

National Library of Australia Electronic Information Resources Strategies and Action Plan 2002-2003

(This plan is online at <http://www.nla.gov.au/policy/electronic/resourcesplan2002.html> with links to many of the projects and documents cited)

Introduction

This paper documents the National Library's proposed strategies and actions in relation to Australian and overseas electronic information resources for the period 2002-2003.

The National Library of Australia's priority within its Directions for 2003-2005 is that of "rapid and easy access to the wealth of information resources that reside in libraries and other cultural institutions – and to break down barriers that work against this". The National Library is committed to undertake actions that progress this objective.

The term "electronic information resources" in this paper is taken to mean:

- ?? Digital copies of existing formats such as print, manuscripts, maps, audio and pictorial items.
- ?? Born digital formats such as electronic journals and web sites.
- ?? Metadata describing the above electronic resources and resources in other formats.

The National Library's role in relation to electronic resources includes:

- ?? Collecting, preserving and making available Australian and other information resources in a wide range of formats, in accordance with the provisions of the *National Library Act 1960*.
- ?? Provision of services to support the Australian library system in areas such as resource discovery (bibliographic and metadata services) and directory services.
- ?? Contribution to international developments in library and information services in areas such as the development and promulgation of standards.

Detailed implementation programs support the strategies and associated actions outlined in this paper.

Electronic Information Resources - Trends

In the short to medium term, it is expected that the following broad trends in the information services environment will influence access to electronic information resources:

- ?? Search engines will provide more efficient Internet search capabilities, allowing users to locate required information more easily and with greater precision. Many information sites will remain out of sight of search engines (the "deep web") and other mechanisms will evolve to locate this information.
- ?? New layers of middleware such as improved authentication software will emerge, supporting activities such as e-commerce and other services requiring high levels of security.

- ?? Issues of intellectual property rights on the web will become increasingly important and will be addressed through technological solutions.
- ?? Web users will increasingly access information resources without intermediation by libraries or librarians.
- ?? Portals as interfaces to information will be developed by a range of organisations, providing users with easy access to a defined range of useful electronic information intended to meet individual requirements.
- ?? Commercialisation of the web will continue, particularly in relation to business activities on the web. Conversely, there will continue to be an expectation by information users that many services will be free or charged at low cost.
- ?? Virtual reference services will become more prevalent and more sophisticated, reflecting the shift to the use of the Web and electronic resources. Reference services will increasingly be offered through the Web.
- ?? Collaboration will assume more strategic importance as a way of achieving similar goals across different sectors, and traditional information service providers will group in new and innovative ways.

Policy Considerations

The National Library's strategies on electronic information resources take account of the above trends and will continue to be influenced by the Commonwealth Government's policies on online information access and the information economy. The experience and expectations of advisory groups and users of the National Library's services will also continue to influence developments in access to electronic information resources.

A key policy issue underpinning the National Library's strategies and actions on electronic information resources is the need to provide access to a range of information resources regardless of format. This involves providing access to a coherent collection of material including both electronic and traditional information resources. The UK eLib Electronic Libraries program has coined the term "hybrid library" to cover services that unite the functions of the traditional library with those of electronic, digital or virtual library services.

Further information on the National Library's thinking on the issue of integrated access and hybrid library concepts is available in the paper [*The Challenge of Integrated Access : the Hybrid Library System of the Future.*](#)¹

Electronic Resources - Strategies and Actions

The following strategies and actions for electronic information resources are grouped in the categories: collecting; preservation; access to electronic information resources; and, support for sharing electronic information resources.

Collecting

The National Library's key objective in terms of its collecting role is:

"To ensure that a comprehensive record of Australian history and creative endeavour, and a selected record of universal human knowledge is collected and cared for".

The volume of electronic information resources being made available through the Internet is beyond the ability of any one library to collect and preserve. Therefore, the National Library will continue to work with libraries, publishers and other relevant organisations to ensure that important documentary heritage resources continue to be available for use through a system of distributed archives of electronic resources that are permanently accessible to the public.

