Strategic Development:
SirsiDynix & Serials Solutions

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

As technology competition gets tougher in the library-automation industry, vendors are looking to third-party developers for specialized solutions.

SirsiDynix has unveiled a new strategy for its electronic-resource management (ERM) offerings for libraries. According to company officials, it has selected Serials Solutions as a strategic partner for the delivery of products related to e-resource management and access (as well as for linking and metasearch).

Previously, the company had planned to develop proprietary ERM products for each of its flagship ILS products, and it had other partnership arrangements in place for linking and metasearch products. But this new collaborative marketing agreement gives both companies important benefits. In a market sector ripe for abundant sales, SirsiDynix secures products it can offer to its customers immediately, and Serials Solutions gains access to libraries outside its traditional scope. The enormous number of public libraries, consortia, and school districts within the SirsiDynix fold extend the reach of Serials Solutions beyond the already strong customer base it has established among academic libraries.

> **Yet the decision to buy—rather than build— products in this area reflects the reality that [SirsiDynix] does not have the resources to tackle every aspect of the library-automation sphere.**

A motivating factor behind SirsiDynix's decision to form this partnership involves the need to have a single suite of products that would operate with both Unicorn and Horizon/Corinthian, as the company inherited a plethora of arrangements from the pre-merged companies. The partnership with Serial Solutions gives SirsiDynix the opportunity to focus on developing a cooperative relationship with a single company, so it can offer a full suite of ERM products.

IN THIS ISSUE

THE ILS SCOOP BY MARSHALL BREEDING

Suite Products

The products covered in the agreement include the full suite of integrated products and services offered by Serials Solutions including:

- **Central Search**—A federated-search application, Central Search relies on the company's federated-search technology, supplemented by translators into remote resources licensed from WebFeat. In January 2005, Serials Solutions partnered with WebFeat for access to its library of translators for connecting to information resources. Serials Solutions developed, in house, Central Search's core technology. SirsiDynix will also incorporate the Central Search technology in its new *Rooms* product.
- **Article Linker**—Released by Serials Solutions in 2003, Article Linker provides an OpenURL-based linking service. Article Linker relies on the knowledgebase of e-journal data (maintained by Serials Solutions), which works in conjunction with a detailed profile of a library's subscriptions.
- **Electronic Resource Management System**—This product provides an environment in which the library can efficiently manage its electronic resources. It includes tools to manage all aspects of licensed electronic content, including procurement; license tracking; current status of each resource; relevant technical and administrative contacts for each resource; proxy services for off-site access to resources; as well as many different reporting and analytic tools related to usage statistics.
- **Full MARC Records Service**—This component delivers records that

can be loaded into the library's ILS so the e-journal titles and holdings stored in a library's OPAC (online public access catalog) are up-to-date and consistent with those that can be viewed through Article Linker or ERMS.

Serials Solutions delivers all its technology products as hosted solutions in the Application Service Provider (ASP) model, which means all the software and data reside on servers hosted and managed by Serials Solutions. Libraries utilizing these products do not need servers for local installation of the software.

One of the key strengths of the product suite offered by Serials Solutions involves the centralized knowledgebase of e-resources it maintains: Serials Solutions devotes seven full-time staff members to the knowledgebase maintenance, and the knowledgebase is updated daily.

The accuracy and quality of this knowledgebase has played a major role in the company's success. By subscribing to products based on this knowledgebase, libraries can track their e-journal holdings more accurately and in a more sustainable way than by attempting to maintain this information through individual library-based efforts.

The Story of Serials Solutions

Founded in 2000, Serials Solutions established itself as a small company devoted to helping libraries manage their burgeoning collections of e-journals. The company's initial product was produced in the form of an A–Z list, which managed a library's collection of e-journals available through its various subscriptions.

In the fall of 2001, Serials Solutions debuted its MARC record service, mak-

ing it the first company in the industry to offer libraries an automated service to keep their journal holdings (represented in their automation systems) up-to-date. Subsequently, the company launched Article Linker in December 2002, and unveiled its E-Resource Management System in October of last year.

