

OASIS

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Alice Library Newsletter

February 2013

Welcome back to 2013! I trust you had a relaxing and refreshing break.

Start of Year Procedures

At the start of each year there are a number of management tasks to perform to avoid 'Unauthorised Loan' messages and to update borrower details in Alice. Follow the links below to the web pages containing details of the process.

- [Update Lending Rules](#)
- [Importing student borrowers from SAS](#) and clean up borrowers who have left the school

Contact me if you have any questions about the processes.

Backing up Alice data

It is vitally important to protect your Alice library data against loss by performing regular backups. Even if your computer people tell you they have backup systems in place, it is still worth while making your own 'Alice only' backups. It will be easier to recover lost data from your own backup and you are also able to make a 'protective' backup at a time that suits you, for example, before performing bulk import procedures such as importing students or SCIS catalogue records.

All Alice libraries supported by OASIS Extras should have a Purple shield icon shortcut available to perform an Alice Data Backup to a USB thumb drive. The backup is very fast and takes less than a minute. **I recommend at the very least performing a backup at the end of any day when Alice is used for loans, returns or cataloguing.**

Consider the alternative: re-cataloguing your library from scratch. It's too appalling to even contemplate.

If your Library does not have the purple shield icon for Alice Backup, contact me so that I can set this up to protect your data.

Shutdown Machine Setting

One Alice library computer needs to be designated as the 'Shutdown Machine'. This computer will prompt with a 'Waiting for Shutdown' message whenever you close Alice. If a computer is replaced or re-imaged or (sometimes) if a different network login name is used the computer will cease to be the Shutdown machine.

With no Shutdown machine it is not possible to import Borrowers or SCIS records and Alice does not perform the regular data integrity checks that are important for its smooth operation.

You can easily reinstate the shutdown machine. Details are on my web site: [Reset Shutdown Machine](#)

Using SCIS for Cataloguing

Most schools have a subscription with SCIS (Schools Cataloguing Information Service) to supply catalogue records in electronic form from a Web Browser. You get high quality catalogue records to import into Alice and can process books in a fraction of the time it would take to hand catalogue them.

[Using SCIS Web to Catalogue Your Library](#)

This document details the procedure for using SCIS to catalogue new resources. It was written for schools computerising their library for the first time but most of the information is relevant for day to day cataloguing as well.

1800 Telephone number

OASIS Extras has a Freecall telephone number **1800 821 281**. This number goes direct to my mobile phone at no cost to you. Please feel free to use this number to contact me for urgent support queries. If the support call will be a long one, I'll offer to call you back using a more economical (to me) VOIP telephone.

For non-urgent queries, email is the best option as this leaves a permanent record of your questions and my answers that can be referred back to at a later time.

Remote support

The tools available to perform remote support have improved dramatically during the past few years to the point where there is almost nothing that cannot be done remotely. If you contact me with an Alice problem that can be resolved easily by me remotely operating your computer, I'll get you to run the remote support client and ask your permission to connect to your computer. With us both seeing your computer screen it is also possible to conduct telephone tutorial and training sessions as well as fix Alice problems without you having to follow possibly confusing instructions.

Virtual Visits

In past years I have periodically headed off on a 'road trip' for a week or two to visit schools in the more far flung regions of the state. I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting each of you and spending time supporting your Alice systems on-site, however, I was always conscious that these trips were an expensive luxury and an inefficient use of my time and the earth's resources because of the long distances between many schools. The visit schedule was also quite inflexible and you had to fit in with my availability. With the availability of excellent remote computer access tools and practically free VOIP telephone calls, there is now a smarter way to provide you with the equivalent of a site visit.

The support fee that OASIS Extras charges has not increased in the 19 years since 1994 when I first went into business. Rather than raise the support fee, the site visits will become **Virtual Visits** utilising telephone and remote computer access. We will schedule a time that will suit

you for me to phone you and connect remotely to your computer and then spend time doing exactly what would have been done during a physical visit.

I'll email you again in the near future with an invitation to book a Virtual Visit at a time to suit you.

Regular email newsletter

Another enhancement to OASIS Extras' support service will be a regular email newsletter containing hints and advice about making the best use of Alice to Manage your library. The email newsletter will be sent out to you at the start of each month during school terms.

Please email me if you want other staff at your school to be included on this mailing list or if you want to opt-out of receiving this newsletter.

Best regards,

Martin Hood

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