

SPECIFYING A PORTAL

A library interested in purchasing a portal product from the vendor of its automated library system, or from another vendor, should develop requirements and submit them to the vendor(s). The requested proposal should set forth:

- What is in general release
- What is in development
- What is in planning

The list of requirements below can either be incorporated into an RFP for an automated library system or can, when augmented with instructions to bidders, be the basis for procuring a standalone library portal.

Appendix A contains model instructions to bidders. Adapt these instructions to your local procurement practices. Although libraries that have standard instructions to bidders may wish to combine them with these specifications, they should check the model instructions for clauses that may be worth incorporating.

1. The portal shall consist of four components:
 - a. Single-search interface
 - b. User authentication
 - c. Resource linking
 - d. Content enhancement (quote annual subscription price separately)
2. The portal shall be Web-based.
3. A variety of clients shall be supported, including:
 - a. PC-based workstations with Web browsers on the library's network
 - b. Palm Pilots or other personal digital assistants (PDAs) on the library's network
 - c. Web browsers accessing via the Internet
 - d. Web TV
4. The portal shall accommodate multiple protocols:
 - a. Z39.50
 - b. HTML
 - c. SQL
 - d. Open URL
 - e. Others [*could emerge at any time*]
5. TCP/IP shall be supported.
6. The portal shall provide access not only to the patron access catalog on the automated library system but also the catalogs of other libraries, archives, and museum systems.

RFP online:

To download a Word file of this request for proposal information, visit www.techsource.ala.org, click LTR Portals in the right column of the home page. Your login is: portalrfp. Your password is: novdec02ltr. The file also includes Appendix A.

TCP/IP: transmission control protocol/Internet protocol.

7. Multiple formats shall be supported:
 - a. MARC
 - b. EAD
 - c. Dublin Core
 - d. Others [*such as CIMI; others could emerge at any time*]
8. Access shall be provided to item-level holdings and location.
9. Patrons shall be able to place holds and view their own records through the portal at the library's option.
10. The portal also shall provide access to the online databases to which the library subscribes. (See attached list of services.) [*Library should attach its own list here.*] Unless otherwise noted, all are Z39.50-compliant.
11. There shall be access to records for all material types, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Monographs
 - b. Serials
 - c. Machine-readable data files
 - d. Maps
 - e. Microforms
 - f. Vertical file
 - g. Audiovisual formats
 - h. Manuscripts
 - i. Journals and diaries
 - j. Scores
 - k. Computer software
 - l. URLs
 - m. Realia (miscellaneous three-dimensional objects)
 - n. Photographs/slides
 - o. Prints/paintings
 - p. Sculptures
 - q. Textiles
 - r. Glass/ceramics
 - s. Stamps/coins
12. Users will be able to broadcast a search to a number of target systems and bring back a unified search result.
13. When a user begins a session, a brief opening message describing the portal shall be provided, including a menu of beginning search options and further help.
14. The portal shall provide user interfaces in languages in addition to English, with the option of switching to English on each screen. Vendor to identify all languages supported.

15. Staff shall be able to modify access points available to patrons.
16. All diacritics in the source of the information shall be displayed.
17. The portal shall support five levels of scoping that can be set by staff so the initial screen shows:
 - a. All holdings of the location
 - b. All holdings of the library
 - c. All holdings of the library and other library-identified libraries
 - d. All holdings of the library and online databases to which the library subscribes
 - e. All holdings of the library, online databases to which the library subscribes, and library-selected URLs
 - f. "Everywhere" (including all the Internet)
18. All related records are accessible when accessing any record (for example, to access a manuscript that is part of a collection organized about a person or by collector).
19. Users can search by at least the following identifiers:
 - a. Author, maker, or artist
 - b. Title
 - c. Series
 - d. Publisher
 - e. Place of publication or production
 - f. Date of publication or production
 - g. Subject or iconography
 - h. Category
 - i. Material or object type
 - j. Medium
 - k. Call number
 - l. Accession number
 - m. Donor
 - n. Any other indexed field
20. Users can limit a search by:
 - a. Language
 - b. Country of origin
 - c. Geographic region
 - d. Year of creation
 - e. Range of years of creation
21. The portal shall allow users to refine a search based on previous search results.
22. The portal shall display the number of hits retrieved by each search.

23. The portal shall merge and dedupe search results.
24. The portal shall provide one or more options for filtering search results to increase the relevancy of the information retrieved.
25. Vendor shall describe how it filters citations to determine relevancy.
26. Search results shall be listed in order of relevancy ranking.
27. Users can, if they choose, maintain a thesaurus on the portal platform.
28. Users can use an available online thesaurus to obtain synonyms to add to the search statement.
29. Vendor shall identify any third-party thesaurus product(s) that it offers.
30. Templates and graphical utilities shall be provided for setting up user interfaces and tying them to back-end services.
31. Vendor shall indicate whether it can provide a collection of preloaded links suitable for a library of its type.
32. Users can add external databases by typing the URL into the portal.
33. The portal shall be capable of suspending a potentially long search at a predetermined point and providing the user with options:
 - a. Narrow the search
 - b. Terminate the search
 - c. Examine a portion of the hits
 - d. Continue the search
34. When a client has been inactive for a specified period of time, the portal shall clear automatically.
35. Help messages shall be available to users at all times.
36. Menus or prompts shall continually remind the user how to request help.
37. The portal shall allow the user to retrieve help messages without losing the search in progress.
38. The portal shall display error messages selected on the basis of the step in the search at which an error occurred.
39. Error messages shall briefly remind users of the nature of the error or of what the portal expects to receive at that point in the search.
40. Error messages shall include instruction for receiving additional information.
41. If a search retrieves no records, the portal shall refer the user to a public service desk.
42. Portal use statistics shall be available for each source accessed, including:
 - a. Number of sessions
 - b. Length of sessions
 - c. Page views
 - d. Documents viewed
43. Users will be able to aggregate data for all statistical categories.
44. Users will be able to group all statistics by the patron codes maintained in the automated library system.

45. User authentication shall be available to meet the requirements of database providers.
46. The portal shall allow the library to predefine the databases that an authenticated user or group is allowed to access.
47. Groupings of patrons shall be determined by the library.
48. The SIP protocol shall be supported.
49. Authentication shall require no more than two steps (such as patron ID and PIN).
50. Authentication shall be against the database on the library's automated library system.
51. Statistics shall be available on the number of patrons:
 - a. Successfully authenticated
 - b. Not successfully authenticated
 - c. Number of authentications for each database
52. Users shall not have to go through the authentication process to access databases that do not require authentication.
53. Users will be able to create links among electronic sources, including, but not limited to:
 - a. A bibliographic record in the library's database and an e-book
 - b. A bibliographic record in the library's database and an image
 - c. A bibliographic record in the library's database and a URL
 - d. A bibliographic record in the library's database and a table of contents record
 - e. A bibliographic record and a book jacket image
 - f. A bibliographic record and a review
 - g. An index and a full-text database
 - h. A database and another database
54. Vendor shall indicate if it provides content enhancement (53 d, e, and f) and shall identify any third-party supplier.
55. Vendor shall build the page layouts for the initial portal before initial installation.
56. Vendor shall indicate what other support services it provides and on what terms.
57. Vendor shall indicate whether the portal and content management software can be mounted on the same server as the library's Web-based patron access catalog or whether it requires a separate server.
58. Vendor shall provide maintenance and enhancement support for a fixed annual fee.
59. Vendor shall quote all hardware, system software, application software, installation, training, and maintenance costs for its portal-content management product.