

wordisout.info  
BN97870610

## **wordisout.info annual report 2002-2003**

### **Background**

The wordisout.info venture produced a quarterly online journal for discussion of political, economic and social issues affecting homosexuals, gay men, lesbians, transgenders, intersexuals, bisexuals and queers. The e-journal aimed to fill the niche not occupied by the tabloid or glossy gay/lesbian print media, gay web portals, or online or offline academic queer journals (in Australia or overseas).

The e-journal contained a select number of submitted or commissioned lead articles, with the opportunity for readers to submit sustained responses ('commentaries'). It also contained book reviews, with the aim of supporting the Australasian and east/south-east Asian markets for gay/lesbian books.

### **The product**

The one product of the venture in 2002-2003 was the journal, *Word is Out*, online at <[www.wordisout.info](http://www.wordisout.info)>.

The e-journal had 7 core pages accessed from navigation buttons: a home/front page, the current issue, the back issues, the journal's editorial policy, guidelines and groundrules for contributors, 'about us', and links to gay websites.

The 2002-2003 year was the second year of trading. Three issues of the e-journal had been published the previous year. We published 4 issues this year, on a quarterly production cycle.

The 4th issue (September 2002) had 6 lead articles, 2 book reviews and 1 commentary:

- Rob Cover, 'Cultured borders, bordering cultures'
- Kevin Markwell, David Rowe and Donna Russo, 'The politics of the international Gay Games'
- David McInnes, 'Thighs and sighs: a sissy boy's take on rugby league's gay hero'
- Andrew Milnes, 'Vamps, camps and archetypes'
- Tom Seddon, 'Behind Sydney's bid for Gay Games VI'
- Caroline Symons, 'Not the gay Olympic Games'
- Priscilla Judge, 'Review of Johnny Warren, *Sheilas, wogs and poofters*'
- Juliet Richters, 'Review of Steven Angelides, *A history of bisexuality*'
- Adam Carr, 'Another comment on "Queers, anti-capitalism and war"'

The 5th issue (December 2002) had 4 lead articles and 3 book reviews:

- Philomena Horsley, 'State of the community: a critical diagnosis'
- Carol Johnson, 'Gay and lesbian refugees'
- Ian MacNeill, 'Gay Games VI'
- Bronwyn Winter, 'The politics of assimilation: are we really "family too"?'
- Jill Julius Matthews, 'Review of Franca Arena, *Franca: my story*'
- Chris Sitka, 'Review of Robert Reynolds, *From camp to queer*'
- Yoichi Takayama, 'Review of Dean Durber, *Johnny, come home*'

The 6<sup>th</sup> issue (March 2003) had 3 lead articles and 1 book review:

- Jennifer de Vries and Allan Goody, 'Creating a queer friendly campus: the Ally Network Project at the University of Western Australia'
- Margie Fischer, 'Kitchen tables, jam sessions, and Feast'
- Craig Johnston, 'Bursting (Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras) bubbles'
- Sian Bennett, 'Review of Susan Mitchell, *Kerryn and Jackie*'

The 7<sup>th</sup> issue (June 2003) had 3 lead articles and 2 book reviews:

- Rodney Croome, 'Relationship law reform in Tasmania'
- Matthew Loader, 'Recognising same sex relationships: ideas and an update from South Australia'
- Jude Noble, 'Acts of "coming out" and the development of resilience'
- Chris Brickell, 'Review of Witi Ihimaera, *Nights in the gardens of Spain*'
- Annette Willis, 'Review of Lisa Daniel and Claire Jackson, *The bent lens*'

### **Our market**

The primary target audience for the journal was gay men and lesbians who are attached to the established, visible gay and lesbian networks/communities in Australia. The secondary audience was transgenders, inter-sexed people, bisexuals and queers who are attached to the established, visible gay and lesbian networks/communities in Australia.

The editorial policy provided that no contributor would be rejected on the basis of their sexuality or sexual orientation, sex or gender, or nationality. The journal's pages had no city or national borders. It was interested in articles from across Australia, New Zealand, Oceania, southeast and east Asia, and other regions. This period saw the first contribution from outside Australia – from Chris Brickell in New Zealand, who reviewed Witi Ihimaera's *Nights in the gardens of Spain* for issue 7.

