



Library Systems

An innovative overview of library automation

50 East Huron Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611-2795, USA

Power protection is increasingly essential

An *Ernst & Young Business Continuity Study* has ascertained that power failures and surges account for 45% of computer data loss. Of the problems, 90% are brownout and surges, rather than failures. Lightning strikes, often mentioned by sellers of power conditioning equipment, are a minor factor. Brownouts and surges—even those lasting for less than a second—can create just enough disturbance for data to be lost.

Vendors of automated library systems increasingly require the configuration of an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) with a system if the contract is to include performance guarantees. Libraries with systems installed before an UPS became a requirement should retrofit their systems with a suitable UPS. For most libraries, the cost will be under \$2,000.

Power problems are not limited to the central site. PCs throughout a library are

also vulnerable. Each should also be protected, ideally by a network UPS because an effective UPS for a single-user PC tends to be priced at \$100 to \$200, and most network UPSs cost \$800 to \$2,000.

To size a UPS, read the nameplate or specifications for each component and write down the voltage and amperage, then multiply the two. For example, a PC usually is rated at 120 volts and 2.0 amps, therefore, the requirement is 240 VA; a monitor usually is rated at 120 volts and 1.0 amps, therefore the requirement is 120 VA. Add a 25% contingency to the figure to determine the total UPS capacity required; in this case the total is 450 VA.

Keep in mind the number of PCs on a local area network (LAN) is likely to increase over time, so consider adding a significant growth factor, such as 50% to 100%. ■



Information Today renames online meeting

Information Today, the sponsor of the National Online Meeting, has announced that it is renaming the 2001 meeting to InfoToday 2001 and adding two concurrent conferences under that name: KnowledgeNets 2001 and E-libraries 2001—the latter formerly known as IOLS.

The dates of InfoToday are May 15 to 17 and the venue is the New York Hilton and Towers.

Contact: Information Today, Inc.
tel. 800-300-9868 or 609-654-6266
www.infotoday.com

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Geac demonstrates new product

Geac gave a series of private demonstrations of its new Apollo product at the ALA Midwinter Meeting. Scheduled for general release in mid-2002, the client-server product will be the successor to both Advance and Plus. Platform independence will allow customers to choose almost any brand of server and any of several operating systems, including Oracle, Informix, UniVerse, Sybase, or Microsoft SQL. The product will be shown in prerelease in the company's booth at ALA in San Francisco this June.

Contact: Geac Computer Corp., Ltd.
tel. 800-825-2574
fax 800-759-0126
www.geac.com

Sun strengthens clustering software

Although Sun has been the most popular hardware platform for mid-size and large automated library systems, clustering several machines to function as one as effectively as Compaq Alpha and Hewlett-Packard has not been possible.

Sun has recently released SunCluster 3.0 cluster management software, which lets a system user add machines to achieve fault tolerance or to increase processing capacity without replacing existing equipment.

SunCluster 3.0 requires Solaris 8.0 as the operating system. ■

Ebsco adds dictionaries

Ebsco has added *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Ed.* and *The American Heritage Children's Dictionary* to several of its general reference databases for schools and public libraries. Overall, users will have access to 200,000 words and many in-depth notes on word usage.

Contact: Ebsco Publishing
tel. 800-653-2726
www.epnet.com

OCLC adds to FirstSearch electronic collections online

OCLC's online journals collection will grow to more than 3,000 titles within the next few weeks. The new additions come from Academic Press, Blackwell, Cambridge University Press, Kluwer Academic, Marcel Dekker, Plenum Publishing, and several other key publishers. Information about more than 64 new additions is available at www2.oclc.org/prg/oclc/fseco/publish.html.

Innovative adds 33 customers in 2nd half of 2000

Innovative Interfaces added 33 new customers between July and December 2000, including such diverse accounts as the SEALS Consortium (South Africa), Black Gold Cooperative Library System (Calif.), San Diego County Law Library, California Judicial Center Library, London Guildhall University (U.K.), Sacred Heart University

(Conn.), Feng Chia University (Taiwan), Istanbul Bilgi University (Turkey), National Accounting Institute (China), and the Waukegan (Ill.) Public Library.

Innovative added 38 new customers in the first six months of the year, bringing its annual total to 71.

Contact: Innovative Interfaces, Inc.
5850 Shellmound Way
Emeryville, CA 94608
tel. 800-878-6600
www.iii.com



DRA ANNOUNCES FY 2000 RESULTS

Data Research Associates (DRA) recently reported that its revenues for fourth quarter 2000 were \$7.9 million and its earnings were \$885,000, figures that compare with \$9 million and \$1.3 million respectively for the same quarter of the previous year. For all of 2000, revenues were \$28.3 million, compared with \$30 million for 1999. Earnings were \$1.9 million, compared with \$2.3 million in 1999.

