



## Automated Services Committee

July 24, 2007

MINUTES

### PRESENT

Voting: Tim Burke (APLM), Nancy Pieri (BETH), Joe Makowiec (BRUN), Deb Canzano (COHS), Richard Naylor (COLN), Debbie Shoup (EGRN), Barbara Nichols Randall (GUIL), Paul Hicok (Troy), Joe Thornton (UHLS), Gail Sacco (VOOR)

Nonvoting: Margaret Garrett (GUIL)

9:00 AM Meeting called to order by Philip Ritter, Chair

### I. Minutes

Minutes of the May 22, 2007, meeting accepted as presented.

**(NOTE: See the Automation Services Report that begins on page 7 for more information. The following deals only with those issues where there was significant discussion and where the ASC took some kind of action.)**

### II. ASC voting by email

P. Ritter noted that since the ASC is a Committee of the Board of Trustees, it is bound by the same regulations as the Board. This means that, according to the Open Meeting Laws, voting by email is "inconsistent with the law," and therefore cannot be done. If immediate action is required on something, an emergency meeting can be called to discuss the problem.

### III. Cataloger recommendation from Database Maintenance Advisory Council

J. Thornton distributed a written recommendation from the DMAC requesting that UHLS consider hiring a cataloger. He explained that he had asked someone from the Council to attend to better explain their position. Since no one volunteered, he presented the request.

He then reviewed the situation from the UHLS point of view:

- UHLS has an agreement with MaryEllen Bena for part-time cataloging consulting. M. Bena retired from UHLS because there was not enough cataloging work to keep her busy. As a consultant, she is only needed about 10 hrs per month or less.
- We have an agreement with CDLC to whom UHLS can send any items that need original cataloging.
- UHLS subscribes to CatExpress for the use of the member libraries in cataloging.
- Rob Carle's job responsibilities have changed slightly to include about 10 hours per week of cataloging using CatExpress (that is all the time that is necessary)

In order to maintain quality control of the database, the following actions have been taken:

- UHLS has a semi-annual authority control processing of the database
- a report has been created to monitor the 245 subfield h in the newly created records
- UHLS can identify the libraries where consistent cataloging errors take place and R. Carle goes out and re-trains the staff involved in the cataloging
- the members of the Database Advisory Council are urged to report specific problems to the UHLS Automation staff
- patrons who encounter problems with the database are urged to report them to either the local library staff or the UHLS Automation staff. M. Garrett mentioned that there used to be an online form to report database problems but the form disappeared when Horizon opened. J. Thornton will check into putting up a similar form.

B. Nichols Randall noted that one of the complaints that she has heard is that there is no one at UHLS to whom a cataloging question can be directed. J. Thornton responded that it can be directed to R. Carle or to himself. If, for some reason, they are not able to answer it, they have sources to whom they can easily turn and get a response. Those sources include Maggie Horn at SUNY, MaryEllen Bena, cataloging staff at CDLC, and the listserv for the Database Maintenance Advisory Council.

B. Nichols Randall noted that when one problem is found, the UHLS staff member correcting it should know to follow up on that problem, not to deal with it one-at-a-time, but to recognize that it is possibly symptomatic of similar problems. Someone needs to follow-up at all times to make sure that the correct cataloging procedures are continually being used. This is not a committee level oversight, but a UHLS staff-level oversight. Bad cataloging keeps books and other items from being found by patrons in the database. She would like to see a plan to clean-up the database and then a plan to over see it.

G. Sacco suggested that maybe R. Carle should be offered more specialized training in cataloging in order to provide that oversight. She noted that the libraries said that they wanted more control over cataloging and were given that... now they are saying that they want a UHLS staff member to have more oversight control. J. Thornton noted that R. Carle has asked for, and been given, more training.

N. Pieri reminded the Committee that there was a time when people had to be approved by UHLS before they were given the right to enter cataloging information into the database. However, it is possible that the accuracy of the

database is not totally at fault but that the searching procedure is not as good as it should be. Hiring a cataloger is a knee-jerk reaction on the part of people who are not satisfied with the searching procedures and results. J. Makowiec agreed with N. Pieri.

G. Sacco wondered if UHLS should require mandatory training before people can enter cataloging information into the database? Would this help with quality control? J. Thornton responded that UHLS cannot control everything that goes into the database and we must be willing to accept some imperfections due to simple human error even on the part of the people who are experienced catalogers.