The National Library is building a national collection of selected Australian electronic resources (the National Collection of Australian Online Publications, formerly known as the PANDORA Archive). The Library is committed to providing ongoing access to the resources in the collection in the same way as it has traditionally provided ongoing access to Australian information resources in print and other formats. The National Library distinguishes between those resources it collects for preservation as part of the nation's documentary heritage, and the resources for which a link is provided from the catalogue but for which the Library does not accept a preservation responsibility.

At this stage, legal deposit is not available for electronic information resources under Commonwealth legislation. Therefore, permission has to be obtained to collect and archive electronic resources. The National Library will continue to seek the extension of legal deposit provisions to electronic information resources in order to ensure a greater range are preserved for on-going access.

Noting the trend towards electronic only publishing by government agencies, the National Library will continue to influence these agencies to adopt emerging web publishing standards in order to facilitate ongoing access to government information.

Specifically, the National Library will adopt the following strategies in collecting electronic information resources:

| STRATEGY | ACTIONS |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Ensure that the most significant Australian electronic resources are collected/archived with a view to long-term preservation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ?? collecting Australian physical format and online electronic resources in accordance with the current <i>Collection Development Policy</i> as supplemented by <i>Acquisition Guidelines for Australian Physical Format Electronic Publications</i> and the selection guidelines for Australian online publications. ?? collaborating with other organisations to achieve a national collection of archived Australian electronic information resources. | <p>. Apply the following three-tier collecting model to online resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ?? NLA-Archived (This terminology refers to Australian electronic resources that are collected in accordance with the selection guidelines for Australian online publications, archived and preserved indefinitely). ?? Distributed Archive (This terminology refers to Australian electronic resources archived by other organisations – eg. State libraries, university libraries, publishers – under arrangements with the National Library. The National Library will negotiate archival arrangements with these organisations to ensure long-term access and will aim to have these electronic resources recorded on the National Bibliographic Database). ?? Linked through Web addresses (This terminology refers to both Australian and overseas material described in the National Library's catalogue. These resources will not be preserved by the National Library and are only made available via links for as long as they remain Web-accessible). |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Participate in the National Libraries Internet Archive consortium to pilot ways of harvesting and providing access to subsets of the whole Internet domain and to research issues to do with ongoing access. . Investigate ways of collecting and archiving significant information in dynamic databases. . Work towards the extension of legal deposit for the collecting of Australian electronic information resources. . In anticipation of the extension of Commonwealth legal deposit legislation to information in electronic form, work with publishers to develop agreed terms of deposit and access. |
| <p>2. Ensure overseas electronic resources are collected in accordance with the current Collection Development Policy to meet information needs of researchers.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Continue to review the availability of new overseas electronic information resources and their relevance to the Collection Development Policy. . Acquire overseas electronic journals in place of print journals where this approach is more cost-effective. |
| <p>3. Apply and encourage practices to ensure persistence of access to Australian electronic resources</p> <p>(Persistence of access refers to ensuring the integrity and long-term availability of online resources. This will involve strategies to deal with archiving, preservation, persistent identification and ready accessibility over time).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Ensure persistence of access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ?? digital objects managed within the National Collection of Australian Online Publications archive and, ?? digital objects created by the National Library. . Promulgate and promote standards and best practice guidelines. Eg. application of persistent identifiers. . Collaborate with other organisations responsible for identification of information resources to ensure that publishers have a streamlined, easy-to-access identification process. . Determine the Library's role in providing a national persistent naming and resolving service. |

4. Continue to collaborate with Government and other relevant Australian organisations in relation to the collecting and managing Australian electronic information resources.

- . Work with National Archives of Australia and the National Office for the Information Economy to influence government agencies to adopt best practice approaches to publishing and managing electronic resources for ongoing access.
- . Develop a model and guidelines for national collaborative archiving and preservation of a range of electronic resources and services such as digital theses, electronic journals and e-print archives.

Preservation

The National Library's key objective in terms of its preservation role is:

"To preserve and maintain all Australian and significant non-Australian library materials to ensure they are available for current and future use".

The National Library's main preservation objectives are to preserve those information resources collected as part of Australia's documentary heritage, and to help others preserve those electronic resources for which they take responsibility.

