



# Smart Libraries

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## PINES Sets Precedent for Open-Source ILS

Part of **The ILS Scoop** by Marshall Breeding

One of the largest shared library-automation systems in the U.S. has migrated from a vendor-developed ILS to an open-source model. Georgia PINES (Public Information Network for Electronic Services) recently completed its migration from SirsiDynix Unicorn to Evergreen, a library-automation system developed in house and based on open-source software. PINES, a program of the Georgia Public Library Service, provides library-automation services for 252 libraries in Georgia. Combined, these libraries hold a collection of more than 7.7 million items, with a majority of the public libraries in Georgia participating in PINES.

Established in 1999 by Georgia's Office of Public Library Services (OPLS), the PINES program is based on large-scale resource sharing and the ability for library users to use a single library card to borrow or request materials from participating libraries throughout the state. Georgia's OPLS selected the Sirsi Unicorn library-management system as the basis for PINES, and the initial project automated 98 libraries, with another 111 libraries added in a second phase. The two phases of the project totaled about \$1 million in software and services from Sirsi Corporation.

**The 252 public libraries in the PINES consortium now operating the Evergreen open-source ILS provide an important precedent for the viability of this type of library-automation software.**

Development of the Evergreen ILS began in June 2004, following an announcement by state librarian Lamar Veatch stating that PINES would not renew its contract with Sirsi, and the consortium would instead develop its own library-automation system. After more than two years of intensive development, the libraries using PINES switched from SirsiDynix Unicorn to Evergreen on September 5, 2006.

The participating PINES libraries' transition from Unicorn to an open-source ILS stands as a major milestone in the ILS industry, and the defection of one of SirsiDynix's largest clients cannot be deemed good news for that company.

*continued on next page*

### IN THIS ISSUE

The **ILS Scoop** by Marshall Breeding

**PINES Sets Precedent for Open-Source ILS**  
PAGE 1

**New NISO Director Named**  
PAGE 2

**Digital Strategy: OCLC Acquires DiMeMa**  
PAGE 3

**Geac Update: More Transition**  
PAGE 3

**A LibraryThing to Love**  
PAGE 4

**Institutional Repositories on the Rise**  
PAGE 5

**Wikipedia Braves *The Atlantic***  
PAGE 6

**Ich Bin Ein e-Berliner**  
PAGE 7



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# THE ILS SCOOP BY MARSHALL BREEDING

More importantly, however, is the reality that, to date, the adoption of open-source library-automation systems has been an almost negligible component of the ILS scene. Prior to this event, only two public libraries had implemented an open-source ILS; the Athens County Public Library (six branches) in Ohio and the West Liberty Public Library in Iowa had each implemented

Koha. The 252 public libraries in the PINES consortium now operating the Evergreen open-source ILS provide an important precedent for the viability of this type of library-automation software.

The PINES catalog is now available at <http://gapines.org>. Information on the development of Evergreen is provided at <http://open-ils.org>. The Evergreen ILS application can be downloaded and

installed by other libraries without paying licensing fees for the software. ■

**More Info @:**  
 PINES catalog, <http://gapines.org>  
 Information of Evergreen Open-Source ILS Development, <http://open-ils.org>

## New NISO Director Named

The National Information Standards Organization (NISO) is operating under new management: Todd Carpenter is NISO's new managing director. The NISO Board of Directors hired Carpenter to lead the organization, and his tenure began September 1, 2006. Carpenter succeeds Pat Stevens, who served as NISO interim director from November 9, 2005, following the departure of Pat Harris, who had led NISO since 1986.

Carpenter comes to NISO with a strong background in the electronic-publishing arena. Most recently, Carpenter served as director of business development for BioOne, one of the leading efforts to provide an alternative publication model for journals in the fields related to bioscience. Prior to BioOne, Carpenter was with Johns Hopkins University Press, where he was responsible for the marketing of its large

inventory of academic journals, and was involved in Project MUSE, an aggregation of journal content in the humanities and social sciences.

