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Smarter Libraries through Technology:

Balancing Continuity and Change through Business Transitions

By Marshall Breeding

Libraries expect continuity from the organizations that they rely on for strategic technology products. Libraries tend to make use of their automation products for incredibly long periods and expect them to be supported and enhanced throughout a prolonged life cycle. I observe that a typical lifespan of an integrated library system implementation in a library exceeds a decade, with some libraries keeping systems in place for as long as 25 years. It's even more common to see a library transition through a series of automation products provided through the same vendor. While many libraries do change vendors, I observe that the tendency is to be loyal to automation suppliers.

It is not realistic to expect any given product to remain viable indefinitely. We are at a phase now, for example, where a new slate of systems is emerging due to major changes in library collections, strategies, and in the broader technology arena. I have written extensively about the transition underway from integrated library systems based on client/server architectures to library services platforms built for cloud computing technologies. Libraries can become stagnant if they remain on outdated systems.

One of the key challenges for a company providing technologies to libraries is to balance the continuity that is so highly valued with the changes needed to meet continually shifting requirements. While libraries may find comfort in continuity, they also embrace and expect change. How technology vendors manage change and transitions in both their product strategies and business environment can make a big difference in their long-term success.

Given that any one technology product may or may not be able to maintain its viability across the decades, it's essential to have a roadmap that lays out the trajectory for its strategic products toward a long-term future. Such a roadmap should plot the life expectancy of its current product and articulate its vision for future offerings. I think that it's important for technology providers to reveal their vision for long-term development as early as possible so that libraries can evaluate and

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explore whether or not that vision aligns with their own long-term strategies.

Libraries naturally do not react positively to abrupt changes in product strategies. When a product loses its viability sooner than anticipated, it disrupts the automation strategies of the libraries using it. In some cases the demise of a product might be inevitable, such as those based on technologies or operating systems that lost out in the broader IT marketplace. Mergers and acquisitions often take their toll as well. When a company acquires a direct competitor, the eventual outcome will almost always involve product consolidation. Implementing such a consolidation in a short timeframe can be disruptive to the libraries, and may have backlash for the company as well. As a general observation, it seems that libraries appreciate transition strategies that include maintaining and enhancing products for an extended period and developing new, next-generation systems that libraries using any of the legacy systems might eventually adopt. Libraries like a roadmap that will give them control of the timing of transitions, avoiding unanticipated, end-of-life deadlines for products.

Libraries also expect a reasonable level of continuity and stability in the management of these organizations. Long-term business viability is paramount. The business history of the library automation industry demonstrates that individual companies come and go. Only a very few have failed outright and gone through bankruptcy; many others have been acquired by competitors.

When companies change ownership. libraries naturally question whether the transition will bring positive or negative changes. Having observed many companies in the library automation industry experience a change of ownership, I notice some interesting patterns. Recognizing the sensitivity that libraries have to abrupt change, initial announcements almost always provide reassurance that it will continue to be "business as usual" and downplay the future implications of the current transition. Current executives will usually remain in place, at least for an interim period. In some cases, the new owners will bring in their own executives to lead the company, but they will work with the incumbent management to plan business strategies that provide for both the continuity needed to maintain customer satisfaction and the business goals for the future. The top executives of an acquired company may join the acquirer, in some cases to such an extent that it is difficult to say which of the entities really dominates in the long term.

We see parts of these patterns play out in industry events covered in this month's issue of *Smart Libraries Newsletter*. The transitions of management at both Innovative Interfaces and Bibliotheca illustrate the issue of managing continuity through a major business transition.

When a product loses its viability sooner than anticipated, it disrupts the automation strategies of the libraries using it.

Innovative Interfaces saw a significant business transition in March 2012 where two private equity companies acquired a major stake in the company, with the founder, Jerry Kline, retaining some ownership. The owners of a company appoint its board of directors, which effectively control its high-level business strategy; executive management and operational personnel carries it out. Innovative's recent transition provides a very interesting example of maintaining the strongest degree of continuity through a major business transition. One of the notable qualities of Innovative throughout its business history has been stability with evolutionary product strategies and organic growth of its customer base. Given that history, any abrupt changes would not necessarily be well received by its library customers. The retention of the founder with equity in the company ensures balance between the interests of the new investors with its corporate heritage and vision. It is also not surprising that the new board of directors would appoint a new senior executive. Again Innovative has struck a course that leans more toward continuity than would otherwise be expected. In most companies a single individual holds the positions of President and Chief Executive Officer. With Innovative, however, these roles are separate. Neil Block, a company veteran who rose through the ranks, is President. The new board of directors appointed Kim Massana to be Chief Executive Officer. Founder Jerry Kline serves as the Chairman of the Board, providing yet another layer of continuity.

