## Sirsi's acquisition of DRA raises many questions

The most often asked question about Sirsi's acquisition of DRA is whether Taos will continue to be developed and supported. Executives at Sirsi say the company is interested not just in DRA's customer base, but the Taos product. They say Sirsi is "committed to an aggressive Taos development schedule." The major issue is whether the scalability problems that DRA experienced can be solved. Finding an answer may take several months.

Another frequently asked question is whether DRA will remain a separate company or will be absorbed into Sirsi. No decision has been made. Pat Sommers, Sirsi's president, is considering a branding study to determine whether keeping both names is better than merging under a single name, possibly even a completely new name.

Some readers wanted to know why Sirsi purchased a failing company. The answer is simple: DRA was not failing; it was making money. For fiscal 2000, revenues were $28.3 million, compared with $30 million for fiscal 1999. Earnings were $1.9 million, compared with $2.3 million in 1999.

Many readers expressed skepticism that Mike Mellinger, DRA's president, will stay after the acquisition has been consummated. The announced plan is to have Mellinger actively run DRA and to become a member of Sirsi's board; however, general agreement among DRA customers is that Mellinger's independent spirit will make report to someone else difficult for him. A good guess would be six

## OCLC articulates its global strategy

In three years, OCLC's WorldCat will contain not only descriptions of library holdings, but also links to digital objects in other knowledge repositories such as museums, archives, private collections, and historical and professional societies. OCLC's cataloging services will become a comprehensive metadata creation and management service to provide the cooperative framework for organizing the world's knowledge, both print and electronic. The MARC format will be supplemented by Dublin Core and other metadata formats. All the current cataloging interfaces and services will be merged into a single, browser-based entry point called the Integrated Metadata Desktop.

These and other components of OCLC's strategy for the future are spelled out at the organization's Web site. Given the potential impact on the future of library services, the document is a must read.

Contact: OCLC
www.oclc.org/strategy

## CONTENTS

# Digital projector prices **drop** again

Digital projectors rated at 1,000 to 1,400 lumens rarely were available at less than $8,000 even one year ago. The market has changed: prices are down and sales are up sharply. It is now possible to purchase a Hitachi CP-X325W or a Panasonic PT-L711U digital projector rated at 1,400 lumens for $4,199. The Toshiba TLP-671, rated at 1,300 lumens, is priced at just $3,995. For an auditorium, the Epson EMP 7600p, rated at 2,200 lumens, is a good buy at $6,569—down from more than $10,000 a year ago. ∎

# NEC flat panel monitor prices drop

NEC/Mitsubishi has dropped the prices on its popular flat panel monitors from $749 to $500 for its 15.1-inch model (LCD1530V) and from $1,899 to $1,149 for its 18.1-inch model (LCD 1830). The rest of the industry is expected to follow, with companies that traditionally sell at prices lower than NEC/Mitsubishi expected to drop the prices below $500 and $1,000 respectively. View-Sonic was the first to respond by dropping its prices to $499 and $999 only 48 hours after the NEC/Mitsubishi announcement. ∎

# NEW PRODUCTS AND
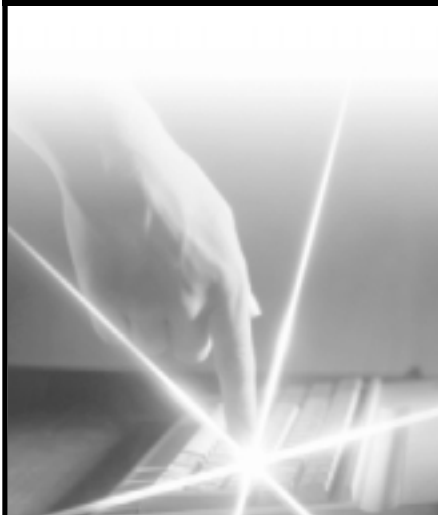
## Sagebrush announces cross-reference database

Sagebrush Corp. now offers an add-on product designed to help patrons find materials more effectively. Its new Athena Cross-Reference Database contains more than 10,000 MARC authority records that can be used as generic "see" and "see also" references within a database mounted on its Athena automated library system—a PC-based system widely used in school libraries. The records can be loaded either as a complete collection or incorporated selectively. The product is priced at $495.

**Contact:** Sagebrush Corp.
2800 National Drive
Onalaska, WI 54650
tel. 800-533-5430
www.sagebrush.com

## TLC enhances YouSeeMore

TLC has enhanced its YouSeeMore product to enable patrons to create their own personalized library Web portal. Patrons will be able to create their own interactive library Web pages "streamed" with a broad range of individualized content, including news, weather, and personal library account information. Further, patrons can input their preferences for books, tapes, music, and CDs, and choose to receive alerts when items that may be of inter-

months until Mellinger moves into an advisory role.

