Smarter Technology through Technology:

The Library Automation News Cycle

By Marshall Breeding

Typically, news in the library automation industry tends to be clustered around major conferences, and larger conferences tend to attract bigger news. The American Library Association Annual Conference (held each summer) and the Midwinter Meeting (held early in the year) have traditionally stood out as the venues where library automation vendors make big announcements. The conferences of the Special Library Association and the Public Library Association often provide the backdrop for products or services oriented to those particular sectors.

Making an announcement at a major conference can amplify the attention given to a new product or service and generate buzz among conference attendees, journalists, and through social media. News travels fast through a conference and shortly afterward, moves through the general awareness of the broader library realm. I hope that this newsletter and my other efforts help ensure that those with an interest in library technology can stay current on industry events and developments.

The cycles of news that revolve around major conferences lead to some dry spells when it seems like nothing is happening in the industry. The months preceding the two ALA conferences are especially quiet as companies tend to save up any brewing developments. I often have to dig hard for newsworthy topics for this newsletter during those months.

But droughts often turn into deluge in the conference seasons. No vendor wants to be perceived as without accomplishments, so press releases are plentiful and range from game-changing events to minor advancements in existing products or previously announced initiatives. It can be quite a challenge to discern the significant and substantive developments among the flood, so to speak.

Another interesting aspect of reporting library automation news is observing the different patterns by which different vendors and players in the industry publicly announce their new products. Some companies like to "launch" products early—often when it's not much more than an idea and a blueprint. I generally like this approach since it lets libraries know early in the development cycle so that they can have more time to think about whether the product is something that might be useful to them. This method also opens more opportunities for libraries to have some input into the shape of the product. Early announcements, however, can leave companies vulnerable to complaints about "vaporware" products and can be riskier should the product development take longer than what was originally anticipated.

On the other end of the spectrum, some companies hold off on public announcements until they have largely completed development. This approach can be advantageous for an especially

Receive *Smart Libraries* via e-mail

Subscribers that would like an e-mailed version of the newsletter each month should forward one e-mail address and all of the mailing label information printed on page 8 of the newsletter to moneill@ala.org. Type "e-mail my Smart Libraries" into the subject line. In addition to your monthly printed newsletter, you will receive an electronic copy via e-mail (to one address per paid subscription) at no extra charge each month.

novel concept where there is an opportunity to begin actively marketing the product before the imitators come along. In my observation, the library automation industry is one where new concepts and features eventually find their way into the competition's product lines. It's a "me too" kind of industry where product differentiation gets blurry over time as each of the rival companies work to match the accomplishments of the competition. This arms race of functionality can benefit libraries as innovative advancements often become mainstream features within the given product genre in the next product cycle.

I'm writing this edition of *Smart Libraries Newsletter* just after the 2012 ALA Midwinter Meeting, and most of the stories covered relate to announcements made at or just before the conference. Overall, it wasn't one with earth-shattering news, despite the fact that we're in a very active phase in the library automation industry where several new game-changing products are in the works. But the announcements regarding these products have been on the table for a while and the current industry narrative tells more about their respective progress in development and deployment. This month's issue covers some of the more interesting technology news surrounding the conference.

SirsiDynix Launches a Native Facebook app, Develops eResource Central

SirsiDynix launched two new products at the ALA Midwinter conference: the SirsiDynix Social Library and eResource Central. These products continue the company's efforts to create forward-looking products and technologies surrounding its ILS products.

A native Facebook application, the **SirsiDynix Social Library** allows a library to offer a full-featured online catalog directly through its Facebook page. The SirsiDynix Social Library is the first full-featured library catalog that has been created completely within an external social network like Facebook. This product enables libraries to reach out to users who are engaged with Facebook directly in that medium without having to visit the library's Web site.

Some of the features available in this initial release of the SirsiDynix Social Library include the ability to search the library's collection, place requests, rate items, and offer comments. Once a library has activated the SirsiDynix Social Library on its Facebook page, any Facebook user can click on the Library Search option to find materials in the library's catalog. The catalog search includes the expected features, such as basic bibliographic descriptions, cover art, format icons, and the ability to view more details by clicking on an image or link for a given item. Users can also place a hold on an item, cancel or update existing holds, view their account details, renew currently charged items, and pay fines using PayPal.

