



# Smart Libraries™

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## OCLC PICA's FDI Buy Reveals ILS Biz Bid

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

Continuing its expansion into the library software arena, OCLC recently announced its intent to acquire U.K.-based Fretwell-Downing Informatics (FDI) Group. A transaction to be processed through OCLC's major European division, OCLC PICA, this move to add FDI comes after OCLC PICA's takeover of Sisis Informationssysteme, a German-based ILS company. This event also takes place within the larger context of a robust consolidation phase within the library automation industry (as evidenced by this year's SirsiDynix merger).

Fretwell-Downing Informatics will continue to operate under its established name, though as a wholly owned for-profit subsidiary of OCLC PICA. Existing management and staff will remain in place. As part of OCLC, FDI gains access to a significant development and support infrastructure. FDI's customers in Benelux (Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxemburg) will especially benefit from closer proximity to OCLC PICA facilities.

FDI Group has established itself as one of the major suppliers of library technology in the U.K., Europe, and the U.S. The company's products include:

- **OLIB**, an integrated library system based on the Oracle relational database management system. The system has proven itself popular in the United Kingdom but never took hold in the U.S. At the end of 2004, there were about 160 installations of OLIB worldwide;
- **ZPORTAL**, the company's federated search, or metasearch, product launched in 2001. This software finds use in many academic libraries and consortia and was selected as the key technology for the Association of Research Libraries' "Scholars Portal" project. It is the basis for the U.K. National Library for Health single-search environment;
- **VDX** (Virtual Document eXchange) provides an interlibrary loan and resource-sharing environment that's been adopted by a number of large consortia. Unlike OLIB, VDX finds a strong customer base in North America. Ironically, VDX gained popularity in library consortia that wanted to reduce OCLC ILL by performing peer-to-peer resource sharing using the OSO ILL protocols. Now this product is owned by OCLC itself;
- **OL2**, the company's OpenURL-compliant link resolver; and
- **CPORTAL** provides an environment designed to support local governments providing information and services through the Web.

The company employs a total of seventy-five individuals, up three from year-end 2004,

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## THE ILS SCOOP



### OCLC *from previous page*

indicating some growth in staff. Headquartered in Sheffield, U.K., the company maintains offices in the United States and Australia.

### FDI Background

U.K. businessman Professor Anthony Fretwell-Downing—who, beginning in 1979, established several other automation businesses (in the fields of hospitality and education)—founded Fretwell-Downing Informatics to develop software for libraries.

In 1989 Fretwell-Downing acquired a library automation system called, “The Lending Library.” That software needed considerable reworking to be commercially viable; it was rebuilt

on top of the Oracle database management system and was transformed into the product “Oracle Libraries,” or OLIB. FDI was formally established as a business in 1992.

Robin Murray heads FDI as its CEO/president. Murray came to Fretwell-Downing in 1988 to lead the company’s efforts in creating graphical information systems; shortly after his arrival at Fretwell, he was charged with producing OLIB. In 1992, he became FDI’s Technical Manager, then he moved up to the company’s Technical Director position in 1995. In 1999, Murray moved into the Managing Director post, and he was promoted to the company’s helm in 2000.

Matt Goldner, executive VP of FDI through 2004, joined OCLC in October of 2000, and Goldner was recently named the Executive Director for Cooperative Collection Services.

Like many of the U.S. library automation companies, FDI has operated with support and direction from venture capital interests. In May 2002, FDI received a three-million-pound investment from the venture capital firm ISIS Capital plc, a subsidiary of Friends Ivory and Sime plc, which provided the VC firm with twenty-four percent interest/ownership in the company. Anthony Fretwell-Downing remained the majority owner, and other company executives owned minority stakes in the company.

### OCLC PICA Background

Founded in 1966 through the Dutch university libraries and the Royal National Library, PICA is a large nonprofit cooperative of European libraries. In April 1999, OCLC gained a sixty-percent ownership of PICA, with forty percent retained by the PICA Foundation. Even under OCLC’s majority ownership, OCLC PICA maintains its own, independent business strategies.

OCLC PICA is based in Leiden, the Netherlands, and the company maintains offices in Birmingham, United Kingdom; Oberhaching, Germany; and in Paris, France; it employs a workforce of about one hundred.

The key activity of the organization involves metadata management, providing an extensive shared cataloging system of more than twenty million bibliographic records called “GGC.” OCLC PICA also distributes OCLC’s services throughout Europe.