Keep in mind that the combined companies, no matter how organized, will have revenues of $60 million a year—a figure that will rival the revenues of epixtech and Innovative Interfaces. The combined companies will rank first in the number of staff members devoted to software development and maintenance; first in the number of new-name sales; first in the number of systems supporting more than 200 concurrent users; second in the total number of installations; and second in the number of staff members committed to customer support.

## UPGRADES

est to them are added to the collection. Users can also search the PAC from within the personal site.

YouSeeMore, which is a third-party product, integrates seamlessly with both TLC and CARL systems. The software resides at TLC, rather than on the local library system, so it is offered on a subscription basis, rather than as a one-time purchase.

YouSeeMore is just one more offering that illustrates how vendors of automated library systems are moving beyond the traditional automated library system that support the core modules of acquisitions, serials control, circulation, and patron access catalog. Sirsi's iBistro and Endeavor's Encompass are others that are likely to shape the future of library automation.

**Contact:** TLC
tel. 800-325-7759
TLCdelivers.com
CARL
tel. 303-758-3030
fax 303-758-0606
www.carl.org

**Contact:** Sirsi Corp.
101 Washington St. SE
Huntsville, AL 35801
tel. 256-704-7000
fax 256-704-7007
www.sirsi.com

# INTEL LAUNCHES ITANIUM

Intel has launched Itanium, its first 64-bit processor. The machine accommodates only Win 2000 server operating systems. The architecture allows each processor to execute up to 20 operations simultaneously, increasing performance to equal that of the RISC-based processors commonly used with Unix-based automated library systems. It is selling the processor to computer makers for as little as $1,117 per unit, allowing computer manufacturers to configure a powerful four-way server for a little more than $40,000—well under comparable Hewlett Packard, IBM, and Sun RISC/Unix platforms. Compaq, Dell, HP, and IBM have already announced they will offer Itanium-based machines.

Industry analysts expect Intel to increase its 18.4% share of the server market only slightly in the near-term; instead, the introduction of Itanium is likely to drive server prices down and to influence companies such as Sun to increase clock speeds and onboard cache. Not only are 64-bit RISC/Unix platforms firmly established, they have a mature operating system with which to work. Microsoft has not yet issued a general release version of a 64-bit operating system for use with Itanium.

The long-term impact is likely to be significant. Win 2000 server is likely to displace Unix for entry-level systems–the designation the industry applies to systems costing up to $100,000, exclusive of software. Unless Sun changes its announced intent not to offer an Itanium platform, its 54.4% share of this segment of the server market could erode. Since Sun has been the most popular platform for automated library systems, such a development would impact libraries. Any contract that includes the hardware platform should spell out the terms for a change in the hardware platform when the library wishes to substantially upgrade its central site— typically four to six years after initial installation. ∎

# *Library Technology Reports* goes online

*Library Technology Reports,* an American Library Association publication devoted to comprehensive overviews of current technology and comparative evaluations of available products, is now available online. Users log on to www.techsource.ala.org with their ALA identification number and password to access nine issues in PDF format, including six issues also available in print and three available exclusively in the online subscription. An archive going back to 1998 is also available. A searchable archive of more than 20 years of *Library Systems Newsletter* is available at the same site.

**Contact:** ALA TechSource
tel. 800-545-2433, ext. 4272
ww.techsource.ala.org

# VIABILITY CRITERIA REVISITE

One year ago *Library Systems Newsletter* published an article on the use of viability criteria in the evaluation of automated library system vendors that use a multiuser operating system such as Unix or NT server. The criteria, revised to reflect current market conditions, are:

**Availability in general release of the core modules: acquisitions, serials control, cataloging, circulation, and the patron access catalog.**

When all the core modules of a product are in general release, evaluation is more reliable. Also, this criteria shows the vendor is committing its development resources to enhancements, including the development of new modules, rather than seeking to catch up with the industry.

**Minimum annual sales of $10 million.**

Sales volume is increasingly important in the fierce competition that exists in the library automation market. The cost of maintaining a market presence—national sales force support, conference and exhibition participation, advertising, new product development, customer service—is daunting. Companies with sales of less than $10 million a year are barely visible. (The $10 million minimum is up from $5 million a year ago).

**A minimum of 200 installations.**

The larger the installed customer base, the more likely that maintenance income and sales of upgrades will keep a company profitable even if new-name sales (sales to libraries not already cus-

tomers) are lackluster. (The minimum of 200 is up from 100 a year ago.)

**A minimum of 30 new-name sales (sales to libraries not previously customers) in the previous year.**

The new-name sales usually are the source of funds for product development. Maintaining a strong program

with less than 30 new-name sales a year is difficult; 50 is far better. (The 30 minimum is up from 20 a year ago.)

