The dis-integration of library management systems

Sometimes state-of-the-art is the most anyone wants from a product. Why ask for more from an integrated library system (ILS)? As ILS companies grapple with shrinking new-name sales and demands from customers that are not met by the traditional ILS, libraries find the ground shifting beneath them.

The traditional ILS is placed on a shelf like a finished product, so shopping for a new ILS seems much like choosing between a fleet of four-door sedans at the rental car lot. But is the traditional ILS really done? The shifting focus of ILS vendors is cause for concern, if not because libraries might not be getting what they're paying for, then because libraries are not necessarily watching the road ahead.

You need only visit a library vendor booth at a national conference or scan the library vendor marketplace to see that ILS vendors are pursuing new products and new markets. Both good and bad result: On the good side, vendors are finally paying attention to the desires of library customers that cannot be met by the traditional library system. On the bad side, new systems designed to meet those needs are being created without considering integration with the existing system. This lack of integration results because ILS vendors have huge incentive to build new information modules that can stand alone or work in (often limited) conjunction with another ILS.

e-journal archiving's promise grows

The digital preservation of e-journals progressed another step with an agreement between the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (KB), the national library of the Netherlands, and Kluwer Academic Publishers. KB will receive and archive digital copies of all Kluwer journals and electronic books made available through Kluwer Online. This collection now includes 670 journals and more than 600 e-books in science, technology, and medicine.

Under the terms of this agreement, KB will provide on-site access to users

who have access to the library's collections. If Kluwer's online system were to become inoperable for a long period of time, KB would become part of an interim service system. Should the publisher or its successors cease to make the journals available on a commercial basis, KB could open the collection for remote access by all.

This agreement parallels the one made last year between the KB and Elsevier

New! Combined subscriptions and improved search function online

ALA TechSource announces enhanced value for its online subscribers, who can now access both Search the Archives & Library Technology Reports Online for one cost-saving subscription price.

Search the Archives includes the 1999 through most-current issues of *Library Technology Reports,* the expert guides to library systems and services, and the complete archives for *Smart Libraries Newsletter*—July 1981 through December 2002. Both publications can be searched by keyword, author, title, date, or issue. Visit www.techsource.ala.org/rna.pl?section=searcharc for more information.

Dis-integration *from page 1*

The push for new stand-alone modules can be seen in five major areas:

- course management
- interlibrary loan (ILL)
- portals
- electronic resource management
- digital asset management.

Starting in the mid-1990s, dissatisfaction with poorly designed or mildly functional modules for functions such as course reserve and ILL offered by ILS vendors led libraries to find those products elsewhere. ILS vendors were slow to catch on that libraries would sacrifice complete integration with the traditional system for more functionality in stand-alone modules.

By the time ILS vendors poured more resources into adding functionality to the primary system, stand-alone products such as ILLiad for ILL, WebCT and Blackboard for course management, and Luna for digital collections had already earned a faithful following. Librarians didn't care that the stand-alone modules created double data entry or lacked interoperability with the ILS because the functionality—and, therefore, service to the end-user—was superior.

ILS vendors were essentially left with two choices: Continue attempting to integrate the (usually) inferior stand-alone modules into the integrated system, or begin development of new stand-alone products themselves, often with bought or borrowed technology.

By the mid-1990s, the software code for many well-established ILS products—based on pre-Web days—was aging. The notion that an ILS vendor could compete with stand-alone vendors and still integrate the product with the old ILS seemed futile.

Starting stand-alone modules from scratch presented better opportunities for rapid development. Although a noble and arguably necessary venture, starting the entire ILS from scratch, such as DRA's attempts with Taos, proved to be doomed because the effort was started too late after the bandwagon of stand-alone products and the successful launch of several next-generation library systems that did not require entire overhauls of software code.

