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## Download This @ Your Library

**D**ownloadable digital-audio-book services are a hot item in the library-service sector. Digital audiobooks are the most recent thing to come down the pike for which there seems to be genuinely strong user demand. Whenever a library or library consortium launches a new downloadable digital-audiobook service, library staff members are usually amazed at the immediate high level of interest and use.

Despite the encouraging early results though, at least two things have been slowing libraries' adoption and use of downloadable-digital audiobooks. The first is that content in protected Windows Media Audio (WMA) file format (from such major library suppliers as OverDrive and

chasers are much more likely to select a device from a manufacturer other than Apple. There is literally a "long tail" of device brands and models currently on the market, and the manufacturers of which are scrambling for the crumbs left after the iPod sales rush. These other devices almost universally are capable of playing protected WMA content.

The other major governor to the growth of downloadable digital-audio-book use in the library market is that it's difficult to offer a downloadable service in an actual bricks-and-mortar library. Downloading the audio content from the Internet to an in-library computer is not the big challenge; rather, because the hardware and software necessary to transfer the content from the computer to the playback device varies from brand to brand, it's no small task to design and deploy a safe, secure, self-service downloading kiosk within a library.

But in late March, OverDrive announced the release of its Download Station Software (DSS). According to information contained on OverDrive's Web site, DSS "enables public Internet PCs to become self-service download stations for audiobooks and music in the library." Once a library patron plugs any of the many types of portable audio-playback devices available into a public-access workstation running DSS, the software automatically tests for device compatibility and compares whether or not it is compatible with the content available for downloading. The software also senses and reports the device's amount of currently available storage space. If the

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**Library staff members are usually amazed at the immediate high level of interest and use.**

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NetLibrary) will not play on Apple's iPod product line of portable-playback devices. With its iPod, Apple holds a substantial share of the portable audio-playback market.

This first problem is not quite so problematic as it first appears. The early adopters of libraries' downloadable digital-audiobook services tend to be middle-aged and older adults, not teens and young adults. Although iPods are the dominant device across the entire U.S. population, older pur-

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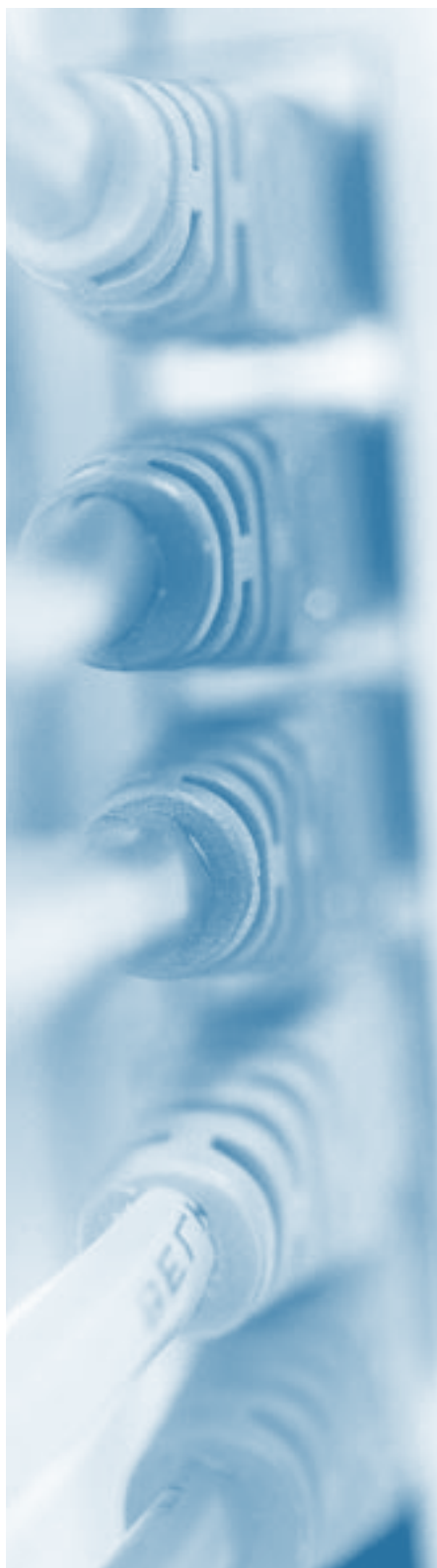
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patron's device passes muster, the software uses a wizard—which should be familiar to users of Microsoft's operating system—to guide the patron through the steps of downloading content onto the portable-playback device.

