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MINITEX ANNUAL REPORT

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This sixth annual report covers a most interesting year. During the last decade it has become increasingly clear that libraries can no longer function or plan in isolation. Witness the establishment of thousands of consortia and networks. Networks also soon found that every decision was dependent upon the plans and programs of others. This is especially true in three critical areas: technology, enlarged areas of responsibility, and standards.

Technology made many promises, some of them are magically coming true and offer great potential to solve problems that appear to be unmanageable manually. Others proved to be false, costly and have been forgotten. At every level, librarians have been struggling to meet their responsibilities to an enlarged community of users. As in other fields, library users are challenging their right to access to information resources. This demand for new and more services coincided with budgetary constraints caused by inflation and decreased funding. Inevitably, discussions focused on the need for national standards and the necessity for conformity.

However, multi-technical options frustrate decision making. New responsibilities require new funding patterns. And it is difficult if not impossible to conform to developing standards. As a result, it has been a decade of raising consciousness, gaining consensus, and making decisions in an unstructured and unstable environment. Fortunately during this past year several significant developments have taken place that give promise of a framework in which libraries and networks can constructively plan and work.

Without a doubt technology made its biggest impact through MARC, on-line cataloging and on-line searching. Library of Congress was responsible for MARC; on-line cataloging was primarily developed by the Ohio

College Library Center (OCLC), Stanford University, and the University of Chicago; and the private sector provided the leadership in on-line searching. OCLC uses MARC and is planning to provide access to on-line commercial data bases, and approximately 1,000 libraries are cooperatively cataloging and building a bibliographic data base of their holdings. Furthermore, conversations are beginning between Library of Congress, BALLOTS (Stanford), OCLC and the University of Chicago. Continuing cooperation with coordinated planning offers realistic hope for a national bibliographic data base.

The National Commission on Libraries and Information Sciences (NCLIS) published its report "Towards a National Program for Library and Information Services: Goals for Action". While it is not a perfect document, it does provide the framework for a national program for library and information services. The document provides the basic justification required to substantiate the need for a national program and for new federal legislation. The NCLIS report is based on five major assumptions.

1. The total library and information resources in the United States is a national resource which needs to be developed, strengthened, and organized and made available to the maximum degree possible in the public interest;
2. All people in the United States have the right, according to individual needs, to realistic and convenient access;
3. With the help of new technology and with national resolve, the disparate and discreet collections of recorded information can become an integrated national network;
4. The rights and interests of authors, publishers, and other providers of information be recognized in ways which will maintain their economic and competitive vitality;

5. Legislation devised for the coherent development of library and information services will not undermine constitutionally protected rights of personal privacy and intellectual freedom, and will preserve local, state and regional autonomy.

After nearly three years of planning, MIDLNET, a regional network including Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Wisconsin and the Dakotas gave indication of becoming a reality. (It was officially organized October 7, 1975). This area includes close to one-quarter of the nation's library resources. The network is organized as a partnership of state agencies, large resource libraries, and multi-type state networks. This is a new approach and recognizes the need for public, large academic and state networks to cooperatively work together on a regional basis.

Within the state considerable attention was given to drafting a "Plan for a Minnesota Library Network". The plan began with a goal based on some assumptions and acknowledges some guidelines. It identifies six basic components: a resources system, a bibliographic system, a communication system, a social system, a financial system and an administrative system. It obviously needs refinements and implementation, but the beginning articulation is significant.

Furthermore, not only were several of the public library regional library systems strengthened, but two new ones came into being: Traverse des Sioux (south central) and Plum Creek (southwestern). More Minnesotans have access to library service and many citizens have expanded service because they have joined an existing regional system. In the Mankato area, a multi-type library cooperative of academic, public, school, government and special libraries (SMILE) came into being. Subject libraries, such as the Twin Cities Biomedical Consortium (TCBC), Capitol <sup>Area</sup> Square libraries and the Consortium of the Faculty



of Seminary Libraries increased their cooperative activities. As participants of MINITEX, they had their serials holdings added to MULS. TCBC and the Seminary libraries produced a subset list of serials. Exploratory meetings were held with the Art Librarians (ARLIS) and the Law Librarians. Minnesota libraries are not in a static state.

In June at a meeting of the Council of Computing Library Networks (CCLN) the Library of Congress announced its plan for assuming increased national responsibility. Providing MARC, COMAR, Serials MARC, the "in-process file" and National Union Catalog on-line to networks is precisely what is needed. The first priority of LC is to the Congress; they are to be congratulated for taking this bibliographic leadership.

CONSER, the Cooperative North American Conversion of Serials began. With Council of Library Resources providing the leadership, and utilizing the OCLC on-line network, the MULS data base became the basic file. The national libraries of Canada and the United States, plus Yale, Cornell, SUNY and the University of California are adding their records in this massive undertaking.

