

Broadcasters from around the world are continuing their campaign to reduce satellite interference – a problem that costs them dearly, both financially and in lost programme material.

The issue was high on the agenda at a meeting of the World Broadcasting Unions' International Satellite Operations Group, WBU-ISOG, in New York in October.

The group brings together members of the world's broadcasting unions, including the ABU, satellite operators and other service providers, to discuss issues of common concern.

The meeting heard that while some interference with satellite signals is intentional – with "pirates" being a particular problem in parts of Asia – 95 percent of cases are caused by human error or equipment failure.

The WBU-ISOG chairman, Dick Tauber of CNN, described the amount broadcasters lose because of the problem as "a frightening figure".

Interference can be caused by people uplinking at the wrong time or at the wrong strength, or pointing their dish in the wrong direction.

The meeting agreed to compile a list of reliable uplinkers by asking broadcasters for the names of service providers they have worked with and can recommend.



Tom Gibbon

WBU-ISOG meeting:

Fight against satellite interference goes on



CNN's New York newsroom

The group has already compiled universal uplink procedures, in association with other groups representing satellite operators and cable and satellite broadcasters.

These have been circulated to members of the broadcasting unions, with the aim of standardising uplink procedures and reducing errors.

In addition, the group is discussing with uplink equipment manufacturers the possibility of installing a device in their encoders to help identify the source of the signal in the event of an uplink problem.

Participants also discussed latest developments in high definition television. NIK's Tom Gibbon predicted that all it would take to speed up HDTV's introduction in the US would be for one broadcaster to cover a truly major news event in HDTV.

The group is working to ensure that all HDTV encoders and decoders are

interoperable, so that any decoder can be configured to successfully decode a signal from any encoder. Several satellite companies have offered to take part in a test programme.

Other issues the group is looking at currently include metadata, digital audio levels and latest developments in fibre for carrying broadcast signals.

Mr Tauber was re-elected chairman of the group for a further two-year term. Chimaki Sakai of NHK-Japan and Louis Cheveau of the European Broadcasting Union were re-elected vice-chairs.

The WBU-ISOG meeting was hosted by CNN/Time Warner at the Time Warner Center, a 55-storey tower just off Central Park.

WBU-ISOG meetings are open to all ABU members. The next will take place in Geneva on May 31-June 1, 2005. The Secretariat will circulate details to members. □

The Caribbean Broadcasting Union's daily news exchange, Caribvision, could soon resume operations after a gap of more than seven years, thanks to the European Union.

The EU is to provide satellite uplink facilities to nine Caribbean national broadcasters free of charge, paving the way for Caribvision's likely relaunch.



Howard Fine

Caribvision may resume

The news exchange was forced to suspend operations in 1997 because of high costs, in particular excessive telco charges.

Tenders to install the EU-funded uplinks – mainly flyaways but including two or three fixed earth stations – closed in October.

WBU support

The EU project is strongly supported by the World Broadcasting Unions' International Satellite Operations Group, WBU-ISOG. Working under the group's umbrella, Howard Fine of the Los Angeles-based Pacific Television Centre has helped steer the project through.

The CBU's Secretary-General, Patrick Cozier, told a WBU-ISOG meeting in New

York in October that he expected the uplinks to be operational by June next year.

"We would expect to see Caribvision renewed and significantly enhanced," he said. "It was an important part of our activities but it became too expensive."

Its members' financial woes were compounded by the monopoly enjoyed in the region by a UK telecommunications company, Cable & Wireless.

That monopoly has since been broken with the liberalisation of the telco business.

The EU is now looking at providing similar uplinks to several Pacific island nations. □

France honours Australian journalist

An Australian journalist, Claus Hannekum, has received one of France's top awards for his services to French-Australian relations in the field of news and current affairs.

Mr Hannekum is Manager of Overseas News Services at the Special Broadcasting Service Corporation, SBS. He was presented with the National Order of Merit by the French ambassador in a ceremony at SBS in Sydney.

The French embassy described Mr Hannekum as the driving force behind the introduction of WorldWatch on SBS television, which sees television news bulletins from a number of countries broadcast every morning.

The France 2 news bulletin has featured in the WorldWatch line-up since its inception in 1993.