The company forecast a stronger 2001 fiscal year because it will be actively

marketing its new Taos product. It expects not only a significant number of migrations from its existing customer base of more than 700, but also new name sales.

The company also announced that it is integrating netLibrary e-books with its Classic and Taos automated library systems. NetLibrary develops, archives, hosts, and distributes e-books through a variety of channels—

the latest several major vendors' automated library systems.

Contact: Data Research Associates, Inc.

tel. 800-325-0888 or

314-432-1100

fax 314-993-8927

www.dra.com



STANDARDS

V.92 standard for dial-up modems released

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has released the latest standard for 56 Kbps dial-up modems. The standard, designated V.92, offers faster upstream speed than earlier standards, quick-connect, and modem-on-hold features. Although the current standard, V.90, offers a maximum upstream data rate of 33.6 Kbps, V.92 is rated at 48 Kbps. This means faster uploading of files, including e-mail and graphics. Faster throughput also translates into shorter connect times.

Quick-connect shortens a modem's time to learn a phone line's characteristics by reusing some information previously learned. The modem-on-hold feature lets modems break a connection and stand by while another call is taken.

Any piece of equipment that supported V.90 should be able to support V.92. In most cases, V.90 modems can be upgraded to V.92 with software. ■

Wireless standards questions

Considerable confusion about 802.11b and Bluetooth wireless LAN standards exists. The former is the official standard of the IEEE, the primary standards setting body for data networking, and is designed for the transfer of large amounts of data over hundreds of feet. The latter is a *de facto* standard promoted by several vendors as a low-cost, low-power device for the transfer of small amounts of data over short distances—up to 10 meters (32.8 ft.). Both use the same broadcast band, so they can interfere with each other. The IEEE is preparing an addition to the 802.11b standard addressing the problem of data transmission collisions with Bluetooth.

Libraries wishing to implement wireless LANs should adopt IEEE 802.11b. They should advise patrons who bring laptops that Bluetooth does not work with the library's wireless LAN; in fact, it may interfere with it—at least until such time as the IEEE revises 802.11b to address data collisions with Bluetooth. Both IBM and Dell offer a choice of 802.11b and Bluetooth network interface cards (NICs) for their laptops. Most other manufacturers offer only one of them.

A small California-based company has recently introduced a NIC which supports both IEEE 802.11b and Bluetooth on a single chip. If larger competitors respond with similar products, laptops users may not be torn between standards. ■



SOFTWARE UPDATES

ELIAS releases Amicus v3.3

ELIAS, the Belgian-French company that was created to continue support of IBM's DOBIS/LIBIS product, and which subsequently developed a new product titled "Amicus," has announced the release of Version 3.3. The new release features an advanced acquisitions module, full Euro support, GUI enhancements, greater security provisions, and the ability to customize preloaded reports.

The company is now marketing its system throughout Europe. Its latest sale was to the National Szechenyi Library of Hungary—the national library of that country. The patron access catalog will be available not only in Hungarian, but also in English. The National Library of Australia and the British Library also purchased Amicus systems within the past two years. ELIAS wouldn't surprise many if it establishes a North American presence in the next two years, just as Ex Libris did after it became a major player in the European market.

Contact: ELIAS NV
Kapeldreef, B-3001
Leuven, Belgium
tel. (32) 16 298-390
www.elias.be

COMPANION releases version 5.42 of Alexandria

COMPANION has introduced the latest release of its Alexandria product for school libraries. The release includes circulation receipt printing, extended reservation capabilities, browsing of cataloging terms, and the ability to search the collection based on study program names such as Accelerated Reader and Reading Counts! for appropriate materials. Spanish language support has also been added.

The company's latest sales are to the Philadelphia Public Schools, the nation's fifth largest district by enrollment, and the Buffalo (N.Y.) Public Schools.

Contact: COMPANION Corp.
tel. 800-347-6439
fax 888-515-3993
www.companioncorp.com

Endeavor to **double** development staff

Endeavor Information Systems has announced it will double the size of its development staff in 2001, from 38 at the end of 2000, to 76 by the end of 2001. The addition of staff will allow the company to increase the pace of product development.

When all positions have been filled, Endeavor's development staff will rank fourth in size in the industry. At present, epixtech, DRA, and Innovative Interfaces have the largest development staffs in the industry.

