

after 500 years of printing.¹¹ In the Pacific, where printing is only 150 years old and was engaged in for Pacific Islanders, rather than by them, audio-visual technology supports the tradition of oral communication. Current research examining changes in communication systems points to the possibility that print may be by-passed in some places.

Cultural revival and the desire for independence is also creating a market for information about the past. In New Zealand the 500 *Kohanga Reo*, or language nests, set up to teach Maori children their own language and culture have been the spur for the first genuine Maori book publishing since the introduction of printing over one hundred and fifty years ago.¹² In Hawaii the *Punana Leo* movement may have a similar effect, creating an upsurge in interest in the language and its publications.

These observations have a bearing on the role of the research library in the Pacific. A re-evaluation of the way in which Pacific collections are promoted and preserved may be necessary. These South Pacific publications may not form part of the research libraries' own national imprints, but geographical, cultural, and political ties with the Pacific can be used to justify an increased allocation of resources for the care of Pacific collections. Even without such ties, sheer scarcity imposes a responsibility. In times when retrospective national bibliographies near completion, it would not be inappropriate to turn bibliographic talents to the South Pacific. With increased use of shared bibliographic databases, a co-ordinated programme does not seem too impractical to contemplate.

The best means of ensuring that copies of publications are available where they are needed is open to discussion. Micro-reproduction would seem an obvious answer, and the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau would be an ideal co-ordinator. However, Pacific libraries do not all have microfilm or fiche readers, so a paper by-product would be a necessary part of any project.

In the 'climate' of the Pacific both cyclones and coups render any library collection vulnerable. It cannot be assumed that someone else will be doing the job. The nature of the collections, relationships with the people of the Pacific, the interests of researchers and the desire to be part of 'the intellectual ordering of experience' demand a more active role. Additionally, in the current political and economic situation of Australia and New Zealand at least, a research library's assumption of responsibility for the rare books of the wider Pacific region may provide justification (if further justification is necessary) for the maintenance of rare book collections.