This appointment of Carpenter comes as the NISO organization is positioned at a crossroads, so to speak. NISO's activities and processes have been under close review for the last two years or so, during which the organization's board of directors initiated (January 2004) a strategic planning effort. A "blue-ribbon panel" was appointed in September 2004 to "evaluate the progress, challenges, opportunities" of NISO. The panel was chaired by Clifford Lynch, the Executive Director of the Coalition for Network Information (CNI), and was given financial support by the Mellon Foundation. Roy Tennant was charged to develop a report on how the standards-development process might

be revised, and this report was issued in December 2005.

Libraries have a great deal at stake in the effectiveness of NISO's work. Standards provide an important framework for interoperability and help protect libraries' investments in software and data. Many aspects of library technologies are in transition, and how standards develop in the next few years will be an important factor in the information landscape—thus Carpenter takes the helm at NISO at an exciting juncture in its history, but also in an era marked by abundant challenges. ■

**More Info @:**  
 "NISO Names Todd Carpenter Managing Director," *Library Journal*, [www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6365909.html](http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6365909.html)

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**Carpenter takes the helm at NISO at an exciting juncture in its history, but also in an era marked by abundant challenges.**

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## Digital Strategy: OCLC Acquires DiMeMa

OCLC continues its streak of strategic business acquisitions with the August 2006 purchase of Digital Media Management, otherwise known as *DiMeMa*. This acquisition formally brings the company—with which OCLC has a long-standing business relationship—into the OCLC fold and provides the opportunity for the organization to focus on a number of digitization-related activities.

OCLC has distributed DiMeMa's CONTENTdm since June 2002; prior to its procurement, DiMeMa operated as an independent company and employed only eleven individuals—a tiny enterprise relative to its new owner.

The major distributor for CONTENTdm, OCLC had been performing sales and marketing roles for the company before the acquisition, so the significance of this action is not necessarily the business expansion for the Dublin, Ohio-based organization, but it is indicative of a strategy for how OCLC will provide products and services to libraries in regard to local digital collections.

### CONTENTdm Development

Developed at the Center for Information Systems Organization (CISO) at the University of Washington in Seattle (a lab headed by Greg Zick, a professor of electrical engineering), CONTENTdm is the application that eventually engendered DiMeMa.

CISO began a partnership with the Washington University Libraries in 1996, initially, to provide access to a collection of 26,000 images from a collection related to theatre. Following success at the University of Washington, beginning in about 1999, the CONTENTdm application was adopted by organizations outside the university.

To provide support for CONTENTdm, DiMeMa was formed as a

company in early 2001, with Zick serving as its president. A year later DiMeMa staffers saw a great boost in interest in CONTENTdm when, in June 2002, OCLC selected it as the strategic product (for managing local digital collections) it would use to market to libraries.

CONTENTdm is a digital collections-management system that enables users to manage, store, and access digital content. Although most collections using CONTENTdm are comprised of digital still images, the system is also used for audio and video materials. To date, CONTENTdm has been selected by more than 300 organizations, including libraries, museums, archival bodies, and other organizations involved in cultural heritage, and is currently used to manage over 2,500 individual digital collections.

Within OCLC, this acquisition is part of a larger effort to integrate its services related to digitization. OCLC has formed a new Digital Services division, which Zick will lead as VP. This new division of OCLC is charged with integrating the digital services of OCLC's existing efforts as well as those brought into the organization with the recent acquisition of RLG. OCLC Digital Services will work closely with the RLG Programs staff.