In July 2004, Serials Solutions was acquired by ProQuest Information and Learning, a large corporation with many subsidiaries involved in various aspects of publishing and electronic content. ProQuest Information and Learning is part of the even larger ProQuest Company, a public company (NYSE: PQE) involved in publishing and information products across several different industries.

In June 2005, Jane Burke joined ProQuest as a VP and was named general manager of Serials Solutions. Formerly, Burke helmed Endeavor Information Systems as president/CEO (from March 1995 through December 2002), and she was also president of NOTIS Systems, Inc., from its founding through July 1994.

Serials Solutions operates as an independent, wholly owned subsidiary of ProQuest, keeping its facilities, management, personnel, and identity intact, while benefiting from the deep resources available from its parent company.

Prior SirsiDynix Efforts

Prior to this arrangement, SirsiDynix had a number of products in place or in development. For instance, on the Dynix side, the company had been working with Serials Solutions since November 2003. Its Horizon Link Resolver was based on technology from Serials Solutions, and the development of an electronic-resource management module

was on the agenda for Horizon. In June 2004, the company, in partnership with Johns Hopkins University, announced it would create an integrated ERM for Horizon. Even earlier, in March 2001, Dynix (then epixtech) formed a partnership with WebFeat as the basis for its Horizon Consolidated Searching offering.

On the Sirsi side, the company inked an agreement in October 2003 to license the 1Cate ("one click to everywhere") technology from Openly Informatics for its link-resolver offering, Sirsi Resolver. The metasearch product *Sirsi SingleSearch* was based on MuseSearch developed by MuseGlobal. On the ERM front, Sirsi had originally planned to develop an ERM module that would be integrated with Unicorn.

A Flexible Agreement

The Serials Solutions and SirsiDynix partnership, although strategic, is not exclusive. It takes into consideration existing business relationships and offers both companies flexibility. Under the terms of the agreement, SirsiDynix will market Serials Solutions's products to its customers, and Serials Solutions will continue to sell directly to all other libraries.

Any client libraries of SirsiDynix that had previously purchased any of Serials Solutions's technology products will continue to deal with Serials Solutions directly, and although SirsiDynix will offer its new partner's products as the preferred option, there may be circumstances that require other alternatives. For example, because Serials Solutions offers its products only as hosted solutions, SirsiDynix will offer other products to libraries that prefer (or require) locally installed applications or extensive customization.

The new partnership with Serials Solutions does not cancel any of the existing agreements SirsiDynix has in place with other companies. It will

continue to support and, under some circumstances, sell its existing SirsiDynix Resolver, which is based on technology from Openly Informatics and Single Search (based on metasearch technology from MuseGlobal). Sites that have made significant investments installing and customizing these locally installed products will be able to continue with these products indefinitely.

Integration Issues

One of the key issues with any electronic-resource management system (ERMS) lies in how it integrates with the other related system components. The ERMS overlaps with both the knowledgebase of the link resolver (for data related to the library's current holdings of e-journals) and with the ILS's acquisitions module (for data related to the vendors from which subscriptions are licensed, the financial-fund management files from which subscriptions are purchased, and the bibliographic components that provide descriptive information regarding each subscription). An ERMS, by its nature, deals with many different data components, and using a stand-alone third-party product presents quite a challenge—in order to avoid duplication of management among the overlapping data components—for ILS integration.

SirsiDynix will work to integrate the Serials Solutions ERMS into both Unicorn and Horizon, and the initial integration level will require users to launch its management console from the Horizon or Unicorn staff client. Higher-level integration, such as automated interchange of data between the ERMS and the ILS, will be developed over time.

Competitive Concerns

At the time of the merger last summer, both Sirsi and Dynix were in the process of developing their own ERM systems. Since the merger, neither the

Unicorn nor the Horizon ERMS has been delivered as a finished product, yet the competition on the ERMS front is well underway. Innovative Interfaces launched its ERMS in 2002, and Ex Libris and Endeavor announced their ERM offerings in mid-2004.

