

The President's Annual Report 1997

1997 has been a busy year for ASCILITE. New and improved services have been offered to members, and membership has increased dramatically. The major achievement of ASCILITE in 1997 has been the appearance of its long-awaited journal. This was accomplished by brokering a joint arrangement with the Australian Society for Educational Technology (ASET), which resulted in a revitalised Australian Journal of Educational Technology (AJET).

ASCILITE will continue to explore close working relationships with ASET and other similar societies, and 1998 will see an exploration of electronic publication of AJET. I encourage you to submit your research work for publication in AJET. The ASCILITE Executive is focussed on providing services to members. The excellent ASCILITE Update Newsletter edited by Helen Carter, and the ASCILITE web site maintained by Allan Christie are examples of this.

ASCILITE makes extensive use of email and the internet for its administrative activities, and the ASCILITE@ascilite.org.au discussion list is an effective means of sharing information among members. Indeed, less than ten of the members do not use email. For the period January 1 to November 24, the web site <http://www.ascilite.org.au> had approximately 70,000 accesses or 'hits'.

These accesses came from 46 countries with the top 5 countries making up 83% of all accesses, viz: 57%: .au (Australia) 15%: .com (Commercial, mainly USA) 5%: .net (Network) 2%: .edu (USA Educational) 1.5%: .ca (Canada) 1.4%: .uk (United Kingdom) 1.1%: .nz (New Zealand) The areas accessed mostly on the web site were: 20%: root directory 19%: members directory 15%: hypermail archives of ASCILITE discussion list 10%: ASCILITE 96 conference papers.

The ASCILITE Awards, sponsored by the Centre for Educational Development and Interactive Resources (CEDIR) at the University of Wollongong, and judged by Debbie Clayton and colleagues at the University of Central Queensland, continue to be popular. They also provide a medium to acknowledge the excellence of work done by ASCILITE members.

On the other hand, opportunities for sponsorship of ASCILITE Local Activities were not pursued as much as in previous years. The incoming Executive will canvas improvements or alternatives to this service. Our membership has increased from 231 to 364 in this calendar year, including 84 new members associated with the Conference. 1997 has also seen the full establishment of a network of campus representatives, who promote the Society and pass information through to members on their campus. Currently, there are 69 campus representatives, and the Executive acknowledges and appreciates their activities.

The Society recorded an operating surplus for the 1996/7 financial year of over \$19,000, which has strengthened the Society's financial status after a couple of lean years. This result is largely a result of the financial success of the Adelaide Conference, and underscores the role that a successful conference has in contributing to the wellbeing of the Society.

ASCILITE is starting to be recognised on the policy front. The Society made a submission to the West Review of Higher Education Policy, and its role has been recognised by the Committee for University Teaching and Staff Development (CUTSD). A priority for the new Executive will be negotiating a mutually beneficial arrangement with CUTSD, so that CUTSD grant recipients can be represented at our annual conferences. 1998 has seen the Web bandwagon take on increasing momentum in the higher education sector. Flexible Delivery is seen almost universally as a direction in which higher education must move. However, it is necessary that any such adoption of technology be based firmly on what is educationally appropriate, rather than on what is technologically possible or administratively convenient. ASCILITE has an important role in informing this debate.

Dr Rob Phillips President 6th December, 1997.