TCR CASE STUDIES:
Virtual Reference in the Real World

One of the hottest new waves in library services is virtual reference. A recent preliminary report on the "Ready for Reference" project of the Alliance Library System in Illinois provides a close-up of a collaborative, 24x7, live reference service being piloted by eight college and university libraries.

The project has been carefully balanced. Four of the participating institutions are community colleges, two in rural/small town settings (serving 1,100 and 700 FTE students), one in a small city (with about 1,300 FTE students), and the fourth in a medium-sized city with an industrial base (serving 2,100 FTE students). Many of the community colleges serve adult students. Of the four-year colleges and universities, one is a state university with about 18,000 FTE students, one is a private university with about 5,000 FTE students, one is a private university with about 1,100 FTE students, and one is a small private college with 500 FTE students.

Funding for the project has been provided by the Illinois State Library, a division of the Illinois Office of the Secretary of State, and is based on federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding. The project uses the eGain Web call center software, as modified and marketed by Library Systems and Services, Inc. (LSSI).

A total of 474 user sessions have been recorded over 13 weeks of this year. Among the preliminary observations:

- the busiest one-hour slot is from 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- evening use is higher than morning use
- only 10 sessions have been logged in the wee hours (1:00 a.m. – 6:00 a.m.)
- Tuesdays and Thursdays have been the busiest days
- LSSI backup staff has handled slightly over half of total sessions (50.76%)
- local staff have handled slightly less than half (49.24%)
- 65% of the queries have not used a campus affiliated email address (AOL, Hotmail and Yahoo have been the most popular non-campus affiliations)

More information on the project, including a list of participants, is available at www.rsa.lib.il.us/ready/. The complete preliminary report is available at www.lis.uic.edu/~b-sloan/ready4ref.htm.

Libraries on the Move

The Harvard University Libraries, Blackwell Publishing, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., and the University of Chicago Press have agreed to work together on a plan to develop an experimental archive for electronic scholarly journals, some of which may be "born digital," and present challenges to librarians, publishers, and to the scholars who will seek to access them over time. The new joint venture is sponsored by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which recently made a $145,000 grant to the MIT libraries for similar purposes. Harvard University Press Release, May 14, 2001.

The Library of Santa Clara University (SCU), California, has received a $20 million pledge from the founder and president of San Francisco-based Business Wire, the largest gift in the history of the institution. Of the funds, $15 million will be used to create a new campus learning center; $5 million will be earmarked for endowed scholarships. SCU expects to combine greatly increased electronic databases and services with a traditional library in the new facility. No date has been set yet for construction. Library Journal, May 1, 2001.

Thanks to a $1 million grant for collection building from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, 293 public libraries across the U.S. have been selected to receive 50 recently-published volumes of The Library of America, a series devoted to American literature and history. The awards are the first of two rounds offered through a partnership between the American Library Association, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and The Library of America. Among the goals of the project are to start new community-centered library programs, including public readings and discussions, using the books as centerpiece. For a list of winning libraries, see www.neh.gov/pdf/other/ALASpring2001.pdf. Applications for the next round are available at www.neh.gov/millenniumlibraries. ALA News, May 2001.

The Connecticut Digital Library, iCONN, is now live and serving users across the state. The initiative was funded at the $2 million level by the Connecticut General Assembly as part of its 2000-2001 budget. Initial funds have been used to license a large suite of databases from The Gale Group, aimed at meeting the needs of K-12 and college students, as well as users of the public library system. iCONN states that it still has money to spend and expects to expand its offerings over the near and long term. For more information, including a PDF version of the joint Gale/iCONN brochure, logon to www.iconn.org.

Don't Miss This!

Want to learn more about Epixtech, Adlib, TLC, DRA, III, Endeavor, Fretwell Downing and more than 30 other vendors of integrated library systems? Results of the annual survey of ILS vendors conducted by Library Systems Newsletter editor Richard Boss are now available fulltext at ALA's TechSource site. To read company profiles, logon to www.techsource.al.org/lsn_survey.shtml.
By the Numbers

$409.6 million ... equals the total of Amazon's book, music, and DVD/video sales to the U.S. market in the first quarter of 2001. Amazon reported a gross margin of 27% on these sales. Sales volume was only 2% higher than the first quarter of 2000. New York Times, May 20, 2001.

