



ALA Tech-Source

# Library Systems™

An innovative overview of library automation

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## State-of-the-art ILS isn't enough anymore

Libraries didn't always demand much from an automated library system: just order the books, receive the books, catalog the books, find the books, charge the books, and discharge the books. Six simple steps—once modular and lacking integration, later integrated, then graphically and Web-enabled, and now simply dull.

The integrated library systems (ILS) market has undergone a serious shift in the last five years. The commercial part of the Web has raised expectations among patrons and staff. Without Amazon or Google, users might not have become so bored by the traditional catalog interface. The six simple steps have been relegated to the back burner.

Dozens of vendors' fancy features and new partnerships focus on library func-

tions traditionally neglected by ILS, and a tremendous amount of energy is spent wedding catalog with content.

### Fancy features

Just as Amazon is not simply about buying a book, the catalog is no longer simply about finding a book. Several vendors' Web catalogs now contain cover art, tables of contents, reviews, and other materials directly or loosely related to the catalog title.

Companies such as Syndetics offer these materials directly to libraries or package them for inclusion with a vendor's offerings, as with Sirsi's iBistro or Innovative's Millennium OPAC. In a more creative twist, Innovative's Millennium offers this added content from technical services

*See State-of-the-Art on page 2*

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## Implications of the PATRIOT Act

The passage of the USA Act of 2001 in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks renews the library community's attention on patron privacy and library data storage policies. In the past, federal agents have been able to obtain patron records with a court order. This new anti-terrorism law, however, also prevents librarians from revealing that an investigation is occurring or that records have been given to authorities. These actions are now a criminal offense. As a result, determining the

extent of investigations affecting librarians has been difficult.

To avoid having to violate patron confidentiality, librarians are reviewing data retained in their ILS modules and considering policies that eliminate the retention of data that reveals which items a patron has used. If libraries no longer have the requested information to provide to the authorities, libraries cannot violate patron confidentiality.

*See Implications on page 4*

### I'm just one bill

Although more commonly known as the PATRIOT Act, this bill's official name is USA Act of 2001. Be aware they are the same bill. PATRIOT is an acronym for Provide Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism. USA is an acronym for Uniting and Strengthening America. The USA Act of 2001 was passed by the House and placed on the calendar in the Senate. Review



## Keep current with automation resource database

Systems librarians and library administrators often don't discover a new database tool they both will love. A newly redesigned resource, Library Technology Guides (LTG), might be that tool.

The tool's creator, Marshall Breeding from Vanderbilt University's Jean and Alexander Heard Library, began the LTG project as a database of information to support his own writing and research about library automation. LTG includes a bibliographic database of resources, a database of library automation companies, a list of subscribers to LTG's automated services, and the resource for which Breeding is well-known, lib-web-cats, the comprehensive database of library catalogs and Web pages.

LTG also includes a searchable news release archive. The searchable bibliography includes a rich set of citations and full-text. Comprehensive indexing is available for the *Journal of Library Automation, Information Technology and Libraries*, and *Library Systems Newsletter*. Selected indexing is available for *Library Software Review*, *D-Lib Magazine*, and *Computers in Libraries*.—AP

Contact: LTG  
[www.librarytechnology.org](http://www.librarytechnology.org)

## INMAGIC EXPANDS FEATURES WITH BIBLIOTECH PRO 2.4

Software from Inmagic, Inc., BiblioTech PRO 2.4, an enterprise-wide integrated library system, now supports Euro currency, real-time indexing, and thesaurus term relation-checking. Government and corporate libraries primarily use BiblioTech PRO. Inmagic acquired BiblioTech PRO from Comstow Information Services in 1999. The software is installed in several dozen libraries.—AP

Contact: Inmagic  
[www.inmagic.com](http://www.inmagic.com)

### State-of-the-Art *from page 1*

modules, making the assumption that if the information is valuable enough for a patron's selection of a book, it also should be valuable in the library's selection of the book in the first place.