The recent changes at Bibliotheca give another example of these issues from the perspective of an RFID-focused company. The consolidation that took place with Bibliotheca represents a much more complex scenario because it involves three companies with overlapping presences among the international regions involved. Yet, we see a business strategy that works toward the formation of a single unified organizational entity and brand, while maintaining some degree of continuity for customers of the antecedent companies. Looking only at the North American operation, we note the same pattern as with Innovative where Shai Robkin, the founder of ITG as the acquired company, maintains both an ownership stake and an ongoing role in the executive management of the company both at the national and global level, at least for an interim transitional period. Robkin will now step away from daily executive roles, and we see the same balance of continuity while the company sets its long-term strategies.

I see great value in the organizational continuity of the organizations that create technology products for libraries. I also don't want to downplay the factors that advance new developments. I favor momentum over inertia and feel a sense of urgency for more rapid development of strategic library technology products.

New Executive Leadership at Innovative Interfaces

Innovative Interfaces, Inc. has appointed Kim Massana as its new Chief Executive Officer, effective upon the announcement on August 27, 2012. Jerry Kline continues as Chairman and Neil Block as President.

Massana comes to Innovative as the former President of Thomson Reuters Elite, which specializes in providing enterprise management solutions to law firms and related organizations. The systems that Elite offers to law firms to manage their operational activities have many similarities to the products that Innovative and its competitors develop for libraries. Thomson Reuters Elite, with a workforce of more than 900 worldwide is roughly three time the size of Innovative. Massana joined Elite in February 2008 as Senior Vice President of Strategic Marketing and International and advanced to President in August 2010. Massana was Director, Sales and Marketing for Sweet & Maxwell, the UK-based legal publishing unit of Thomson Reuters from January 2003 until he jointed Elite. Prior to his progressive career in Thompson Reuters companies, Massana was UK Sales Director for Equifax PLC. Massana's earned a Master of Business Administration from the Escuela Superior de Administratión de Empresas (ESADE) in Barcelona and a Master of Science from the London School of Economics. Neil Block, who joined Innovative in 1988 and has served as President since August 2010 will continue to hold that position. Other roles held by Block at Innovative include VP for Worldwide Sales and VP for North American Sales.

Massana joins Innovative after its roll-out of the new Sierra platform. Now Innovative's flagship product, Sierra has been very well received, especially by its existing customers using Millennium. In 2011, Innovative signed a record number of contracts for Sierra. Key challenges for Innovative include some erosion of customers to open source alternatives. Sierra, though still a proprietary platform, offers a much more open architecture than Innovative's previous offerings.

Given the major strategic investments by private equity firms Huntsman Gay Global Capital and JMI Equity that took place in March 2012, the subsequent appointment of new executive leadership is not unexpected. This transition saw the formation of a new Board of Directors for Innovative with seats allocated to both private equity firms, as well as to Jerry Kline, who retains an ownership stake in the company and serves as the Chairman of the Board.

Massana brings relevant experience to Innovative, both in the executive management of a company that develops enterprise business applications and in the general types customers served. While the majority of Innovative's library customers are in academic and public libraries, it has a very large contingent of law libraries using its products. It is too early to anticipate any new directions or priorities that may take place at Innovative under the leadership of Massana.

—Marshall Breeding

New Management at Bibliotheca

Bibliotheca, the consolidated global company specializing in RFID products for libraries, announced a change in executive management of its North American operations. Shai Robkin will step down as President, and Al Coalla, formerly North American Sales Director will step into this position on October 1, 2012. Coalla joined Biblioteca in November 2011 and previously served as Director of Sales at EnvisionWare.

Gary Potts, previously the Finance Director of Bibliotheca Group, has joined the North American division as its Chief Operating Officer. Potts came into Bibliotheca through his previous position as Director of Finance and Operations for Intellident.