In addition to bibliographic services, PICA has long been involved with developing library automation software, offering both Central Library System (CBS) for union catalogs, and Local Library System (LBS), offering traditional ILS functionality. Recent annual revenues for the organization totaled about 17.5 million EUR.

## An Earlier Phase of Library Automation

This isn't the first time that OCLC has been a player in the library automation game. In the 1980s, the organization operated a Local Systems Division that (in addition to other library automation software products) developed, marketed, and supported the library automation system LS/2000. In 1990, OCLC exited that sector by selling its library automation products to Ameritech Corp., one of the many antecedents to the current

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SirsiDynix company. From 1993 through July 1997, OCLC also owned Information Dimensions, which was a for-profit subsidiary. Information Dimensions developed the BASIS family of software products utilized for managing documents, software with common use in corporate libraries and information centers.

## Consolidation Trend

OCLC PICA's add-on of FDI falls well within the recent consolidation phase occurring within the library automation industry. Long a fragmented industry, the proverbial wheels of mergers-and-acquisitions now seem to be turning. The recent acquisitions of Dynix and DocuTek stand as the largest examples of this phase.

Keeping in mind this acquisition takes place through the European OCLC PICA cooperative, not *OCLC proper*, it does seem to reflect a revived interest in bringing in major library automation products into the OCLC fold. Unlike Sisis Informationssysteme, which was a small and lesser-known automation

company, FDI stands as a larger presence in the library automation industry, with both a major library automation system and a suite of products for resource sharing, federated search, and linking.

As noted above, earlier this year (June 2005) OCLC PICA acquired Sisis Informationssysteme, a relatively small German company that offers the integrated library system SISIS-Sun-Rise (which finds use in about 180 libraries, mostly located in Germany and Austria). Sisis Informationssysteme also produces the portal product, "SISIS Elektra."

OCLC PICA itself brings the LBS Local Library System used in more than 60 installations, spanning 180 libraries, which are primarily in the Netherlands and Germany. By adding FDI to its portfolio, and with the 160 libraries running FDI's OLIB automation system, OCLC attains a significant competitive level, situating it to vie with some of the major library automation product vendors. With the FDI acquisition, the number of libraries running library automation systems under OCLC's control will total 480-plus. And when counting the number of libraries using the company's suite of resource sharing, union catalog, federated search, and linking products, that number of libraries using OCLC-related products grows even larger.

When I covered OCLC PICA's acquisition of Sisis Informationssysteme (*Smart Libraries Newsletter* 25, no. 9, Sept. 2005, p. 4), a few months ago, I suggested this development *did not* necessarily represent OCLC making a major move back into the ILS arena. But now that OCLC PICA has gone on to acquire a much larger automation company, the company makes apparent its desire to compete in the area of library software. With three library automation systems; a union catalog environment; one of the major federated search products; an OpenURL linking product; a community-information portal; and a peer-to-peer ILL system, OCLC now stands as one of the major library automation vendors. Its expansion into these areas represents a major development in the library automation industry and is one that the field should follow closely.

**Contact:** [www.oclc.org](http://www.oclc.org)  
[www.oclc-pica.org](http://www.oclc-pica.org)  
[www.fdggroup.com/fdi/company](http://www.fdggroup.com/fdi/company)



## THE ILS SCOOP

# AGent Deals with Digital Dilemmas

Through its service called “AGent Digital Collections,” Auto-Graphics has extended its product line to include a platform for helping libraries create, and provide access to, digitized collections of local content. Auto-Graphics specializes in products offered through the ASP (application service provider) model, a model in which the vendor hosts the software on its own servers. The company’s federated search, resource sharing, and ILS products follow this approach as well.

Auto-Graphics designed the AGent Digital Collections service to enable its library customers to provide patrons with access to digital collections—*without* the time-consuming requirement for *libraries* to maintain their own infrastructures. A completely Web-based product, AGent Digital Collections provides users with the capability to define a collection; upload digital files; and describe the files. It also provides

access to the collection through a professionally designed interface.

Library staff members can use the Web-based interface to catalog the objects in the collection, and once the library uploads and describes the files, they become immediately available to users and patrons. Offered via a subscription model, the service charges no additional monies related to the amount of storage used.