"Mr Hannekum has played a key role in promoting French news and current affairs programmes on SBS, including more recently on the SBS digital World News Channel," the embassy said.

"As liaison between SBS and French television channels Mr Hannekum has been influential in ensuring an uninterrupted presence of French news broadcasts over the past decade, despite major changes in technology and contractual agreements."

Mr Hannekum said he was very honoured by the generosity of France in awarding him such a high distinction.

"This award is not only an honour for me but also recognition of SBS' commitment to reflect the diversity of Australia's multicultural society.

"Most news services limit overseas opinion coverage to short sound-bites but WorldWatch services allow for proper background information." □



Claus Hannekum

Robocon Seoul 2004:

Vietnam wins Robocon again!

For the second time in three years, a team from Vietnam proved its prowess as it emerged the winner in Robocon Seoul 2004, beating 19 other teams from 18 countries.

In what was virtually a rematch of the Robocon Tokyo 2002 final, teams from Vietnam and China competed for the honours in 2004.

The exciting final match was witnessed by a crowd of 3,000 supporters and fans whose loud cheers of pride swept across the Olympic Stadium in Seoul. In the end, Vietnam emerged as the winner amidst a torrent of wild cheers.

"Making robots is our pleasure and happiness. Our happiness became bigger when we won the ABU Grand Prix," a representative of the winning team from Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology, told ABU News.

The 3rd ABU Robocon was held on September 11 and was hosted by KBS. At the opening ceremony, the President and CEO of KBS, Jung Yun-Joo, told participants: "I hope that through this competition the students will successfully build a bridge with the robots of their own making, while also building a bridge of friendship and co-operation."

Katsuji Ebisawa, President of the ABU, also addressed the participants and noted the dramatic increase in the popularity of the ABU Robocon in the Asia-Pacific.

"General interest in the ABU Robocon is greater than ever in the third contest. The numbers of teams and participants in the domestic preliminary round hit 817 and 9000, showing a phenomenal increase. As a proponent of this contest,



The winning team from the Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology

I hope you will forgive me the pride I take in this undertaking," Mr Ebisawa said.

The Opening Ceremony was followed by the preliminary matches among 20 representing teams. It was the day of reckoning, after a series of domestic contests, the wide popularity of which, many said, showed that the ABU Robocon was becoming a sort of "movement" among students in the Asia-Pacific region.

Korean theme

The contest theme of Robocon Seoul was "Reunion of Separated Lovers, Gyeonwoo and Jinkyoo" based on an East Asian legendary tale. "Gyeonwoo", a celestial herdsman, and "Jinkyoo" were forced to be apart from each other with the Milky Way between them. Magpies and crows felt sorry for the couple and flew up to the sky to build the "Ojak Bridge" using themselves as a bridge to bring the couple together. The couple got together by crossing "Ojak Bridge" once a year.

In the Robocon contest, teams tried to outdo each other by completing an unfinished "Ojak Bridge" with their manual robots and carrying a "Golden Gift" with their automatic robots from the "Gyeonwoo Zone" to the "Jinkyoo Zone". Each match lasted three minutes and ended as soon as either team accomplished the "Reunion".

Out of 20 teams, eight qualified for the finals. They were from Southwest University of Science and Technology, People's Republic of China; Electronic Engineering Polytechnic Institute of Surabaya, Indonesia; Chungnam National University, Republic of Korea; University Technology Malaysia; Mongolian University of Science and Technology; Samut Songkram Technical College, Thailand; Gazi University, Turkey; and Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology, Vietnam.

At the start of the final, the Chinese team was leading but the Vietnamese team caught up with its opponents and was first to accomplish the "Reunion". The robots of the Vietnamese team, both



The handover ceremony from Seoul to Beijing



Korean entertainment at the Robocon reception

the manual and the automatic, proved to be well designed as they were able to accomplish three "Reunions" in their five matches.

Apart from the grand prize, twelve other awards were presented to other teams.

The participating broadcasters in the Robocon Seoul were RTB-Brunei, RTPRC/CCTV- China, ERTU-Egypt, Fiji TV-Fiji, RTHK-Hong Kong, DDI-India, TVRI-Indonesia, IRIB-Iran, NHK-Japan, KBS-Korea, TDM-Macau, RTM-Malaysia, MRTV-Mongolia, NTV-Nepal, PTV-Pakistan, ITN-Sri Lanka, TPT-Thailand, TRI-Turkey, and VTV-Vietnam.