In some cases, libraries got what they paid for. Although demands to keep maintenance fees down continued, demands on what the traditional integrated system could do increased. As vendors struggled for new-name sales in the late 1990s, many buckled under the pressure of keeping maintenance fees as low as possible. These fees were then diverted from development of legacy systems to next-generation ILS facelifts or the development of new stand-alone products.

E-BOOK VENDORS INTRODUCE DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT

Although the hype around e-books has quickly turned from revolution to evolution, e-book development is far from stagnant. Library involvement in the still somewhat fledgling service continues to grow.

Earlier this year, Cleveland Public Libraries (CPL) launched its lending e-book service backed by OverDrive Inc.'s Content Reserve. After less than a month of being live, the vast majority of the 1,000-title collection had already been checked out. The titles (typical of a public library) are mostly popular fiction, travel, business, study guides, and IT.

NetLibrary followed suit with an Adobe Content Server suite of titles, breaking with its traditional model of online viewing only through supported Web browsers. After acquisition by OCLC in 2002, netLibrary had discontinued support for its offline reader; the introduction of self-expiring checkouts using the Adobe reader is a reintroduction of the offline reading service. With RCA's device-specific e-book readers and online netLibrary titles as the primary source of library e-book content, users are left to complain about the inability to download content to the device of their choosing. The new Adobe reader and offline PDF content servers resolve this long-standing problem.—*AKP*

Contact: OverDrive, Inc.
www.overdrive.com
NetLibrary
www.netlibrary.com

The library world may never know if higher fees would have meant more sophisticated and better-integrated services. Nevertheless, although the traditional system garnishes most of the maintenance revenue, most of those funds are now poured into new product lines that may not promise system integration, or, at best, may only interoperate with the ILS from the same vendor.

Interoperability matters

Perhaps the ILS is not so much done as the library industry is done with the word integration. Accepted standards, published protocols, advanced application programming interfaces (APIs), and Web services are quickly putting integration out of favor and giving rise to interoperability. Vendors who promise their new stand-alone product will interoperate with the traditional ILS (likely if it's their own ILS) have an easier sell; in this case, interoperability is just as good as integration.

More likely, though, an ILS vendor stand-alone module will have little interoperability with products from a competing ILS vendor. At best, ILS vendor stand-alone modules will work with a limited—or pre-determined—set of vendor products, especially if the development did not include incorporating accepted standards.

Perhaps short memories have made library developers forget that the slow road of interoperability in the 1970s and 1980s led to the fully integrated systems of the 1990s and today. In essence, libraries traded stand-alone functionality (whether digital or analog) for integrated consistency and efficiency. Nevertheless, advances in interoperability in the 21st century make the dis-integration of library management systems a new and attractive option.

Integrated Web services that use various parts of ILS data might be the baby steps that libraries can use without having to return to the bad-taste-in-the-mouth days of 1980s' homegrown library systems. Open-source solutions, interoperable stand-alone modules, and the dis-integrated ILS may prove that the ILS is not really done, but that the interoperable library management system is just beginning.—*Andrew K. Pace*

In August, *Smart Libraries Newsletter* will examine the interoperable library management system. Does open source software offer a solution for the complete interoperability of stand-alone modules? Or will ILS vendors embrace standards to the point that choosing a cataloging module from one and a circulation module from another will be possible?

E-books in libraries get a boost

The Open eBook Forum (OeBF), a trade and standards association for the e-book industry, has created a Library Special Interest Group (SIG) to improve communication among e-book publishers, resellers, technology companies, and librarians.

The group will share business problems and concerns that could stand in the way of successful use of e-books in libraries. The group includes members from Adobe, the American Library Association (ALA), the Library of Congress, Baker & Taylor, eBrary, netLibrary, and several academic libraries, public libraries, and e-book-related businesses. The Library SIG will first help the OeBF and ALA develop a compre-hensive survey on e-book usage in libraries. It will develop the survey methodology, oversee the distribution of the survey, and analyze and publish the results. The survey will expand available information about e-book usage and acceptance in public libraries.

