LISWA launches new information gateway

People searching the LISWA website are now able to access not only the new-look catalogue but more resources than ever before directly from the home page, making knowledge resources easier and quicker to find.
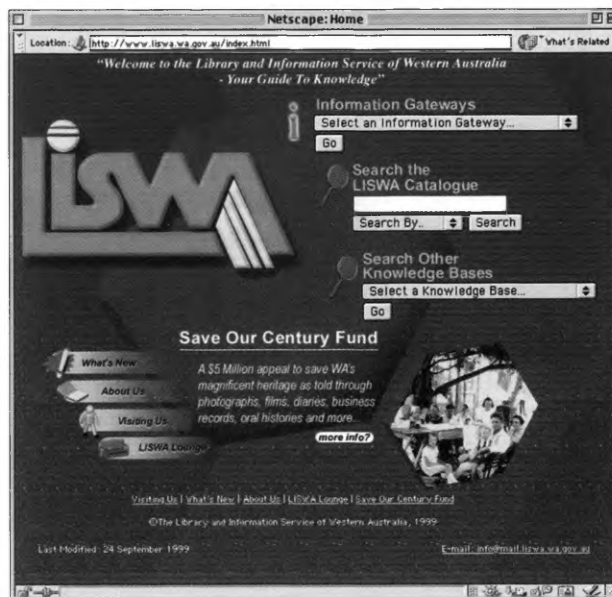
Arts Minister Peter Foss launched the new website on Friday 3 September, describing it as being more user-friendly, and allowing easier navigation of the information superhighway than ever before. Mr Foss said, 'LISWA is to be congratulated on this initiative, providing information gateways to the world's information for all Western Australians'.

State librarian, Lynn Allen, described the website as LISWA's most innovative service. 'It not only delivers more quality than before, its design will enable the development of future interactive services'.

This sophisticated new design also allows free access to internet information resources and sites at any of the forty-seven work-stations within the Alexander Library Building. A feature of the new website is the Search Pad, which allows clients to search for information in the LISWA catalogue while they are visiting other sites.

At the launch, Mr Foss announced another new service for clients of the Alexander Library Building and regional public libraries: the opportunity to explore the wealth of documents available through one of the largest international document providers, EBSCO Information Services. The EBSCO services include MasterFile Premier, which provides full-text access to articles over 1810 periodicals; World Magazine Bank, which provides full text articles from over 240 English language publications, and EBSCO Animals, which provides in-depth information on a variety of topics relating to animals.

Mr Foss also launched the new LISWA catalogue on CD-ROM. The catalogue will be updated yearly, and made available from most libraries for people who do not have access to the internet, or for those who prefer searching the catalogue using CD-ROM.

In summing up, Mr Foss said, 'You don't need a crystal ball to see that the explosive growth in electronic information will have a major impact upon library and information services. LISWA has anticipated these changes and, by developing new online services, is allowing all Western Australians to share the benefits of the global information society'.

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NSW.net

The tyranny of distance is a harsh reality to many people in New South Wales. Much of the state is information poor, particularly in areas where electronic access to information is still relatively expensive. Improved public and community access is a priority and local government public libraries are playing a key part. NSW.net is providing the necessary state-wide communications infrastructure to allow cost-effective access and sharing of information.

NSW.net is about equity, participation, co-operation and utilising the global network for local community benefit. The NSW.net project allows New South Wales public libraries and their local authorities to connect to the internet, and to each other.

The underlying philosophy of NSW.net is based upon equity and participation. The aim is to increase the efficiency of access to online services across the state and to eliminate the inequality that exists between metropolitan and rural New South Wales.

NSW.net has three main aspects:
- a permanent high-bandwidth connection to the internet for a set per annum cost
- the establishment of a virtual private network for the delivery of services to members; and
- the establishment of NSW.net as a consortium for the bulk purchase of services.

NSW.net also allows libraries and councils to make their catalogues and other databases available over the internet.

NSW.net has recently subscribed to ABI/INFORM — Global Image edition for members. ABI/INFORM brings together a large collection of information from hundreds of international business and management journals, and has been compiled to meet the research needs of international users.

The interface is attractive and the searching software is easy to use. The subject coverage includes areas such as: accounting, banking, business, computers, economics, energy, engineering, environment, finance, health, insurance, law, management, taxation and telecommunications. Also provided is information on more than 60 000 companies. ∎