

Education Services Australia

A merger of



Submission No: 119.1

Date Received: 12/7/10

Secretary: Fiti Bone

A not-for-profit, ministerial company established to provide services to the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) and other education and training bodies, as outlined in the company objects. Several of these objects have a strong parallel to the role of libraries in education:

- a) to advance key nationally-agreed and commissioned education initiatives ...
 - (iii) facilitating the pooling, sharing and distribution of knowledge, resources and services to support and promote e-learning; and
 - (iv) supporting national infrastructure to ensure access to quality assured systems and content and interoperability between individuals, entities and systems;
- (b) to create, publish, disseminate and market curriculum and assessment materials, ICT based solutions, products and services to support learning, teaching, leadership and administration ...
<http://esa.edu.au/about-esa>

We recognise that the teacher librarian provides a key role in the process of continuous curriculum improvement through the development of high quality, relevant resource collections and their specialist skills in teaching effective and critical use of information.

As a result of listening to and reading previous activity to this inquiry we see the following areas as key points of intersection between our services and the issues facing school libraries and teacher librarians.

National collaborative services and infrastructure for education

Significant quality outcomes and efficiencies are gained through a national agency working together with schools and states to reduce the cost, particularly the time spent by schools, libraries and library staff in managing learning resources. Education Services Australia provides tools to support teacher librarians in delivering information services to their users.



Schools Catalogue Information Service

www2.curriculum.edu.au/scis

The rationale for the development of SCIS over 20 years ago was that a catalogue record of a library resource need only be created once and can benefit all schools. This service offers significant cost savings compared to the services previously maintained by individual jurisdictions, and even more significant savings than if schools were to catalogue resources individually.

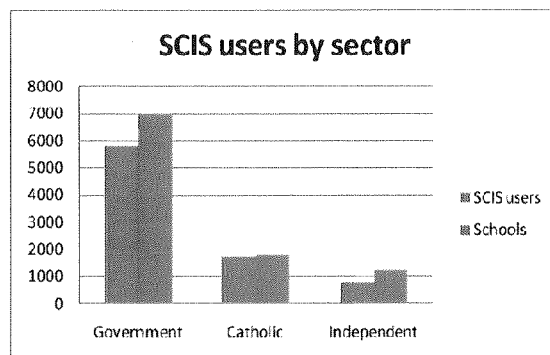
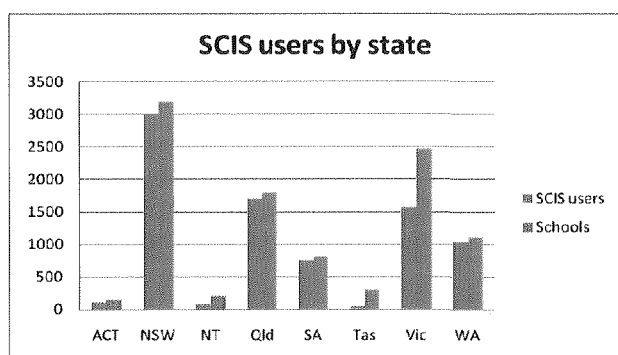
What is saved?

Using SCIS gives staff access to a database of over one million consistent catalogue records (metadata describing library resources), enabling them to spend more time in classroom-related activities. The cost of individual records in the annual 'pool' of records for the average SCIS user is estimated at around 1.4 cents per record, compared with the estimated \$18.41 it costs on average to create a consistent quality record.

The hit rate is the measure of the relevance of the SCIS database to users; that is, the percentage of items found when the database is searched. From January to June 2010 schools downloaded 4.3 million records, with an average hit rate of 87%. If we compare the per record cost of using SCIS records to the cost of each school creating records of equivalent quality individually, the total savings are estimated at over \$79 million.

SCIS user base

83% of Australian schools subscribe to SCIS. The following diagrammatic representations are based on the Education Services Australia schools database which may have separate records for multi-campus schools.



New technologies

SCIS provides records for websites, electronic learning objects and digital resources, including those produced by Education Services Australia's National Digital Learning Resource Network, as well as for the books, DVDs, kits etc. which are collected by school libraries. SCIS catalogue records use subject descriptors that are pitched at a suitable level for school students and reflect Australasian terminology. SCIS records now also contain terms from the Schools Online Thesaurus (ScOT). The inclusion of ScOT terms prepares SCIS records for integration with other metadata records in different types of systems including content management systems and learning management systems. The value of the library collection is enhanced by its integration into the online resource discovery environment.