Specifically, the National Library will adopt the following strategies in preserving selected electronic information resources:

| STRATEGY | ACTIONS |
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| <p>1. Apply appropriate preservation strategies to the National Library's own collections of electronic resources for long-term access.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Initiate and manage action to preserve at risk materials, implementing the <i>Preservation Policy</i> and the Action Plan which were endorsed in 2001-02. . Enhance the software used to manage the Library's digital collections to enable the recording of preservation management. |

2. Provide leadership to Australian libraries and other relevant organisations in developing policies and techniques for preserving electronic resources, and participate in international forums to develop electronic preservation standards.

- . Share information and tools found to be helpful, such as information on preservation of specific formats.
- . Test and promote the use of the internationally developed preservation metadata set recommended by the OCLC/RLG Working Group on Preservation Metadata.
- . Distribute and gain support for best practice guidelines on archiving and preserving electronic resources (such as the National Library's *Safeguarding Australia's Web Resources* and the reports of the RLG/OCLC Working Group on Attributes of Reliable Digital Archives
- . Continue to develop the PADI subject gateway exploring ways of sustaining the service through further international collaboration.
- . Contribute to the work of the Conference of Directors of National Libraries Digital Issues Group by researching developments among national libraries in extending legal deposit to electronic resources and in archiving digital resources.
- . Develop and make available a costing model for identifying the costs associated with archiving, preserving and providing access to online information resources.
- . Under contract to UNESCO, prepare guidelines on the preservation of digital heritage and arrange a regional international consultation meeting to discuss a draft Charter for the Preservation of Digital Heritage.

Access to Electronic Resources

The National Library's key objective in terms of its information access services role is:

"To ensure that the Library provides effective and open access to its own collections, and to information sources elsewhere".

The Library will continue to provide a wide range of information resources through its Web site, with the catalogue a key resource discovery point. The National Library intends to maintain a holistic view of its resources through its catalogue. In addition, the National Library intends to provide users with access to more detailed subject or format-based listings and to links to remote resources. The aim is to provide users with integrated views of the information resources available to them.

The National Library is responding to user expectations of increased access to digital content, regardless of the user's location, through:

- ?? Ongoing digitisation of Australian collection items in a variety of formats – print, pictorial, map, manuscript and sound recording, and the development of delivery services for these materials.
- ?? Licensing of electronic data sets to provide direct access to electronic journals and other information that is commercially available.
- ?? Provision of links in the catalogue to Internet resources that meet the collecting guidelines outlined in the Collection Development Policy.
- ?? Development of services such as PictureAustralia that provide convenient aggregated search access to digital content held in a variety of Australian libraries and other organisations.
- ?? Participation in the development of digital reference service in and beyond Australia.

Digitisation of parts of the National Library's Australian collections commenced in 1995. Since that time, there has been a steady increase in the availability of digitised pictorial works, maps, manuscripts and sheet music. The National Library has also cooperated with RMIT Publishing and the Copyright Agency Limited to provide a commercially available service based on digital images of a wide range of journal articles indexed in the Australian Public Affairs Information Index (APAIS) and the Australian Medical Index (AMI). At this stage, the demand for increased access to digitised content is being addressed through an expanded digitisation program.

The National Library has traditionally maintained a record of Australia's publishing output. In recent years this has been in the form of a subset of the National Bibliographic Database – the record of library materials held in Australian libraries. In future, electronic information resources will be considered as part of the national publishing output with strategies devised to enable integrated searching across Australian information resources in all formats.

In keeping with its role as set out in the *National Library Act 1960*, the National Library will continue to offer a core set of services free of charge. This is consistent with the trend of free access to a large amount of the information content available via the Internet. More value-added services (such as access to Kinetica) have traditionally been charged in order to recover a proportion of their costs. This will continue to be the case but, wherever possible, free or subsidised access will be provided.