Coalla advances to the position of President just under a year after joining Bibliotheca as its North American Sales Director in November 2011. He came to the company with extensive experience in the RFID and self-service industry through his tenure at EnvisionWare, a key competitor of Biblioteca, though with more of an emphasis on products related to scheduling public access computers and managing end-user printing. Prior to EnvisionWare, Coalla held positions at Card Meter Systems, now CMS Diginet, a company involved in print and copy solutions for libraries and academic campuses.

Robkin has been involved with libraries since 1984, when he purchased Vernon Library supplies from its founder Anthony Vernon. In 2005 Robkin founded Integrated Technology Group to create and market products to exploit RFID technologies that facilitate library efficiencies. ITG developed a wide array of self-service circulation and related products and services. Robkin sold ITG to One Equity Partners in April 2011, which also acquired Swiss-based Bibliotheca and UK-based Intellident to form the global corporation focused on RFID products for libraries now known as Bibliotheca. Following the consolidation of ITG into Bibliotheca, Robkin remained with the consolidated company and held a minority investment stake. He was named president of its North American division and participated in the executive management of the global company. Robkin played a role in the integration of the antecedent companies into a unified global company operating under the Bibliotheca brand.

Robkin will continue involvement with Bibliotheca as an investor and as an advisor to both the global Executive Board and to the management of its North American operations. Robkin also continues to own Vernon Library supplies, though he has not been involved in its day-to-day management for many years. Vernon Library Supplies has a self-sufficient management and operational team in place. Following his departure from full-time involvement with Bibliotheca, Robkin will pursue business interests outside library-related industries.

Bibliotheca's core business continues to be focused on library products related to RFID and self-service, though it launched an e-book initiative in June 2012. According to Robkin, progress on this initiative continues. The company continues to build the technology framework that will be the basis of its e-book offerings and to work with publishers and libraries to refine product development. The Bibliotheca e-book solution will be based on the model established by the Douglas County Library in Colorado.

—Marshall Breeding

BIBSYS and OCLC Withdraw from Partnership

In previous issues of *Smart Libraries Newsletter*, we reported on the partnership for the BIBSYS consortium, comprising more than 100 research and special libraries in Norway to implement OCLC's WorldShare Management Services (WMS). The BIBSYS project has been presented by OCLC as an example of a large-scale project based on WMS that uses it as a foundation to support applications and services created by libraries and other third parties, as is the vision for the WorldShare Platform. OCLC and BIBSYS have recently announced that the project has been discontinued.

BIBSYS provides an automation system and other services to a national consortium in Norway that includes National Library of Norway and all the major research and special libraries. The organization operates as a public administrative agency, reporting to the Ministry of Education and Research of the

Norwegian government. The automation system currently in place was developed by BIBSYS.

Beginning in about 2009, BIBSYS sought to acquire an externally provided platform as the basis of its new generation automation environment. This new system would need to offer a service-oriented architecture on which it could develop customized extensions and modules for the needs of its members. A tender was issued on September 1, 2009, which included a statement:

> The consortium may need special adaptations that will not be provided by the contractor's ILS. BIBSYS will be responsible for the implementation of these adaptations in parallel with the contractor's project. BIBSYS must therefore have access to standard services and interfaces at an early stage. [NTNU Tender Document: Negotiated Procedure in 2 steps over the EEC-threshold for the Purchase of Next Generation Integrated Library System.]

In June 2010, following a year-long review process, BIBSYS announced to its members that: OCLC and Ex Libris had been identified as qualified vendors; what is now known as WorldShare Management Services OCLC had been selected as the basis for its next library management environment; and it would enter the next phase of contract terms. OCLC announced the selection of WMS by BIBSYS in November 2010.

Not only was BIBSYS the largest organization that had contracted for WMS, it was presented as the exemplar of the vision of its extensibility through the development of applications and services to meet local issues.

The project did not grow to fruition. As early as March 2012, BIBSYS posted announcements on its website that there were issues in the delivery of functionality and then in May 2012 issued a more strongly worded statement that the BIBSYS board was not satisfied with the progress of the project. On August 14, 2012, OCLC and BIBSYS issued a joint statement indicating that the implementation project had been discontinued, "due to differences in timing and interpretation of what the solution would entail for BIBSYS, as a system integrator."