Library catalogs are laudable to catch up with the Internet. The only danger lies in whether the patron can make the distinction between the library index (the traditional catalog) and supplemental information. For example, libraries are not responsible for a *New York Times* book review, nor can they be held accountable for poor authority in links to author biographies. Moreover, jacket art makes for pretty visuals but is not as valuable a selection criteria as a back cover or book flap, or even chapter excerpts (especially for academic libraries).

On another front, libraries have long put tables of contents (TOCs) in MARC records. Now TOCs are available as supplemental data streams. Which is better? The latter may be more aesthetically pleasing, but they are not part of the library index. Libraries should consider retaining their embedded TOCs for indexing and record retrieval but suppressing TOC displays in favor of links to third-party content providers.

### Breaking old new ground

ILS companies also are renewing their attention to long-ignored areas such as interlibrary loan, course reserves, binding, and report-writing. Traditionally libraries have ignored ILS vendors' half-baked product offerings in these areas in favor of either standalone modules or local development. Local development has even resulted in some sophisticated products, such as Prospero for interlibrary loan (ILL) or ERes for electronic course reserves.

Rather than play a tremendous amount of catch-up with a plethora of products on the market, ILS vendors are integrating with third parties. In an unprecedented flurry of partnerships, vendor product development strategy has shifted dramatically: Endeavor Information Systems joins forces with Clío for interlibrary loan, Innovative Interfaces partners with MuseGlobal for broadcast database searching, Ex Libris and Able integrate library binding, and Sirsi Corp. partners with LSSI to integrate virtual reference software with the ILS.

The shift is notable in an industry that would traditionally either try to keep third-party contributions behind the scenes or favor internally developed solutions over licensing a more sophisticated solution. Libraries have an advantage if the newly integrated solution is already in use. The partnerships are trickier when they limit product choice by favoring one solution over another. Nevertheless, librarians should always favor integration of products and data over standalone solutions that require separate workflows and duplication of data entry and maintenance.

## Catalog and content

A more dangerous aspect of catalog and content integration results when one flavor of content is favored over another. This flavor choice is especially tricky when an ILS attempts to merge catalog discovery with full-text article discovery.

In a library with limited resources, solutions such as Questia or ebrary might seem attractive as a complement to locally housed resources. When one database package or a single subscription agent comprises all of a library's electronic resources, the problem of wedding book and article discovery is reduced. But when the line between content and local indexing (the catalog) becomes more blurred, or when the catalog is tied to one suite of content over another, the user may be within a small box of content.

The result is little ability for the user to seek, or even desire, to escape. Add this limitation to the libraries' already limited flexibility in negotiating the actual content of aggregated or pay-by-the-drink content subscriptions and poof! goes the last defense that expert selection has led the user to the content.

## Innovation is critical

ILS vendors *should*, though, keep developing innovative products. Lacking the resources for local development or the ability to fill service gaps with third-party solutions, most libraries rely on the ILS to provide new features and public interface bells and whistles. But will innovation and originality supplant the state-of-the-art system that supplies libraries with the best ability to follow the six simple steps?—*Andrew Pace*

# INNOVATIVE KNOWS THE WAY . . .

. . . to San Jose, where the new Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library will be installing Innovative Interface's Millennium library automation system. The new library combines the libraries of San Jose State University and San Jose Public Library, both in San Jose, Calif. Supported by Silicon Valley's leaders since its announcement in 1997, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library stands out for this collaboration, creating and co-managing a learning center that students, faculty, and community members share.—*AP*

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

## Auto-Graphics, EBSCOhost partner for easy interface

AGent—a new cross-database search tool from Auto-Graphics, maker of the VERSO Web-based library management system—is now compatible with EBSCOhost indexes and full-text database content.