Contact: Endeavor Information Systems
tel. 800-762-6300
www.endinfosys.com

Dell Drops Prices

A 24% decline in PC sales in 2000 and the recent introduction of the Pentium 4 have led Dell, a leading mail order supplier of PCs, to drop prices. The greatest bargains are the Dimension L desktops: an 800 MHz Intel Pentium III or a 600 MHz Intel Celeron. Prices start at \$699, including monitor.

Although Dell takes telephone orders, the best way to obtain information or place orders is online.

Contact: Dell
tel. 800-433-7301
www.dell4me.com

OCLC ISSUES ANNUAL REPORT

OCLC had another good year in 1999–2000. Its revenues were up 5% to \$153 million, due in large part to the fact that the number of participating libraries increased from 34,775 to 37,297. The participants added 2.7 million new cataloging records and 47 million new holdings to the WorldCat database. They also arranged 8.6 million interlibrary loans and

conducted 64.3 million FirstSearch searches.

The database is increasingly international. Fewer than 27 million of the more than 44 million records are in English. There are more than 2.6 million records in French, 2.5 million in German, 1.8 million in Spanish, and 860,000 in Japanese.

The report is available on the Web at www.oclc.org/oclc/ar2000/ar.html or in printed form by calling 614-798-5728. ■



TLC adds reader preference option and ITS.International

TLC has announced an agreement with RatingZone to use that company's online Quick Picks and Precision Guide. The former enables a library user to access the service through a library's patron access catalog and rate several books, music, and movies on a scale of 1 to 10, and then provides them with other titles they might appreciate. The latter is more comprehensive. Users register as members, rate about two dozen items, and receive suggested titles. Currently the service is tailored for adults and teens, but there are plans to extend the service to children.

ITS.International is a new cataloging tool that enables librarians to catalog library resources in virtually any language and then automatically generate the corresponding romanized text using a built-in, editable transliteration table. ITS.International takes advantage of UNICODE, an international standard for information exchange designed to support all the world's languages. To support UNICODE functionality, the product must be installed on Windows 2000.

Contact: TLC
tel. 800-624-0559
www.TLCdelivers.com

CAT 6 CAVEAT

Category 5 UTP (Unshielded Twister Pair) cabling has been the standard for networks for the last several years. There are IEEE standards for data transmission over CAT 5 of up to 1.0 GB per second. Nevertheless, some users with extraordinary bandwidth requirements prompted the industry to develop Cat 6 cable and the IEEE to begin drafting a standard. A few libraries, thinking that one should always go with the latest network products, have installed Cat 6, rather than Cat 5. Where those installations have been in new buildings, or in new building additions, there have been some serious problems.

The polyvinyl chloride jacket around Cat 6 cabling contains numerous holes that intentionally allow fire retardants to enter the cable. Unfortunately, the holes can also allow in water, which degrades the cable. Moisture in new buildings and building additions is common, including in the conduit, because the building is exposed to rain, condensation, ground water, and cleanup during construction.

Cross talk between cables has also been a problem with some Cat 6 installations.

Dampness causes no problem with Cat 5 cable; nor have there been serious problems with cross talk.

Cat 6 problems can be minimized by requiring the building contractor to dry out the conduits and cap the ends; the installer to check for moisture, the use of a spline to separate the cables, and caps at the ends of the conduits. Most importantly, libraries should retain an experienced data network installer, not an electrical or phone company. The consensus of network experts is that even with all these precautions, problems will continue, especially on the ground level and below grade if there is a high water table.

For the foregoing reasons, avoid Cat 6 cable until the problems have been resolved, an IEEE standard is in place, and installers are familiar with the technology.

Cat 5 and Cat 6 will likely coexist for years. ■

IBM BETS \$1 BILLION ON LINUX

IBM will spend \$1 billion on the development of Linux-based products in 2001. It will commit more than 1,500 analysts and programmers to the task of adding Linux as an option on all IBM hardware products, including top-of-the-line mainframes.

At the other end of the spectrum, Dell Computer Corp. has agreed to invest in Linux software maker Eazel, Inc., and to offer Linux on all its PCs and entry-level servers.

Although Linux has not had much of an impact on library automation, it is an operating system to watch. ■

Comparing printers made easy

To identify and compare the hundreds of available models, consult the *Low-Volume Printer Guide* and *The Mid-Volume Printer's Guide* from Better Buys for Business.

A low-volume printer is rated at 8 to 15 pages per minute; a mid-volume printer produces 16 to 49 pages per minute. For higher-end laser printers, consult a laser

printer specification guide from Buyers Laboratory.