To prepare the content for use with AGent Digital Collections, a library staff member can either scan the items in-house or outsource that work. In addition, Auto-Graphics provides libraries with a service that assists in the scanning, cataloging, and indexing of a collection.

**Contact:** [www.auto-graphics.com](http://www.auto-graphics.com)  
[www.auto-graphics.com/product\\_digitalasset.html](http://www.auto-graphics.com/product_digitalasset.html)

## SAGEBRUSH PARLAYS K-12 PRESENCE

K-12 school librarians and their employing districts need ever-more sophisticated data analysis and reporting tools to monitor students’ educational progress as well as to satisfy reporting requirements of state and federal agencies. To help its school library customers meet such requirements, Sagebrush Corp., a company that specializes in providing library automation products for K-12 libraries (see *SLN* 25, no. 9, Sept. 2005, p. 2), also offers products that extend beyond the library, into the information and assessment needs of the broader school administration. Last month, Sagebrush added “Viewpoint,” a suite of analytical tools for school districts, to its product array for K-12 customers.

Viewpoint offers a suite of data warehouse, data mining, and analytical reporting tools that comprise a data-management system to support the complex reporting and analysis involved in monitoring the progress of student learning and school performance. Based on a data warehouse model, the Viewpoint system uses an Operational Data Store (of focused data) that supports reporting and analytical modules. One of the components, “Student Plans,” packaged with Viewpoint provides users with a facility to easily complete some of the common student-plan reports required on the district, state, and federal levels. Sagebrush offers “Viewpoint Student Plans” as a standalone product as well.

All the features of Viewpoint operate through a Web-based interface, providing users with a unified approach to managing the system; this also allows access to all the data and modules through a single, secure sign-on mechanism.

Viewpoint builds on Sagebrush’s earlier reporting product, “Analytics,” which was announced in May 2003. Analytics, based on decision-support technology licensed from Swift-Knowledge, remains a component of Viewpoint.

As of early November 2005, two school districts, one in Hillsborough County, Florida, and another in Sacramento, California, are using the software. The other forty districts that have previously licensed Analytics will upgrade to Viewpoint in the coming months.

Sagebrush’s offering of Viewpoint serves as an example of how each of the library automation companies seeks to expand their businesses beyond offering just a core library automation system—a topic I’ve covered often in this “ILS Scoop” department of *SLN* over the last year’s volume (25). As ILS sales slow due to market saturation, these companies must seek out additional opportunities for revenue growth. With the launch of Viewpoint late this year, Sagebrush is able to extend its K-12 school library-technology product expertise into a broader, but related, market niche.

**Contact:** [www.sagebrushcorp.com](http://www.sagebrushcorp.com)  
[www.sagebrushcorp.com/tech/viewpoint.cfm?CFID=62222&CFTOKEN=24802854](http://www.sagebrushcorp.com/tech/viewpoint.cfm?CFID=62222&CFTOKEN=24802854)

# Google Corner(ed)

BY TOM PETERS

## Lawsuits and Condemnations Assail Google Print This Fall

The legal department at Google may be hiring. With plenty of lawsuits to address, the Silicon Valley-based tech company has no shortage of legal work ahead.

### On October 19 . . .

The Association of American Publishers (AAP) announced a lawsuit against Google. This declaration came on the heels of the lawsuit filed earlier by the Authors Guild. The AAP suit seeks a court-ordered injunction against the scanning of entire books still under copyright protection without the express written consent of the copyright holders. According to the AAP press release, the lawsuit “. . . was filed on behalf of five major publisher members of AAP: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Pearson Education, Penguin Group (USA), Simon & Schuster, and John Wiley & Sons.” (More about the Google Print saga can be found in September and October issues of *SLN*, vol. 25, no. 9, p. 5; and no. 10, p. 6.)

The twenty-member AAP board strongly supported the filing of the lawsuit, which is being coordinated and funded by the AAP on behalf of its three-hundred organizational members. AAP president Pat Schroeder has stated, “. . . under its current plan Google is seeking to make millions of dollars by freeloading on the talent and property of authors and publishers.”

The AAP team had proposed the use of ISBN numbers to identify titles still under copyright, then the group asked Google to secure permissions from the copyright holders so it could make digital copies. According to the AAP, the Google legal and management team “flatly rejected” the proposed ISBN solution.