Specifically, the National Library will adopt the following strategies in accessing electronic resources:

| STRATEGY | ACTIONS |
|--|---|
| 1. Maintain and develop the Library's Website to operate as the Library's primary interface for delivering online services to both onsite and offsite users. | . Implement a new service delivery model for the Website that removes barriers to access to the Library's collections by simplifying the number of user interfaces and moving the point at which users have to make choices from discovery to delivery. |
| 2. Provide integrated access to: ?? print and electronic resources; and, ?? collections, items and parts of collections through continued development of the National Library catalogue and information portal. | . Enable discovery of electronic indexes and databases through the Library's catalogue and the National Bibliographic Database by deriving the Library's current Indexes and Databases Service from the catalogue. . Provide better access to the National Library's manuscript collection by linking manuscript finding aids in Encoded Archival Description format (EAD) with the catalogue. |

. Develop and maintain subject guides that provide integrated access to print and electronic resources on a given topic or theme.

3. Extend the availability of digitised information content (including digitised National Library collections) and access to other electronic resources.

. Continue an expanded program of collection digitisation in accordance with the National Library of Australia Digitisation Policy 2000-2004.

. Increase access to online resources through licensing of Australian and overseas datasets and linking to free resources.

. Continue the development of online publications and exhibitions.

. Build on the publishing model developed by the South Seas project to provide innovative online access to Library collection material and to research based on the material.

. Replace the Library's web based resource discovery infrastructure, with the aim of supporting larger databases, improving search performance and increasing searching functionality.

. Develop a delivery framework and specific delivery systems for digitised sheet music, maps, audio materials and manuscripts.

. Enhance the Digital Collections Manager to support the recording of rights management information about the Library's digital collections.

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| <p>4. Develop virtual reference services that support users wherever they are located.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Enhance the Library's online reference services. . Participate in the development of collaborative Australian, regional and international virtual reference services. During 2002-2003 this will be through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Management and participation in the CASL collaborative chat reference service. . Active membership of the international QuestionPoint service. . Investigation of opportunities for regional partnerships in reference service development. |
| <p>5. Collaborate with other organisations on the development of delivery systems (such as portal technologies and rights management systems) that enable users to have improved access to electronic resources.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Continue to support the ongoing development of the <i>Australian Academic Research Library Network (AARLIN) Portal for Resource Sharing</i> |

Support for Sharing Electronic Information Resources

The National Library's key objective in terms of support for the Australian library system is:

"To ensure that Australians, wherever they live or work, have access to information resources in Australia and overseas".

The National Library will continue to support the provision of services and systems, developed collaboratively, which provide access to print and electronic information resources held in the collections of Australian libraries. Australia is fortunate in having a number of important national resource sharing services already in place: the National Bibliographic Database, the [Australian Libraries Gateway](#) (including the Interlibrary Resource Sharing Directory) and the [Register of Australian Archives and Manuscripts](#). In addition, Australia has a well-established tradition of library cooperation manifested in a national interlibrary loan network that is now based on open standards. Technologies are in place to enable the delivery of electronic information resources from remote library collections using document delivery services such as [Ariel](#).

The Kinetica service aggregates information about the resources available in many Australian libraries. The National Library believes there is an ongoing role for aggregated searching of print and electronic information resources. The National Library is committed to developing services to share metadata describing electronic information resources and seeks the support of Australian libraries and other organisations to achieve this.

There is a clear advantage in minimising the need to create more than one record describing an electronic resource (metadata record) where the one record can be reused or shared in many different products (eg. National Bibliographic Database, National Library [catalogue](#), [PictureAustralia](#), [Register of Australian Archives and Manuscripts](#) and other libraries' catalogues). This principle follows the successful reuse of bibliographic records through services such as the Australian Bibliographic Network and Kinetica. The reuse of records for different products lowers the overall costs of Australian libraries and is a key plank of national resource sharing within the Australian library sector.

There is a continuing need for the development and implementation of technical standards that support key functionality such as cross-database searching, operation of directory products, cooperative document delivery, and authentication of users. The National Library will continue to collaborate with others in the interests of developing necessary standards in emerging areas of electronic information resource discovery and delivery.

