How to make your documents jump with PDF

by David Gough

ONE of the newest developments on *CALMweb* is the gradual introduction of Portable Document Format files, more widely known as PDF files.

So what are PDF files? Created by using an inexpensive software package called Adobe Acrobat, they can be viewed or printed by anyone who has downloaded the free viewer, regardless of whether or not they have the software in which the file was originally produced.

For example, you can view and print a word-processing document such as Word Perfect, or a desktop publishing document such as Pagemaker or Quark Express, even if you don't have that software. What is more, you view the document exactly as it was, or will be printed.

To see an example of a PDF in action, look at the Index of Key Documents section on *CALMweb*, that Grace Silvestro has been converting over the past month, and select either the CALM Policy Statements or CALM Circulars.

The Index for either of these points to the relevant documents, but to go to the next step you need to have the Adobe Acrobat Viewer downloaded and installed. To speed up the process, the latest copies have been placed on the CALM server.

Once armed with the installed viewer, you can see the documents in exactly the same form as the original, and if you need a copy you can print all of it, or just the page you need.

Now the possibilities are endless; PDF's can be made for all of CALM's administrative documents. They can then be 'distributed' via *CALM-web*, where they can be read and printed if a hard copy is needed.

They also remain on the system rather than being binned.

Updating the document is as simple as making the changes in the word processor or desk-top publishing package originally used, and saving it as a PDF, which is then uploaded to *CALMweb*. The new version of the document is immediately available.

Forms can also be distributed and filled in on screen, then printed off or sent back (the latter is still in development).

Newsletters such as *Risky Times* (http://calmweb.calm.wa.gov.au/drb/csd/hrb/Risky times.html) can be displayed in their finished form and read on screen, which cuts down paper usage and distribution costs.

Of course, the biggest problem with this is persuading people to 'check the web first', to make *CALMweb* the first port of call for posting information and for looking for it.

Not an easy task, but as more people become connected and more 'paperwork' is converted to PDF, it could very quickly become the norm.

As an experiment, we have put up this page of *CALM NEWS* on *CALMweb* as a PDF file. Why not have a look at it now, then browse *Bookshelf* in the *CALMweb* Guide. (You can finish reading the rest of *CALM NEWS* afterwards.)

Note: *If you see a need for presenting your Division/Region/District/Branch's information in this way, contact David Gough at Corporate Relations on (08) 9389 8644 for details on Adobe Acrobat. If you wish to buy a copy, contact John Dakin at the Helpdesk (08) 9334 0334.*

Right: Communications officer (and 'web master') David Gough. Photo by Verna Costello.