The Boston Public Central Library at Copley Square and the Cuyahoga County Public Library were among the first libraries in which this type of in-library downloadable digital-media workstation was made available for public use.

### Setting Up a Station

In order to turn one or more of your library's public-access computers into a self-serve downloading kiosk for audio content, you will need a fairly powerful computer. The recommended system requirements include a 500 megahertz processor; 256 megabytes of RAM; 1 gigabyte of free hard disk space for the temporary storage of media files; 2 open and easily accessible USB ports; a Windows XP operating system; Windows Media Player 10 series; Microsoft Active Sync 4.1; and a 1.5 megabytes per second Internet connection. A workstation running DSS need not be dedicated for that purpose, however.

OverDrive's documentation reports the overall performance of DSS in your library will depend on the Internet bandwidth available at the DSS workstations as well as the transfer rate of the patron's audio-playback device.

It remains to be seen if the fundamental question—Should a responsible library offer a downloadable digital-audio service to its patrons that's difficult or impossible to actually use in the library itself?—that spurred all this development and testing is as important to the actual user population as it has been for librarians. Will library patrons actually use public-access downloading stations in the library? If the library can

offer significantly more bandwidth than the user has at home, the faster download and transfer times available in the library may lead to heavy use.

### Video Views Too

Being able to download video content—motion pictures, music videos, and television shows—onto media players from these public-access, downloading workstations may be in the not-too-distant future. In late March, OverDrive also announced it's branching out into downloadable video content, such as classic movies, educational videos, and TV programs. The functionality of OverDrive's existing Media Console software has been expanded to handle video content. The new downloadable video service is available 24/7, and there are no cassettes, tapes, jewel cases, and discs for librarians and library patrons to handle and potentially damage. Once the video content has been downloaded, it may be transferred to a portable media player. OverDrive is offering two pricing models to libraries: the one unit/one concurrent user purchase model and a multiple concurrent user licensing model.—*Tom Peters* ■

**Contact:** [www.overdrive.com/DownloadStation/overview.asp](http://www.overdrive.com/DownloadStation/overview.asp)  
"Boston Public Library Adds Download Stations for Audiobooks and Music," [www.overdrive.com/news/pr/20060320.asp](http://www.overdrive.com/news/pr/20060320.asp)  
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# THE ILS SCOOP BY MARSHALL BREEDING

## GEAC MORPHS INTO EXTENSITY LIBRARY SOLUTIONS

*There's a new name for an old company in the library automation industry—Extensity Library Solutions. Last November, Geac Computer Corp. reported its acquisition by Golden Gate Capital, a deal worth more than \$1Billion (U.S.). Geac included a number of business divisions, including one devoted to library-automation systems. Although the company is in the early reorganization stages, we now know some of the basics about how the library-systems' division fits in its new corporate environment.*

At the time of the acquisition, Golden Gate indicated the former Geac would be broken up—some divisions would be merged into companies already owned by Golden Gate and others would be spun off into a new company. (Part of Golden Gate's business strategy involves purchasing companies and reassembling them in ways that will increase their effectiveness, gain operating efficiencies, and increase their value.)

Events since the time of the acquisition have played out much according to the original plan. On March 20, 2006, Golden Gate reported the formation of the new company, Extensity, which was formed out of several of two of the former Geac divisions, Financial Applications and Industry Specific Applications.

Geac had grown over time to include a number of different business inter-

ests, mostly involving software systems related to financial management. The company's Industry Specific Applications (ISA) division produced automation software designed for various such vertical industries as restaurants, local governments, public safety, and libraries.

The new Extensity Library Solutions resides as a relatively small business unit within the ISA division of Extensity—much the same arrangement as with the former Geac. In its early corporate history, Geac engaged in library automation as one of its principal activities. But as Geac expanded and diversified, its interest in library automation was dwarfed by the company's other interests.

Extensity will be headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, but will maintain the offices of the former Geac Library Systems in Markham, Ontario, Canada; Waltham, Massachusetts, U.S.; and Bristol, U.K. Kenneth Walters—formerly the head of Infor, another Golden Gate-owned company—serves as president/CEO of Extensity. Eric van Lubeek, continues in the new company as managing director of Extensity Libraries Division (the same position he held under Geac), and Ellen Isaacson continues as the general manager of the North American Region.