By using a library that integrates the two services, AGent users can retrieve subscription content from the EBSCOhost database, complete with the native navigation and display, while still within the AGent broadcast search system. This partnership offers a tremendous advantage to libraries that subscribe to both services: users won't need to learn a new interface. Integration with interlibrary loan and other functions of the integrated library system make the partnership complete.

AGent also is compatible with both the Z39.50 accessible VERSO catalog and Auto-Graphic's Impact/ONLINE interlibrary loan (ILL) software. EBSCOhost replaced EBSCO's e-journals service, EBSCO Online, in July 2002. Access to full text databases, secondary databases and individual e-journals are now provided under the EBSCOhost umbrella.—*AP*



### Implications *from page 1*

The heightened awareness in the library community about privacy of patron records has prompted discussions with ILS vendors and a review of internal library policies about data stored on:

- Book circulation linking a patron record with a book checkout
- Patron-specific searches that are stored and executed at a future date
- Interlibrary loan data that link a patron with a book or journal article

Most vendors provide flexible options for data storage, and libraries are wise to review their policies regarding the data they keep, the advice they offer patrons, and their staff guidelines for compliance.

## System options

In Sirsi's Unicorn system, the temporary loan record linking the patron and book is destroyed when the book is returned. Although the transaction is stored in the history log (part of the backup strategy for recovery from hardware failures), Sirsi has a routine that makes these logs anonymous. The system removes unique identifiers but retains statistical and demographic information. Libraries set internal schedules and policies for purging detailed data and collecting usage statistics.

Epixtech reported that in both its Dynix and Horizon systems, the record of the last circulation is kept since it may be needed if the librarian discovers the item is damaged. Some libraries keep aggregated lists to generate usage statistics. Anonymity, however, is considered in the design: book titles, for example, do not appear on mailed postcard notices. Information exchanged between terminals and the server is encrypted so it can't be grabbed or sniffed.

Endeavor allows libraries to determine the data they wish to retain. The data are usually about the type of patron. Some libraries also keep the patron ID in case the staff discovers damaged materials. Endeavor also encrypts all data streams between the clients and servers.

Ex Libris noted that scrub programs do not affect the open and active records for books being circulated or books that are overdue. It is developing scrub programs for release early in 2003. It is reviewing the hundreds of

**A scrub program breaks the link between the user and the item within a library's database after the item is returned or when it is next**

reports its system can produce in light of scrubbing data. Libraries may wish to alert their patrons that stored searches retained in the system for later execution can be retrieved for federal agents under the PATRIOT Act.

Gaylord's Polaris system retains the last patron who used a book, and some librarians have asked that this link be broken earlier, although no consensus is available on this point. Gaylord plans to include a note on stored searches that alerts the patron to the impact of the PATRIOT Act in terms of library staff potentially having to provide use data if required to do so.

## Library actions

Libraries should review their existing systems to determine where patron-specific data is linked to content in searching, circulation, and interlibrary loan modules. Librarians would be wise to review how and when statistical reports are generated to ensure that stored data has been scrubbed and does not violate patron privacy.—*Judy Luther*

**Contact:** [Discussion of the PATRIOT Act www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/usapatriotact.html](http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/usapatriotact.html)  
Dec. 11, 2002, satellite teleconference on  
the USA Act of 2001  
[www.sla.org/content/memberservice/communication/safeguard.cfm](http://www.sla.org/content/memberservice/communication/safeguard.cfm)

## Are institutional repositories the next step?

Libraries could position themselves in a central role to capture and preserve the intellectual output of the university community, including articles, data sets, images, video, and courseware, according to a white paper presented this fall. In effect, this proposition thrusts the library into a knowledge management role to identify, collect, and make accessible the intellectual output of a university community.

The white paper, "The Case for Institutional Repositories: a SPARC Position Paper," by Raym Crow, the senior consultant for the Scholarly Publishing & Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), served as the background document for an ARL-, SPARC-, and CNI-sponsored workshop in October 2002 in Washington, D.C. Nearly 300 librarians and information technology staff gathered at the workshop to discuss how to take this idea from concept through implementation.