According to executives at both SirsiDynix and Serials Solutions, one of the motivators in forming this partnership involved the need to deliver an ERM product to SirsiDynix customers in the shortest possible timeframe. Through this agreement with Serials Solutions, SirsiDynix can offer its customers these key products immediately.

A Trend Toward Partnerships

Employing more than 675 overall, with at least 150 devoted to software development (more developers than any other ILS company), SirsiDynix stands as the largest company in the ILS arena. Yet the decision to buy—rather than build—products in this area reflects the reality that it does not have the resources to tackle every aspect of the library-automation sphere.

These days, companies in the library-automation arena must make hard choices about which products to develop as proprietary and which to license from third parties. The partnership with Serials Solutions reflects SirsiDynix's strategy to outsource development of these resources so it can focus its resources on other products it considers more strategic.

The relationship between SirsiDynix and Serials Solutions, too, parallels recent announced partnerships between other library-software vendors. Endeavor Information Systems recently partnered with TDNet for its suite of e-resource products, and earlier this year, Endeavor announced it would transition from its locally developed ENCompass and LinkFinderPlus

THE ILS SCOOP

products to the federated-search and link-resolver products from TDNet (See *SLN*, April 2006, p. 1).

In both cases, the ILS vendors involved made major shifts in product offerings, both utilizing technology from a third-party company that specializes in the development of e-resource technologies.

The SirsiDynix partnership with Serials Solutions reinforces the trend that non-ILS companies are gaining more and more ground in the library-automation arena. More than ever, libraries are focused on products related to the management and access of electronic resources. Companies that deliver strong products in this sector have a promising outlook. In this case, SirsiDynix gains by associating itself with a strong suite of products, and Serials Solutions expands its market opportunities too. ■

More info. @:

Serials Solutions, www.serials solutions.com

"SirsiDynix Partners with Serials Solutions for Integrated E-Resource Management and Discovery," www.sirsidynix.com/Newsevents/ Releases/2006/20060425_ serials_erms_marc.pdf

Getting a Second Life Library

Have you ever dreamed of starting a new library from scratch? Have you spent many a happy hour thinking about the collections, services, organizational charts, funding sources, and related matters? Well, if you have, you may be interested to know that a group of librarians is really doing this in a virtual environment.

The process of creating the Second Life Library 2.0 (SSL2) in the Second Life virtual-reality environment has been very interesting to date. Basically, a group of avatars controlled by self-selecting volunteer librarians has been working to create and launch the new library. The Alliance Library System, headquartered in East Peoria, Illinois, is the real-world library organization providing the impetus and overall management of the project.

In late April, the first official organizational meeting of the volunteer group was held. It was an amazing online event. The approximately twenty avatars in attendance were not only sharing lots of ideas, but also volunteering to work on various components of the new library's plan and launch. Many a discussion often began with some really fundamental questions, such as ones that touched on the value and basic design of a "physical" library in this virtual-reality environment. (This environment, by the way, has a real economy, where land, building materials, furniture, other equipment, and services can be bought and sold using a currency unique to this online world.)

Another fundamental question the volunteers considered involved whether or not the SSL2 should have a collection. A collection-development team quickly formed to investigate the issues and opportunities, and they then came back to the full group with some recommendations. The early thinking was to at least try to collect "in-world" information objects—that is, publications and other information objects created by avatars in Second Life itself.

Publicizing the new library and creating a presence in this virtual environment also has been a major part of early discussions. The volunteer librarian avatars want the library to be responsive to the information needs of the Second Life avatars. Already there is talk of creating separate "branch" libraries for teens, health information, and other specific information needs. Efforts to publicize the new library

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received a big boost when the Metaverse Messenger, the most widely read publication in Second Life, ran a front-page article about the new library on April 25.