The new Digital Services division in OCLC falls under the OCLC Collection Management Services led by Phyllis B. Spies. The eleven former DiMeMa staffers will become OCLC employees and will continue to work from their offices in Seattle, WA. ■

#### More Info. @:

"OCLC Acquires DiMeMa," [www.oclc.org/news/releases/200633.htm](http://www.oclc.org/news/releases/200633.htm)

"OCLC: Soup to Nuts?" Hectic Pace Blog by Andrew Pace, [http://blogs.ala.org/pace.php?title=oclc\\_soup\\_to\\_nuts](http://blogs.ala.org/pace.php?title=oclc_soup_to_nuts)

## Geac Update: More Transition

The former Geac Library Solutions division has experienced yet another business transition in recent months. In January this year, I reported that Geac was acquired by Golden Gate Capital ("Long-Standing Geac to be Absorbed by San Fran Firm," *SLN* 26:1, p. 2). The arrangement announced at that time was that portions of Geac would be absorbed into Infor, a company owned by Golden Gate, and that the remainder of Geac—including the Library Solutions Division—would be spun off into a new company.

In March 2006, Golden Gate announced the new company name, *Extensity*, which is based in Atlanta. In August 2006, even before the dust had fully settled at Extensity, it was acquired by Infor.

Golden Gate's actions are unclear—why did it, originally, divide these business activities into separate entities only to consolidate them, with Infor's purchase of Extensity, under another of its own portfolio companies? Regardless of the logic, the Library Solutions business unit was a tiny speck within Extensity and is now an even tinier speck within Infor.

Nevertheless, the group marches forward in the development, marketing, and support of Vubis Smart and a suite of related products. In the last two months, the business unit has announced the release of its second major version of the Vlink OpenURL resolver, the development of a new electronic-resources management system, and a new portal product called *V-spaces*. Although few new sales of Vubis have been announced in the last two months, installation of previous sales have come to completion, including Driestar Educatief, a small university of professional education in the Netherlands. ■

#### More Info. @:

Chris Williams, "Infor Buys Extensity, Systems Union," *The Register*, [www.theregister.co.uk/2006/08/07/infor\\_buys\\_extensity/](http://www.theregister.co.uk/2006/08/07/infor_buys_extensity/)

## ■ A LibraryThing to Love ■

If a picture paints a thousand words, a logical question to ask is: “Which words?” That’s the beauty and the problem with photographs. No words are supplied.

So Flickr came along and provided a mechanism for adding tag words to photographs. It became and remains insanely popular. The funny thing is, “me” floated to the top as a tag word used to describe photos: *me* and my friends, *me* at the beach, *me* on the mountaintop, etc.

There’s also something a bit insufferably solipsistic about the sharing of photos. Photos can be interesting, but for people who love words, books are better.

Whether the world realized it or not, what the world needed was a Flickr-type social space for books and book lov-

ers. LibraryThing, launched on August 29, 2005, is trying to meet that need. (Perhaps digital and virtual libraries will begin moving in this direction.)

Founded by Tim Spalding, a classicist who has worked with Houghton Mifflin as a Web developer, LibraryThing allows users to catalog their personal book collections. It also enables an incredible amount of social interaction and Library 2.0-ish sharing of ratings, comments, tags, and the like.

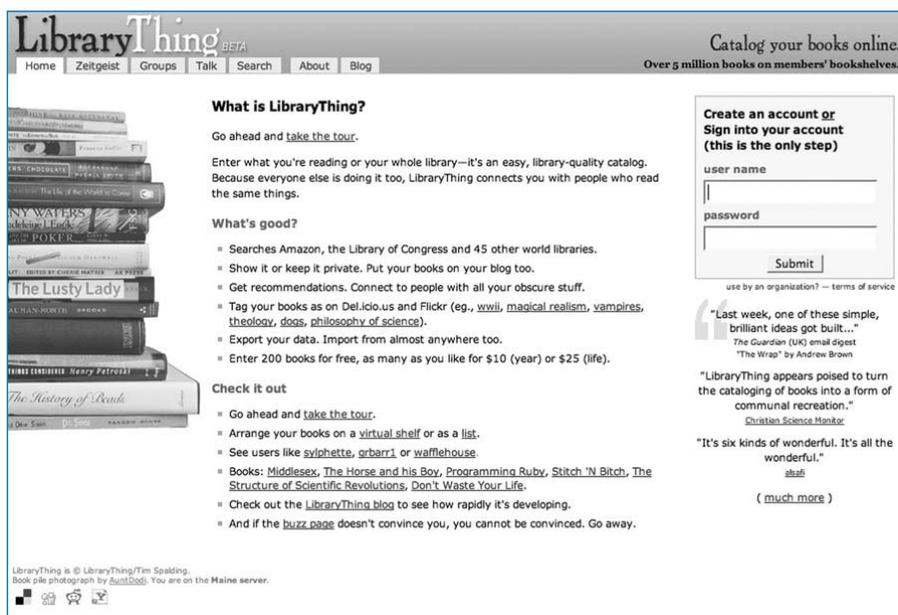
Anyone who joins may catalog up to 200 books for free. Cataloging in this sense does not involve OCLC copy cataloging, but rather it involves searching in an existing bibliographic database of choice (e.g., Amazon, Library of Congress, or more than 45 major online catalogs worldwide), finding an exact or close match, then adding tags, com-

