



Value Statement

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INTRODUCTION

Libraries Australia is an essential pillar of the national information infrastructure, and reflects the endeavour of hundreds of Australian libraries to provide support for the activities of libraries and their users.

The Libraries Australia service is built around the National Union Catalogue and the Australian National Bibliographic Database (ANBD). It commenced in 1981 as the Australian Bibliographic Network (ABN). The service was established to support the description of books, journals, and other items held in Australian libraries and it continues to be the key bibliographic support service within the Australian library sector.¹ The service platform has been completely upgraded at regular intervals – from ABN to Kinetica to Libraries Australia - and this program is ongoing.

The National Library of Australia has always regarded the provision of the National Union Catalogue as the keystone of its outreach to the library community. The library community responded positively by contributing details of individual collections to the ANBD, in effect creating a cooperative. As an acknowledgement of this, the key recommendation listed in *Libraries in the Online Environment*, Senate Enquiry October 2003, that the National Library of Australia receive additional funding to provide improved access to Kinetica for all Australian libraries and end users² has been delivered by the National Library, without the proposed extra government funding.

The transformation of the networked service from ABN to Kinetica was a deliberate response by the National Library to the phenomenal change propagated by the web environment. Similarly, the National Library has paralleled the delivery of networked information online

¹ NLA Annual Report 2000-01, www.nla.gov.au/policy/annrep01/pages/annrep.html

² *Libraries in the Online Environment*, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.arc-38307>

with its opening up of access for the general public to the National Union Catalogue via Libraries Australia.

ECONOMIC VALUE

After 25 years, the cost of running the service stands at \$5m per annum³, but the return on investment could be increased in the context of both the needs of Australian libraries and the needs of the general public. The expert metadata (MARC) contained within the ongoing contributions made by libraries could work harder across the global information network⁴.

International studies ascribing value to National Union Catalogues have focused on the traditional: in 2002, the National Library of New Zealand valued its national bibliographic services as worth more than \$NZD160m to that nation⁵. Also in 2002, a study by the National Library of Canada found that almost \$2m Canadian dollars were saved for university and large public libraries by the cataloguing efforts of the Library and Archives Canada / Bibliothèque et Archives Canada⁶. However, this forms only a part of Library subsidisation for its union catalogue services.

The 'retail' value of Australia's National Union Catalogue has not been quantified.

CURRENT SERVICE VALUE

The National Library continually seeks ways to grow the use of existing services. The current value of Libraries Australia is measured by stakeholders against the services provided to support the businesses of Australian libraries. Contributions to the ANBD, including bibliographic, holdings and authority records, are subsequently reused to support all libraries which subscribe to Libraries Australia, and to a lesser extent, assist Australian libraries which aren't subscribers. The services that underpin the management of individual libraries, which can be exploited as separate modules, are:

- Searching;
- Original & copy cataloguing;
- Batch loading;
- InterLibrary Loan / Document Delivery;
- Statistics and Products;
- Syndication for resource discovery; and
- Support for the library network.

The statistics provided below show usage by library sector. Where actual overall totals are increasing, the percentage share of a particular sector may decline in response to this positive growth.

³ This figure includes a \$1m subsidisation by the National Library (2006-07).

⁴ RLG Programs 2007 Partners Annual Meeting, Dempsey L.,
<http://digitalarchive.oclc.org/da/ViewObject.jsp?objid=0000070504&reqid=3590>

⁵ *Economic valuation: National Bibliographic Database and National Union Catalogue*
www.natlib.govt.nz/catalogues/library-documents/economic-valuation-nbd-nuc

⁶ *The Value of the National Union Database* [Kinetica paper KAC2003/1/10]

Searching

The Libraries Australia subscription service represents about 87% of search usage of the ANBD, so the service is still very much perceived as a tool for librarians. In this context, the key purpose of searching is to facilitate original and copy cataloguing and interlibrary loan functions. Libraries Australia also provides a back-up when individual library catalogues are unavailable to library users. Since being launched, the Libraries Australia free search service has increased search usage by 93% and exposed Australian library collections more widely. The table below shows Libraries Australia search usage by subscribing library sector.