SirsiDynix reports that over 40 libraries have licensed the SirsiDynix Social Library as of January 2012. Early adopters include the Boise Public Library in Idaho and Brunel University in the United Kingdom.

The SirsiDynix Social Library sets up a communications layer between the Facebook platform and the library's own instance of Symphony or Horizon. The communications take place between the Web Services add-on that can optionally be layered onto either of SirsiDynix's ILS products.

Web Services

An important element of the recent direction of product development at SirsiDynix is the creation of a new communications layer for its ILS products that serves as the foundation for subsequent strategic products. Branded as Web Services, this

product introduces a modern communications layer based on current interoperability methods to ILS's that predate this expectation. It also allows SirsiDynix to create new add-on products addressing Web Services that then work with both of its core ILS offerings. Web Services was made available for Symphony in early 2010 and for Horizon in March 2011. This product enables a set of application programming interfaces (APIs), following what has become a well-established method called Web services (REST or SOAP), which make a subset of the functionality of the underlying ILS available to external systems.

The Web Services package consists of several components, including Standard Services, which provide access to the library's bibliographic database and item data to allow an external system to perform search operations. It also includes Security Services that allow external systems to authenticate a user based on the ILS login credentials and Patron Services that provide access to user accounts for operations such as renewals, placing holds, or updating account details. Finally, Admin Services allows access to system policies or other system configuration data.

BookMyne

BookMyne, the SirsiDynix mobile application, relies on the installation of the Web Services layer in conjunction with the library's instance of Symphony or Horizon. In December 2011, the company released version BookMyne 3.0 with support for Android-based smartphones in addition to the original iPhone offering. With this release, SirsiDynix introduced an enhanced product called **BookMyne+** that gives libraries the ability to implement local branding and customizations. It also provides the ability to integrate additional data sources beyond that of their ILS, and to create push notifications and alerts. While BookMyne can be used by any library that has implemented the SirsiDynix Web Services, BookMyne+ will be offered as an added-cost product.

Project eResource Central

SirsiDynix also reports ongoing development of **Project eResource Central**, a new electronic resource management product it expects to release in the second quarter of 2012. Although full details of the product have not yet been announced,

eResource Central will include end-user functionality to provide more seamless access to e-books, digitized materials, and subscribed e-journals as well as tools to aid library personnel in managing these resources. eResource Central aims to allow users to access or download electronic materials in a single click instead of some of the complex tasks required in current environments. Some of the features to help staff manage these electronic resources will include tools to help maintain related metadata in MARC and other formats, workflows to help with the acquisition of new resources, and extending circulation reports to also include the use of electronic materials.

eResource Central will be offered through the software as a service model, with the metadata associated with the library's e-resource collections loaded and indexed in the cloud environment managed by SirsiDynix. This approach builds on the momentum that the company has seen with its existing products toward hosted arrangements. SirsiDynix reports that it currently provides hosting for over 750 of its client libraries.

—Marshall Breeding

Ex Libris: Alma, Aleph, and Primo

Ex Libris has made progress across multiple products. There have been developments with Alma, its new unified resource management platform, Aleph, one of its integrated library systems, and with its Primo discovery product.

As **Alma** nears general release, the company has about 60 institutions participating as early adopters in addition to the original four development partners. Some of the libraries recently announced

as joining the early adopter program include RMIT University in Australia and the University of Otago in New Zealand. North American institutions recently signed as early adopters include Boston University, Fort Hays State University, Midwestern State University, North Dakota State University Libraries, Northeastern University, Texas Woman's University, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, University of Minnesota

Libraries, University of Texas at Dallas, and Virginia Commonwealth University.

In other recent Alma news, a meeting of a group of Expert Advisors--assembled by Ex Libris and charged with the task of making recommendations regarding how metadata in the shared Community Catalog should be managed—has taken place.

While the group's detailed recommendations were not published, a gen-

eral statement reflected its principles that metadata in the Alma Community Catalog should be open and that "members should be able to share, copy, edit, and redistribute records that are linked to the library's inventory." Alma will be available for production use in 2012.