Larger organizations interested in WorldShare Management Services will naturally take this aborted implementation into consideration, but should not necessarily jump to conclusions regarding the technology.

Under the terms of an agreement between the organizations, no details were released regarding the specific problems or issues that led to the termination of implementation of WorldShare Management Services for BIBSYS. BIBSYS will continue to use its existing system as it begins a new tender process to select a vendor.

This event comes at a critical time when the competition among new-generation library services platforms is beginning to intensify. When a high-profile implementation project such as this one does not go forward as expected, initial thoughts may turn to problems with the technology. Organizational dynamics, however, seem to play a role, given the wording of the joint statement. As a software development organization in its own right, providing services to a national library consortium, BIBSYS' choice to become a very early adopter of a new platform still under development carried some risk. Larger organizations interested in WorldShare Management Services will naturally take this aborted implementation into consideration, but should not necessarily jump to conclusions regarding its functionality, performance, or scalability once it has more fully matured. Provided that OCLC continues to build an ongoing track record of ever larger numbers of libraries implementing WorldShare Management Services successfully, the impact of this counter example will diminish accordingly. To date, 73 libraries, including some consortia, have implemented WorldShare Management Services successfully.

—Marshall Breeding

OCLC Expands Opportunities for Sharing WorldCat Metadata

One of the ongoing issues with OCLC involves the guidelines associated with how its members can share metadata managed in WorldCat, a topic covered in the June 2012 issue of *Smart Libraries Newsletter*. The ways in which libraries can share bibliographic records that describe their collections derived from OCLC's WorldCat database is addressed in the guidelines articulated in the "WorldCat Rights and Responsibilities for the OCLC Cooperative" (http://www.oclc.org/worldcat/recorduse/policy/). We noted in our previous discussion that OCLC's interpretations of these record sharing guidelines have been increasingly liberal and are now deemed to be consistent with the Creative Commons Attribution License.

Many scenarios in which libraries wish to contribute metadata involve a Creative Commons Zero public domain license (CC0). The National Library of Sweden, for example, cited the OCLC Rights and Responsibilities Statement as the basis for not joining OCLC in December 2011 since it would not allow the library's contributions to projects, such as Europeana, that require CC0.

OCLC and Europeana have recently reached an agreement that would allow member libraries to contribute data to the Europeana.eu portal and remain within the WorldCat Rights and Responsibilities guidelines. Under this agreement, OCLC member libraries can contribute metadata derived from WorldCat using the Creative Commons Zero public domain license. Europeana and OCLC would then request that subsequent users of that contributed metadata give attribution to OCLC and the contributing institution.

This approach generally satisfies OCLC's preference for Creative Commons Attribution license and the Europeana Data Exchange Agreement, which requires CC0. Such an arrangement is similar to Harvard's release of its 12 million bibliographic records under the CC0, with a recommendation that those that use the metadata give appropriate attribution. While CC0 provides no binding obligation to provide attribution, in practice OCLC accepts recommendations for attribution as consistent with the WorldCat Rights and Responsibilities guidelines. This agreement between OCLC and Europeana represents an important step in the understanding of how content from WorldCat can be used relative to increasing expectations for free exchange of metadata.

—Marshall Breeding

Library Technology News in Brief

EBSCO Publishing Enhances Teacher Resources with Expanded Curriculum Standards

IPSWICH, MA — August 30, 2012 — EBSCO Publishing (EBSCO) announced the enhancement of the Curriculum Standards feature available through many of its K-8 interfaces and databases. EBSCO's Curriculum Standards module, powered by Academic Benchmarks, has been expanded to include:

- Common Core for mathematics and language arts
- Canadian standards
- New and updated standards from U.S. states

Improvements to the module also include an update to search strings associated with benchmark levels, better guiding users to the most direct words or phrases needed to retrieve appropriate educational material.

Designed to assist teachers in crafting targeted lessons, the Curriculum Standards module contains more than 1,050 standards aligned to the curriculum of U.S. states, the U.S. Common Core State Standards Initiative and Canadian provinces.