Library sector	2005/2006	2006/2007
CAUL	34%	30%
State/territory/national	18%	19%
Public	30%	31%
Special	13%	14%
Other	5%	6%

Table 1: Search usage by sector (excluding free search service usage)

There has been a significant reduction in payments since the introduction of the subscription based payment model on 1 July 2005. If the previous model based on the value of search and document delivery functions was applied in 2006/07, libraries would have paid \$7,5m rather than \$4m to Libraries Australia.

Original & Copy cataloguing

Original cataloguing is contributed by more than 100 libraries in the Libraries Australia cooperative. For many libraries the Libraries Australia Cataloguing Client is their primary interface for creating original catalogue records.

Finding items for copy cataloguing purposes is estimated to be behind 60% of searching. The service provides an efficient way to simultaneously search over 17 million records contributed by Australian libraries and sourced from international agencies such as the Library of Congress and the British Library.

Library sector	2006/2007	
	Record Import Service	Online cataloguing
CAUL libraries	41%	11%
State/territory/national	26%	22%
Public	5%	34%
Special	28%	30%
Other	0%	3%

Table 2: Cataloguing contributions (includes new and copy cataloguing) by sector

A dozen international search targets are also provided, with access configured and maintained by the National Library on behalf of the cooperative. The ability to search so many purpose-built sites in real time is extremely efficient for the cataloguing workflow. The 1st July 2007 agreement with OCLC provides an additional source of more than 92m records for all Australian libraries to streamline workflows.

International target	2005/2006	2006/2007
British Library	70,615	56,232
Chinese University of Hong Kong	5,948	8,686
CISTI (Canada)	13,763	107,994
CURL (UK)	24,948	30,049
Hong Kong University of Science & Technology	6,126	8,844
Library of Congress	94,316	115,478
WorldCat ⁷	42,385	27,135
RLG	157,318	193,400
SCIPIO	2,330	2,604
Singapore	21,841	32,921
Te Puna (NZ)	84,749	351,816
University of Hong Kong	6,869	10,245
TOTAL	531,208	945,404

Table 3: Searches of overseas targets to which Libraries Australia provides access

Commercial record suppliers also use the ANBD to source records for subsequent supply to libraries. Libraries Australia supports these organisations in the interests of building the National Union Catalogue and supporting alternative and cost-efficient workflows for Australian libraries.

Batch loading

The Record Import Service (RIS) is a convenient mechanism for agencies to load records to the ANBD. Whether the agency is a library or a commercial supplier, every agency is treated uniquely, with attendant massaging of metadata to meet Libraries Australia standards. This is a significant value-added service provided by the National Library, and is not restricted to MARC21 data. Other data, such as Dublin Core and MODS, are also converted as necessary.

Records containing non-Roman script (Chinese, Japanese, and Korean) were integrated into the service in 2005. This activity has expanded to include more than 10 non-English language scripts, reflecting the increasing number of multi-lingual resources in Australian libraries.

⁷This count does not show the full usage of WorldCat by Australian libraries which subscribe directly.

ANBD records in non-Roman script	30 June 2005 705,000	30 June 2007 816,456
ANBD records for non-English language materials	n/a	4,927,567

Table 4: Multi-lingual resources

InterLibrary Loan (ILL) & Document Delivery

InterLibrary Loan services are appreciated strongly by all library sectors. As more Australian libraries switch to ISO ILL protocol compliant systems, there has been growth in participation in the Libraries Australia Document Delivery (LADD) service. Subscribers to LADD have increased from 677 in 2005/06 to 716 in 2006/07. This activity is supported by a very efficient national payments service, which manages payments and charges between more than 500 member libraries.

Library sector	2005/2006	2006/2007
CAUL libraries	63%	57%
State/territory/national	9%	8%
Public	8%	16%
Special	18%	16%
Other	2%	3%

Table 5: Document delivery (items requested and supplied) by sector

An InterLibrary Loan and Document Delivery benchmarking study was conducted in 2001⁸. The study found that: "Overall, there is a cost benefit in minimising fees paid. The most effective means to do this appears to be through cooperative agreements." In particular, "the more requests made to libraries within a cooperative agreement, the lower the fees paid unit cost. Public libraries and special libraries with the highest percentage of requests filled by 'cooperative' libraries had significantly lower fees in general. This trend was most significant for public and special libraries, but was also evident for other library sectors. Cooperative agreements involving university and National/State libraries were less likely to be free of fees."