The name *Extensity* comes from a company that Geac acquired in August 2002, but the brand is now associated with a completely different company. The original Extensity developed software to automate employee-based financial processes and was based in Emeryville, California. The new Extensity is a very large company with a large

arsenal of products. At its inception, Extensity will have annual revenue of about \$325 million, based on the earnings of its constituent divisions. And according to statements given by Walters and published by IDG News Service, Extensity has ambitions to grow into a \$1billion company over the next three years.

Over the last decade, the broad trend of Geac Library Solutions involves a shift in business activity from North America to Europe. Through the mid-1990s, Geac played a major role in the North American market with its Advance and PLUS automation systems (not to mention its GLIS family of library-automation systems popular in the 1980s). Based on proprietary hardware, GLIS was phased out in the 1990s. Advance and PLUS relied on architectures now considered outdated, and libraries using them have migrated to newer products, mostly those offered by Geac's competitors. Geac's current offering, Vubis Smart, has gained a strong customer base in Europe and the U.K., but has yet to show strong sales in North America.

### The Business Intensity of Extensity

Since the time of the November 2005 acquisition, Extensity Library Solutions has been far from idle. The number of business activities has remained at about the same level as before the acquisition, though many of the announcements reflect processes already in place.

In December 2005, the company reported its Vubis Smart software

## THE ILS SCOOP

exceeded 200 sales to date, representing 597 libraries. In the same month, the company released version 2.4.1 of Vubis Smart, incorporating features such as RSS news feeds, a cashless e-commerce

America, following Harnett County in North Carolina and Westmount in Quebec.

In February 2006, Extensity Library Solutions was named by Medialab Solu-

Extensity will expand significantly over the next few years through mergers and acquisitions.

It's not clear, though, what impact these changes may have for the new Extensity Library Solutions division. As we bid farewell to the Geac brand in the library-automation business arena, we will follow with interest to see how its legacy prospers under a new name and a new corporate structure. ■

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### If its ambitions prove true, Extensity will expand significantly over the next few years through mergers and acquisitions.

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system, faster indexing, and a new global-change capability.

Vubis Smart appeals primarily to public libraries; out of the 200 sales, 166 went to public libraries, 13 to academic libraries, and 33 to museums or special libraries. In March 2006, the company announced the Amsterdam Public Library had finished its implementation of Vubis Smart, which includes the city's main facility and 28 branches. Stateside, the Jeffersonville Township Public Library in Indiana selected Vubis Smart in January 2006. This sale marks the third sale of Vubis Smart in North

tions as the exclusive distributor of its AquaBrowser Library search product for the United Kingdom and Ireland. The installation of Vubis Smart at the Amsterdam Public Library includes the use of AquaBrowser Library as the search interface.

At this point, only a few months following a major restructuring, we can observe tentatively that Extensity Library Solutions remains on about the same footing as the business unit operating under the former Geac corporate umbrella. The next year will be a critical one. If its ambitions prove true,

**Contact:** "Long-Standing Geac to Be Absorbed by San Fran Firm," *Smart Libraries Newsletter*, January 2006 (26:1), p. 2  
Extensity Library Solutions, [www.library.geac.com/page/home\\_LIB.html](http://www.library.geac.com/page/home_LIB.html)

"Extensity Hopes to Be \$1B Firm within Three Years," [www.networkworld.com/news/2006/032106-extensity.html](http://www.networkworld.com/news/2006/032106-extensity.html)

"Amsterdam Public Library Goes Live with Vubis Smart," [http://www.library.geac.com/object/OBAgolive\\_LIB.html](http://www.library.geac.com/object/OBAgolive_LIB.html)

## Innovative Undaunted

Innovative Interfaces, second ranked company in the industry after SirsiDynix, has delivered its own steady stream of accomplishments so far this year. Recent sales of the Millennium ILS include the Oakland Public Library in California, Texas State University—San Marcos in Texas, Jinan University in China, Bibliothèque Méjanes in France, and the Université François-Rabelais de Tours Information Services also in France.

In addition to purchasing Millennium, Oakland Public Library will join the implementation of INN-Reach of the Link+ consortium. The company recently reported a new INN-Reach sale for a five-library consortium in Ohio to support direct consortium borrowing. Colby College selected Innovative's

Symposia as the basis for its institutional repository. Binghamton University, a member of the State University of New York, selected Innovative's Electronic Resource Management system.

These accomplishments reflect Innovative's stature as a strong competitor in the industry.