Despite the efforts focused on Alma, Ex Libris also continues full support of its existing products, including Aleph and Voyager. **Aleph** is widely used by academic and research libraries and has been deployed in around 2,300 sites spanning many regions of the world. January 2012 saw the release of Aleph Version 21. The previous major release, Aleph Version 20, was issued in March 2009; Version 19 came out in January 2008. So while the pace of new releases has slowed, this new release demonstrates that Ex Libris has kept true to its commitment to continue enhancing its existing ILS products as it develops Alma.

In the largest and most complex implementation of Aleph to date, the National Diet Library, Japan's national library, moved to production use, consolidating a variety of resources and projects that had previously been managed sepately. Aleph now manages a collection of 20 million bibliographic records representing 40 million items; it includes the Asian Language Materials catalog and the Japanese Periodicals Index in addition to the library's holdings. The implementation of Aleph began in 2010 following an extensive selection process and an 8-month trial period (See http://www.ndl.go.jp/en/).

Ex Libris continues enhancing its Primo Central discovery service. In January 2012, the company reported that it would provide full-text search for the HathiTrust collection of 5.3 million books and 263,000 serial titles. HathiTrust was founded in 2008 as a platform to collaboratively manage the materials digitized through library partnerships, such as the Google Books project by Microsoft, the Internet Archive and other initiatives. Sixty-seven institutions currently belong to the HathiTrust partnership (See http://www.hathitrust.org/).

Just prior to the ALA Midwinter conference, Ex Libris announced a number of new sales of Primo in North America, including Fort Hays State University, Idaho State University, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, University of Hawaii, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Virginia Community College System, and the 11 academic libraries of the WISPALS Library Consortium. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, a member of the Association of Research Libraries, also announced its selection of Primo in January 2012. Ex Libris reports that Primo is in use in over 900 sites worldwide.

—*Marshall Breeding*

Serials Solutions: Summon and Intota

Serials Solutions continues to expand the reach of its Summon discovery service, both in terms of the content addressed and the number of library subscribers, as it prepares to enter the realm of library automation.

At the 2011 ALA Annual Conference, Serials Solutions announced that it had begun the development of a library management product, generically dubbed as its Web-scale management solution. They announced a product that would follow many of the same principles that underlie its current suite of products, including knowledgebase driven workflows and deployment through software as a service. At the ALA Midwinter Meeting, Serials Solutions gave a progress report and unveiled the name of the new product —Intota. The product will be made available through three phases of development from 2012 through 2013, focusing respectively on data management, selection, and fulfillment. Serials Solutions has not yet announced libraries designated as development partners or early adopters. *Smart Libraries Newsletter* covered the initial

At the ALA Midwinter Meeting, Serials Solutions gave a progress report and unveiled the name of the new product — Intota.

announcement of what is now known as Intota in its August 2011 issue.

Summon, launched by Serials Solutions at the 2009 ALA Midwinter Meeting, now marks its third anniversary with ongoing progress in the growth of its underlying index and in the numbers of libraries now subscribing to the service. The company reports that Summon currently finds use in over 400 libraries in 40 countries worldwide. The Summon index has grown to over 840 million items, showing substantial growth past the 300 million items it addressed during its initial beta test period.

Some of the new capabilities added to Summon in recent months include Discipline Scoped Searching, where a Summon search box can be configured to limit materials according to a pre-defined subject or topic area. These scoped searches are based on subject classifications implemented at the item level. Currently 59 different disciplines are available based on a variety of authoritative classification tools, including Columbia's Hierarchical Interface to Library of Congress Classification, as well as from its own KnowledgeWorks and the Ulrich's knowledgebase. Libraries can place these search box widgets in any Web-based environment, such as courseware pages or LibGuides, and faculty members can create customized search widgets for use on their personal pages.

Serials Solutions reports that one third of the academic members of the Association of Research Libraries have selected Summon. Most recently, the University of Illinois at Chicago, announced it had joined the ARL members using Summon. This implementation also will include bringing the I-Share catalog, which spans the holdings of the Consortium of 76 members of the Academic Research Libraries in Illinois.