ments, ratings, and other user-supplied information.

Subscriptions—not advertisements—seem to be the primary revenue stream for LibraryThing. To become a registered user, all you need to supply is a user name and a password. If you want to catalog anywhere from 201 monographs to all the books ever published, you can subscribe for \$10 per year. A lifetime membership in LibraryThing costs only \$25, which, unless you already are in your 70s, 80s, or 90s, or smoke and drink to excess, is an incredible deal.

Here are a few fun facts to know-and-tell about LibraryThing:

- More than 5 million books have been cataloged. Abby Blachly, LibraryThing’s librarian, apparently joined the project in December 2005. Tim, Abby, and two anonymous programmers comprise the LibraryThing staff.
- As of late August, Tim and his crew had more than 70,000 registered users. Approximately 615 of those users purported or admitted to being librarians by joining the “Librarians Who LibraryThing” group discussion, which is by far the largest group within LibraryThing.
- In May 2006, Abebooks acquired a 40-percent interest in LibraryThing.
- LibraryThing even has a mobile version for your net-connected PP ICE device (personal portable device for information, communication, and entertainment), so you can check your personal library collection while in a bookstore or library. (I admit to a couple of instances in my life when I purchased a copy of a book



Founded by Tim Spalding, LibraryThing celebrated its one-year anniversary not too long ago and enables users to catalog their personal book collections. As of late August, LibraryThing reported more than 70,000 users.

already in my personal library, which resulted in an arcane form of re-gifting—giving surplus copies from my personal library as gifts.)

- Although LibraryThing was designed as a cataloging tool for personal book collections, it is not rabidly focused on serving only individual end-users. Tim and Abby are interested in discussing with libraries and other

organizations how LibraryThing can benefit them and their users.

- Figuratively, LibraryThing resides at higher level than that of existing library catalogs, and it moves the library field closer to the platonic ideal of a catalog—a mix of good, reliable, professionally developed metadata, lots of options for user input and customization, and numerous ways to connect with other people who

enjoy the books and authors you enjoy.—*Tom Peters*

**More Info @:**

LibraryThing, [www.librarything.com](http://www.librarything.com)  
Michelle Boule, "Building a Better Beta," ALA TechSource Blog, [www.techsource.ala.org/blog/2006/09/building-a-better-beta.html](http://www.techsource.ala.org/blog/2006/09/building-a-better-beta.html)

## Institutional Repositories on the Rise

Since first appearing on the scene in 2002, institutional repositories—which are designed to collect, organize, and provide access to a wide variety of digital-information objects created by institutions of higher education—seem to be gaining traction among research libraries at major universities. Responses to a January 2006 survey disseminated by the University of Houston Libraries Institutional Repository Task Force to the 123 member organizations of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) indicate that a majority of the institutions (68, which is 78 percent of the 87 responses received, and 55 percent of the total ARL membership) either have an operational institutional repository or plan to have one by the end of 2007.

The top three reasons for starting an institutional repository are: ". . . to increase global visibility of, preserve, and provide free access to the institution's scholarship."