The competition was sponsored by Panasonic, Toyota, Mabuchi Motor, Konami, Samsung and LG.

Robocon fever continues, with next year's contest to be held in Beijing. With the theme "Climb on the Great Wall, Light the Holy Fire", the robots will have to climb a representation of the Great Wall and feed fuel balls into five torches and four bonfires.

To officially start the ball rolling for Robocon Beijing 2005, a handover ceremony was held during which Mr Jung passed the flag for the Robocon Host Organisation to Huashan Zhang, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of CCTV. □

What the team members said in Seoul

Champion: Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology, Vietnam:

"Making robots is our pleasure, and happiness. Our happiness became bigger when we won the ABU grand prix. Now, we are trying to use our knowledge in making robots to create other useful machines for our country and we have confidence enough to do that."

1st Runner Up: Southwest University of Science and Technology, People's Republic of China:

"What a pity, every game just has one winner – but we are all still good friends. The scores may change, the time may pass, but the friendship between us will never fade."

2nd Runner Up: Chungnam National University, Republic of Korea:

"We are so glad that we made the long journey to Robocon. Looking at ourselves now, we have achieved fulfillment and confidence through this contest and it has turned us into positive and constructive people."

3rd Runner Up: Mongolian University of Science and Technology, Mongolia:

"We had a huge desire to try many new things and we have been motivated by desire, decisions and goals. Defeating the opponent is not more important than winning ourselves. Inventing something is not more important than finding ways to reach the goal."

Robocon Seoul 2004:

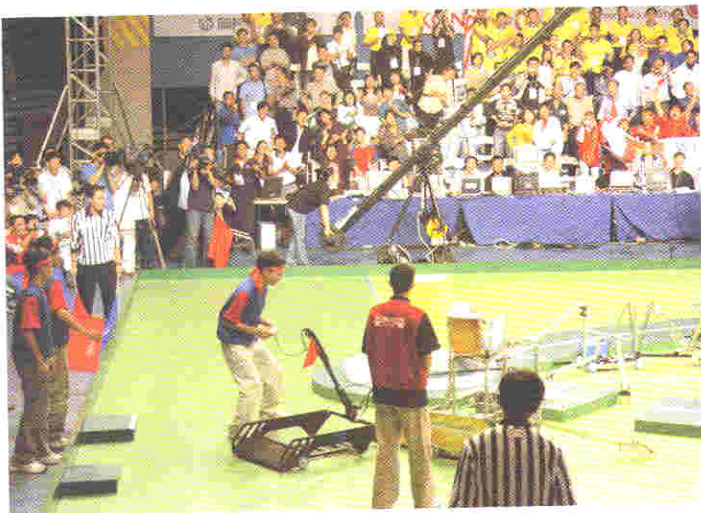
Some of the action in Seoul



Teams line up for the Opening Ceremony



The start of the Vietnam vs China final



A tense moment in the final match



Some of the many supporters at Robocon 2004



The winning team being interviewed on stage



Popular Korean singer Boa entertained the crowd

Workshop focuses on radio software

It was down to the basics of computer programming at a recent radio workshop held in Penang, Malaysia.

The workshop on "Low Cost Digital Modular Radio Stations" introduced the participants – a mix of experienced and those with no prior experience in the field – to the complexities of Visual Basic programming.

Over the three weeks they were taken through the process of designing PC based radio stations capable of recording and playing back a play-list of music and spots at predetermined times.

The participants were shown how various features can be added to the

PC based radio station depending on individual requirements.

The workshop was jointly organised by the ABU and Deutsche Welle Radio Training Centre (DWRTC), with the DWRTC meeting the cost of participation of delegates from ten ABU member organisations, the cost of the venue and the cost of the resource persons.

The ABU's Technical Director, Wayne Heads, said DWRTC had been a valued supporter of the ABU for many years.

He added that judging from the enthusiasm shown, it was likely that an advanced course in Visual Basic would be held next year for the same set of participants.



Bernhard Disselhof (right) gives a helping hand to workshop participants

The workshop was attended by 15 participants from Afghanistan, Brunei, Bhutan, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey and Vietnam. □

Improving programme research and marketing

Improving skills in ratings analysis and programme marketing were the key topics of the first Asia-Pacific Programme Research and Development Workshop held in Bangkok in September.