The initiative would deliver on the promise of a scholars portal to provide access to the results of faculty research. It would

include the curriculum component (items that support the faculty's teaching role) essential to the educational mission of the university. This strategy could bring together diverse efforts—such as faculty websites and syllabi, databases of images for teaching art history, and student dissertations—under a coherent framework that supports both teaching and research.

Practical initiatives include the California Digital Library (CDL) eScholarship Repository, announced in April 2002, and Dspace, a collaborative effort between MIT and Hewlett Packard to create a long-term digital repository. Though more questions than answers exist at this stage, the white paper's initiative merits watching.—*JL*

Contact: [ARL](http://www.arl.org/sparc/IR/ir.html)  
[www.arl.org/sparc/IR/ir.html](http://www.arl.org/sparc/IR/ir.html)

### Sirsi

#### Sirsi lands three big consortia

Substantially expanding its consortia market share, Sirsi Corp. sold the UnicornConsortia Management System to major consortia in Illinois, Texas, and Wisconsin this fall. Joining the growing fold of Sirsi consortia are the 54-member Harrington Library Consortium in Amarillo, Texas; the 38 libraries of the Heritage Trail System in Shorewood, Ill., and 15 public libraries comprising the Lakeshores Library System in Waterford, Wisc. iBistro and iLink public interfaces, offerings from Sirsi that enrich the public interface to the online catalog, gave impetus to the sales.—*AP*

Contact: [Sirsi](http://www.sirsi.com)  
[www.sirsi.com](http://www.sirsi.com)

### Endeavor

#### Illinois consortium brings up Voyager quickly

Unprecedented migration speed marks the successful launch on Sept. 23 of the Illinois Library Computing Systems Organization's (ILCSO) and Endeavor Information Systems' Voyager integrated management system at ILCSO's mix of 44 university, college, and community college libraries. ILCSO and Endeavor implemented the system between December 2001 and July 2002. It includes ILS servers at each member library, nearly 18 million records loaded into 44 systems, and Endeavor's Universal catalog for reciprocal borrowing, with almost 8 million bibliographic records.—*AP*

Contact: [Endeavor Information Systems Inc.](http://www.endinfosys.com)  
[www.endinfosys.com](http://www.endinfosys.com)

## USABILITY RESHAPES LIBRARY WEBSITES

Accustomed to the simplicity of Google, today's Internet users have no patience, ability, or interest in learning the skills used by librarians to navigate a library's resources. This discovery—emerging in usability studies across the country—is quietly revolutionizing the design of library websites.

Initiatives focused on user-centered design include tools such as personas (representing different learning styles) and usability testing (monitoring how users find materials).

### Lessons learned

Over the last 18 months at the University of Rochester in New York, students in the library were offered \$5 for 15 minutes of their time to participate in exercises focused on how they would find answers to common questions, such as locating an article from a specific citation.

The results of this research led to the following conclusions:

- Simplify the language. Students are not familiar with library terms such as catalog and bibliographic database. They prefer selections that describe an action they would take, such as find articles or get other materials.
- Provide a search box. Users want a Google-type box where they can type their keywords for a simplified search.
- Recognize that journal articles are difficult to find. Typically, users took 12 clicks to locate a specific article online as they navigated a library's website and then the publisher's or vendor's website.
- Realize that faculty work in silos. Professors know their subject matter well but may become lost on the library's main website.
- Segment the OPAC. Students have difficulty understanding the concept of an online catalog. The catalog will make sense to them with links to different types of material, such as articles, dissertations, and videos.

Many of these themes also are evident in the Web access to content at the University of Arizona and the University of Washington. Their WebPacs were designed to present a user-friendly, intuitive interface that allows users to be self-sufficient.