—Marshall Breeding

Bibliotheca Acquires Trion AG

In the last year, the library RFID sector saw a significant reshaping of it's business landscape. The biggest development was the consolidation of three of the major global competitors —Bibliotheca RFID, IDG, and Intellident —into a single entity under the ownership of Equity One Partners. The feature "Global Consolidation: Three firms join to gain RFID synergies" in the July 2011 issue of *Smart Libraries Newsletter*, covered the details of the transaction.

The consolidation of the industry and the growth of Bibliotheca continues with the February 2012 announcement of its acquisition of Trion AG. Trion ranks as a major manufacturer of automated materials handling equipment for libraries. The company's products include the BiblioReturn automated station for the return of library materials, BiblioSorter system for sorting returned materials into bins based on status and location, BiblioLift for sorting and distributing materials to multiple floors of a library building, and the BiblioCheck M2 RFID-based self-check stations.

Trion AG, headquartered in Dübendorf, Switzerland, was established in 1999. Sven Carlson, the founder and CEO of Trion AG, joins Bibliotheca and will lead its team of partners.

The acquisition of Trion AG builds on existing business relationships. The company had previously been involved as a supplier of AMH equipment to each of the three organizations that now comprise the new Bibliotheca Group. This latest move not only increases the size of Bibliotheca Group, but also brings important new capacities into the company in terms of product design and manufacturing. While the full implications of this acquisition will play out over time, having ownership and exclusive access to the design and manufacturing resources should prove to be a valuable asset and should further strengthen its position in the industry.

—Marshall Breeding

Innovative Interfaces: Sierra, Encore, and Electronic Resource Management

Innovative Interfaces continues to build interest in its new Sierra platform. The company also launched its new Decision Center product, and announced new releases of Encore and Content Pro.

January 2012 saw the announcement of Encore Release 5, an update of Innovative's strategic discovery product. This new version of Encore brings in a variety of social networking concepts and features. Some of the new features include offering tools that allow users to "like" and share items of interest on external social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Reddit. Another new capability involves an option for users to create their own home page within the Encore environment, with the ability to selectively share it with other users. From this profile page, they can then opt to assemble and share reading lists, reviews, or items from the library collection checked out or placed on hold. Innovative reports that they anticipate this new release of Encore to be available later in 2012 and that it will integrate with either Millennium or Sierra.

Innovative announced a new tool called Decision Center, which is designed to provide advanced support for collection development. Through the use of data derived dynamically from all relevant parts of the management system, such as bibliographic and item holdings, circulation, holds and requests, and patron demographics, Decision Center generates recommendations for items to be added to the collection, weeded, or transferred. This new tool has been designed to work with either Millennium or Sierra and will be available by the end of 2012.

Content Pro, the digital asset management system offered by Innovative, has also been significantly enhanced. Version 2.1 will include new features including a redesigned interface for staff

and library users, improved branding opportunities, and a new carousel viewer for the presentation of digital items in a slideshow format. These slideshows can also be inserted as widgets into external systems such as Facebook and other social networks, course pages, or within the library's own Web site. Innovative has also created a new desktop application for library staff for easier system administration and collection management. It also includes tools to batch load digital content, convert incoming data, and to gather usage statistics.

Innovative also announced that its Electronic Resource Management has been selected by the University of Michigan to centrally manage all of its electronic resources. As a member of the

Association of Research Libraries and one of the largest library systems in the United States, with extensive investment in electronic resources, the selection of Innovative's Electronic Resource Management system is a significant vote of confidence in this product. Electronic Resource Management integrates natively with Innovative's own Millennium and Sierra automation products. The University of Michigan has also licensed an additional module called Acquisitions for ERM to handle the exchange of data with its Aleph integrated library system. The company reports that about 300 libraries have licensed its Electronic Resource Management product.

—Marshall Breeding

VTLS Completes Implementation of Virtua in the Hong Kong Public Library

In 2008, VTLS made news through its rapid and successful implementation of Virtua in the Queens Borough Public Library, the busiest library system in the United States as measured by the number of annual circulations, with over 23 million transactions in 2009. The implementation of Virtua in Queens established the capability of Virtua to withstand the demands of a very large and busy municipal library.