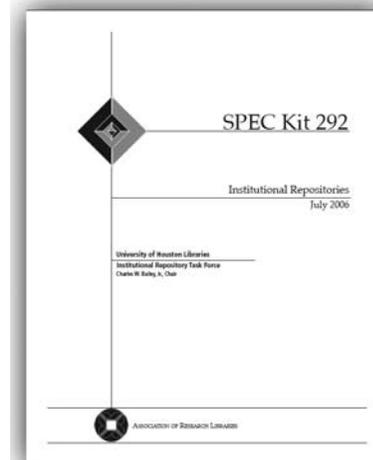
The survey results indicate that libraries—compared to campus IT departments, academic departments, and university administration departments—have been more of a driving force in planning for and implementing institutional repositories. Also in the survey results:

- DSpace is the most popular system for an institutional repository, followed by ProQuest's DigitalCommons.
- The average number of documents in individual institutional repositories is less than 4,000.
- Electronic theses and dissertations are the most common type of material being deposited into institutional archives, followed by journal articles.

The full report on the survey was published in July as *ARL SPEC Kit 292*. The table of contents and nine-page executive summary are available online at no charge at the URL listed below.—*Tom Peters*

**More Info. @:**

Lee Anne George, series ed. "Institutional Repositories," *ARL Spec Kit 292* (July 2006), [www.arl.org/spec/SPEC292web.pdf](http://www.arl.org/spec/SPEC292web.pdf)



*ARL Spec Kit 292, "Institutional Repositories," July 2006*

## Wikipedia Braves *The Atlantic*

During the week of October 27, 1975, Bruce Springsteen appeared on the covers of both *Time* and *Newsweek*—it was a key indicator of something. I won't hazard a guess what. A similar indicator, albeit on a more focused scale, of something demanding our attention can be observed in the fact that two long essays about the Wikipedia have appeared recently in both the *New Yorker* and *The Atlantic Monthly*. Clearly the editors of those two magazines feel that the Wikipedia phenomenon has captured—or should capture—the imagination of at least a sliver of the American intelligentsia.

Last month, I examined Wikipedia in light of the *New Yorker* article. *The Atlantic* essay, “The Hive,” is quite different and throws a different perspective on the meaning of Wikipedia's success. Marshall Poe, the author of “The Hive,” states, “Wikipedia has the potential to be the greatest effort in collaborative knowledge gathering the world has ever known, and it may well be the greatest effort in voluntary collaboration of any kind.”

Because this is collaborative knowledge gathering on a grand scale, librarians should take a keen interest in both the process and the product.

It seems to me that encyclopedias always have loitered on the risky intersection of scholarship and commerce, but the Wikipedia does not demean or flaunt scholarship by being unusually lucrative. The Wikipedia represents a serious challenge—but not an open threat—to both the academy and the library in other, more fundamentally unsettling ways, including:

- Pre-publication peer reviewing and editing by a select few have been replaced by post-publication peer reviewing and tweaking by quite a few.
- The wiki way proves that amateurs can play a vital role in at least certain phases of knowledge creation, gathering, and synthesis, such as data gathering and the compilation of tertiary knowledge products, such as dictionaries and encyclopedias.

- The implicit authority relied upon by libraries, in their purchased reference resources compiled by experts and published by reputable publishers, has been challenged by the Wikipedia model. Wikipedia has opened wide the question of how many people (and who) should be allowed to collaborate in knowledge gathering.
- For all the talk about Library 2.0 principles, we must admit that the Wikipedia implemented online-community building (via knowledge gathering and tweaking) and user participation on a large scale.
- As a mode of capturing and presenting the fruits of collaborative knowledge-gathering labors, the wiki model has advantages over threaded e-mail discussions, blog entries with comments, Web conferencing, and other new media forms. If the majority in librarianship decides that the Wikipedia phenomenon is too chaotic, suspicious, or just plain too participatory, then we need to ask ourselves

about the Library 2.0 movement: We can talk the talk, but can we walk the walk?