Campus eBookstore Selects Ingram's Vital Source to Enhance its e-textbook Offering

NASHVILLE, TN —August 27, 2012 — As more students and educators worldwide adopt digital course materials, Ingram Content Group Inc. today announced that Campus eBookstore, Inc. has selected its VitalSource Bookshelf platform to enhance and expand its e-textbook offering to institutional and retail bookstore customers.

The creation of an e-book-distribution platform at college stores is typically an expensive and complex proposition. Campus eBookstore, Inc. (CEI), a development project owned and operated in Canada and the USA by the Canadian Campus Retail Associates Inc. (CCRA), and the Independent College Bookstore Association Inc. (ICBA), was developed to provide affordable alternatives and complements to traditional course materials. Through its work with Vital Source, CEI will provide a rich digital textbook catalog to more than 170 independently owned college bookstores in the United States and Canada.

Qatar National Library enters Partnership to Enhance Arabic translation of Innovative Interfaces products

EMERYVILLE, CA – August 29, 2012 — Qatar National Library (QNL) has entered into an exclusive partnership with U.S. company Innovative Interfaces to help translate Innovative products into Arabic, including the Millennium ILS, Sierra Services Platform, Encore discovery solution, and Content Pro digital asset management system.

This will boost QNL efforts to enable more Qataris to participate in their emerging global knowledge-based economy, as well as reveal Qatar's rich Arabic heritage. As a partner in the multiple-award-winning World Digital Library, QNL already helps to make material from cultures around the world available on the Internet in multilingual format.

By increasing access to Arabic library resources, the Arabic translation will benefit the patron communities of more than 50 Innovative libraries that serve users in primarily Arabic-speaking countries.

QNL is due to open its new Qatar Foundation building in 2014, which will provide a state-of-the-art facility to serve the information needs of the residents of Qatar. QNL aims to become an outstanding academic, research, public, and national library, and will serve the public as well as universities, schools, foundations, and research institutes.

OCLC Research to Develop Semantic Similarity Computing Algorithms with the Europeana Dataset

August 20, 2012 — OCLC and Europeana are collaborating to investigate ways of creating semantic links between the millions of digital objects that are accessible online through Europeana.eu in order to improve "similar object" browsing.

Europeana is Europe's digital library, archive and museum. The Europeana platform and network of experts facilitate research and knowledge exchange between librarians, curators and archivists, and link them with digital innovators and the creative industries. Europeana currently gives people access to over 24 million books, paintings, films, recordings, photographs and archival records from 2,200 partner organizations, through an interface in 29 languages.

Because aggregating metadata from these heterogeneous collections leads to quality issues such as duplication, uneven granularity of the object descriptions, ambiguity between original and derivative versions of the same object, etc., Europeana and OCLC Research are working together on innovation pilots to identify and create semantic links between objects that are connected. Examples of this include translated copies of the same publication, a painting and a photograph of that painting, different editions of one book, or a collection of letters that belong to the same archive.

LibraryThing debuts BookPsychic at Portland Public Library

PORTLAND, ME — September 10, 2012 — LibraryThing and Bowker have launched BookPsychic, a new concept in readers advisory — a personal recommender system for libraries. BookPsychic is a service within LibraryThing for Libraries, distributed by Bowker, an affiliate of ProQuest. It went live at its first site earlier this month at Maine's Portland Public Library.

BookPsychic works by inviting library patrons to rate books using an interface that early users felt was familiar and intuitive. Books to rate and recommendations are split into simple genres, like "Recent Fiction," "History" and "Home and Garden." As patrons rate more books, the system learns more and more about their likes and dislikes, enabling the creation of "Just for You" recommendations.

"We are excited about BookPsychic because it fits right in with our library's focus on engaging readers with particularly relevant recommendations for their next read. It's simple, fun, and fast at doing just that," said Sarah Campbell, Head of Lending, Technical Services and Systems at Portland Public Library. "It's good for the library too because BookPsychic recommends what the library actually owns. It's a way for the library to be of immediate service to our community anywhere, all the time."

BookPsychic's recommendation system runs off more than 200 million data points from members of LibraryThing.com, a social network for book lovers. It also analyzes book and DVD popularity in the library, and across the more than 300 libraries that use LibraryThing for Libraries. BookPsychic integrates with the social networks Facebook and Twitter for signup, and users can import ratings from LibraryThing.com and Goodreads.

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