The OeBF, in contrast to some other publishers' associations, has welcomed the participation of librarians in its standards work. Its three main initiatives are to develop standards for metadata and identifiers, publication structure, and digital rights management.—*PLC*

Contact: Open eBook Forum
www.openebook.org

Science for archival access to the roughly 1,500 journals in ScienceDirect. KB is attempting to make similar agreements with all major scientific publishers. Of significance to libraries, KB is committed not only to maintaining copies of the journal articles but also to providing preservation treatment to ensure the long-term usability of the content as technology changes.

> Happily for librarians, the larger commercial journal publishers appear to be more receptive to third-party archiving than they were perceived to be even two or three years ago.

KB has been in the forefront of the digital preservation community: It led the Networked European Deposit Library (NEDLIB) project and implemented a national deposit program for electronic publications in the Netherlands. Its preservation program includes the use of various preservation techniques such as reformatting, migration, and emulation as appropriate.

Can the promise be kept?

Nonetheless, libraries should not rest comfortably in the belief that the electronic scientific literature will be preserved. The field of digital preservation is too immature for memory institutions to rely on any single preservation archive.

Major commercial publishers should make arrangements with multiple institutions internationally, and archival copies of published content should be stored at multiple institutions. Ideally, too, a multiplicity of preservation approaches should be represented. For example, approaches could be based on both PDF and XML source files.

Happily for librarians, the larger commercial journal publishers appear to be more receptive to third-party archiving than they were perceived to be even two or three years ago.

Libraries, and their reluctance to commit to electronic-only subscriptions without some assurance of the continued

Standards

TLC's NCIP Toolkit ensures consistency

The Library Corp. (TLC) is making its NISO Circulation Interchange Protocol (NCIP) Toolkit available to library systems vendors and library organizations worldwide. The Toolkit gives vendors and other organizations wishing to implement the NCIP a big head start in applications development and will help ensure consistent implementations.

NCIP offers direct benefits to libraries in time savings and better record keeping. For example, by using NCIP an interlibrary loan transaction entered in an ILL system can be automatically recorded in the library's circulation system as well. NCIP defines transactions needed to support circulation activities between individual library systems in the areas of direct consortial borrowing, interaction between circulation and interlibrary loan (ILL), and self-service circulation.

Although not open source, the NCIP Toolkit is favorably priced for developers, which should encourage wide adoption of the NCIP protocol by the industry. TLC toolkits for interlibrary loan and Z39.50 also are available at favorable licensing terms.—*PLC*

Contact: The Library Corp. (TLC)
www.tlcdelivers.com
Ted Koppel
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Web Q&A for Dublin Core

If other organizations follow the new model introduced by the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (DCMI), libraries may ultimately make use of a network of interconnected virtual reference services for metadata and standards initiatives.

DCMI's new website feature, AskDCMI, provides Web forms for submitting questions related to the Dublin Core element set or organization. Questions are routed to experts in DCMI and are

in the news

usually answered within five to seven days. AskDCMI also provides a searchable archive of prior questions and answers that functions like a frequently asked questions (FAQ) list in providing current and commonly needed information. A "My Questions" feature allows registered users to view and manipulate a personal archive of their own questions.

AskDCMI is the first non-K-12 use of the virtual reference software developed by the Information Institute of Syracuse as part of the Virtual Reference Desk project.—*PLC*

Contact: Dublin Core Metadata Initiative
www.dublincore.org

NISO initiates specification registration process

Librarians can increase their awareness of potentially useful specifications thanks to the development of a new registry by the National Information Standards Organization (NISO). Developers of emerging standards are now offered the opportunity to register their specifications with NISO. Groups developing standards can use NISO registration to secure acceptance and recognition in a larger community of potential implementers.

