

# Lost in the information universe?

## Cataloguers chart the way

*Charting the information universe*, 13th National Cataloguing conference, 13-15 October 1999

In his book, *Silicon snake oil: second thoughts on the information superhighway*, Clifford Stoll wrote:

*'And if there's one thing librarians know how to do, it's catalog things... how come they're not consulted right in the beginning of the designing of most databases?'*

Why indeed? When you think about it, cataloguers are amongst the world's foremost experts in the organisation of information. Librarians have been working for centuries on making the universe of information more accessible to users. The objectives of cataloguing have not changed, but advances in technology have altered dramatically the environment in which cataloguers operate.

The 13th National Cataloguing conference will investigate the changing environment and how we should respond to it. The keynote speaker, Tom Delsey, director general of Corporate Policy and Communication at the National Library of Canada, has been studying this issue for some time; his recent work on modelling the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules is an expression of his intellectual endeavour. His keynote address will deal with the impact of technological change on the objects we catalogue and the systems we use to manage bibliographic data.

Clifford Stoll's plea for more organisation of the data available on the internet is not new. Both cataloguers and metadata specialists have been exploring ways of reducing the complexity and chaos that exists there. Renato Iannella, from the Distributed Systems Technology Centre in Brisbane, will present a paper at the conference on Dublin Core developments in Australia. We hope that his attendance will help to promote the synergy that is needed between librarians and systems specialists to approach this problem.

Several sub-themes will be explored during the conference. The call for papers invites authors to address a range of topics, including knowledge management in business and new organisational structures in technical services.

A trade display will be held in conjunction with the conference — a first for a cataloguing conference.

Each cataloguing conference has its own unique flavour, reflecting the issues of the time and the place in which the conference is held. The organising committee of the conference in Brisbane hopes that this will be a challenging conference, examining the very foundations of cataloguing and its application in the modern world. Brisbane as a city has seen enormous change in the last



## 13<sup>th</sup> National Cataloguing Conference

few years. In a relatively short time it has grown from a large country town to a sophisticated and lively city. It is appropriate that the 1999 conference should be held here, where change is seen as inevitable and desirable. We hope that it will be a catalyst for the development of new ideas and strategies for the future of cataloguing in the 21st century.

*Ann Huthwaite, conference convenor*

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