The company's Millennium ILS is gaining an increasingly international following. Beyond the ILS, Innovative's Electronic Resource Management was the first commercial offering in the new ERM arena, which the company continues to lead in sales. INN-Reach continues to prosper as a resource-sharing platform, and Symposia demonstrates the company's interest in testing the new-product waters, in this case a commercially developed institutional repository that competes with the already established open-source products like DSpace and Fedora. ■

**Contact:** [www.iii.com](http://www.iii.com)



## SirsiDynix Status

Almost a year has elapsed since Sirsi acquired Dynix to form *SirsiDynix* in June 2005. During this period, the company has begun to take a more unified shape and is beginning to show its muscle as the powerhouse of the industry. In the last few months, the company has announced some major sales, some minor product releases, and appointed a new VP and CFO.

SirsiDynix reports major sales for both its Unicorn and Horizon flagship products, and in the first three months of 2006, Horizon sales announcements outnumber those for Unicorn by far. Sales of Horizon to large municipal libraries include the Toronto Public Library in Canada and the Queens Library in New York. In the U.K., the Angus Council and Peterborough City Council selected Horizon. Down under, the City of Unley in Australia, Catholic Theological College, and Ormond College will all be implementing Horizon. Navarro College in

Corsicana, Texas, also announced its intention to implement Horizon.

But the company reports only one Unicorn sale during the same period; the Prairie Area Library System, a recently formed consortium created from the merger of three other consortia, will consolidate its library-automation operations into a single implementation of Unicorn. This Unicorn system will support 95 libraries as full participants and 202 additional libraries that add their holds into the system's union catalog.

### People and Products

SirsiDynix recently made two high-level executive appointments too. In March, Dean McCausland, joined the company as chief financial officer replacing Larry D. Smith, a fifteen-year veteran of Sirsi and SirsiDynix. McCausland's previous posts include CFO of Fast Channel Network, Inc., and consulting

roles at Arthur Andersen and PriceWaterhouseCoopers. Talin Bingham joins SirsiDynix as its new senior VP of technology, and Jack Blount, CEO/president of Dynix prior to its acquisition, had been serving as interim CTO and continues to participate in the company as an executive consultant.

In the product development arena, SirsiDynix reports a partnership with Fast Search and Transfer (FAST) to use that company's FAST InStream technology embedded as the search technology for SirsiDynix Rooms. The next version of Unicorn, dubbed version GL3.1, is scheduled for delivery this spring. Although no date for the general release of Horizon 8.0 and Corinthian 8.0 has been publicly announced, that major revamp of the Horizon automation is expected later this year as well. ■

**Contact:** [www.sirsidynix.com](http://www.sirsidynix.com)

## WRANGLING WITH RFID

RFID (radio frequency identification) is a technological system that uses radio waves to identify and track the location and movement of unique items that have been somehow tagged. The tagged items could be anything—library materials, consumer goods, etc.

The use of RFID tags in libraries (as well as in industry and commerce) has been fraught with concerns and controversies; librarians, for example, have raised the privacy red flag, concerned that RFID tags could compromise patron privacy and confidentiality.

The problems and promise of RFID are so complex the National Information Standards Organization (NISO) recently formed a technical committee “. . . to create guidelines that lay out best practices for the use of radio frequency identification (RFID) in library applications.”

The committee will coordinate its activities with a working group (formed by the American Library Association and the Book Industry Study Group) to investigate the privacy issues related to information technology.

### And Now Viruses Too?

Now the threat of viruses can be added to the growing list of RFID concerns and controversies. In March, a team of computer researchers from Vrije University in Amsterdam published a paper that claims to show how RFID tags could be used to transmit computer viruses.

*RFID Journal* reported the study showed how RFID tags “. . . could be employed to instigate a number of malicious attacks on the databases and middleware used in an RFID network, including buffer overflow and SQL injection, and even open a back door to the RFID application server.”

Representatives from the EPC (Electronic Product Code) industry were quick to question the Dutch study. For example, according again to the report

on the study published in *RFID Journal*, Sue Hutchinson from the U.S. branch of EPCglobal, Inc., a leading industry group, noted that “. . . security features built into the latest EPC tag and reader standard, Class 1 Gen 2, make the air interface protocol very different than the tags and readers used in the Dutch study.”

The air-interface protocol, by the way, governs how the RFID tag and the tag reader communicate. EPCglobal, an entity spun out of the original, Massachusetts Institute of Technology-based collaborative effort—which involved industry and academe to develop RFID technology—describes itself as a joint venture between GS1 and GS1 U.S.