Contact: Better Buys for Business
tel. 800-247-2185
www.betterbuys.com

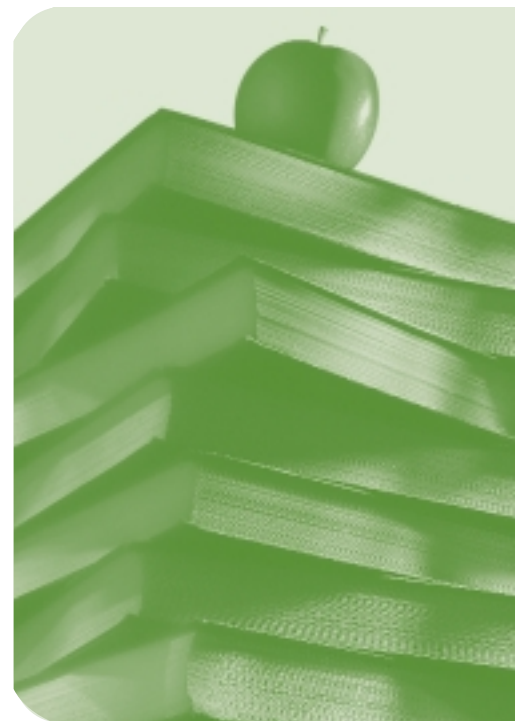
Buyers Laboratory
tel. 201-488-0404
www.buyerslab.com

VTLS packages Virtua as small system

VTLS has developed Virtua SLE (Small Library Edition) for libraries that require a system supporting fewer than 16 concurrent users, but seeking the same richness of functionality as larger libraries. Virtua SLE is designed to run on Intel machines using the Linux operating system and the Oracle database management system.

While the formal launch will be made on April 1, 2001, delivery may begin even earlier as only ISO testing remains to be completed.

Contact: VTLS
1701 Kraft Drive
Blacksburg, VA 24060
tel. 540-557-1200
www.vtls.com



Geac extends CRCnet to EUROPE

CRCnet, Geac's Internet access to its Customer Support Center in Boston, has been so well received in North America that the company plans to extend it to Advance and Plus users in the rest of the world. Northern European customers began using the service January 2001.

Not only can users place calls in the help desk system of CRC, but they can keep track of their help desk calls.

Contact: Geac Computers, Inc.
tel. 800-825-2574
fax 800-759-0126
www.geac.com

Follett and Sagebrush introduce accelerated reading services

Follett and Sagebrush, the two largest vendors of automated library systems for schools, have introduced competing accelerated reading services.

Follett has titled its service Find-a-Book. The patron access catalog now features an option to search for books associated with Accelerated Reader (AR), Reading Counts! (RC!) or Lexile Measures. A student simply clicks the AR, RC!, or Lexile button on the main search screen and enters search criteria such as subject and interest level. The program returns a list of titles that match the student's reading abilities. To take advantage of the new search function, a library must enhance its MARC records with information in the 526 MARC tag (for AR or RC!) or the 521 MARC tag (for Lexile Measures). Follett Software will add the information for a library or the records can be updated locally by a library's staff.

Sagebrush calls its service AchieveMARC. It works with either Accelerated Reader or Reading Counts! The company emphasizes it will not only add reading information to existing records but will also update existing data. A library need merely send the records via the Internet or on diskettes. Sagebrush will also provide spine labels to identify suitable materials at a glance.

Contact: Follett Software	Sagebrush
tel. 800-323-3397, ext. 7205	tel. 800-533-5430, ext. 2001
csentman@fsc.follett.com	info@sagebrushcorp.com

Best-Seller purchases ALS and changes name

Best-Seller, the French-Canadian vendor of automated library systems, has purchased ALS of the United Kingdom. ALS' strength is systems for public library consortia; Best-Seller's is small- to mid-size public and special libraries.

The name of the companies will be changed to BiblioMondo, with offices in Canada, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Contact: BiblioMondo
3300 Cote-Vertu, Suite 203
Ville St. Laurent, Quebec H4R 2B8 Canada
tel. 514-337-3000
www.bibliomondo.com

Office 10 Beta 2 released

The second beta release of Microsoft's Office 10 reached us in December. Unfortunately, it remains far from ready for general release. Among other deficiencies, the much-touted speech recognition feature cannot recognize basic text editing commands even after extensive training, eliminating almost all background noise, and replacing the PC microphone with a higher-quality model. If Microsoft has to issue a third beta release, the mid-2001 general release date may have to be set back by up to three months. ■

NISO standards online for free

All NISO standards are now available for downloading as PDFs at no charge from the National Information Standards Organization's Web site. From the homepage at www.niso.org, click the NISO Press icon, then click "standards, books, and software." Printed copies will continue to be available for sale.

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