18% ... of URLs cited in 1996 still lead to the correct Internet document in 2000, according to a study by Philip M. Davis and Suzanne Cohen, authors of "The Effect of the Web on Undergraduate Citation Behavior." Of URLs cited in 1999, 55% are still valid. Also discovered: citations to books in undergraduate papers are down from 30% to 19% since 1996. Journal of the American Association for Information Science and Technology, February 15, 2001.

1,085,206 ... user sessions were logged in March 2001 by Academic Press’ IDEAL service, an increase of 57% over sessions a year earlier and 2,577% since statistics were first tracked in 1997. User sessions totaled 7,416,613 in 2000. IDEAL is the online library of the Harcourt Worldwide STM Group. More information is available at www.idealibrary.com.

$16,740 ... is the average budget set aside for e-books among respondents to the ATG Annual Report Survey. E-book purchases are up: 68% of respondents report that they have purchased e-books this year, versus last year’s figure of only 28%. Against the Grain, April 2001.

100 ... is the number of participating libraries in the new Collaborative Digital Reference Service (CDRS), co-sponsored by the Library of Congress and OCLC. RUSA (ALA’s Reference and User Services Association) and LSSI (Library Systems and Services, Inc.) are also partners in the effort. For a list of members, logon to www.loc.gov/rr/digiref/members.html.

7% ... of U.S. citizens read more than one book a week, while 59% read fewer than 10 books a year, according to a recent Gallup Poll. Washington Post, washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A23370-2001May13.html.

1,460 ... of EBSCO’s 2,947 fulltext titles have an embargo period of 3 months or longer. 1,081 (36.7%) have an embargo period of at least 12 months. Posted to liblicense-l, May 15, 2001.

100% ... of libraries in U.S. two- and four-year colleges are now connected to the Internet, up from 93% last year, and a "first ever" milestone, according to Market Data Retrieval’s annual survey of colleges and technology. For complete statistics, see www.schooldata.com/datapoint58.html.

Short Takes

The New York Times has introduced its “First Annual Library Awards” to be given to public library employees “who have made a significant difference” and who have been nominated by city residents and the general public. Eligible librarians must work in a public library within the five New York boroughs. Librarians are also being encouraged to nominate their peers. The deadline for nominations is June 29, 2001; forms can be found at www.nytimes.com/pressroom. Each winner will receive $2,500.

A new MSIS/MBA joint masters’ degree will be offered by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s School of Information and Library Science and its Kenan-Flagler Business School. The combined degree will serve students with an interest in information technology and business, aimed at a future in the knowledge economy marketplace. Students admitted to the three-year program will spend one year in each program’s core and a third year finishing electives from either school. UNC-CH SILS Newslette, Spring 2001.

The American Library Association is offering grants of $1,000 - $3,000 to libraries which partner with authors, artists, and musicians to present “live” programs at local libraries, as part of its @Your Library campaign. The effort is aimed at strengthening the library’s role as a cultural center in local communities. Application deadlines begin in July 2001 and continue through March 2002. For more information, including a roster of available authors, logon to www.ala.org/publicprograms/live.html.

TCR Quote

"A library is more than a stack of books. The library is a focus of the community. It’s a monument to knowledge and learning." Dick Brass, Microsoft’s vice president in charge of e-book efforts. Wall Street Journal, March 12, 2001.
More Journal Vendors and Publishers Use SFX ... But What Is It?

The list of journal publishers and intermediaries who are now supporting the context-sensitive linking service SFX has become a "who's who" in the world of academic publishing. Implementers include:

- Bell & Howell's ProQuest
- Cambridge Scientific Abstracts
- EBSCO Publishing and EBSCOhost
- The Gale Group
- ingenta, including CatchWord and UnCover
- Institute of Physics' AXIOM online journals service
- ISI's Web of Science
- OCLC First Search
- Ovid
- SilverPlatter ERL
- SwetsBlackwell's Swetsnet Journal Navigator
- Wilson Web

But what is SFX? And what does all this mean for content owners, particularly regarding pricing and revenue streams?