Poe suggests that Wikipedia represents or reflects an evolving sense of truth. The truth on a subject presented by a Wikipedia article is more about the current community consensus about the truth of the subject than about some immutable, objective truth that is out in the world to be discovered through human inquiry. In this sense of truth, community conversation, input, and refinement are essential to knowledge

gathering—this community involvement is not just some side attraction.

The Wikipedia also embodies the belief in the perfectibility of human knowledge. Through countless iterations of tweaking an entry and community response to them, the hope is that we collectively move toward the truth on a topic. We need to remember, however, that wiki means “quick,” not necessarily accurate or concise.

The Wikipedia also could be understood as the familiar neighborhood-watch program writ large in the realm of net-

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**If the majority in librarianship decides that the Wikipedia phenomenon is too chaotic, suspicious, or just plain too participatory, then we need to ask ourselves about the Library 2.0 movement: We can talk the talk, but can we walk the walk?**

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worked digital-knowledge management. As Poe notes, “Given enough eyeballs, all errors are shallow.” The eyeballs and digits of the community of users have been busy. The articles’ list on George W. Bush has been edited more than 30,000 times. The only woman to make the top twenty most-edited articles is Britney Spears (at number eleven). Anarchism is the sixteenth most-edited article, which for some reason warms the cockles of my heart.

It is too early to tell how far the influence of the Wikipedia model of knowledge gathering and refinement will reach. Will most library and scholarly publications become wikified? To achieve that, both the process and the product must be clearly superior to current processes and products of knowledge gathering and refinement.—*Tom Peters*

**More Info @:**

Marshall Poe, “The Hive,” *The Atlantic*, [www.theatlantic.com/doc/200609/wikipedia](http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200609/wikipedia)



## Ich Bin Ein e-Berliner

Although most librarians I speak with believe that a dedicated portable electronic-reading device is not going to be widely accepted among the U.S. reading public, there are at least a few major multinational corporations, such as Sony and iRex (a spinoff of Phillips), that have a hunch there may be a worldwide market for dedicated-reading devices.

Small startup companies also are beginning to reappear. For example, Bookpac, evidently a new company based in Berlin, recently announced its intention to build a new dedicated reader based on e-ink technology, the basis of just about all new dedicated-reading devices being developed worldwide these days. No specific launch date has been announced.

The Bookpac folks say they have a partner in China, where presumably the new device will be manufactured. In an e-mail message sent to the Librie Yahoo Group in late August, a Bookpac representative described the “core values” of the new device in this way: “We think that such a device should be cheap, robust, have a very long battery life, and allow for a range of formats as wide as possible.”

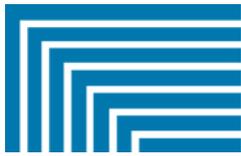
These core values—inexpensive, robust, long battery life, and multiple file-format support—are shared by librarians and library users who hope the dedicated reading-device manufacturers learn from past missteps and eventually deliver a winner.

One amazingly refreshing move Bookpac is already taking is to conduct an open survey through its Web site to learn what potential users of their forthcoming dedicated-reading device actually prefer. The survey asks potential users about potential applications of a dedicated-reading device. The survey also asks users to rate the importance of various types of e-content, such as published fiction, newspapers, office documents, and journal articles. (In the “other” category for that question, I quickly added “audiobooks.”) Respondents were also asked to rate the various design features—which sometimes are tradeoffs—of dedicated-reading devices.

It may be years, perhaps decades, before it becomes apparent if the quest for a good, versatile dedicated electronic-reading device was a fool’s errand or another triumph for human persistence and the power of trial-and-error learning.—*Tom Peters*

**More Info. @:**

Bookpac, [www.bookpac.com/index\\_en.html](http://www.bookpac.com/index_en.html)



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## **October 2006** **Georgia Public Libraries Migrate to Open-Source ILS**

### *Smart Libraries Newsletter*

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