The workshop was jointly staged by NHK's Broadcasting Culture Research Institute and the Mass Communication Organization of Thailand Co. Ltd. (MCOT).

*by Yokoyama Shigeru,
NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute*

Participants were introduced to a holistic view of their rapidly changing audiences on the first day, and looked at hit programmes and their scheduling on the second day. The last day was devoted to marketing broadcasting in the digital age.

Through the workshop participants came to recognise:

- It is desirable to make analysis of data not only with ratings but also by combining other research data such as time-use, opinions and basic attitudes of viewers
- It is necessary to develop more effective ways of programme marketing in accordance with the actual circumstances and experiences of each broadcaster

- An holistic understanding of TV audiences, and reflecting this in programmes and schedules, is crucial in the digital era.

The participants asked for the workshop to be an on-going exercise to allow for the exchange of information on surveys and research into TV viewing, to develop suitable research methods and comprehensive analysis, and to initiate a joint implementation of programme making based on research.

NHK accepted the proposal and announced that a second workshop would be organised next year.

More than 100 people from 30 organisations in 11 countries attended the Bangkok workshop as participants or observers. □



Workshop session in progress

“It is very important to us – the arrival of world class TV and radio professionals, the possibility of close communication and sharing experience with our colleagues from all over the world.”

– **Dariga Nazarbayeva** of ‘Khabar’ Agency, on hosting the General Assembly

“I consider your forum to be an important mechanism of regional cooperation.”

– **Kazakhstan’s President Nursultan Nazarbayev**, in a welcoming message

“The influence that broadcasting has is increasing year in and year out.”

– **Katsuji Ebisawa**, ABU President

“The reaction of the audience in Mongolia was just fantastic.”

– **David Astley**, Secretary-General, on the response to TV5’s coverage of the Athens Olympics – the first time it had been seen live in that country

“Whenever there’s a headline they are putting their heads on the line.”

– **Zainal Abidin Ibrahlim** of RTM-Malaysia on the hazards journalists face in some parts of Asia

“We were the leading broadcaster of Olympic material in the world. We covered the greatest landmass of any broadcaster or union with our Olympic signals.”

– **Les Murray**, Chairman of the Sports Group, on ABU coverage of the Athens Games



“A special effort is required. I’d like to pledge my full support.”

– **K S Sarma**, PBI/DDI-India, on the need for a new treaty protecting the rights of broadcasters

“It would be great if apart from the professional activities... you have an opportunity to get acquainted with the particularities of the local life, the people, and the nature of our country.”

– **Vladislav Bogusevich**, ‘Khabar’ Technical Director

“The rapid deployment of new networks in Japan and Korea has caught the world by surprise.”

– **Turgay Cakimci**, Technical Committee Chairman, on mobile TV developments in the ABU region

“If we focus on our content, I’m sure we’ll be able to survive, and survive very well.”

– **Stephen Chan**, TVB-Hong Kong

“For most of us, an abundance of information does not necessarily mean enriching our lives.”

– **Toshiyuki Sato** of NHK-Japan, on information overload

“We Koreans like new products very much.”

– **Nam Sun Hyoun**, KBS, on the popularity of high-speed Internet and mobile phone services

“In broadcasting the name of the game is change.”

– **Johari Achee**, RTB-Brunei

“This area is very exciting, because of the series of debates it launches to determine the kind of broadcast standards we must choose for the future.”

– **Takao Shimizu**, TBS-Japan, on the switch to digital technology

“The important thing is to see ourselves as content providers rather than transmission providers.”

– **Colin Knowles**, ABC-Australia, on the broadcasters’ role in the new media

“It is OK to predict ‘what.’ But never try to predict ‘when.’”

– **Phil Laven** of the EBU on advances in technology

“The greater the freedom of expression, the higher the chance of controlling corruption.”

– **Cecilia Lim Lazaro**, Philippine journalist

The Indian Government has been asked by the ABU to support the proposed Broadcaster's Treaty.

The ABU's Legal Officer, Fernand Alberto, told a seminar in New Delhi in October that the outdated Rome Convention provided inadequate protection for broadcasters.

