

ASIALIB AND ASIAN LIBRARIANSHIP IN AUSTRALIA

The Asialib electronic discussion list was established in 1993, following talks involving the National Library of Australia, the Australian National University Library and others. From its inception, Asialib was intended as a vehicle for communication on a wide range of Asia-related library matters of interest to Australians, but open to subscribers from anywhere in the world.

Given its broad aims, how successful has Asialib been over its first two years? The following are a few preliminary thoughts on the topic.

Asialib has been particularly valuable in providing a fast and effective means of informing librarians and researchers around Australia and overseas of new developments and events. This has ranged from announcing meetings, overseas visitors, publications and so on, to more substantial reports on developments such as what is happening with the National CJK Project and the 3rd National Roundtable on Libraries and Asia. The success of the Roundtable on 16 February this year can be attributed in part to the detailed information provided both before and after the meeting in print and in electronic form, including through Asialib, the Distributed National Collection (DNC) list, and the National Library's Information Server.

One important aspect of Asialib has been to bring Australian librarians into closer and faster contact with colleagues in Asia, North America and Europe. Asialib has attracted a considerable number of overseas subscribers. It appears to have helped bring an increased awareness of Australia as a place where Asian studies and Asian librarianship are practised.

What is the future for Asialib? For the time-being it is likely to continue to play an important information role, complementing print and electronic sources such as the *EALRGA Newsletter* and the *Asia Pacific Special Interest Group (APSIG) Newsletter*, which are providing valuable but different services. The longer term future will depend on technology and the changing needs of librarians and researchers.

For anyone who has not yet joined Asialib and is interested in doing so, send to: majordomo@info.anu.edu.au
and the message:

subscribe asialib (your email address)

Access to past exchanges is via

ANU-Asialib-Archive dbase

(gopher://cheops.anu.edu.au/7waissrc%3a/Coombs-db/ANU-Asialib-Archive.src)

Andrew Gosling
Chief Librarian, Asian Collections, National Library of Australia