## New guide to virtual reference

Point-of-need service for library users is the focus of *The Virtual Reference Librarian's Handbook*, a new guide being published in November by Neal-Schuman. Arranged in three parts, author Anne Grodzins Lipow's book covers:

- The decision to go virtual
- The process of moving to the virtual desk
- Techniques for building a lively service, which includes a checklist for choosing software and guides for designing the service's Web space and related policies

Lipow, founder and director of Library Solutions Institute and Press, Berkeley, Calif., helped the Library of Congress launch QuestionPoint, a 24/7 reference service designed as a collaborative effort of public and academic libraries, including national libraries in other countries. Lipow was formerly director of instructional services in the library at the University of California, Berkeley. She has worked with all types of libraries to address the changing nature of reference service and the continuing education of librarians.

*The Virtual Reference Librarian's Handbook* includes a forward by Clifford Lynch, the executive director at the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI).—*JL*

**Contact:** [Library of Congress](http://Library of Congress)  
[lcweb.loc.gov/rr/digiref](http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/digiref)  
 Neal-Schuman  
[www.neal-schuman.com/db/2/292.html](http://www.neal-schuman.com/db/2/292.html)

## The challenge

Usability testing requires a library's commitment of time and money, especially in its planning and testing phases.

But the bigger hurdle is the politics of beliefs—or rather disbelief—in the results and conclusions drawn as a result of the usability research, according to OCLC's Mike Prasse. Opponents to the usability data findings say the catalog is being dumbed down. They are concerned that users are not learning proper research skills.

Meeting the user's need for quick access to answers by simplifying the website runs counter to the belief that librarians should train students to use research skills that evolved in a pre-Web era. This argument is similar to one that calculators would preclude the development of basic math skills. Although a lack of skill may be the result in both instances, this missed knowledge won't hinder the user's ability to function.—*JL*

## Usability sources

With millions of visitors to the Web, usability has evolved from the field of human-computer interaction to bring together diverse disciplines such as psychology, graphics arts, programming, and Web design. Librarians who have conducted usability tests find the following sources helpful:

- Usability Professionals' Association, [www.upassoc.org](http://www.upassoc.org) (a member organization with an annual summer meeting)
- User Interface Engineering, [www.uie.com](http://www.uie.com) (a small conference with excellent seminars, training sessions, and discussion. Its spring program is held in Burlingame, Calif.; Boston hosts the fall program. Limited volunteer opportunities are available for those who register early, which is good because the conference is \$2,500.)
- *Don't Make Me Think: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability* by Steve Krug
- *Handbook of Usability Testing: How to Plan, Design and Conduct Effective Tests* by Jeffrey Rubin
- *Designing Web Usability: The Practice of Simplicity* by Jakob Nielsen.
- *Usability Assessment of Library Related Web Sites: Methods and Case Studies*, Nicole Campbell, editor (LITA publication)—*JL*

Contact: [www.library.arizona.edu](http://www.library.arizona.edu)  
[www.lib.rochester.edu](http://www.lib.rochester.edu)  
[www.lib.washington.edu](http://www.lib.washington.edu)  
[www.oclc.org/usability](http://www.oclc.org/usability)

## VTLS Virtua embraces FRBR cataloging model

Last summer, VTLS made itself the first commercial ILS system to embrace one of the newest developments in bibliographic description: functional requirements for bibliographic records (FRBR), which is a conceptual framework for the national and international sharing of bibliographic data. Developed by the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), in conjunction with national libraries such as the Library of Congress and the National Library of Canada, FRBR attempts to address the difficulties in linking hierarchic metadata records in a way not supported by traditional MARC cataloging practices.

VTLS has created an integrated catalog solution that allows the traditional model to co-exist with the new FRBR model on the same database. This method allows for migrations at the libraries' own pace without requiring massive record conversions.—*AP*

Contact: **FRBR**  
[www.ifla.org/VII/s13/frbr/frbr.htm](http://www.ifla.org/VII/s13/frbr/frbr.htm)  
 VTLS Inc.  
[www.vtls.com](http://www.vtls.com)



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