**A minimum of 25 full-time programmers.**

The question is whether new-name sales are actually funding aggressive product development. A staff of 25 is an absolute minimum to keep pace with

### VENDOR VIABILITY STATISTICS

| Company | Support sales (in millions) | # of sales | # installed | Dev. staff | Staff ratio |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BiblioMondo | 10–15 | 13 | 1,400 | 70 | 1:40 |
| DRA | 25–30 | 24 | 1,371 | 142 | 1:16 |
| Endeavor | 25–30 | 83 | 713 | 44 | 1:14 |
| EOSi | 5–10* | 22 | 138 | 15 | 1:8 |
| epixtech | <70 | 65 | 3,260 | 126 | 1:13 |
| Ex Libris | 10–15 | 43 | 489 | 36 | 1:13 |
| Gateway | 1–2.5 | 3 | 166 | 2 | 1:41 |
| Gaylord | 10–15 | 5 | 283 | 58 | 1:5 |
| Geac | 40–50* | 22 | 791 | 45 | 1:8 |
| Inmagic | 2.5–5 | 13 | 45 | 3 | 1:22 |
| Innovative | >70 | 56 | 949 | 80 | 1:16 |
| Keystone | 1–2.5 | 7 | 39 | 5 | 1:13 |
| Open Text | 10–15* | 6 | 252 | 7 | 1:23 |
| Sirsi | 25–30* | 172 | 989 | 51 | 1:8 |
| TLC | 25–30* | 76 | 381 | 41 | 1:6 |
| VTLS | 5–10 | 23 | 334 | 32 | 1:14 |

(All the companies listed above have the four core modules available. Some of the revenue figures have been estimated and are, therefore, marked with an asterisk. The figures for CARL have been incorporated into those for TLC as they are now under the same ownership. If Sirsi's purchase of DRA is consummated, the figures for the two should be combined.)

# D

the industry; more staff is necessary if a vendor is seeking to lead it. (The minimum of 25 is up from 20 a year ago.)

**A customer support ratio of 1:15 or better.**

The ratio of support staff to installed sites is an important measure of the support a customer can expect. Many variables affect this ratio, however, so a ratio poorer than 1:15 is merely an indicator of possible weakness in support. The size and complexity of the installed systems and the sophistication level of vendors' customers will have an impact on the level of involvement required of the Help Desk staff.

Although each library will want to adjust the criteria, the figures in the chart will help determine which vendors can be considered viable. They were obtained as part of *Library Systems Newsletter*'s annual survey of the industry. Only vendors active in North America with sales of at least $1 million in the past year have been included because too few vendors active in other parts of the world submitted complete data.

By applying the recommended criteria, the vendors that are currently viable are Endeavor, epixtech, Ex Libris, Innovative Interfaces, Sirsi, and TLC. Although current viability does not guarantee long-term strength, the vendors that exceed the viability criteria have a low failure rate. Those that fall far short often fail within five years.

The company most likely to meet the proposed viability criteria in the next year is Gaylord. Now that its Polaris product is complete, its sales can be expected to increase. ■

# eBookNet returns as eBookWeb

One of the most highly regarded sources of e-book information, eBookNet, is returning to the Web after being shut down by new owner TV Guide/Gemstar on April 2. Re-establishing itself as an independent news source, eBookNet has relocated to eBookWeb.org.

In the eight weeks since the shutdown, original editors Glenn Sanders and Wade Roush have been working hard to line up support for a next-generation eBook site. The editors have officially announced that July 4 will be the re-launch date for eBookWeb (www.ebookweb.org). Like its predecessor, it aims to be a central source for news and information on all aspects of electronic publishing and a community center for eBook enthusiasts and industry professionals.

The site already offers an introductory page at www.ebookweb.org, with the latest daily eBook news briefs, opportunity to subscribe to the weekly e-mail newsletter (a resurrected feature of the old eBookNet), as well as an insider's account of eBookNet's treatment by Gemstar.

Beginning July 4, the full site will offer a familiar mix of content, including news, opinion, resources, and community message boards. The site's sponsors are members of a new non-profit organization called the Electronic Publishing Resource Center (EPRC), which is dedicated to exploring and promoting all forms of e-media, including electronic publishing and other applications of advanced information displays. ■

# BLUETOOTH WIRELESS TECHNOLOGY GAINS POPULARITY

The Bluetooth specification for establishing short-range radio links among PCs, handheld computers, telephones, and other devices that are within 30 feet of one another is gaining popularity within the computer industry. 3Com will provide Bluetooth PC cards and software designed to manage a personal networking environment. IBM has introduced the Bluetooth UltraPort Module, a clip-on device designed to add Bluetooth functionality to laptops. Hewlett-Packard and Compaq also appear to be readying Bluetooth-enabled systems.