### On October 20 . . .

The International Publishers’ Association and PEN USA—which, according to the press release, is “. . . the third largest PEN centre in the word [sic] and is part of International PEN, the

oldest writers’ organisation currently counting 140 PEN centres worldwide”—issued a joint declaration expressing alarm about the activities of the Google Print Library Project. The declaration asserts “. . . the unassailable, inalienable fundamental right of the author to decide whether—and if so, to what extent—someone should digitize, index, and make [his or her] works available through search engines and the Internet. . . .”

The joint declaration also asserts that forcing copyright holders to seek out and opt out of digitization efforts, such as the Google Print Library Project, places an unreasonable burden—and, by implication, expense—on copyright holders.

### On October 25 . . .

The National Consumers League (NCL) announced that letters had been sent to the chairmen of the U.S. House and Senate Judiciary subcommittees overseeing intellectual property issues, expressing concern the Google Print Library Project “. . . poses dramatic threats to the principle of copyrights; fairness to authors; and cultural selectivity, exclusion, and censorship.”

The NCL letters also warn that *any* act of selectivity, in regard to what gets scanned, could make Google a massive censor of history and culture.

### On October 30 . . .

A pair of “he said, she said” opinion pieces from the *Washington Post* were widely syndicated.

University of Michigan (one of the initial academic libraries participating in Google’s project) president Mary Sue Coleman argued that Google *has not* gone too far. In her op-ed piece, Coleman emphasized the “deeply important public policy issues” and the public good at stake with the Google Print Library Project. She suggested that this massive digitization project “can be a widening of human conversation comparable to the emergence of mass literacy itself.” Coleman reiterated the deeply held belief of those involved with the project at the University of Michigan, “. . . that this endeavor exemplifies the spirit under which our nation’s copyright law was developed: to encourage the free exchange of ideas in the service of innovation and societal progress.”

In the “he said” companion piece, Authors Guild president Nick Taylor argued the Google Print Library Project infringes on authors’ rights. Taylor described Google’s promise—to

See **Google** on next page

**Google** *from previous page*

increase exposure to millions of books and, perhaps, thus increase the sales of these books—while declining to license in-copyright works, as a “devil’s bargain.” Taylor asserted that increased exposure is not the only form of compensation copyright holders expect and deserve from Google.

Like Coleman, Taylor points to some of the larger issues involved here: “When did we decide that socialism was the way to run the Internet?” In addition, Taylor scoffs at Google’s use of fair use as a shield. “That makes a private company, which is profiting from the access it provides, the arbiter of a legal concept it has no right to interpret.” According to Taylor, this struggle is “. . . about a just return for work and the dignity that goes with it.”

Although not all authors and publishers agree with the lawsuits and statements being issued by the organizations that represent them, at least authors and publishers seem to be ahead of librarians and other stakeholder groups in releasing official utterances and actions.

**On November 1 . . .**

Current American Library Association president Michael Gorman (who is also the University Librarian at California State University, Fresno) was quoted in a *Wall Street Journal* article as saying the American Library Association has not announced an official position on the Google Print Library Project. In the piece, he did not indicate if a statement or other action from ALA would be forthcoming. During a brief phone conversation I had on the same date with Larra

Clark, media relations manager at the ALA Public Information Office (PIO), she also stated that she was not aware of any official ALA statement, resolution, or other action being developed.

In the *WSJ* article, Gorman did assert that he sees a “potential disaster on several levels” with the Google Print Library Project. His feeling, indicated in the *WSJ* article, summarized: If scholarly texts are reduced to paragraphs and snippets for searching and a triage assessment of the ability of a text to meet the reader’s needs, the goal of an author to build a sustained argument and engage in a lengthy dialogue with the reader will suffer.

FYI—Charles W. Bailey, Jr., has developed a useful, selective compilation (*The Google Print Controversy: A Bibliography*) of online documents about the Google Print controversy. Stay tuned.

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<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB113081241343684922.html> (subscription may be required)

## READER REVIEWS LAND ON OPENWORLDCAT

Amazon.com’s book section—the original section, lest we forget—made this step years ago. And although the WorldCat database has existed in various guises for decades, not until recently has it taken a similar stride. But, yes, it has finally happened: The eagle has landed—OpenWorldCat now features reader-contributed reviews.

Lorcan Dempsey, on his blog, provides a direct link to a sample review (at [www.worldcatlibraries.org/wcpa/isbn/1594200637&tab=reviews](http://www.worldcatlibraries.org/wcpa/isbn/1594200637&tab=reviews)).