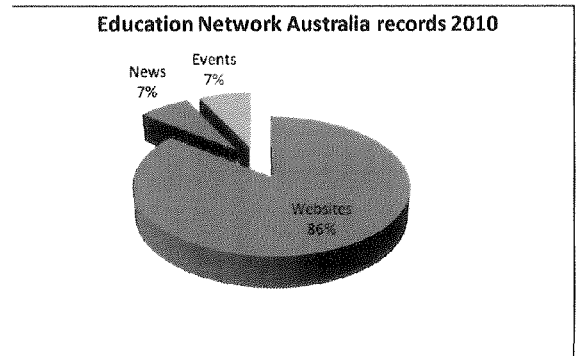
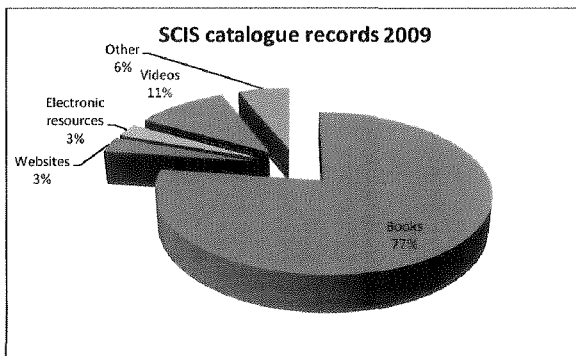


Education Network Australia

www.edna.edu.au

Australian governments have significant investment in Education Network Australia a service which identifies and catalogues free high quality online resources for education. When the internet first started being used in schools in 1996 it was recognised that finding, evaluating and describing websites relevant to Australian education was another area which would benefit from national collaborative activity. Rather than every teacher librarian individually seeking websites on curriculum topics such as the Victorian goldrush or astronomy to place on school intranets or library pathfinders, this could be provided as a national collaborative service. edna includes a collection of 10,000 sites for schools and early childhood educators, as well as education news feeds and key events.

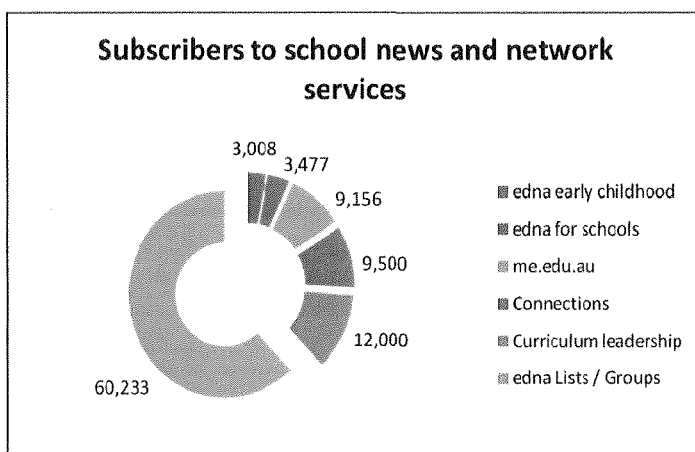
SCIS and edna offer complementary services, both making use of data standards which offer flexibility in providing access to resources at the local level.



Maintaining and strengthening collaborative services such as SCIS and Education Network Australia represent one area of national activity through which the federal and state governments can assist school libraries and teacher libraries to save time and effort, while providing high quality metadata services that enhance the discovery of learning resources.

National networks, communication, marketing and professional learning

We have heard through the inquiry of issues in promoting the role of the teacher librarian, of keeping leaders up to date with research and of the challenges of staff keeping abreast of rapid changes in technology and resources. Education Services Australia sees the role of information aggregation, dissemination, informed commentary and informal professional networks as a key part of its role. It hosts and supports a variety of networks and services, including the edna newsletters, *Connections* and *Curriculum Leadership* journals. Teacher librarians represent a major proportion of the audience for newsletters and journals. There is ongoing demand for training and for future digital services such as the management of e-books.



Recommendation

Education Services Australia recommends an adequate distribution of funding for the ongoing development of school library staff in both specific library-related professional development and as a key element of whole school development.