Bluetooth supports speeds as fast as 1Mbps, suitable for personal area networks but not for institutions. If large numbers of laptops with Bluetooth PC cards come into use, libraries that have developed wireless networks based on the IEEE 802.11b standard will have to consider dual networks: one based on the wireless standard and the other on a specification packaged in the laptops library users purchase.

Adding confusion is the development of the IEEE 802.11a standard, which will deliver speeds of up to 54 Mbps, compared with 11 Mbps for 802.11b. The consensus in the industry is that 802.11a will be a niche market product for government and large corporate networks, and that 802.11b will be the widely deployed product for hotels, airport terminals, and other facilities that cater to the public. ■

# UPDATES

**GOVERNMENT**

## CHILD ONLINE PROTECTION ACT UPDATE

The U.S. Supreme Court agreed May 21 to hear an appeal by the Department of Justice to overturn an appeals court decision that blocked enforcement of the 1998 Child Online Protection Act. The law would require commercial Web site operators to require age verification to prevent underage users from accessing potentially harmful material. The most common age verification technique currently is the submission of credit card information. The law was challenged by the American Civil Liberties Union and a number of online magazine publishers and booksellers. The appeal is expected to be heard during the court's fall term. ■

## FILTERING REQUIREMENT DELAYED

The filtering requirement imposed on libraries by the Children's Internet Protection Act will be delayed until July 2002 under an agreement made by lawyers on opposing sides of a legal challenge to the act. The American Civil Liberties Union and the American Library Association challenged the law. The Department of Justice is acting for the federal government. The agreement does not affect schools. ■

## WHO IS E-MAILING OUR KIDS ACT INTRODUCED

On May 15, 2001, Rep. Felix Grucci (R-NY) introduced bill H.R. 1846. It would require libraries and schools receiving E-rate telecommunications discounts to block access to anonymous Web access and e-mail services. Although the Congressman is seeking to stop those who anonymously prey on children, his act will block millions of library users from accessing Hotmail and other free e-mail services. ■

## E-RATE REQUESTS EXCEED AVAILABLE FUNDS

Libraries and schools have requested more than $5.2 billion in E-rate telecommunications discounts, twice the $2.24 billion available. The Federal Communications Commission is considering changing the rules to give priority to libraries and schools that did not receive funds last year for internal wiring. If the FCC goes ahead with that decision, almost all the available money would go to schools. That, argues the American Library Association, would be unfair to the libraries that submitted applications and technology plans based on the rules in effect in the previous round. The American Library Association has filed its objections and urged that the FCC focus on the formula for calculating the discount level. ■

# EBSCO ONLINE adds OECD PUBLICATIONS

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a cooperative of 30 national governments, has licensed EBSCO Host to provide online access to the full text of its 49 publications. The OECD collects data, analyzes trends, and researches changes in domestic and international economics and social policy. Publications documenting the OECD's work usually are available only in large research libraries.

**Contact:** Ebsco Information Services
www.ebsco.com

# SILVERPLATTER adds FIAF ARCHIVE

The International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) has licensed SilverPlatter to distribute its FIAF International FilmArchive database. FIAF is a global organization of the institutions in the field of moving picture heritage. It is dedicated to the rescue, collection, preservation, and screening of moving images. Its database has four components: International Index to Film/TP Periodicals, Treasures from the film Archives, Bibliography of FIAF Member Publications, and the International Director of film/TF Documentation Collections. The database was begun in 1972.

**Contact:** SilverPlatter
tel. 800-343-0064
www.silverplatter.com

## Baker & Taylor forms alliance with Gaylord

Software developer Gaylord Information Systems (GIS) has announced an alliance with Charlotte, N.C.-based Baker & Taylor, a distributor in the public library market. This alliance provides enhanced electronic data interchange (EDI) ordering in Polaris, GIS' third-generation library automation system. The new interface will allow Polaris customers to do online collection development, ordering, and acquisitions through Baker & Taylor. This interface will also allow for processing of branch distribution information, which will expedite the ordering and receipt of copies for multiple locations.

Both companies expect the new Polaris/Baker & Taylor interface to provide enhanced functionality for Polaris cus-

tomers. They can order directly from the book wholesaler using EDI. Polaris will support the latest version of EDI (4010) for ordering, order acknowledgement, and invoicing. In addition, Polaris customers will be able to import order-enhanced bibliographic records from Title Source II into Polaris for bulk creation of purchase orders. They can also have books delivered directly to branches, which will save time and resources.

Future plans for the two companies include development of an XML version of the Polaris/Baker & Taylor interface.

**Contact:** Gaylord Information Systems
www.gaylord.com

# All systems go @ your library™

Library Systems Newsletter delivers hard data
and innovative insights about the world of
library automation, every month.