health sciences.

Julie Hooke