If you have a Second Life avatar, the Second Life Library 2.0 can be found at Minoa (205, 85). —*Tom Peters*

More info @:

"A Library for Avatars," www .techsource.ala.org/blog/2006/04/ a-library-for-avatars.html

www.metaversemessenger.com/PDF/ MM-2006-04-25.pdf

"ALS & OPAL to Open: An Alliance of Libraries 2.0 on Second Life," www.alliancelibrarysystem.com/ article.cfm?id=946

Second Life, http://secondlife.com/

Culture War: Read-Only vs. Read-Write

A cultural, social, and economic battle is being waged, and digital information accessed by the public is at the center of the controversy. Whether we like it or not, librarians are in the thick of this, because our institutions are general, non-discriminating purveyors of public information. Business information, raw data, military intelligence, and other specialized forms of information are

recorded music, radio programs, motion pictures, and other media developed a massive and passive entertainment society. Basically, the ability and impetus to create new cultural material passed, in large part, from the general populace to a relatively small number of professional creative artists and the companies that produced, marketed, and distributed their creative output.

building net-based cultural-consumption engines based on the Apple business model. For the read-only culture, the Internet represents the perfection of passive couch-potato culture.

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Lessig exhorted librarians to be clear and vocal about the values we want this network infrastructure to support. He said the read-write culture wants to be practiced, not sold. The developing world cannot afford to buy culture and knowledge, even at a discount. Science has an embedded ethic not only to produce knowledge, but also to make it universally accessible. The Jeffersonian ideal of knowledge as widely accessible to all is what libraries are all about.

not our strong suit. Some of the public information that libraries collect, organize, and deliver is in the public domain, while some of it remains under the protection of copyright laws. When Lawrence Lessig—the Stanford law professor and founder of the Creative Commons—spoke at the annual conference of the Texas Library Association in late April, he described the struggle as "Read-Only culture versus Read-Write culture."

According to Lessig, read-write culture was widespread up until the early twentieth century. When people sat on their front porches playing and singing older and recent popular tunes, with their own riffs, lyrics, and entirely new songs thrown into the mix, they were involved in a participative read-write culture. Read-only culture developed early in the twentieth century as

To some extent, libraries also participated in the read-only culture that dominated most of the last century. You could check out a book from your local library and read it, but writing in the book brought fines, and writing comments in the card catalog, and later the online catalog, was not facilitated and was generally frowned upon.

The emergence of the Internet and the networked digital-information infrastructure in the final decades of the twentieth century was the fireball in the night that resulted in the current cultural—if not civil—war. Lessig asserted that both cultures want to dominate the Internet in the twenty-first century and mold it to reflect their business models and cultural values. Lessig noted that Apple, with its iTunes Store, is the poster child of read-only culture, but Amazon, Sony, and other corporate entities are

Lessig also asserted that librarians have an extremely important role to play in this culture war. We need to use and apply our cultural authority to spread the news about the values that support a wide range of creative economies. Our rhetoric is often too timid, too apologetic, and too late. Librarians need not apologize for arguing for a free society. The intellectual property rights system is becoming increasingly out of balance. It needs to be retooled. Lessig pleaded with us to join this cultural war. He said librarians are the soul and the conscience of a free, participatory, and inclusive culture.—*Tom Peters*

More info. @: Stanford Law School: Lawrence Lessig, www.lessig.org

Weaving Your Schedule into a Web 2.0 World

Web-based calendars made a big splash this spring. Several services have been around for a while, but more entered the market this year, apparently due to the widely held (likely venture-capitalist) belief that there's money in them thar calendars.

You can use a Web-based calendar service to create and manage a personal calendar, or a calendar for your project team, library department, or the entire library. And many of these calendar services offer free accounts.

When Jenny Levine, The Shifted Librarian, spoke at the Texas Library Association's annual conference in late April, she was keen on a service called *30 Boxes*. A feature of this service, one that Levine says impresses her, is its ability to add an item to a calendar using natural language, such as "lunch Thursday at noon with Biff at Burger Hut."

Indeed, this does work, but the 30 Boxes intelligent interface is not very smart. For example, when I entered "Duel at sundown in a fortnight (bring pistols)," it did not have the sufficient intelligence to schedule this two weeks in advance, and it could not calculate the time the sun will set in Central Daylight Time in two weeks. Instead, it scheduled it for tonight. To its credit, it did include the reminder to bring the pistols. I don't know if it alerted the local constabulary or not.