### **Promotion and publicity**

The journal was marketed and promoted through:

- emailing a media release to gay, lesbian and queer media, when each issue was released (except for issue 6);
- posting a notice about each issue to the ozhomohistory e-group, highlighting articles of interest to Australian gay, lesbian or queer history (except for issue 6);
- emailing a notice about each issue to select book publishers and bookshops, highlighting book reviews;
- emailing a notice to readers who joined a special, Friends email address list;
- distributing a 'business card' with the URL on it at Sydney gay and lesbian community events (from leftover stock from 2001-2002);
- having a 6 x 6.5 cm display ad in the *Gay Australia Guide* (issue 5, summer 2002), provided free by Gay Travel Guides Pty Ltd.

### **Customer service issues**

We sent a notice when each issue came out to readers who joined a Friends email address list. There were 46 readers on this list as at 31 August 2002 and 48 as at 30 June 2003. Use of email addresses contained in this Friends list was covered by a privacy policy.

Informal feedback from readers was intermittent. No negative comments were received. Here are some positive (emailed) comments:

'Word is Out seems to be becoming THE Australian gay/lesbian journal. Great work.'

– Canberra, 3/9/02

'Congratulations on the Word is Out website ... it is a much needed service and you and everyone are doing a great job ... well done.' – Brisbane, 17/10/02

'I read each issue that comes out and think it is a great resource.' – Albury, 21/10/02

'I have had a look at your journal and it looks great, excellent and most fabulous!!'

– Dunedin, 3/2/03

'Good read. Another thoughtful edition of Word Is Out.' – Sydney, 10/3/03

'It's been a great journal – I've made good use of some of the articles and enjoyed more.'

– Hobart, 2/6/03

'What a great contribution Word is Out has been to our cause and community'

– Adelaide, 8/6/03

The site design appeared to cause slow downloads for some users (perhaps Macintosh users, especially). This was because the site was a 'no frames' site, with each core page based on an identical template. Each time a user clicked on a navigation button to go to

another core page, the template had to reload; the template included a 14 kb GIF masthead, which was the biggest component of each core page (the size of the HTML text itself varied from page to page, e.g. 6 kb for the front page to 13 kb for the guidelines page).

## Evaluation

The outcomes for the year were about the realization of results in 3 key areas (as identified in the venture business plan for 2002-2003), namely:

- efficient, effective and regular production of an online journal;
- efficient and effective governance and management of the venture; and
- smooth handover of ownership of venture and editorship of journal to a new publisher/editor.

The business plan identified key performance indicators for each of these outcome measures. See Attachment 1 on page 7 for details.

- *Efficient, effective and regular production of the journal*

All four of the planned issues were released, and on time (that is, they were uploaded on the first day of the month indicated as the publication date.)

The target number of lead articles an issue, of four, was met for issues 4 and 5, but it was not met for issues 6 and 7. The target number of book reviews an issue, of one, was met for each of issues 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Of the 24 lead articles and book reviews, 20 were solicited by editor Craig Johnston, and 4 were unsolicited contributions. The very low rate of offers of unsolicited contributions was the major challenge to the journal's viability, and the single most important stress factor in production management. (The second most important stress factor in production management was the very late arrival of contributions.)

The first diversity target – a minimum of 50% of writers of lead articles and book reviews to be women – was met. Half of the 24 contributors of lead articles and book reviews were women (N=13), and half weren't women (N=11).

The second diversity target – a minimum of 60% writers of lead articles and book reviews to be from outside Sydney – was met. Of the 24 contributors of lead articles and book reviews, two-thirds (N=16) were from outside Sydney (Adelaide 4, Canberra 1, Dunedin 1, Hobart 1, Melbourne 6, Newcastle 1, Perth 2), and one-third (N=8) from Sydney.

Half (N=12) of the contributors of lead articles and book reviews were not academics, and half (N=12) were academics.

There were 25,272 indicative visits to the website between July 2002 and June 2003 – an average of 2,106 indicative visits a month.<sup>1</sup> See the graph indicating the indicative visits in each month, below.

There were at least 2,842 visits from people inside Australia between July 2002 and June 2003 – an average of 236 visits a month. (The country of web server was identifiable for only 35% of visits.) Australian visitors were at least 31% of visits.