Library Sector	Requesting	Supplying
Combined	44%	55%
National/State	25%	48%
University	13%	22%
Special	51%	68%
Public	90%	90%

Table 6: Percentage of requests filled via cooperative agreements⁹

⁸ *ILDD Benchmarking Study*, 2001 www.nla.gov.au/initiatives/nrswg/ildd_rpt_sum.html

⁹ "A cooperative/reciprocal agreement may include, for example, reduced or waived fees, or expedited

The National Library established a cooperative agreement with the National Library of New Zealand's Te Puna service in 2006 to support InterLibrary Loan between the two countries. In 2006/07, the Trans Tasman InterLending service exchanged items as follows: 7,318 items were supplied to New Zealand libraries from Australian material and 2,931 items were supplied to Australian libraries from New Zealand collections.

Statistics & Products

As libraries change their jurisdictions or downsize their print collections, the ANBD is the perfect tool for extracting data to support collection management decisions. The Products and Record Export Service (RES) services provide batches of records from the ANBD according to specific criteria for collection analysis as well as the routine transfer of catalogue records to public access catalogues.

Library Sector	2005-06	2006-07
CAUL libraries	34%	42%
State/territory/national	8%	2%
Public	2%	33%
Special	19%	3%
Other	33%	20%

Table 7: Products usage by sector

Data syndication & resource discovery

Data syndication is a mechanism for bringing the general public to Libraries Australia, even if they initially know nothing about the service. When a patron starts a search in a search engine such as Google, the results can provide a direct link to the patron's local library or other holdings in Australia. This supports the dissemination of information and published research beyond the boundaries imposed by current systems, which should be transparent to patrons.

Syndication is arranged by the National Library in a brokering role on behalf of all contributing Australian libraries. Syndication takes the form of both record seeding into search engines and exchange with larger aggregations. The current targets are:

<u>Search engines</u>	<u>Catalogue exchanges</u>
Google	WorldCat
Google Scholar	Open WorldCat
Yahoo	
A9/OpenSearch.	

Syndication overcomes the issue of union catalogues in themselves not having as much gravitational pull as search engines. Seeding search engines results in the general public

processing or delivery."

discovering library resources when they are using search engines as their research starting point, with deep linking back to individual public access catalogues.

Syndication for enhanced resource discovery is not aimed at increasing InterLibrary Loan traffic; rather, it showcases Australia's creative endeavour and scientific research to a global audience. Such strategies are positioning the ANBD for the occasion when records for digital resources outnumber those in print. The National Library does not wish to create extra unmanageable work for libraries, it is attempting to find a future which keeps libraries indispensable in a rich information age and repays the investments made in the cooperative over the past 25 years.

Support for the library network

The National Library provides ongoing support to the library community by leading on and/or participating in standards development activities, for example, by hosting the Australian Committee on Cataloguing¹⁰. With highly-valued support from other Australian libraries, the Library also provides a voice from the Australian community to the global library network level. More recently, the Library has led in the development of RDA – Resource Description & Access¹¹, and ISO 2146 – Registry Services for Libraries and Related Organisations.¹²

BENEFITS ARISING FROM PARTICIPATION

Participation in the cooperative provides efficiencies back to the library community even if they do not contribute records to the ANBD. Investment in Libraries Australia services is returned many-fold in the following ways:

For libraries:

- collection analysis and management; for example, the libraries of the Group of 8 universities have decided to rationalise holdings of journals and monographs. Ongoing concerted effort in this area will result in the National Union Catalogue becoming an 'online catalogue of last copies';
- collection development, which could be arranged by consortia rather than at individual library level; and
- access to National Library innovation to keep library services functionally relevant. The ANBD is a unique platform from which to springboard new types of service delivery.

