Technology Award for State Library of NSW

Amanda Kelly coordinates this prize-winning project

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The State Library of New South Wales has won a gold award in the Government Technology Productivity Awards, presented in Canberra on 22 February.

The award recognises the Multimedia Library Link (ISDN) Project which allows remote site users to access the Library's resources, including its vast collection of full colour visual images.

The project combines the use of Telecom's Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) with an image compression technology known as Super VideoWindows, to allow the capture and transmission of images in full colour to a remote site.

State Librarian Alison Crook accepted the award at a dinner attended by 570 senior public servants and computer suppliers in Canberra. She said that the award should help focus attention on the extremely interesting things that libraries are doing with technology these days and the enormous benefits that other government departments can obtain in

working with these libraries. For example, the public library system is the best option for making government information accessible to the public, especially information in data bases. Public libraries are the biggest distribution network, are open the longest hours, are accessible to more people and are staffed by trained information professionals.

The State Library is also developing markets throughout Asia for its services and has the experience and expertise to assist other Government and private organisations wishing to make information available to these markets.

The Multimedia Library Link Project operates through workstations designed specifically for ISDN by Australian technology company Jtec Pty Limited . The University of Western Sydney, Nepean has acted as a receiver site for the testing of the transmission of paintings, relics, manuscripts and other forms of information during an initial trial which commenced in January 1991.

The second stage of the project,

scheduled to commence in May, will be a pilot study involving four public libraries—Tamworth, Cooma, Wyong and Warringah. Amanda Kelly, the project coordinator for the State Library, will supervise demonstrations of the image and text transfer system to a variety of Library clients and to business, community and industry groups. Research will be carried out to determine the response and the results will be known in November 1993.

Initial testing has shown that anyone needing to send and receive pictures, 3-dimensional items, graphics or electronic data can benefit from the system. These include advertising agencies, television, print media, medical practitioners (for X-rays and ultra-sound), architects and education services.

The State Library's new Document Delivery Service will participate in the project by using ISDN's Group IV fax mode to transmit text-based documents requested by clients at the four public libraries. ∎