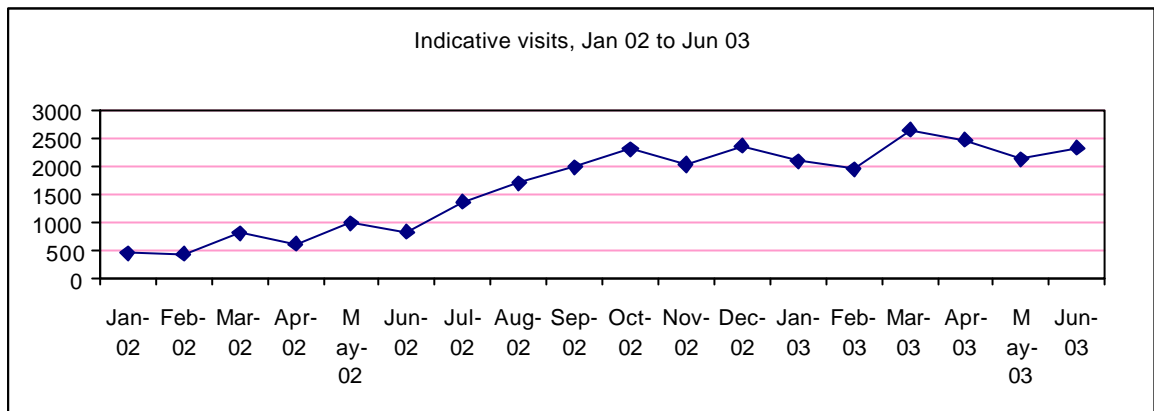
There were at least 6,593 visits from people outside Australia between July 2002 and June 2003 – an average of 549 visits a month. (The country of web server was identifiable for only 35% of visits.) Overseas visitors were at least 26% of visits. We got an average of 438 identifiable visits from the USA a month. US visits were 80% of identified overseas

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of 'indicative visits' represents the number of individual/discrete visitor sessions, calculated by using the number of visitor sessions as reported by the website host as a base number and then subtracting a quota being an estimate of the monthly number of visits by the site manager. This produces a lower, conservative, result. It is also lower than the number of 'hits' reported by the website host. The purpose of reporting indicative visits thus calculated is to avoid the exaggerated reporting of site hits typical of many web publishers.

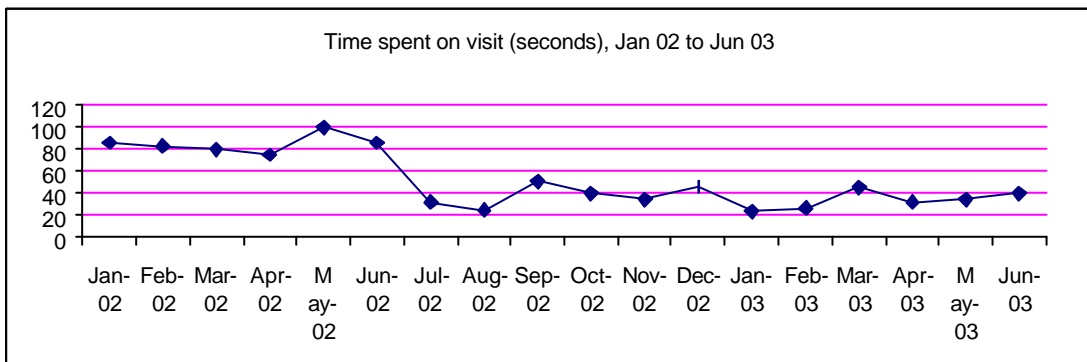
visits. Our next most popular countries among identified overseas visits were Britain (5%), Canada (3%), New Zealand (2%), Germany (1%) and China (1%).

The following chart indicates the indicative visits in each month, from January 2002.



There was a blowout in visits to the site in the second half of 2002. This was associated with a high number of visits from Saudi Arabia and other west Asian countries. The most popular page visited in those months was that for a Kimberly O'Sullivan article on lesbians in the sex work industry in issue number 3 (June 2002). The average time spent at the site bottomed during those months. So it is probable that the high number of visits was from surfers for porn who, disappointed, left the site very quickly. This phenomenon adversely affected the site statistics in two ways: it inflated the monthly and cumulative monthly average of indicative visits and deflated the monthly and cumulative monthly average of time spent at the site. The 'Kimberly effect' peaked in October 2002 and waned from January 2003.

The following chart indicates the average time (in seconds) spent at the site.



The average number of indicative visits of 2,106 month during 2002-2003 compares with an average of 677 a month for the first full six-months of trading (January–June 2002). The minimum percentage of Australian visits to the site, of at least 31% of visits, during 2002-2003 compares with an average of 43% for January–June 2002. An average time spent at the site of 36 seconds a month for 2002-2003 compares with an average visit time of 85 seconds a month for January–June 2002.

The statistics for the site are online at <<http://bne071u.server-statistics.com:80/?setsite=vs81134>>.

