

Dear Mike

Thanks for your comments on this - I'm grateful for the time you've taken to provide this and we will certainly be taking it into account for the next forum.

regards  
Sarah

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>From: legart@ozemail.com.au[SMTP:legart@ozemail.com.au] Sent: Friday, May 29, 1998 11:45 AM  
>To: Sarah Gardner  
>Cc: Mireille Eid & Paula Garrett; recode@autonomous.org Subject: On-Line Forum

>Dear Sarah Gardner

>Thank you for your letter from the beginning of May in relation to my involvement with the Australia Council's On-Line Forum pilot, "Are we producing too many arts graduates?"

>I reply in response to your statement that the Australia Council "will be endeavouring to utilise the Forum component of the Australian Cultural Network" (ACN) for the next Australia Council On-Line Forum.

>There are several problems I foresee with this proposal:

>1.The ACN has not been 'out there' long enough to establish a user base and has not been active in creating links FROM other websites likely to have users wishing to participate in the Australia Council forum;

>2. The ACN has not, as yet established a Forum component and therefore it is difficult to see how their approach might be an improvement over the initiative taken by the OzCo;

>3. The ACN, as a facility of the Dept of Communications, the Arts and the Information Economy (DoCA), is unmistakably, an arm of government. Whilst the relationship the Australia Council has had with various federal governments over the years has been ambiguous, the Australia Council has achieved a clear separation between the development of policy in the cultural arena and its financial support, and the kind of short-term outcomes that politicians most often seek. I would suggest therefore, that a forum associated with longer-term goals will be the one that is taken seriously, and one associated with politicians to be little more than a pollster's barometer.

>I feel that the well-organised site run by the OzCo, that has been established for much longer than ACN, has the authority and should have the confidence to run a forum component, and is likely to have the trust of a wider range of potential participants. But as I mentioned in my evaluation report about the pilot event:

>- establishing active forums requires a patient building process with the constituency, an OzCo shortcoming that the Chair clearly wishes to correct;

>- that the necessity for a 'live' moderator is doubtful, given the right framework by using a disclaimer and reserving the right to edit contributions - this could include the preparation of a digest component as well as 'deleting expletives and flammers';

>- that a web based forum makes it possible for people without email accounts to participate and should therefore be the preferred option.

>But NOT with the ACN.

>Sincerely,

>Mike Leggett