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# **The Development of Virtual Libraries in Commonwealth Libraries in Australia**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research examines the development of virtual libraries in Commonwealth libraries in Australia in 1998-1999. The background to the study lies in some of the current issues in the information sector, and government responses to those issues.

The study begins by considering the nature of the Australian Commonwealth Government, reviewing what government libraries are and whom they serve, and examining the future trends expected to affect Commonwealth libraries. The current state of virtual library research is then reviewed, and the need for research in the Commonwealth library sector examined.

The author reviews the virtual library concept as expressed in the literature in the field, determines what a virtual library is, and gives consideration to why virtual libraries are being developed. The issues that affect and are affected by virtual library development are then examined. Based on this, a model of virtual libraries is formulated, along with a brief consideration of the possible application, importance and problems associated with each element of the model.

The research design and methods that were used to gather information for this study are then outlined, along with the inherent limitations of the research model. Following this, the findings from a survey of virtual library development in Commonwealth libraries are discussed. The author then conducts some analysis of these responses, and makes comparisons between different Commonwealth library responses, as well as comparisons with virtual library studies conducted in American and Australian academic libraries.

The research concludes by attempting to reach some conclusions about Commonwealth virtual library development and the validity of the proposed model of virtual libraries. Flowing from this, recommendations are made for further research in this field.

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## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

AARNet	Australian Academic and Research Network
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ALG	Australian Libraries Gateway
ALIA	Australian Library and Information Association
ALLG	Australian Law Librarians' Group
ANU	Australian National University
ARL	Association of Research Libraries (US)
CAL	Copyright Agency Limited
CAUL	Council of Australian University Librarians
CGD	Commonwealth Government Directory
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DARPA	Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (US)
DDC	Dewey Decimal Classification
DSD	Defence Signals Directorate
Email	Electronic mail
FLIN	Federal Libraries Information Network
FTP	File Transfer Protocol
GOLD	Government On-Line Directory
ICOLC	International Coalition of Library Consortia
ISO 2789:1991	International Standard on Information Documentation: International Library Statistics
LAMA	Library Administration and Management Association (US)
LIS	Library and Information Science
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration (US)
NLA	National Library of Australia
NSF	National Science Foundation (US)
NSTL	Nashville State Technical Institute Library (US)
OPAC	Online Public Access Catalogue
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SSCI	Social Sciences Citation Index
UNLV	University of Nevada, Las Vegas (US)
WWW	World Wide Web