All of these developments are of vital concern to MINITEX and will continue to affect its programs and services. They are helping to clarify for MINITEX its role and relationships to local (metropolitan or multi-county) and specialized subject consortia within the state. MIDLNET will provide a rational mechanism for MINITEX to interact nationally and internationally. A national system of on-line cataloging is a near reality, and standards are emerging.

It is difficult to remember networks are very new. In a short fifteen years, the concept of a network has developed into an integrated library network. Soon most libraries will be part of one or more networks. This

dramatic change has not been without trauma. Networks probably will alter the way many librarians function and therefore, they may frighten some librarians. Networks will probably change the way most patrons use their library and this may be upsetting. In all probability, networks will affect the way information is disseminated, stored and retrieved. This may threaten publishers.

A high point of the year was the signing of a contract between Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Commission and the State Library of North Dakota. Following the example of our Governor and the educational reciprocity agreements, both states agreed to share their library resources with each other. MINITEX further agreed to incorporate North Dakota serials into the MULS base and produce a North Dakota Union List of Serials. Recognizing the unequal resources and commitments, North Dakota made a cash settlement. This type of library agreement may be unique.

The reciprocal arrangement with Wisconsin continues to be mutually beneficial and deceptively simple. MINITEX supplied 3904 items and received 4106 items. So that we might fully utilize Wisconsin resources, Mary Rae Oxborrow spent a week in Madison. She discovered several collections that are proving useful. In the absence of bibliographic access, this appears to be a viable alternative.

It has been most rewarding to have these interstate arrangements. It has been a joy working with Wisconsin and North Dakota librarians.

#### PARTICIPANTS

There are 146 participants of MINITEX. The breakdown is:

- 63 academic
- 24 public
- 9 state agencies
- 34 hospitals
- 5 seminaries
- 3 special
- 2 federal
- 1 high school

3 North Dakota  
1 Wisconsin (WILS)  
1 Canadian (Lakehead University)

It is not known how many other libraries feed through these nodes, but they number in the hundreds.

#### SERVICES

The communication network is becoming more diverse. Sixty-seven libraries enter through 58 TWX machines, 13 of them are modified to DDD and utilize state WATS lines; 15 libraries enter through the MERITSS System (this will be transferred to the new MECC [Minnesota Education Computing Consortium] network in early August); 40 by courier and 24 by mail. The WATS line not only supports the reference service, but it is vital as a communication link between librarians. In order to reduce TWX costs and to eliminate the proliferation of terminals, an integrated communication system is essential.

During the year, 129,118 interlibrary requests were processed. 87.6% were filled; 82.84% were filled by photocopy, 17.16% by loans. 73.3% were processed in 24 hours; 79.7% were filled at the University of Minnesota TC campus libraries; 20.3% were referred to a secondary location.

If one adds those requests processed by consortia or networks within the state, it totals well over a quarter million; if one adds North Dakota and Wisconsin, there is almost half a million. Using available statistics, seven years ago there were approximately 20,000 interlibrary transactions in Minnesota annually.

One-fifth of the requests are filled at non-University locations. Verifying entries, locating copies, and either referring or retrieving is complex, costly and time consuming. Of necessity, MINITEX has become a bibliographic center. Using MULS; University card catalog; ACK (Alternative Card Catalog); CLIC Union Catalog; Hennepin County, Dakota County and



Minneapolis Public Branch book catalogs; University of Wisconsin microfilm card catalog and Union List of Serials; the Center for Research Libraries book catalog; and searching the Minneapolis Public and Minnesota Historical Society catalogs is standard procedure. In order to facilitate the sharing of resources, it is essential to develop a bibliographic data base of monographs and other information resources.

Without a doubt the highlight of the year was the publication of the five volume first edition of MULS. There are over 71,000 title entries, and it includes the holdings of 120 academic, public, governmental, medical, seminary and special libraries in over 200 locations. This was truly a cooperative effort. It simply could not have been done without the support and extra work of countless Minnesota serials librarians who submitted the data about their libraries. The editorial staff did an outstanding job in a most dedicated fashion, and obviously it would have been impossible without their systems staff. It is truly an amazing accomplishment. As a by-product, most local libraries have improved serials records and the user is better served. If his local library does not own a needed item, the user can either go to a holding library or have it secured for him. If he has a choice of citations, he can select from items available in Minnesota.

Serial subsets were produced for the seminary libraries and the Twin Cities Biomedical Consortium. As part of the North Dakota contract, work was begun on building a North Dakota Union List of Serials through MULS.

MULS also became a major participant in CONSER. It was a singular honor to be selected as the foundation data base of the National Conversion of Serials project. This assures that MULS will participate in and be consistent with national developments.