Specifically, the National Library will adopt the following strategies in support of sharing electronic information resources in Australia:

| STRATEGY | ACTIONS |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Extend the concept of resource sharing among Australian libraries to include electronic resources, by continuing a range of activities which facilitate the use of nationally operated bibliographic and metadata services for the description, discovery and delivery of electronic information resources.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Undertake a proof-of-concept project to test the business and technical issues associated with the extension of resource sharing services to include a wider range of electronic information resources. This project will include consideration of centralised versus distributed metadata services, data creation and maintenance, link checking and reporting functions, and the services that may be offered. The data for the proof-of-concept will be drawn from Australian Digital Theses, ANU Eprint Archives, AJOL, South Seas Project, the National Collection of Australian Online Publications, the National Bibliographic Database, NLA Exhibitions, Resource Discovery Network (RDN) and EdNA. . Implement extended resource sharing services to include electronic information resources, based on the findings of the proof-of-concept project. . Report to the National Bibliographic Database the National Library's holdings of and links to electronic information resources, ensuring that links are maintained in records with a National Library holdings statement. . Increase the relevance of Kinetica services by improving the coverage of electronic resources in the National Bibliographic Database through promotion of electronic information resources guidelines, and projects to increase content such as the inclusion of records from Australian Journals Online. . Enhance access to sets of electronic resources for Australian libraries by providing libraries with sets of records in MARC and non MARC formats corresponding to their holdings of these resources in the National Bibliographic Database and enabling access to Australian digitised materials such as the National Collection of Australian Online Publications. |

2. Improve access to resources in Australian libraries by developing a new model for the generation of union catalogues and directories for particular subjects or formats, such as the Register of Australian Archives and Manuscripts, from the National Bibliographic Database.

- . Extend the delivery of records from the National Bibliographic Database to provide sets of electronic resources in non MARC and MARC forms.
- . Extend the coverage of resources in the National Bibliographic database through automated processes and policies to enable the inclusion of data in the NBD from records in a range of formats including eXtensible Markup Language (XML) and spreadsheets, to enable records from publishers and library suppliers to be contributed to the NBD.

3. Provide a deeper and/or broader level of access to resources in a given format or on a given subject.

- . Extend the Register of Australian Archives and Manuscripts to enable access to electronic finding aids. During 2002-03 manuscript records from the State Library of New South Wales PICMAN database will be added to RAAM.
- . Continue to provide support for the coordination of Australian subject gateways to facilitate the sharing of expertise and application of common standards. During 2002-03 there will be continued support through the provision and maintenance of the website, facilitation of national meetings, and promotional activities. Additional actions may result from the Australian Subject Gateways Forum meetings.
- . Improve the coverage and currency of data in the Australian Libraries Gateway by automating the notification of updating and improving the coverage of electronic resources, particularly online exhibitions and web accessibility guidelines.
- . Explore architectures for providing online access to Australian newspaper indexes by hosting the outcomes of the Argus Project. (This is a project to produce the first complete index to an Australian newspaper covering the second half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, and to make the index available online.)

4. Collaborate with other libraries on consortia acquisition of a selection of full text electronic resources, with the ultimate aim of providing all Australians with access to these resources regardless of location.

. Continue to support the CASL Consortium and expand the set of electronic resources available, particularly to public libraries.

. Continue to investigate the feasibility of developing, in collaboration with CAUL, a national opt in/opt out licencing model for electronic resources for Australia

Additional Information

Additional information on the above strategies and actions may be obtained from the National Library. For information on:

Collecting contact Pam Gatenby (02) 6262-1672

Preservation contact Colin Webb (02) 6262-1662

Access to electronic resources contact Margy Burn (02) 6262-1301

Support for sharing electronic information resources contact Roxanne Missingham (02) 6262-1484

In June 2001 the Library of Congress released an Action Plan for Bibliographic Control of Web Resources (<http://lcweb.loc.gov/catdir/bibcontrol/draftplan.html>). Developments from this Action Plan will be monitored, as a number of the proposed actions will have implications for the National Library of Australia and other libraries.

References

¹ Pearce, Judith and Cathro, Warwick. "The Challenge of Integrated Access : the Hybrid Library System of the Future." A paper presented at the 10th VALA Biennial Conference and Exhibition, Melbourne, Victoria, 16-18 February, 2000. Available: <http://www.nla.gov.au/nla/staffpaper/jpearce1.html>.