"If broadcasters are expected to fulfil their public service obligations and to provide information to the public, they must be provided with effective means to protect and exploit their broadcast signals," Mr Alberto said.

He said the governments of India and Brazil formed a minority who opposed the convening of a diplomatic conference to adopt a new treaty. He told the seminar that it was time for India to join the majority of the governments who supported the adoption of the Broadcasters' Treaty.

Mr Alberto was speaking at a seminar on "Broadcasting: A Look Towards the Future", organised by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

WIPO Counsellor, Carole Croella, discussed the work of WIPO in updating international protection for broadcasters.

She told the seminar that the treaty discussions had reached a crucial stage and that the remaining issues would be discussed during the 12th WIPO Session on the proposed treaty on 17-19 November 2004 in Geneva.

K S Sarma, CEO of DDI-India and an ABU Vice-President, expressed his support for the convening of a diplomatic conference which is the final step in the treaty-making process.

"Although the 1961 Rome Convention already provides protection for broadcasters, there is a need to bring

India urged to support Broadcasters' Treaty



Pradip Bajjal, Chairman of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) declared that the regulatory body is committed to protect the rights of all in the broadcast business

broadcasters a little forward to be at par with other rights holders," he said.

The Joint Secretary of the Indian Ministry of Human Resource Development, Bela Banerjee, discussed the need to balance the rights among all stakeholders and said that India "must keep an open mind" on the treaty issues.

In reply, Mr Sarma said that "instead of keeping our mind open, the time is up" and that the adoption of the treaty should now be supported. He explained that the rights to broadcast signals were neighbouring rights that were akin to the rights of phonogram producers.

Joining the panel discussion was the Director General of DDI-India, Navin Kumar, who talked about regional trends in piracy of broadcast content and signals.

The Director of the Indian Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Seema Bisht, told the seminar that the ministry conducted two meetings amongst stakeholders and said that

they were unanimous in the view that a call for a diplomatic conference should be supported.

The Co-Chairman of the FICCI Entertainment Committee, Kunal Dasgupta, said that when programmes of Indian free-to-air broadcasters were shown abroad without permission, India could not stop the infringing act because there was no international law on broadcasting rights to which India was a signatory.

Mr Dasgupta said that India was not a signatory to the 1961 Rome Convention which provided protection, albeit outdated, for broadcasters' rights.

"The entire broadcasting industry, not only in India but internationally, is poised for metamorphosis. It is very difficult for broadcasters to control what is happening and therefore they can not control piracy too.

"Cable operators have been picking up signals without paying for them, leading to a huge loss for those who invested in the rights," he said. □

Heard in Almaty:

“The technical staff of most broadcast stations is decreasing in size and getting older. Budget restrictions make training difficult to afford.”

– **Chuck Kelly** of the Society of Broadcast Engineers

“We should promote our region and I think this is a good platform.”

– **Zohara Gany Mhd Bathusha** of NTV7-Malaysia on the proposed Asia-Pacific Film & Television Awards

“The number of media outlets has increased but the increase has not turned into quality.”

– **Uzbek broadcast journalist Sayyora Rusikulova**, on the Uzbek media since the collapse of the Soviet Union

“There are more and more Internet auction sites enabling trading with anonymity. These are potentially hotbeds of crime.”

– **Kazumasa Enami** of NHK-Japan on the growing piracy of broadcast material

“A person from northern Norway is likely to know a lot more about fishing than someone from Oslo.”

– **Gunnar Garfors** of NRK-Norway, on why broadcasters should allow questions from viewers using interactive technology

“When I arrived in Almaty for the General Assembly, I had the feeling that I had found my family.”

– **Sarangarel Davaajantsan** TV5-Mongolia

“We came here (in 1962) to build the city.”

– **Guennady Kachalov** of RTR-Russia, visiting Kazakhstan’s capital, Astana, and recalling his first visit

Keeping on top of the news

For news on key people and events at the Almaty meetings, participants had to look no further than *Khalam*, the daily bulletin produced for seven straight days.

The glossy, full-colour bulletin took its name from meetings of Kazakh nomads in days gone by. Today, “*khalam*” means a meeting at international level.

Editing the eight-page bulletin was Gael Guichard, 30, a French-born freelance journalist and lecturer in journalism at an Almaty university.