SFX was developed at Ghent University in Belgium and has been licensed for commercial application and support by Ex Libris, which also markets integrated library system solutions. Libraries which install SFX software can input information about their online journal and database subscriptions (as well as desired free resources) which are then used by their local systems to determine the most appropriate route to various Web-based documents requested by researchers. SFX can link to citation databases, fulltext journal articles, and virtually any information format, and can link to local materials as well as those available on servers across the Web.

The software is promoted as providing libraries with tighter control over their information resource budgets by actively preventing researchers from selecting, for example, a pay-per-view option when the library already has a subscription to a journal, or by promoting cheaper or more efficient routes to material via aggregators and local servers. It's probably too soon to say, but users may well find the service restrictive, in the event that access is blocked to an article for which they would be willing to pay.

From the publisher viewpoint, becoming SFX-compliant means installing a "hook" that allows resources to become OpenURL aware. Does it also mean losing pay-per-view revenues for publishers? Possibly, yes. One additional potential side effect of SFX is referred to as "price transparency," that is, making the price of material from different sources more public. This factor may in turn lead publishers to be more cautious about the number and pricing of multiple versions of their content.

On the other hand, as one industry player recently noted, in the current climate of cooperation among STM publishers to create more user-friendly services for both librarians and readers, who can afford not to join the party?

Ed Note: Thanks to SwetsBlackwell for many of the references in this article. For more information about SFX, logon to any of the following links: SwetsBlackwell: www.swetsblackwell.com; SFX: www.sfxit.com; Ex Libris: www.exlibris.co.uk; Ghent University: www.rug.ac.be; Los Alamos National Laboratory: www.lanl.gov; Catchword: www.catchword.com.

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U.S. Periodicals:
Highest and Lowest Prices for 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Average Subscription Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highest Prices (descending order)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Russian Translations</td>
<td>$ 1,744.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Chemistry &amp; Physics</td>
<td>$ 1,407.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Medicine</td>
<td>$ 726.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mathematics, etc.</td>
<td>$ 559.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Zoology</td>
<td>$ 510.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Lowest Prices (ascending order) |                      |
| 1. Children's Periodicals   | $ 25.52               |
| 2. General Interest         | $ 45.96               |
| 3. Physical Education       | $ 54.11               |
| 4. Fine & Applied Arts      | $ 59.17               |
| 5. Literature & Language    | $ 60.03               |


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e-Publishing Advice from Market Leaders

John Regazzi, CEO of Elsevier Science, says he admires libraries for their technology and customer savvy. His advice to publishers is to embrace the broadest range of standards to allow the maximum exposure and use of content and services, and to appoint librarians to internal design committees to take advantage of their understanding of what online users want.

Stephen Rhind-Tutt, head of Alexander Street Press, and former President of Chadwyck Healy, U.S., advises that context is now just as important as content. He notes: "Today the central issue is not what the specific content is, but how you find it."

More advice to e-publishers:
1. Be driven by the ultimate customers, not the distribution chain player.
2. Collaborate on the development of digital standards, which will benefit the entire marketplace.
3. Bring flexibility to content offerings, allow consumers to choose final format(s) from a menu of options.
4. Remember that the purchase of any content will be driven by when, where, and how the consumer wants it.
5. Publishers will become creators of content-based suites of services, rather than individual commodity offerings.


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TCR QUICK TIP:
Need Help Doing Business with the Federal Government?

Try logging onto the Federal Acquisition Regulations' Web site at www.ar.net.gov/far for the most up-to-date regulations on federal procurements, in PDF, zipped, and HTML formats.
**TCR TRENDS: Analyzing Library and Internet Use**

All libraries, but particularly public libraries, wonder when and why users choose the library over the Internet, and vice versa. The Urban Libraries Council, based in Chicago, Illinois, surveyed over 3,000 adults on this topic. A sampling of their results:

**Overall Data**
- 40% of those surveyed use both the library and the Internet
- 75% of those surveyed who are Internet users also use the library
- 60% of those surveyed who are library users also use the Internet
- 20% of all those surveyed use the Internet exclusively
- 10% of all those surveyed use the library exclusively

**Twice as Many Respondents Use the Internet Over the Library to...**
- do research for their jobs
- do research for personal projects
- read newspapers and magazines
- complete schoolwork
- obtain information on consumer products

**Libraries Receive Higher Ratings For...**
- ease of use
- accuracy of information
- low cost
- helpfulness of librarians

**Other General Findings**
- the Internet is rated higher for "fun" and for "currency of information"
- library users and Internet users are better educated and have higher household incomes than nonusers
- more women reported using than library than men, and conversely, more men reported using the Internet than women

Complete survey results and overviews are available at [www.urbanlibraries.org/Internet%20Study%20Fact%20Sheet.html](http://www.urbanlibraries.org/Internet%20Study%20Fact%20Sheet.html).