Questions have already arisen (on various e-mail discussion lists) about the ownership and intellectual property rights surrounding the contributed reviews.

In an age in which the lines between authorship and readership are blurring, and in which the gate-keeping and control functions of any information system are being questioned and challenged, adding reader reviews to OpenWorldCat records is one small step for libraries . . . and one small step for librarians.—*Tom Peters*

**Contact:** Lorcan Dempsey’s, “The Reader and the OpenWorldCat,” <http://orweblog.oclc.org/archives/000825.html>  
[www.worldcatlibraries.org/wcpa/isbn/1594200637&tab=reviews](http://www.worldcatlibraries.org/wcpa/isbn/1594200637&tab=reviews)

## OPEN CONTENT ALLIANCE GAINING MOMENTUM

Over the past few months, the Open Content Alliance (OCA) has been creating a positive buzz throughout librarianship. While the Google Print Project has been bogged down by complaints and lawsuits, the OCA seems to be forging ahead.

At a San Francisco fête held in late October, a candlestick-maker's dozen (a.k.a. fourteen) libraries joined the OCA, as did Microsoft Network (MSN). The library contributors included Columbia, Emory, Johns Hopkins, McMaster, Virginia, Pittsburgh, and others. It's not clear yet how each of these contributing libraries and other organizations will contribute to this project. The FAQ at the OCA states that contributors "include individuals or institutions who donate

collections, services, facilities, tools, or funding to the OCA."

The Open Content Alliance is trying to be as open, inclusive, and respectful of intellectual property rights as it possibly can be. For instance, while a massive database containing millions of scanned books will be a wonderful thing, the processes and best practices that emerge during these massive digitization projects will be of keen interest to librarians, archivists, curators, and others involved in the preservation of cultural artifacts. Although several important leaders in the library preservation and digital library fields have stated that they are impressed with Google's scanning technology and methods, Google has been tight-lipped to date about revealing and describing its techniques. The OCA, on the

other hand, has been very open about this matter. A digital flipbook developed for the launch contains a brief overview of the OCA's scanning process.

Both Microsoft and Adobe are among the for-profit corporate members of the OCA, which may make for some interesting conference calls and meetings. According to Brewster Kahle from the Internet Archive, MSN has committed to scanning one hundred fifty thousand books in 2006.—*Tom Peters*

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## Out of the Voice Box into the LibriVox

Digital audio books are hot, both for the general consumer market and for libraries. While for-profit companies such as Audible.com, OverDrive, and netLibrary vie for market share, a parallel universe of not-for-profit distributors of downloadable digital audio books also is emerging.

One interesting recent start-up venture in the not-for-profit universe is LibriVox, which uses the slogan, "acoustical liberation of books in the public domain." The mission of this all-volunteer organization is to make all books in the public domain available for free in digital audio formats on the Internet.

Here's how it works: Volunteers agree to read aloud and record at least one chapter of a public domain work. Some volunteers agree to take on an entire book as a solo project. The eventual result is a complete audio book, either narrated sequentially by a team of volunteers or read straight through by a single, dedicated volunteer.

By the end of October, the LibriVox project had approximately ten complete digital audio books ready for downloading, with a couple dozen more in the works. The sea of public domain

works stretches across many latitudes of varying depths. Choosing which titles to digitize in audio format first is no easy selection challenge. But any organization that chooses Joseph Conrad's fine novel *The Secret Agent* as one of the first titles to record gets my attention! *The Secret Agent* is available through LibriVox in MP3 format (both 64 and 128 kbps are offered) and in ogg vorbis format.

The LibriVox Web site/blog (by the way, in some instances, the distinction between a Web site and blog is becoming almost indiscernible) also contains links to more than twenty-one other not-for-profit, downloadable digital audio book projects, including audio book projects in several other languages (other than English).

The challenges for libraries wanting to incorporate these grassroots projects into their overall offerings of digital content and services are the usual suspects: the quality of the narration; the quality of the sound recordings; the need for bibliographic control (or should we call it "audiophilic" control?); discovery aids (something like *Books in Print* for *Books Heard on the Internet*); etc.

LibriVox appears to have some sort of affiliation with the Open Content Alliance but is not listed as an official partner organization.—*Tom Peters*

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



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## **OCLC and the ILS Landscape: Acquisition Affects Automation Biz Terrain**

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