In mediated public services:

- one-stop shopping, obviating the need to locate and search multiple catalogues;
- reference services: a recent survey examining the use of links to guides in the Libraries Australia search service showed that the service is accessed equally by cataloguers, ILL officers, and reference librarians; and
- InterLibrary Loan and other mechanisms for exploiting of 'The Long Tail'¹³.

¹⁰ Australian Committee on Cataloguing <http://www.nla.gov.au/lis/stndrds/grps/acoc/index.html>

¹¹ Defined at <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/jsc/rda.html>

¹² Defined at <http://www.nla.gov.au/wgroups/ISO2146/>

¹³ Australian National Bibliographic Number: <http://nla.gov.au/anbd.bib-an40672949>

Globally speaking, mediated services such as these are being redeveloped to ensure they are accessible in an unmediated way, freeing up library time for more essential tasks such as digitising and describing unique local resources.^{14,15} These benefits will quickly be lost if the cooperative can't adapt to the new information environment of which libraries are now part.

The ANBD is a unique platform from which to springboard further development and it can be taken in new directions. Some possible directions are outlined below.

FUTURE SERVICE VALUE

A recent study found that the economic value of libraries is less important than what their efforts signify in the long term. Two issues often not considered in current value studies, which are valid measures to some degree for the National Union Catalogue, were:

"... for libraries the value of the collection and services is not always seen in immediate use by patrons. The research collections, including historical collections in public libraries, are not created simply to use each year, but are a long term investment in building a cohesive resource based [sic] for current and future study. There also may be communities which do not use the library [currently] but have the potential to benefit in the future..."

*... If the whole national research output of a nation is available through libraries a multimillion dollar research cohort is accessible."*¹⁶

The utility of the Libraries Australia service has always been dual: it supports the activities of librarians and other collection managers as well as the information-seeking needs of all Australians. Two factors have changed the immediate information environment: a significantly reduced need for mediated discovery services; and the proliferation of e-resources from publishing houses trying to compete against freely available Web content¹⁷. But as the business of Australian libraries changes, it doesn't follow that the ANBD is less relevant to library operations. Stakeholders can still derive efficiencies from participation in the cooperative. This is illustrated in three areas of growth:

■ Digitisation of unique local collections;

Public, state and university libraries are realising that their special collections have intrinsic value in the networked environment.¹⁸ The unique nature of these collections makes it imperative to share access to them. The ANBD provides a place to aggregate virtual collections of the distributed works of authors, artists, and academics spread across Australian collections.

¹⁴ Tennant, R. *Grand Unification Theory*

<http://libraryjournal.com/blog/1090000309/post/1630009963.html>, 24 May 2007

¹⁵ Dempsey, L. *The network reconfigures the library systems environment*

<http://orweblog.oclc.org/archives/001379.html>, 6 July 2007

¹⁶ Missingham, R. *Libraries and economic value: a review of recent studies*

www.nla.gov.au/nla/staffpaper/2005/missingham8.html

¹⁷ E-resource is defined here to mean browser-accessible content, not a discrete physical carrier.

¹⁸ Horn, A., Epps, J., and Moncrieff, J. *Financial Accounting and library collections: the bottom line*, 2006, www.deakin.edu.au/library/staff/publications/ahorn/Horn_Click061.pdf

■ Management of the scholarly lifecycle by academic libraries;

The National Union Catalogue ties together print-based collection development policies. However, as institutional repositories become more established, scholarly outputs should become the focus of collection, description, life-cycle management, and resource sharing activities for their libraries. Libraries Australia provides an efficient vehicle with which to expose Australian research to the global network, because the National Library is able to be a broker and negotiate with other large aggregators¹⁹.

■ Licensing of e-resources.