- *Sound governance and management of the venture*

The number of days spent on editorial work and publishing and web-authoring was considerable (though not counted), but not unreasonable. The combined roles of publishing and editing were part-time tasks that could be done by one person on evenings and weekends: the peak period was the weekend and week before the day of publication. The trading loss of \$462 was less than budgeted, mainly because of little money being spent on minor administrative items. Reports to stakeholders were completed: an annual report for 2001-2002 was posted on the site.

- *Smooth handover of ownership of venture and editorship of journal to a new publisher/editor*

The wordisout.info venture was established on a pilot basis, to test the market for this type of title. The first business plan indicated that we would be seeking an Australian, nonprofit nongovernment organization to whom to hand over ownership and management of the site and journal from 2003-2004. Sydney Gay and Lesbian Community Publishing was sounded out informally on 28 February 2003, but a loss-making title did not fit in with their business plans. The Australian Centre for Lesbian and Gay Research offered to take the title over, on 13 March. This offer was supported by the editorial reference group, and was accepted on 31 March. The transfer date to the new owner/publisher was 1 July 2003.

### **Governance, management and production**

The roles involved in the venture were:

- governance (ownership and strategic direction);
- management (publishing, financing, contracting with suppliers);
- editing (commissioning articles, liaison with contributors, copy-editing); and
- site management and maintenance.

wordisout.info was solely owned and managed by Craig Johnston from 3 August 2002. Until then it was owned and managed by Craig Johnston and Richard Turner as an unregistered informal partnership.

wordisout.info is a registered business name in New South Wales, BN 97870610.

The editors in this financial year were:

- issue no.4: Craig Johnston and Richard Turner
- issue no.5: Craig Johnston
- issue no.6: Craig Johnston
- issue no.7: Craig Johnston

The members of the editorial reference group were:

- Reece Plunkett (Perth);
- Ian Purcell (Adelaide);
- Graham Willett (Melbourne);
- Maude Frances (Sydney), from 23 August 2002;
- Sarah Bacon (Sydney), to December 2002.

They corresponded by email.

Site management and maintenance were undertaken by Craig Johnston.

### **Revenue and expenses**

There was a trading loss of \$462. This does not include uncosted infrastructure costs for the venture, such as online time/costs, telephone calls, rent of software, and wear-and-tear on personal computers, which were met by the publisher.

A policy on sponsorship, grants and donations was adopted on 5 August 2002, and was online from 1 September 2002.

The following businesses gave in-kind donations:

- Gay Travel Guides Pty Ltd – a display ad in the *Gay Australia Guide* (issue 5, summer 2002), valued at A\$400;
- Allen & Unwin – a review copy of Lisa Daniel and Claire Jackson's *The bent lens*, with an RRP of A\$45, and a review copy of Susan Mitchell's *Kerryn and Jackie*, with an RRP of A\$39.95;
- Melbourne University Press – a review copy of Robert Reynolds's *From camp to queer*, with an RRP of A\$34.95;
- Reed Publishing (NZ) – a review copy of Witi Ihimaera's *Nights in the gardens of Spain*, with an RRP of NZ\$24.95;
- Marginal Eyes Press – a review copy of Dean Durber's *Johnny, come home*, with an RRP of A\$19.95.

See Attachment 2 on page 10 for an (unaudited) profit and loss statement for the financial year.

**Attachment 1**

**Performance report on business plan**

<b>KRA 1</b>		Production of online journal		
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Produce the journal regularly, efficiently and effectively	Develop and maintain quality content	4 articles an issue (minimum target) published.	publication dates: September 02, December 02, March 03, June 03	N of lead articles was 6 (issue #4), 4 (#5), 3 (#6), 3 (#7). Lead articles comprised 16 of the total 25 contributions
		1 book review an issue (minimum) published.		N of book reviews was 2 (issue #4), 3 (#5), 1 (#6), 2 (#7)
		Commentary pieces (unsolicited) posted.		N of commentaries was 1 (in issue #4). This feature did not 'take on'
	Promote sex ratio balance and geographical diversity among contributors	50% (minimum target) of total N of writers of lead articles and book reviews to be women. 60% (minimum target) of total N of writers of lead articles and book reviews to be nonSydneyiders, over the year.		13 of 24 lead articles and book reviews from women. 16 of 24 lead articles and book reviews nonSydney (none from Brisbane)
	Maintain and update site and publish new issue quarterly	Contributions copy-edited, formatted into HTML, formatted into PDF. Pages updated and loaded.	upload dates: 1 September 02, 1 December 02, 2 March 03, 1 June 03	4 issues published on time. The upload date was changed to the 1 <sup>st</sup> of the month (the date of issue)
<b>Outcome measure</b>	Journal produced efficiently and effectively.			
<b>KPIs</b>	% of planned issues released; Number of lead articles an issue; Sex and city targets met; Number of visits a quarter.			
<b>Evaluation</b>	Production efficient. Targeted number of lead articles not met. Women and non-Sydney diversity targets achieved.			