Also worthy of note, the EPCglobal Board of Governors includes representatives from the likes of Procter & Gamble, Sony, Lockheed Martin, Wal-Mart, Hewlett-Packard, Cisco Systems, Sony, and, surprisingly, the Office of the Department of Defense. GS1 describes itself as “. . . a leading global organization dedicated to the design and implementation of global standards and solutions to improve efficiency and visibility in supply and demand chains globally and across sectors.”

If librarians and/or library patrons are feeling like rag dolls in some global RFID tag smackdown, there may be some value in heeding one’s feelings.—*Tom Peters*

**Contact:** [www.epcglobalinc.org](http://www.epcglobalinc.org)  
[www.gs1.org](http://www.gs1.org)

“NISO Launches RFID Committee,”  
[www.niso.org/news/releases/pr-RFID-3-06.html](http://www.niso.org/news/releases/pr-RFID-3-06.html)

“Can Tag Viruses Infect RFID Systems?” [www.rfidjournal.com/article/articleview/2201/1/1/](http://www.rfidjournal.com/article/articleview/2201/1/1/)

“RFID Tags Subject to Viruses, Study Says,” [www.pcworld.com/news/article/0,aid,125096,tk,dn031506X,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/news/article/0,aid,125096,tk,dn031506X,00.asp)

## Google Corner(ed)

BY TOM PETERS

### More about Digital Books: A Plan to Partner with Publishers

Earlier this spring, Google announced plans to partner with publishers in the United States and the United Kingdom to sell full-text online access to books still in copyright. The Google Book Search service will allow purchasers to view the books via browser software, but not download the content, copy or paste pages, or transfer the digital book to a portable-viewing device. The publishers will set the prices for this form of access.

At this point, it is difficult to discern what ownership rights purchasers may have over this content. It also is unknown if Google plans any library or institutional purchase or lease options in relation to this new program. The Google Web site states that there is no firm launch date yet for this service.

Perhaps as a form of obeisance to Google's ongoing legal, commercial, and ideological struggles with publishers and authors over its massive digitization project, Google has clearly stated that the primary goal—the sole stated goal—of this expansion of the Google Book Search program is to increase the revenue derived from publishing books. As the Q&A section of the Google Book Search site states, "It's a way for publishers to experiment with a new method of earning money from their books in addition to those that already exist. Think of it as a way to reach more users by offering a new version of your book with a different reading experience."

There's nary a mention of increasing access to information or in using digital utilities to expand and improve how readers can interact with and gain value from published books.

**Contact:** Google Book Search Help Center, [http://books.google.com/support/partner/bin/answer.py?answer=34596&hl=en\\_US](http://books.google.com/support/partner/bin/answer.py?answer=34596&hl=en_US)

"Google Wants to Sell Online Access to Books," [http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20060314/wr\\_nm/google\\_books\\_dc](http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20060314/wr_nm/google_books_dc)

## Questia Continues Its Quest

When the e-book industry retrenched—some would say imploded—earlier this decade, many companies shuttered or morphed into something different. Questia merely slashed its payroll—in May 2001 it laid off about half its staff—and hunkered down. It recently has resurfaced.

Early in 2006, the management team is expanding again. Rod Canion, the founder of Compaq, now is serving as the chairman of Houston-based Questia Media. Canion is also the chairman of the Houston Technology Center—"... a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, is Houston's business accelerator and the largest technology business incubator in Texas"—which seems to be the link between his Compaq days and his Questia days.

Questia continues to provide subscriptions to its content directly to end users, who primarily are college and high school students. According to a recent online article in *CNET News*, Questia currently has a collection of approximately 65,000 e-books that serves about 150,000 subscribers.

A recent article in the *Denver Post* about the changing reading habits of young people and their impatience with the classic novels of English literature contains an interesting quote from Troy Williams, the founder and CEO of Questia: "There's so much competing for our leisure time and attention . . . Students don't read cover to cover. They read three or four paragraphs before moving on because they have grown up in an environment where snippets mean something."

Given all the controversy about snippets and snippetization, it may indeed mean something to grow up in an environment where snippets mean something.—*Tom Peters*

**Contact:** "Compaq Founder Pushes for Academic Library Online," [http://news.com.com/Compaq+founder+pushes+for+academic+library+online/2100-1025\\_3-6048801.html](http://news.com.com/Compaq+founder+pushes+for+academic+library+online/2100-1025_3-6048801.html)

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## **May 2006 OverDrive Delivers DSS for Digital Audiobooks @ Your Library**

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