One of the critical comments in the recent Libraries Australia stakeholder survey was that the ANBD is not the place to share information about licensed e-resources, information which may not need to be shared at all on a national scale. A recent paper throws some light on this commentary: *“electronic resources are now of greater value to the institution in achieving successful outcomes, strategically and financially...Since 2003, the total proportion of Deakin University Library’s information resources budget expended on online resources has increased from 17% to 47%.”*

“The increasing move to electronic journals and electronic books by scholarly publishers, coupled with user’s preferences for online access, is leading the Library to question the long term value of print items.”²⁰

Cataloguing by the licensing library may not be important, but sharing the records and providing holdings information still is. This can be done by ensuring the vendor places the MARC record in the ANBD on behalf of the licensee. Such an arrangement has been confirmed for the recent national site licensing initiative, and was sought to provide a better picture of what is licensed in Australia²¹.

The prime value of the Libraries Australia service is still perceived to be as a bibliographic utility for sharing of catalogue data, but it is available to be exploited in different ways from those imposed by current or historical perceptions of the ANBD. The contributions which have been made and continue to be invested in the cooperative can now be leveraged in the following ways:

■ Representation of a nation’s intellectual record over the long term²²;

The value of the ANBD as a national asset arises from the National Union Catalogue, which was initially a restricted public face of the intellectual output of a nation but is now open via the Libraries Australia free access portal. Leaving the responsibility for the provision of a public access portal to the national and state libraries releases resources for university and public libraries to manage the Australiana for which they have assumed responsibility.

¹⁹ Google Scholar is an obvious example, but having an independent agency such as the National Library take on this role provides a nimble pathway to other aggregators on behalf of all libraries

²⁰ Horn, A., Epps, J., and Moncrieff, J. op. cit.

²¹ ERA - Electronic Resources Australia, for Australian library e-resource subscriptions
<http://era.nla.gov.au/>

²² British Library Press & Public Relations, *The Value of a National Library*, 10 December 2003
<http://www.bl.uk/cgi-bin/press.cgi?story=1399>

■ The metasearch platform;

The Libraries Australia free access portal took a step towards creating a true metasearch platform which can support different types of data, different forms of content, and different approaches to navigation so that "... *libraries can think about how to erase some of the boundaries between databases and allow their users to prospect the full literature in easier ways.*"²³ The same platform could be used to replicate an Australian version of WorldCat Local for libraries which do not want to supply their own Online Public Access Catalogues²⁴.

■ Provision of a statement of the availability of items close to home;

Even while searching the global network, the ANBD should link Australians to content they can use *in situ*. This is particularly important while broadband issues remain unresolved, reducing the amount of digitised content which is usefully available.

■ Promulgation of Australian authors;

The People Australia project is exploring ways of exploiting the ANBD authority file to support creators prior to publication (who lodge their work in institutional repositories) as well as post publication. Not only will this portal recognise the previous high quality authority work done by Australian cataloguers, information about Australian creators will be persistent, citable and available for the long term.

■ Making content accessible through data syndication.

Exchange of ANBD records with other large service providers increases the accessibility of Australian content (and strengthens our assertions in relation to library management best practice). Data syndication bridges the gap between the general public which uses a web search engine to start an information search but can find and use the relevant item in their nearest library via Libraries Australia.

The huge spike in referrals to local catalogues repays the syndication.²⁵ Interestingly, Google is not interested in the Long Tail,²⁶ preferring to 'satisfise' queries with the most frequently held content. As some libraries downsize their print collections in Australia, it will be interesting to gauge the impact of syndication on the exploitation of holdings occurrences in any aggregation.

Data syndication will also apply in reverse, as the ANBD integrates metadata from other sources such as Library Thing²⁷, and the Million Book Project²⁸.

As Australian library collections move from managing print-based materials to managing digital and licensed resources, the National Union Catalogue provides a significant platform on which to examine, test and create a future for library services.

²³ Dempsey, L., *Thinking about the catalogue*, 2006, <http://orweblog.oclc.org/archives/000919.html>

²⁴ <http://www.oclc.org/productworks/worldcatlocal.htm>

²⁵ Gatenby, J. *Accessing library materials via Google and Other Web Sites*, 2007, http://elag2007.upf.edu/papers/gatenby_2.pdf

²⁶ Gatenby, J. *ibid.* p. 2

²⁷ *Library Thing*, <http://www.librarything.com/>

²⁸ *Internet Archive: Million Book Project*, <http://www.archive.org/details/millionbooks>