AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION WINTER CONFERENCE.
TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 1990
NOTES ON TWO MEETINGS.
B. Heath. 1-22-90.

Association for Library Collections and Technical Services. Resources Section. Acquisitions Librarians/Vendors of Library Materials Discussion Group.

Participants: Bonnie Postlethwaite (LINX-Faxon); Marilyn Northsted (head cataloger, Virginia Technological University); Rebecca Lenzini (CARL Systems, Inc.)

This meeting centered around the issue of a National Publication Pattern Database (for serials). Bonnie had made the proposal a year ago at another ALA meeting. The purpose of this proposal is to establish a national database of publication patterns which would then be linked to individual serial titles, enabling every library to have access to this information without having to key it in individually (kind of like sharing the OCLC bibliographic database). This database would be very useful because of the enormous time-saving aspects, and it would be useful for the obvious reasons: predicting dates of publication so that unnecessary claims were not sent out, predicting binding patterns, helping in establishing bibliographic identification in the case of the same title with different publication patterns, and, of course, the ability to put this information into online catalogs and circulation systems.

The issues involved are: 1) timeliness: libraries can't really wait for this information because they need it now; 2) quality control: who is the authority on this type of information? 3) it would take an enormous amount of storage; 4) how would the data be distributed? 5) who could even begin to handle this type of database building?

It was suggested that CONSER and the bibliographic utilities need to back this kind of database before it could get off the ground. Virginia Tech. Library said they would be willing to help maintain such an entity on the national level, but they couldn't afford to contribute to its creation. We need a CONSER-like structure to build the database, but it would need more timeliness than CONSER presently affords to be useful. A further suggestion was that a knowledgeable ALA taskforce be appointed to develop this idea; that people who worked with this information on the detailed level be appointed to it, not people who would bring only a theoretical approach to the problem.

The woman from CARL responded that this pattern database is an excellent idea: how to implement is the question. A suggestion was made that pressure be put on library deans and directors to support this idea by emphasizing the resource-sharing aspects of it.

Questions were raised about automatic claiming, and a discussion centered around the fact that, with the advent of NOTIS and other automated systems, serial vendors are inundated with so many claims that they can't possibly respond to all of them. This is apparently a real crisis, and having publication patterns in a national database could help. The question was further raised about what LC's role in this database should be.

NOTIS Acquisitions Special Interest Group meeting.

A number of speakers presented material at this meeting.

Jerry Ginsburg from NOTIS talked about "enhancements" (some of them are <u>not</u> enhancements, in my opinion) to the Acquisitions module in release 5.0, which should come out in the fourth quarter of 1990. The main changes are: 1) the report writer (i.e., management reporting capabilities); 2) changes to the invoice record; e.g., the fiscal year will now appear in the payment statement, and the vendor's invoice number can now contain 20 digits; 3) OPR change; <u>there will be no vendor's invoice number on the OPR itself.</u> This is a major, extremely inconvenient, change, and I said so in the meeting. Every time a vendor's financial statement is checked, there will have to be a second look-up to get to the NOTIS invoice, which will then give you the vendor's invoice number. NOTIS needs to know that this is a real step back, not an enhancement; 4) there will be unlimited XC codes on each fund record; 5) there will now be an audit trail for changes to fund allocations.

Other new developments center around the fiscal year closing, and do not really affect us because of the program George has written to handle ours. Some of the by-products will be various management reports available: list of active funds with commitments, list of open orders, detailed list of cancelled orders, and others.

All of the above information, and much more, will be appearing in NOTISes, perhaps the February or March issue.

Marge Axman talked about the planning meeting for the fall NUGM, which will be held October 24-25. Special Interest Groups will now have input into NUGMs. Some of the topics suggested were 1) GTO (a no-conflict session); 2) workflow; 3) in-depth discussion of 5.0 enhancements; 4) exchange of machine-readable data; 5) VITLS; 6) informal session during which new users could talk with experienced users; 7) MFHL; 8) bindery control.

It was reported that the Acquisitions manual for 4.6 is now available.

Dorothy Marcinko, head of Acquisitions at Auburn, spoke next about changes in release 4.6 that they don't like. In general, she asked the question "Why are changes made to aspects of the system that work well?" A couple of inconvenient and annoying changes are the fact that the ADate in the order line has been moved toward the center of the line rather than hanging out in the right-hand margin. It is much more difficult to spot these dates now when doing claims or taking other action. Another change that is irritating to people doing payments is the need to clear the invoice screen before calling up the OPR. (Formerly one could just key in the command at the top of the screen.) Again, this is not a major problem, but one that requires extra key strokes for no apparent gain. The response was that this "enhancement" is really a bug in the program that will be fixed in release 5.0.

Three points were brought out in the discussion after the presentations: 1) we badly need the ability to search the database by <u>vendor's</u> invoice number; 2) we need more subtotalling options for expenditures, and we need the ability to see this information online, not just on printed reports; and 3) the XC categories need to be interactive with commitments, not just with expenditures as is now the case.

There were questions raised during this meeting about the NOTIS printed voucher, and I was able to describe our experience with customizing the voucher. Dorothy Marcinko asked for a sample of what we had, which I mailed to her upon my return.