

data held by the police authorities' (I do not know if this is to be the case – I simply use it as an example). More likely is that we shall simply see a guarantee of good practice that confirms, for example, that personal information will never be collected without information about why it is needed and how it will be used, as well as our right to question what data are held on us and how and with whom they are shared.

But apparently no one else is worried – my note on LIS-CILIP using the quotations in the first paragraph of this Ex Cathedra, asking whether ID cards would be governed by the Data Protection Act drew no more than a quip from Bruce Royan ("Hmm, he'll have to find them first. The 2001 Census could only find 58,789,194" [of the 60m Mr Blunkett said were in the UK]) and a response about them all hiding in Plymouth. And as noted above, four out of every five people supported the idea of ID cards – although 58% had little confidence in the government's ability to introduce the scheme efficiently.

So my second question is this. Do we, as the information profession or as a part of CILIP, as the supposed experts in the appropriate organisation of information, need to take some action in this area? Should we be lobbying for safeguards on governmental data processing and on their application of the first data protection principle: personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully? (What combining of all the data held on us is fair or legal?) Should we be demanding complete transparency in data processing as a fundamental right?

And so to a case in point – "Familial DNA Sampling" hit the news while I was writing this piece. This is the case whereby someone can be identified because the DNA of a relative is on the database and this is a close enough match to arrest and prosecute on. We know that national security and crime mean exemption from the DPA, but DNA matching is not an exact science: we're told that the chance of a wrong DNA match is one in several million, I wonder what it is down to now. Would you want to be the 'one'?

This being my last Ex Cathedra – the Chair of UKOLUG being under new management – I leave you free (presumably) from quotations, and from my maundering. It has been an interesting few years as we have established UKOLUG securely as a part of CILIP and worked to ensure that it has emerged as a stronger group, more properly focussed on all aspects of information delivered electronically. I mentioned at last year's AGM that the committee feels that the term 'online' does not

mean very much in this day and age, when 'electronic' is used almost universally to indicate non-paper resources: 'e-journal', 'e-book', etc. UKOLUG has evolved over some 25 years from working with databases and telecommunications, to take in interests that include CD-ROMs, networking, the Internet and the World Wide Web, reference management, content management and information architecture. Hopefully – if our proposal at the AGM is accepted – we shall have a new name to match this focus: UKeIG: the UK eInformation Group.

The AGM is on Tuesday, June 8th at CILIP, London. It is surrounded by what promises to be an excellent meeting: our own spin on information overload – I'm an information professional ... get me out of here. As with all our meetings, we now offer certificates of attendance for your CPD portfolio, so there are at least three reasons why you should be there! Follow the links and be there!

**Chris Armstrong**  
**Chair, UKOLUG**

## **A View from New Zealand on Electronic Resources, 2004**

There is no doubt Kiwis love technology! Give them a couple of rusty nails and a length of No 8 fencing wire and they will make something or get something going! New Zealand in the 1970's appeared quaint and about 40 years behind the times! This was until you looked below the surface. Electricity and phone (installation of which was considered essential before moving into your home!) were connected by overhead wires; a definite Kiwi icon, and thirty years on, still the method in a few areas (including the road in which I live, although broadband access to the internet is delivered by a separate landline)

Looking at where we are today and from whence we came; it is fair to conclude that technologically New Zealand has not only joined the world, but is technologically literate. Telecom our largest service provider offers broadband connection nationwide. Their nationwide mobile service has just reached an agreement with InphoMatch to enable two-way mobile SMS texting to the majority of US mobile networks. Our young population use text messaging as a matter of course and have it seem developed a language that is

incomprehensible to we more mature members of society. Telecom is also heavily involved in sponsoring and upgrading computers in schools and in the operation of Senior Net which provides training for those over the age of 55.

Xtra (Telecom internet) has announced with Nokia the launch of a new High Speed Camera Phone expected to be available in the fourth quarter of the year, which makes interesting conjecture on what these young folk will make of this! It also announced that the Capital Coast Health Board, having completed a successful trial of a new computer application will soon be able to offer patients the option of checking appointment times over the internet. The system will also allow doctors to access information about where their patients are in priority queues. Statistics New Zealand offers a wealth of information on the use of technology. Looking at the graphs one has to be impressed by the figures which show a high percentage of computers and mobile phones in homes.

Lord of the Rings has put New Zealand firmly on the world stage and the technology supplied by Weta Workshop has earned it a Technology New Zealand grant for further development of advanced business technologies.

Hard on the heels of this success has come the purchase by the BBC of WeatherscapeXT an innovative television weather package developed by MetService of New Zealand Ltd. Other users include Nine Network in Australia and CNBC stations in Europe, Dubai, Turkey, and television stations in Beirut and Saudi Arabia. What Weatherscape does is apply technological advances in 3D graphics and animation techniques.

I am writing this from my home base in Havelock North; a small township in Hawkes Bay where a horticultural research consulting company is located and making use of the latest technology. Under accreditation for the OECD Principles of Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) all trials must be archived - hence my involvement as Archivist.

Geelen Research is a horticultural research consulting company based in Havelock North, New Zealand and has been established for almost 20 years. Its focus is on the field evaluation of agrichemical performance on a wide range of fruit and vegetable crops and has recently been accredited under the OECD Principles of Good Laboratory Practice. In the time it has been in operation there have been many changes and a steady increase in the use and sophistication of technology; the most recent being the purchase of

Palm Top computers for direct use in the field. These machines handle XL spreadsheets, making it possible to enter data directly in the field resulting in a saving not only of time, but also automatic averaging of data and verification of the information. There is an in-built warning when the battery is low and needs to be re-charged. Previous data loggers required pre-programming prior to going into the field so that subsequent field changes were not possible, the problem of information having to be put in a set order (which had to be remembered by the assessor), and the programmes used were different from those needed for statistical analysis. In the process information was lost or incorrectly entered or lost when transmitted from the field to the PC in the office. Now these difficulties have all been overcome. Prior to this and the coming of the laptop good old Kiwi sheep counters were the favoured technology! Remarkably effective and used in a wide variety of ways, it is an icon that survives on such things as school and tour outings to make sure you have the right number getting on the bus!

The next step forward will most likely evolve from the desire of large multinational businesses wanting the information from these field trials entered into their specific company research database so that their staff can peruse results even as they are being collected in some other part of the world. They could even download accompanying photographs to highlight product effectiveness or any adverse side effects. However, the problem of individual company requirements, the restriction of access and also confidentiality means that this is still a little way off. Something for the future.

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