Building on this success, VTLS has now completed the implementation of Virtua in the Hong Kong Public Library, the busiest public library in the world. A library with over 59 million annual circulation transactions, serving 3.8 million patrons, with 67 branch facilities, the implementation of Virtua and Chamo stands as a remarkable achievement for VTLS.

The selection of Hewlett-Packard HK SAR Ltd as the lead contractor with VTLS

as the supplier of the automation software component was announced in 2010 following a lengthy and rigorous procurement process. There were 309 requirements for the process that involved custom development in the VTLS software. The completed system successfully passed the acceptance tests administered by the Hong Kong Public Library in the Fall of 2011.

—Marshall Breeding

OCLC Launches the WorldShare Brand and Wins an ARL Member

OCLC launched its Web-scale Management Services in May 2009, and has since completed the development of the initial version of

this new environment, which provides a complete suite of library automation functionality through its cloud platform. OCLC has referred to this new product as Web-

scale Management Services from its launch almost three years ago until December 2011 when it was branded as **WorldShare Management Services**. The development and

deployment of this product has been extensively covered in earlier issues of S*mart Libraries Newsletter*, including the June 2009 and October 2010 issues. The OCLC WorldShare Platform is the general technology and data infrastructure that exposes a set of application programming interfaces (APIs) to support the development of applications by OCLC, its members, and external organizations. The WorldShare Management Services is the first application created using the WorldShare Platform.

WorldShare Management Services has been available as a production product since early 2011. By February 2012, OCLC reports that around 35 libraries use it as their primary automation environment, with another 180 that have signed commitments for future implementation, including the large 105-member BIBSYS consortium in Norway.

In January 2012, OCLC announced WorldShare License Manager based on the OCLC WorldShare Platform to offer a complete set of services to help libraries manage their subscriptions to electronic resources. This product makes use of the OCLC WorldCat knowledge base, which holds data describing the universe of specific holdings that can be accessed via the electronic resource packages available to libraries. Functionality offered by the WorldShare License Manager includes selection, acquisition, and management of electronic resources as well as link resolution. The application manages related to vendors, subscription details, license terms, and access restrictions.

Until now, most of the libraries committing to WorldShare Management Services have been relatively small. Now a member of the Association of Research Libraries has joined the ranks. In January OCLC announced that the University of Delaware Libraries will implement WMS, with a target date of summer 2013. The library also plans to implement WorldShare License Manager, a component of WMS. The University of Delaware was the first ARL member to implement WorldCat Local in 2008.

—Marshall Breeding

EBSCO Consolidates its Platforms

E BSCO has long been a major supplier of products and services to libraries, with a broad array of technology and content products and a complex organizational structure. EBSCO Publishing produces products that libraries license to provide access to electronic content, including the EBSCOhost databases and the EBSCO Discovery Service. EBSCO Information Services provides products used by libraries to acquire and manage materials, both print and electronic. The technology products of EBSCO Information Services include the LinkSource link resolver and EBSCO A-Z for providing access to e-journals, with an underlying knowledge base of e-journal holdings.

Until now, these two EBSCO subsidiaries have created and maintained their own and separate technology infrastructures. Linking services, e-journal access, and discovery have become increasingly interrelated tasks. Even though the A-Z and LinkSource resources have always been accessible by EBSCO Discovery Service, they reside on distinct and separate

EBSCO has announced that it will begin merging all services into the EBSCO Discovery Services.

platforms. EBSCO has announced that it will begin merging all of these services into the EBSCO Discovery Services. The consolidation of these tools will not only provide opportunities for more seamless behind-the-scenes integration of the linking and discovery environments, but it will also allow libraries to manage both product families through a single administrative tool.

The integration of the platforms will begin later in 2012 and will be done with consultation and involvement of its customers.

—Marshall Breeding

**March 2012
The Library Automation News Cycle**

Smart Libraries Newsletter

Smart Libraries Newsletter delivers hard data and innovative insights about the world of library technology, every month.

TO SUBSCRIBE

To reserve your subscription, contact the Customer Service Center at **800-545-2433, press 5 for assistance,** or visit **alatechsource.org**.

The 2011 subscription price is $85 in the United States and $95 internationally.