Information needs that cannot be met with local library or community information resources may be transmitted by a toll free call to MINITEX. The resources of the University and other metropolitan libraries and agencies are utilized and long distance phone calls are placed when necessary to help provide answers to reference questions, usually within 24 hours. Patrons in local libraries may speak directly with a MINITEX reference librarian or their librarians may call for them. Answers are either telephoned, or mailed to the local library. The service provides an opportunity for professional consultation among librarians when searching for sources of information. Telecommunications can break down geographic barriers and any reference librarian may discuss search strategies with colleagues. A community of libraries is developing and no librarians need feel isolated or alone.

Working with advanced graduate library school students, 861 questions were answered; 325 from public libraries, 475 from academic, 42 from state agencies, 5 from AVTI's; 5 from seminaries and 8 from medical libraries. Approximately the same number of reference assists (suggestions of where to look for information) were given.

The Reference Workshops have been planned to provide a continuing education experience for reference librarians from MINITEX participating libraries. Five or six librarians from the same geographical area spend a week becoming acquainted with available resources (3/4 of Minnesota library resources are located in the Twin Cities metropolitan area). They also have the opportunity to examine new and expensive reference tools, try on-line searching and visit the periodicals exchange program and MULS. Visits to some 20 metropolitan libraries dramatically shows different approaches to library philosophy, organization and service.



Spending a week with local counterparts and meeting many metropolitan colleagues frequently leads to the exchange of ideas. This is proving to be an invaluable experience for the MINITEX staff. We are getting suggestions for improved procedures; we are all learning to interact with others. We believe this will be useful in helping us to trust one another and make change easier. Five out-state groups from Moorhead/Fargo; Mankato/St. Peter; St. Cloud/Collegeville/St. Joseph; Bemidji/Southwest/Morris; Austin/Rochester/Waseca participated in week-long seminars. Seven mini groups were held with metropolitan librarians. Over 120 librarians participated.

The prerequisites for a collection development program are a viable sharing system, bibliographic knowledge of ownership and documented usage patterns. With the development of MULS, the way has been cleared for such a program in serials, and some of the serials librarians are meeting together in monthly conference calls to coordinate new subscriptions, withdrawals and cancellations. They attempt to evaluate the need for new titles, to determine how many copies are needed and to assign responsibility for its binding and retention. Budget constraints have caused many institutions to undertake a serious serials review. A number of cancellations have resulted. It has been a very frustrating year for serials librarians. In the periodical exchange program, 10,068 missing issues were provided.

Librarians who need to search large data bases by computer and do not have the required equipment or the trained professional staff are asking MINITEX for assistance. MINITEX staff will either conduct the search or make arrangements for the search to be conducted by skilled University staff.

#### NEEDS

The goal of any library is to provide bibliographic and physical access to needed resources. There is no doubt that users are best served when

their information needs are met locally. Finite resources and inequitable distribution constrain most libraries and consequently users suffer. Cooperative use of resources and economies of scale justify networks such as MINITEX. As a facilitator and facilitating agent MINITEX has a major responsibility to provide local libraries opportunities to function in a more effective and efficient manner. Therefore, it is incumbent to constantly evaluate its programs and services.

There are four urgent needs in the Minnesota library community.

1. In order to provide maximum utilization of existing resources and reduce local processing costs, it is essential to begin an integrated and coordinated on-line bibliographic data base in Minnesota that interfaces with existing and developing national data bases.
2. In order to reduce accelerating telecommunications costs, it is critical to develop an integrated communication system. Instead of separate terminals for requesting services, transmitting bibliographic data and searching large files, one integrated terminal should be adequate. In addition to improving technical interfacing between systems, attention needs to be given to bulk purchasing of telecommunication services and sharing facilities when appropriate.
3. While a pre-Copernicum stance tends to delude every age into preoccupation with its problem intensity, there is little doubt that the work of the professional librarian is rapidly changing. In order for libraries to fulfill their new and demanding responsibilities and to function productively with ease, serious attention must be given to their continuing education and training for assignment in positions utilizing new technologies and information resources.

4. When 146 libraries attempt to share their physical and human resources in a period of fluid development, there are demanding communication requirements. While the library community constantly deals with information overload, there is an urgent need for regular communication. We need a newsletter for information exchange, procedures updates and input.

Finding solutions will require cooperative planning and implementation. This is people. While technology will be needed, it is people who identify needs, suggest solutions, secure the necessary resources and provide the service. MINITEX is fortunate to work with thousands of concerned and service-oriented librarians in Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin. Other networks have been generous with their time, counsel and resources. MINITEX staff is grateful for the opportunity to work in the exciting field. The enthusiastic and energetic staff provide the services and programs.