



Australian Libraries Copyright Committee

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Australia 2020 Submission:

2. The productivity agenda - education, skills, training, science and innovation

The ALCC is the main consultative body and policy forum for the discussion of copyright issues affecting Australian libraries and archives. It is a cross-sectoral committee which represents the following organisations:

- Australian Library and Information Association
- Australian Council of Archives
- Australian Government Libraries Information Network
- Council of Australian University Librarians
- National Library of Australia (NLA)
- National and State Libraries Australasia.

The ALCC believes it is important that Australia utilise the enormous potential of digital developments for education. We recognise the Government's commitment to this through the 'digital education revolution'. The availability of high speed broadband across Australia has the potential to reduce many problems of resourcing and access to information faced in Australia due to our dispersed population. Students and researchers in remote areas could be provided with equal access to quality resources and texts that students in metropolitan centres with libraries have. If every student has access to a computer and high speed broadband, then all students, regardless of socioeconomic status, can have access to knowledge.

The ALCC recognises that libraries and archives play a crucial role in providing students and researchers with access to the range of materials held in their collections. However, the ALCC is concerned that Australian copyright law continues to hamper the ability of libraries and archives to provide this wealth of material.

Some examples:

- Libraries, archives and cultural institutions across Australia hold vast collections of rare materials they can digitise for preservation purposes, and can make available on computers on the premises, but are unable to make available more broadly via the internet due to copyright restrictions.

- The Australian Government recently completed a review of Australia's Legal Deposit provisions. We strongly support this provision being expanded to provide the National Library of Australia with a mandate to collect digital materials as well as hardcopy works. Currently the NLA's web archive (<http://pandora.nla.gov.au/>) includes only sites that the NLA has negotiated with the owner for permission to collect. This severely limits the quantities of historical web materials that students and researchers have access to. The ephemeral and dynamic nature of the internet means that without legal provision for archiving of sites large amounts of significant digital materials will disappear forever.

Libraries and archives have a role to play in providing students and researchers with access to information. We see great potential in the digital education revolution, however, without significant copyright reform we believe that students will be severely limited in the kinds of information they can access.

We recommend:

- The Australian Government improve access to knowledge by providing flexible provisions under the Copyright Act that will allow digitisation of larger quantities of materials.
- Legal Deposit provisions be amended to provide a mandate for collection of digital materials.
- The Australian Government encourage access to knowledge by making government resources readily available to all users under permissive licenses such as creative commons licenses.