

## Editorial

By the time you read this the delights or hassle of Christmas, depending on your viewpoint, will be a distant memory, but right now election fever is rife and we are supposed to be quizzing candidates about their views on libraries and information.

The LIS research and development scene moves on apace, with a variety of opportunities for funding and staff development. The Library and Information Commission has issued several tenders (see below), and also plans to progress the digital content and National Information Policy areas during 1997. BLRIC issued a Call for Proposals in the field of digital research, and RIC is now selecting the successful applicants. So committed is the RIC Analyst in charge of this area that he even sent us an email from an Internet cafe in Indonesia while on holiday. No rest for the wicked and all that. Elib also continues to be active in commissioning new work besides maintaining its ongoing impressive suite of projects.

It is interesting that instead of handing it straight to the British Library, as in the past, DNH has gone out to tender for the management of its 1996/97 Development Funding for Public Libraries. £135,000 of new money has been made available, and "in subsequent years it is expected that £225,000 will be available". Tenders were due in on 10 January, and Comedia, of 'Borrowed time' fame, was the winner.

Discussion lists continue to be a source of interest and amusement, and one recent debate, relevant to research of course, was about survey/questionnaire fatigue. Harry East, a doyen of research and a LIRG veteran, gives some good advice, including suggestions to enclose a reply paid envelope and to send each respondent a summary of the findings. These could be considered simple things but how often are they done? His own bugbears include student questionnaires which queer the pitch for researchers with long term interests, and the inexperienced who think they can formulate questionnaires and do so without taking advice on design and so on. As someone who evaluates proposals my heart often sinks when I read "questionnaire survey" under methodology, but it is hard in some cases to dream up a viable alternative. Perhaps this proves the need for wider attendance at LIRG's research methods courses...

Apologies to readers for the continued late appearance of LIRN, which has been due to several factors, including production problems. The LIRG Committee is making strenuous efforts to sort these out. We also apologise to Nigel Macartney (BLRIC), the last AGM's guest speaker, for the faulty rendering of his name on the photo caption.

...and finally

In the last issue I invited readers to send in a precise definition of "disintermediation" and promised to give a prize to the most accurate. The term seemed fairly new at the time of writing but is now common currency and a major topic the last Online. Shows how quickly we can get used to new expressions, also how no one reads journals, or responds much to editors, since no entries have been received. Pity, as the potential winner has missed a good bottle from the editor's extensive cellar!

Roslyn Cotton  
Editor