For a specification to be registered, the developing organization must be committed to an open development process, guarantee open access to the specification, and ensure sustained support for the specification. The topic also must be deemed relevant to the NISO community of libraries, publishers, vendors, and information providers. Although registration does not imply a formal NISO endorsement, it does mean the specification warrants interest and further investigation within the community. Registration provides a lighter-weight review and accreditation process than the procedures required for full ANSI/NISO standardization.—*PLC*

Contact: National Information Standards Organization
www.niso.org
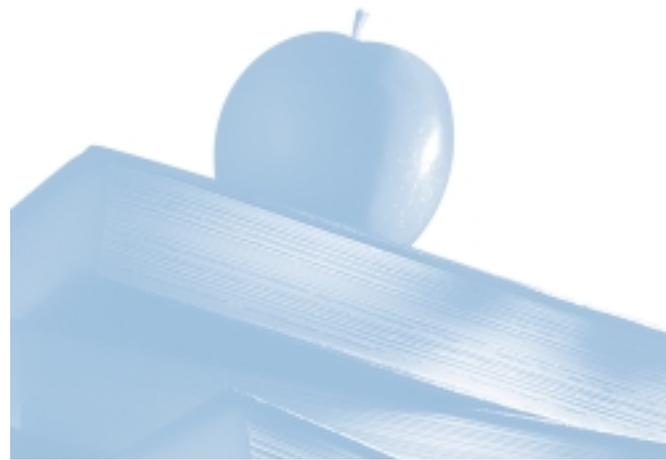
ENDEAVOR LINKS TO COURSE SOFTWARE

Class assignments generate the demand for student use of library resources in higher education. So why not connect these two different systems: course management software, such as WebCT or Blackboard, and the ILS providing access to all the library's resources? Endeavor Information Systems, Inc. demonstrated that connection in April at the Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) Conference in Charlotte, N.C.

Instead of conducting a search in the OPAC and then cutting and pasting the URL into the online course syllabus, Endeavor's Course Content Integrator streamlines the process with a seamless link through ENCompass to search across the library's various resources in different formats. A preformatted search of selected resources is then embedded directly into the course syllabus. Instead of having static search results saved, the student can execute the search and retrieve the most current results that day.

By incorporating XML-based searching, ENCompass supports searching of rich media systems such as Virage, which indexes and manages audio and video content, and Luna, which manages high-resolution images and data. These tools provide access to a growing array of nonprint formats.—*JL*

Contact: www.endinfosys.com

availability of backfiles, are partially responsible for this change. Authors and editors who fear their work will disappear also have been influential. Electronic-only journals will lose their best contributors unless scholars know their work will be preserved.

Many barriers still block the development of viable e-journal archives. Balancing the commercial interests of publishers with the access needs of archives is difficult and often centers on the definition of appropriate trigger events (circumstances) that would open up archived content to public use.

Viable business models for supporting the substantial cost of archiving have yet to emerge and, despite much progress in this area, technical models for ingest (accessing materials into the archive), format transformation, management, and quality control of this content are still in their infancy.

Current thought is that national libraries and large not-for-profits are best suited to archive commercial e-journals. At this time, though, few options exist. In the United States, the Library of Congress has not yet made any agreements to become a preservation archive for commercial publishers.

OCLC's Electronic Collections Online will serve as a digital archive, but archived content may only be accessed by subscribing libraries for the period of their subscription. JSTOR may develop a preservation archive for e-journal source files with funding from the Mellon Foundation.

Negotiate for archiving

Libraries should continue to make preservation archiving an issue when negotiating licenses with publishers of e-journals. They also should think critically about archiving claims.

The deposit and storage of e-journal articles in a repository or cache does not constitute preservation archiving unless the organization running the facility is committed to preserving the content indefinitely. The organization itself should be stable and likely to endure. It should have a plan for how the usability of materials in each archived format will be maintained over time, and it should be collecting the technical and administrative metadata required to implement those plans. Unless these conditions are met, the content is not truly being preserved for future use.—*Priscilla L. Caplan*

What's in a name?