Approached by the organisers just a week before the meetings began, she quickly assembled a team of five – two local journalists, a graphic designer/copy editor and two photographers. Working closely with the team was the official ABU photographer, Igor Sagun.

Asked how she enjoyed meeting and interviewing people from all over Asia, Gael said simply: “It’s wonderful, it’s wonderful.” The biggest challenge, she said, was meeting the deadlines. She



Gael Guichard with photographers Victor Vassiliev (left) and Igor Sagun

worked until the early hours of the morning, getting by on about three hours of sleep a night and an occasional catnap.

Covering the technical meetings proved challenging, but they were able to draw on the help of delegates and Secretariat staff.

The first issue came out on September 21 and the final issue six days later. In an editorial in the final one, Gael wrote: “It has been a pleasure to cover this event.”

Getting to know the *Khalam* team was a pleasure for delegates too. □

They were the unsung heroes of the General Assembly – the 50 young student volunteers who, in their distinctive blue shirts, seemed to be everywhere all at once.

The volunteers were always on the go. They met participants at the airport. They manned the registration desk and the information desks at the conference hotels. They helped run the excursions. They busily photocopied and distributed documents for hours on end.

Dinora Sharipova of the ‘Khabar’ Secretariat was in charge of the volunteer army.

“There were many more applicants than places,” she said. “To get the job they were tested for their English and their ability to work as part of a team.

The volunteers in blue

If they appreciated the chance to be part of the General Assembly, their hard work was equally appreciated by delegates and Secretariat staff alike.

This was never more evident than on the night of the NHK dinner, when delegates queued up to have their pictures taken with the smiling volunteers. □



Dinora (third from right) and some of her hard-working volunteers

ABU CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Events of interest to the ABU and its members in the coming year

NOVEMBER		
17-19	12th Session WIPO Standing Committee Meeting on Broadcasters' Treaty	Geneva
18-21	Asian Digital Infrastructure Technology Forum (ADIT) 2004	Kuala Lumpur
22-Dec 3	Asia Media Festival 2004	Singapore
29-30	PROMAX & BDA Asia 2004 conference	Singapore
DECEMBER		
2	9th Asian Television Awards	Singapore
19-21	ASBU General Assembly	Algiers
JANUARY 2005		
16-19	PTC 27th Annual Telecommunications Conference (PTC'05)	Honolulu
24-28	ABU-HFC Coordination Meeting	Kuala Lumpur
FEBRUARY		
17-19	Broadcast Engineering Society (India) – 11th International Conference & Exhibition on Terrestrial & Satellite Broadcasting (BES Expo)	New Delhi
MARCH		
8-13	APT Preparatory Meeting WRC-07	Bangkok
21-23	China Cable Broadcasting Network Exhibition (CCBN) 2005	Beijing
8-10	Middle East International Cable, Satellite, Broadcast & Communications Exhibition (CabSat) 2005	Dubai
APRIL		
16-21	NAB2005	Las Vegas
21-22	WBU-TC Meeting	Las Vegas
25-27	ABU Study Tour 2005	Seoul
30-May 14	ITU-R Study Group 6 Meetings	Geneva
MAY		
5-6	78th ABU Administrative Council meeting	Islamabad
9-11	Asia Media Summit 2005	Kuala Lumpur
25-27	NATPE 05	Las Vegas
JUNE		
13-17	BroadcastAsia 2005	Singapore
25-29	ISBT 2005	Beijing
JULY		
4-10	ABU Children's Programme Item-exchange Meeting & Workshop	tbc
AUGUST		
27	ABU Robocon Beijing 2005	Beijing
SEPTEMBER		
8-13	IBC 2005	Amsterdam

**ABU News Sept/Oct 2004
Vol. 23 No. 5**

Published six times a year by the
Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union

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Printed by **Xpress Graphic**
32-3A-1, 4th Floor, Jalan 1/116B,
Sri Desa Entrepreneurs Park,
Off Jalan Kuchai Lama
58200 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

PP 4408/2/2005
ISSN 0127-4902

*For advertising enquiries,
please contact Amy Ariffin.
Editorial contributions are welcome.
ABU News is supplied free of charge
to ABU members and is available
on subscription to others.
Subscription: US\$25.00 a year
(six issues) airmailed to
anywhere in the world.*