Discover more than 4500 Australian libraries!

Erica Ryan, Australian Libraries Gateway

The Australian Libraries Gateway (ALG) [www.nla.gov.au/libraries], a Web-based directory service hosted by the National Library of Australia, aims to be the 'one-stop-shop' for current information about all Australian libraries: a vital tool for Australian and international users.

Since April 1998, the Gateway has served to improve access to information about Australia's libraries, their collections and services. The key difference between it and many other Australian library directories is that each library listed has its own password to update or amend its entry via the World Wide Web. This means that many libraries are managing their information in the Gateway, thus ensuring that it is both up-to-date and reliable.

Visitors to the Gateway can, for example:

- easily locate all the libraries of a particular type (sixteen library 'types' are available, including public, special, school K-12, university, corporate/business, health/medical) in Australia or just those in a particular region;
- search for Australian libraries by keyword or name and retrieve a detailed summary of information about the libraries, their collections and services (including links back to the library Web site/s);
- use a series of maps to locate libraries in Australian states/territories, regions and five major metropolitan areas (Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide and Brisbane) based on Australian Bureau of Statistics statistical divisions;
- link directly to the Web site of any listed library (where available) and so explore the resources it provides and services it offers in more depth;
- link directly to the catalogue/s (Web or telnet accessible catalogues, where available) of any library listed;
- find and use the online reference services provided by Australian libraries;
- search for libraries which have revealed their subject collecting levels;
- access cultural heritage materials through on-line exhibitions and events;
- access and search the image collections of Australian libraries;
- discover which Australian libraries have adopted the Z39.50 protocol (via the Directory of Z39.50 Targets in Australia), and so individually search remote catalogues using a single set of commands;
- access a wide range of national and international library related organisations and institutions;
- find a comprehensive list of Australian library sector electronic discussion lists (including details of how to subscribe);
- access information about a wide range of subjects relating to the Australian library profession, such as copyright and standards; and
- access information via other key Australian internet subject gateways.

Since the site prototype was first released in April last year, the Gateway has been developed as a 'net project' of the federal government-funded, Australia's Cultural Network (ACN). Together with other sectoral gateways such as Australian Museums & Galleries On-Line (AMOL) [amol.org.au] and Archives of Australia [www.archivenet.gov.au], the Australian Libraries Gateway reveals the depth and range of materials held in Australian cultural and heritage institutions.

Australian Libraries Gateway publicity materials are available free for your library staff and users. If you would like copies, please contact ALG Administration.

For more information about the Gateway or to have your library included, contact: Reply Paid 29, ALG Administration, Australian Libraries Gateway, National Library of Australia, Canberra 2600. Telephone: 02 6262 1137; fax: 02 6273 2545; or e-mail alg@nla.gov.au

Why not add a link to the Gateway from your Web site today? ∎