But the 30 Boxes Web-based calendaring system does have some other nice features. You can set up buddies and share all, parts, or none of your calendar with these buddies, and of course, they can reciprocate. You can use the one-box natural language interface to set up repeating events. You can invite other people to your scheduled event simply by adding a plus sign and their e-mail addresses to your natural-language (well, semi-natural) entry. If an invited individual accepts and also has a 30 Boxes calendar, the event will be added to that person's calendar too. You can even send an e-mail message to the 30 Boxes e-mail account. The subject line of your message will be treated as the natural-language command, and the body of the e-mail message will be added for that date in your calendar. So, the next time you receive an e-mail message containing a meeting agenda, conference schedule, or airline reservation, just forward that message to your 30 Boxes calendar.

And yes, Virginia, it is possible to add tags to your entries in your 30 Boxes calendar. If you put an address in brackets in your natural-language command, 30 Boxes will create a link to a Google map pinpointing that address.

You also can add Web 2.0-type content and connections to your 30 Boxes calendar, such as material from Flickr, MySpace, and blogs. You also can see this type of content from your buddies in your calendar, and, if one of your buddies has an editable profile, you can add content to that buddy's calendar. Obviously, this isn't your parent's Daytimer.

The folks at 30 Boxes also have created an experimental import tool that will allow you to add events you have schedule in Outlook, iCal, or Yahoo Calendar. Google is also trying to muscle its way into the online calendaring space. The beta version (of course) of Google Calendar was launched in mid-April.—*Tom Peters*

More info. @:
"Google Launches Google Calendar," www.pcworld.com/news/article/0,aid,125389,tk,dn041306X,00.asp
http://30boxes.com
The Shifted Librarian, www.theshiftedlibrarian.com
Levine's Work on the ALA TechSource Blog, www.techsource.ala.org/blog/Jenny/Levine/100001/

A 30 Boxes Web-based calendar created for ALA TechSource. A Web-based calendar can be created for a specific library, library department, and/or project team, and many of these calendar services, like 30 Boxes, offer free accounts.

Beta Than Google Scholar? Windows Live Academic Search Launches

Microsoft recently launched a beta version of Windows Live Academic Search. According to the Web site, the beta version currently indexes "content related to computer science, physics, electrical engineering, and related subject areas." In the left-hand nav column of the site, you'll find the link *For Librarians*—which greets you with, "Welcome to the Windows Live Academic search information page for librarians. This page is designed to provide you with more information about Academic and how you can gain the most benefit from this service."—and another one *For Publishers*.

At launch, the site claimed to have more than six million records for articles and papers culled from more than 4,300 journals and approximately 2,000 conferences. The Web site reports that the relevance ranking given to items in the search results is based on the quality of the match between the search terms and the index to the article or paper and the "authoritativeness" of the paper.

Currently, citation analysis is not part of the relevancy-ranking algorithm. Academic Search has implemented the OAI (Open Archives Initiative) protocol for harvesting metadata from OAI-compliant digital repositories, and its using the OpenURL standard.—*Tom Peters*

More info. @:
Windows Live Academic Search, Beta, http://academic .live.com
Open Archives Initiative, www.openarchives.org

Google Corner(ed)
BY TOM PETERS

Google's Patent for Voice-Activated Searching

If you'd rather express your Web-based information needs by talking rather than typing, Google has you in mind. In April, Google was granted a U.S. patent for voice-activated searching. Soon you may be able to use a PC microphone or your cell phone to initiate a vocalized search command. This will be a bit of progress for all information seekers, especially the blind and visually impaired.

A voice-activated interface for a search engine may be one small step for man and one giant leap for humankind, but it's a thorny problem in regard to how to efficiently and effectively convey a search engine's query results as voice-like output.

No word yet on what this new search interface may be called—whether it's *Google Yell*, *Google Come Hither*, or *Google Watson*, you can almost bet it will be released as a beta version.

More info. @:
"Google Patent Points to Voice Search," www.cnet.com.au/software/internet/ 0,39029524,40061984,00.htm

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