<b>KRA 2</b> Sound governance and management of the project					
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Comment</b>	
Manage and govern the project efficiently and effectively	Enhance current governance model	Editorial advisory group extended to at least 6 members; a Brisbane person appointed; a 2nd Melbourne person appointed; sex ratio parity in the total N of editorial reference group members plus editors achieved.	01-Jan-03	No Brisbane person or Melbourne lesbian invited	
	Seek more secure financing	Policy on strategic partnerships adopted.	01-Sep-02	Policy adopted 5 August	
		Sponsor (appropriate) considered in line with policy, and if appropriate obtained.	01-Jan-03	No effort made to find a sponsor	
		Profit-and-loss statement for 2001-2002 produced.	01-Jul-02	Included in 2001-2002 annual report	
		Budget for 2003-2004 prepared.	01-Aug-02	Prepared	
		Reserve of \$1500 (for 2003-2004) created.	01-Jul-03	Not achieved	
	Develop effective partnership relations	ALGA strategic partnership maintained.		Relationship maintained	
	Market the product	Media releases issued with each issue.	1 September 02 1 December 02 1 June 03	Media releases produced – not released for issue #6 because issue was under target with N lead articles	
	Account to stakeholders	An annual report on 2001-2002 trading prepared.	01-Jul-02	Released August 2002	
		An annual report on 2002-2003 trading prepared.	01-Jun-03	Written	
		Report on ALSO grant prepared.	01-Jul-03	No grant received	
	<b>Outcome measure</b>	Governance and management sustainable and efficient.			
	<b>KPIs</b>	Volunteer hours spent on project reasonable; Expenses less than budgeted losses; Reports to stakeholders completed.			
<b>Evaluation</b>	Governance and management sustainable and efficient. Loss was less than budgeted for.				

<b>KRA 3</b> Transfer of ownership, management and production				
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Hand over site auspice and journal production to new manager/editor smoothly	Consult with editorial reference group on process for decision-making and parameters	Process and parameters agreed to by editorial reference group.	01-Dec-02	Draft prospectus circulated for comment
	Consult with potential 'candidate' entities	Short list of eligible entities prepared.	01-Feb-02	
	Consult with editorial reference group on 'candidate' entities	Preferred 'candidate' entity/ies agreed to.	01-Apr-03	Editorial reference group members sympathetic to takeover offer from Australian Centre for Lesbian and Gay Research
	Negotiate handover settlement with preferred 'candidate' entities	Preferred 'candidate' entity chosen.	01-May-03	ALGA advised that takeover offer accepted, 31 March
	Hand over to new owner/manager	New owner/manager established	30-Jun-03	Done
<b>Outcome measure</b>	Site/journal handed to an entity satisfactory to the editorial reference group and editors.			
<b>KPI</b>	Majority (50+%) of editorial reference group and editors support new owner/manager chosen.			
<b>Evaluation</b>	New publisher identified; friendly takeover by ALGA gets consensus support; handover effected.			

Date adopted: 16 March 2002

Progress report ('Comments' column): 30 June 2003

**Attachment 2**

***Profit and loss statement***

	<b>2002-2003</b>	<b>2001-2002</b>
<b>Revenue</b>		
Advertising	0	0
Grants	0	1080.00
Membership/subscription fees	0	0
Sales revenue	0	0
Sponsorship: cash	0	0
Sponsorship: in-kind	0	0
Donations: cash	0	0
Donations: in-kind	564.80	52.00
<i>Total revenue</i>	<u>564.80</u>	<u>1132.00</u>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Administrative costs: general	38.34	173.35
Book review copies - purchased	0	139.06
Book review copies - donated	164.80	52.00
Contributors' fees	0	0
Domain name registration	0	138.18
Printing	0	140.00
Publicity	400.00	0.00
RBN registration	0	118.00
Travel	4.10	34.42
Website design/technical support	0	400.00
Website host set-up	0	58.18
Website hosting	420.00	381.82
<i>Total expenses</i>	<u>1027.24</u>	<u>1635.01</u>
Net profit/(loss)	<b>-462</b>	<b>-503</b>

**Notes:**

*Items GST-exclusive from 1/7/02-31/9/02; items GST-inclusive from 1/10/02-30/6/03; GST-registration status changed from 1/10/02. All items GST-exclusive in 2001-2002.*