Gaylord Information Systems officially changed its name to GIS Information Systems in May. Not to be confused with Geographic Information Systems, GIS chose the name often used by its faithful customer base. The name change follows the acquisition of Gaylord's library supplies and furniture division by Demco, Inc. The name change also follows a change in management, with the resignation of Katherine Blauer as president; she is succeeded by William Schickling.

GIS's announcement follows a series of name changes and mergers in the library industry over the last several months, including epixtech to Dynix, UMI to Bell & Howell, and DRA to Sirsi, and, of course, *Library Systems Newsletter* to *Smart Libraries Newsletter.—AKP*

Contact: GIS Information Systems, Inc.
www.gisinfosystems.com

Industry veterans take the reins at **Ex Libris**

Following the March departure of President Carl Grant for rival VTLS, Ex Libris Ltd. executives have appointed ILS veteran Robert Walton as chairman of the board of Ex Libris (USA).

Walton is joined by sales veteran Russell McDonald as vice president of sales. Walton and McDonald formerly worked together at Innovative Interfaces during its days of record revenues in the mid-1990s. Ex Libris' rapid North American expansion has been plagued by delays in ILS implementations, juxtaposed against the growing success of its stand-alone SFX and Metalib products.

Walton's appointment followed the announcement from Chairman Azriel Morag that Matti Shem Tov will now head the Tel Aviv-based company as its new president and CEO.—*AKP*

Contact: Ex Libris (USA), Inc.
www.exlibris-usa.com

GUIDE TO STILL-IMAGE DIGITIZATION AND PRESERVATION

The National Agricultural Library (NAL), the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), and the Boston College Library have joined forces to develop guidelines to help libraries create, share, and preserve digitized still images.

NAL, ARL, and the Boston College Library will survey institutions and published literature to identify procedures for preserving still images. The survey also will result in a best-practices guide for handling, stabilizing, describing, and preserving still images. The guide will be available by early 2004; watch the ARL website (www.arl.org) for release information.—*PLC*

Contact: National Agricultural Library
www.nal.usda.gov
Len Carey
lcarey@nal.usda.gov

CrossRef **drops** annual fee

CrossRef is dropping its annual fee for Library Affiliates as of July 1, 2003 so libraries will be able to use CrossRef for DOI and metadata retrieval at no cost. Until now, Library Affiliates paid $500 a year to retrieve digital object identifiers (DOIs) in a batch or to use the CrossRef system to retrieve metadata associated with a DOI. The latter use is a common function of link resolution systems, so libraries using these systems had to pay to become a Library Affiliate unless their vendor absorbed the fee.

CrossRef was established in 2000 as an independent, nonprofit membership association with a mandate to make cross-publisher linking throughout online scholarly literature efficient and reliable using the DOI system.—*PLC*

Contact: CrossRef
www.crossref.org

AAP and **ALA** sponsor DRM white paper

Technology can't adequately accommodate the legitimate uses of e-books in libraries. That thesis sums up the problems described in a new white paper released in March and—surprisingly—jointly sponsored by the Association of American Publishers (AAP) and the American Library Association (ALA), through its Office for Information Technology Policy.

The paper, "What Consumers Want in Digital Rights Management (DRM): Making Content as Widely Available as Possible In Ways that Satisfy Consumer Preferences," is not a position paper of the AAP or the ALA, says white paper author and active AAP member F. Hill Slowinski.

The paper does an adequate job of outlining the issues and concerns surrounding DRM systems for e-books, but its supporting evidence to substantiate the fears of publishers is shaky. The paper also goes to great lengths to separate e-book content from the traditional protection of the First Sale Doctrine.—*AKP*

The white paper, its appendixes, and executive summary are available at: http://doi.contentdirections. com/mr/aap.jsp?doi=10.1003/ whitepaper1. For a better library perspective on the issues of consumers and e-books, read "E-Book Functionality: What Libraries and Their Patrons Want and Expect from Electronic Books," LITA Guide #10, a product of the E-book Functionality Working Group of the ALA. It's available by calling toll free 1-866-746-7252.

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www.techsource.ala.org

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