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**Mark Your Calendar for these Upcoming Events in Charleston, SC**

**21st Annual Charleston Conference**

The Charleston Conference is coming right up! Preconferences and the Vendor Showcase are set for October 31, 2001; full conference dates are November 1-3, 2001, all at the Lightsey Conference Center on the College of Charleston campus in beautiful Charleston, S.C. For more information or to register, logon to [www.cofc.edu/library/conference](http://www.cofc.edu/library/conference).

**Charleston Advisor Preconference**

The focus is on Electronic Collections. What impact is the digital revolution having on space planning, archiving, budgetary support, statistics and library use? Join Judy Luther of Informed Strategies and Ruth Wolfish of Lucent Technologies as coordinators for an interactive session featuring library administrators and front-line collection developers who are identifying practical approaches to new challenges.

The Realities of Acquiring Electronic Collections: Conversations with Library Administrators is this year’s title. Join us on October 31, 2001 in the Lightsey Conference Center from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. The cost is $100 which includes Lunch and Vendor Showcase.

Who should attend? Library directors, collection development officers, electronic resource librarians, vendors, and publishers. You won’t want to miss this fourth in the series on “Evaluating, Selecting and Acquiring Electronic Resources,” sponsored by *The Charleston Advisor*. Be sure to sign up now at [www.cofc.edu/library/conference](http://www.cofc.edu/library/conference).

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**"Why Is the AAP Waging War on Librarians?"**

This provocative title introduces an Op Ed by Chuck Hamaker, Associate Director for Technical Services at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, which appears in the April 2001 issue of *The Charleston Advisor*. As many *TCR* readers will immediately recognize, Chuck was responding to widely reported remarks made by the Association of American Publishers’ President Pat Schroeder, who commented in a February 7, 2001, article in *The Washington Post* that “[p]ublishers have a very serious issue with librarians.” Schroeder’s remarks sparked a lively round of shock and debate in the U.S. library community.

Members of the STM (Scientific, Technical and Medical) publishing community will be pleased to know that Chuck points to this sector as presenting the most positive approach to libraries and suggests to Schroeder that she look to STM for an example of what AAP can and should do. While Schroeder is quoted as blaming technology for library budget shortfalls (her quote: “Libraries have spent all this money on technology...They don’t have any money left for content.”), Chuck notes that libraries’ investment in technology has enabled STM and other publishers to reach markets which could not be reached before. Indeed, he implicitly refers to Elsevier’s purchase of Endeavor as an example of an STM publisher embracing library technology wholeheartedly.

Be sure to read the (FREE) full text of Chuck’s remarks at [www.charlestonco.com/features.cfm?id=61&type=ed](http://www.charlestonco.com/features.cfm?id=61&type=ed). And don’t miss Pat Schroeder’s reply, which will be published in the July 2001 issue of *The Charleston Advisor*!

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**3rd Annual Vendor Showcase**

It’s not too late to register! More than 40 vendors will be showing their latest online and Web-based products at this year’s *Charleston Advisor* Vendor Showcase on October 31, 2001 in the Lightsey Conference Center from 12:00 noon – 6:00 p.m. (set-up runs from 8:00 a.m. til noon). More than 250 acquisitions and collection development librarians are expected to attend. Table-top displays, Internet connections and electrical will be provided. Don’t miss this opportunity to reach your target library buyers. And Hurry! This event always sells out!

For more information or a registration packet send email to <rlenzini@charlestonco.com>.

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**Coming in Future Issues**

- ALA Hot Topics
- The “State of the State” in Copyright
- E-Learning: What’s Working, What’s Not
- Previews of Charleston Conference Sessions