The President's Annual Report 1998

The Society has continued to prosper in 1998, during a period of consolidation, but with some important new activities. Membership numbers have increased since the large increase in 1997. The Society currently has a membership of 408, compared to 364 in 1997. At the time of writing, thirty new members had joined as part of their conference registration. It is also pleasing that we appear to have been able to retain members who joined at last year's conference. While people may have initially joined the Society for a conference discount, they seem to have remained members because of the services we offer.

ASCILITE is now represented at 37 universities in Australia, has an increasing number of members from the TAFE sector, and is represented in 9 countries. An increase in membership from outside Australia reflects the change of name of the Society from Australian to Australasian at the last Annual General Meeting.

There have been nearly 120,000 'hits' on the ASCILITE web site this calendar year equating to over 18,500 user sessions. This figure is up from 70,000 in 1997. The top countries accessing the ASCILITE web site are:

Countries	User Sessions:
United States	8,062
Australia	5,286
UK	417
Canada	260
Germany	215
Singapore	33
New Zealand	120
Netherlands	95
Sweden	75
Malaysia	72

1998 saw a consolidation of our role in the Australian Journal of Educational Technology. The journal now operates smoothly under its own editorial board, managed by Ron Oliver and Roger Atkinson. The AJET volume 14 web site received 2366 hits up to the 8th of November, and 880 copies are printed for each issue, with 450 copies distributed to ASCILITE, 100 to NSPI, 150 to ASET, and 47 to subscribers in 13 countries. Five articles were published in each issue in 1998.

The Society's finances are currently in a very healthy state. Our net worth in June 1998 was $52,494, which has increased by $18,000 and $19,500 in the last two years, respectively. These increases flow solely from successful conference results, and underline how dependent the Society is on conference income. One of the principles the Society is adopting in the business plan it is developing is that we should attempt to have reserves equivalent to two years operating expenditures. In this way we can insulate ourselves from a poor conference result, should it occur. The Society's most important achievement in 1998 was its success in obtaining a grant from the Australian Government's Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs Evaluations and Investigations Programme

for the "Development of a National Inventory of Computer-based Learning and Support materials used in University Teaching". The purpose and scope of the project is to develop a strategy which could lead to a dynamically updated national inventory of computer-facilitated learning (CFL) and support materials used in university teaching. The project is managed by Carmel McNaught and Jenny Winn, with assistance from other executive members.

The judging of the ASCILITE Awards has passed from Central Queensland University to Southern Cross University under the coordination of Rod Sims. The Awards, which are also sponsored by Southern Cross University, provide a medium to acknowledge the excellence of work done by ASCILITE members. We also acknowledge the support of Melbourne IT, who are sponsoring the Awards ceremony. The future is looking bright for ASCILITE. We are a Society in the right place at the right time with technological and political factors pushing tertiary teaching towards the use of Information Technology. Please encourage your colleagues to join the Society, and participate in our future activities, including conferences at Queensland University of Technology (1999) and Southern Cross University (2000).

Dr Rob Phillips President 6th December, 1998.