T. Burke noted that we are talking about two different problems: a cataloging situation and a database maintenance situation. He felt that there were a couple of solutions: modify R. Carle's job description to include database maintenance duties; and give the System the authority to do something about the cataloging errors that are found.

D. Canzano noted that the database is not perfect, but that it is not bad. She felt that the turnaround time for UHLS to catalog items was pretty quick and that the statement in the information from the Advisory Council was not correct. She said that any cataloging questions that have been directed to Rob have been answered - either he knows the answer or he can find it quickly.

Discussion regarding the process for dealing with recommendations from the Advisory Council. N. Pieri objected to the Advisory Councils driving the work of the ASC; she did not feel that it was necessary to respond to their recommendation. She felt that the material from the Database Maintenance Advisory Council was hyperbole and did not offer specific examples of the problems that they claimed to exist.

Several motions were made and withdrawn in an attempt to define the problem. Is it bad records? Or is it a search engine problem? Or a combination of both?

**MOTION:** R. Naylor moved that as a first step, to define the problem, UHLS should put a staff member in charge of researching and answering the question - what are the problems in the database that lead to poor searching results? This person should do some independent research on the database. This person should contact Maggie Horn and ask her what are some of the typical database problems and then should test to find out if those problems exist in the UHLS database. B. Nichols Randall seconded. 9 approved, 1 opposed, MOTION CARRIED.

**MOTION:** T. Burke moved that the ASC recognizes that there are problems resulting in poor service and searches in the database but the ASC does not think that hiring a cataloger at this time will be the answer. N. Pieri seconded. Unanimous.

J. Thornton will put a form on the Internet that will make it easy to report specific database problems.

#### **IV. Database clean-up: Marcive**

**MOTION:** B. Nichols Randall moved that UHLS should investigate and get quotes from vendors able to do the database clean-up and present an analysis of the problems that they find. The results of the investigation should be reported at the September 25<sup>th</sup> ASC meeting. G. Sacco seconded. Unanimous.

The Directors Association recommended allocating \$50,000 of the supplemental State aid for this project. B. Nichols Randall feels that the costs will not be that high, J. Thornton noted that the Directors Association should have done a little more research before proposing that figure.

#### **V. AquaBrowser**

Discussion regarding the value of AquaBrowser in making the database searches more effective. J. Thornton spoke with staff members at the Onondaga System who told him that their patrons prefer it for searching but that the staff are neutral.

N. Pieri noted that this would seem to be the most practical application of the supplemental state aid since it would benefit all of the libraries equally. She is very supportive of the purchase of AquaBrowser.

J. Thornton mentioned the value of worldcat.org.

**MOTION:** N. Pieri moved that UHLS should purchase AquaBrowser and WebFeat with the supplemental state aid. If this money is used for this purchase, adjustments can be made in the proposed expenditures when it is presented to the Board. J. Makowiec seconded. Further discussion. The exact cost of AquaBrowser and the necessary accessories could not be determined.

N. Pieri and J. Makowiec agreed to table the motion until the September meeting pending information about the full costs.

## **VI. Terminal Services**

J. Thornton reported that there is a way to speed up the local computers by taking the processing away from the individual workstations and putting it onto a UHLS server. D. Canzano reported that Cohoes is currently experimenting with terminal services and it has made a big difference in the speed of their computers.

J. Thornton asked for \$7,500 from the automation reserve account to purchase a \$5,000 server, a new UPS back-up and funds to subsidize replacing the Epson receipt printers that are in use in some of the libraries.

**MOTION:** P. Hicok moved to recommend that the Board approve the use of up to \$7,500 to purchase the server and necessary accessories. D. Canzano seconded. 9 approved, 1 opposed, MOTION CARRIED.

## **VII. Patron PINs**

**MOTION:** D. Canzano moved that J. Thornton should create and run a script to add PINs for patrons with telephone numbers but whose PIN box was never completed in their registration. J. Thornton seconded. 8 approved, 2 opposed, MOTION CARRIED.

## **VIII. Emergency contact**

J. Thornton reminded Committee members to remind their staff to periodically check their email during the day because this is one of the methods used to notify the libraries if there are any emergencies, problems, power outages, etc.

Discussion regarding battery backup for Horizon. J. Thornton reported that at this time we only have about 30 minutes of battery backup. Some time ago, the ASC recommended the purchase of 2 hours worth of battery backup. J. Thornton will pursue this, get new figures, and report at the September meeting.

## **IX. UHLAN Agreement 2009-2011**

P. Ritter distributed drafts of the UHLAN Agreement 2009-2011. The Agreement will be on the agenda for discussion and approval at the September ASC meeting so that it can go onto the UHLS Board for discussion and approval before the end of the year. He also distributed a chart showing how the total UHLAN cost was estimated. He pointed out that the increase in fees will be very minimal since the total UHLAN cost from 2008 to 2009 only increased by under \$3,000. The costs for 2010 and 2011 are projected with a 3% increase. The UHLAN costs are based on the current staff configuration and with the current equipment.

P. Ritter urged people to call himself or J. Thornton with any questions about the

Agreement. He would like to answer most of the questions prior to the September meeting. A draft of the UHLAN Agreement will be placed under the "What's New" section on the UHLS intranet.

**X. Other Business**

D. Shoup wanted the creation of a subcommittee to investigate alternative automation systems and to explore all options.

By consensus, a MIGRATION PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE was formed consisting of: J. Thornton; D. Shoup; B. Nichols Randall; G. Sacco; M. Middleton; and G. Kirkpatrick. J. Thornton will call the first meeting.

11:45 adjourned.

**AUGUST ASC MEETING HAS BEEN CANCELLED**  
**NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, September 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM**

Heidi A. Fuge  
7/25/07

## **Automation Services Report**

### **July 24, 2007**

#### **System slowness**

We continue to receive sporadic reports of system slowness. We continually monitor use of system resources with this report: <https://horizon.uhls.lib.ny.us/reports/system.html> Also, we setup a VNC connection to a circulation workstation at GUIL so we can observe response time during the day. We have also asked SirsiDynix to look at our *Sybase* (database management system) parameters to see if we can fine tune them to improve performance. They gave us a suggestion (to increase a setting from 10 to 2000), which we did in increments of 200 over several weeks. We have not yet seen an obvious positive or negative effect of this change.

Several times in the past two months the system slowed almost to a stop. The report we use to watch system activity (<https://horizon.uhls.lib.ny.us/reports/system.html>) did not show anything extraordinary. By looking at our router log, however, we saw that there was a lot of suspicious traffic coming from PC's in four of our libraries. It turned out that the PC's were infected with a virus or some sort of malware that was flooding our network, probably with a DDOS (distributed denial of service) attack. We notified the libraries, who reacted very quickly to find and clean (or shutdown) the problem machines. However, because the problem happened several times, and sometimes with the same machines, we do not consider the problem solved. We're confident that we can find and fix problems when they occur, but we need to prevent them from occurring in the first place.

#### **Terminal Services**

Most of the reports of serious system slowness come in the afternoons and usually from smaller libraries. However, spring break was a problem-filled week (not just in the afternoons), and we've had some reports since the school year ended that things are slow all day, which would indicate that the problem is network/teenager related.

We have strong evidence that using Terminal Services would improve response time significantly for many of our libraries. Briefly, what Terminal Services would do for us is move circulation processing from the PC's at your Circulation Desks to a large server at UHLS. Your Horizon client would look almost identical to what you see now, but your workstations would effectively become "dumb terminals" while the UHLS server did all the work. This would greatly reduce the amount of network traffic between you and UHLS, and thereby speed things up.

In order to provide this service, though, we would have to purchase a new server, and we don't have enough money in this year's hardware budget. Because poor response time is such a big problem for many of the libraries, and because we feel strongly that Terminal Services would help greatly, we're asking ASC to approve the use of \$7,500 from the Automation Reserve fund to pay for the server and related UPS.

At this time nine libraries use Terminal Services, including COHS and SNLK, which started using it during the last severe slowdown.

### **ASC voting by email**

The *Terminal Services* (really, system slowness) issue above had some urgency, and I had asked if ASC would/could vote by email. The responses I received were all in favor of the Terminal Services proposal, but less than a majority of ASC responded, so we decided to wait for a meeting to hold the vote.

But this situation raised the question of voting by email, which I'd like to pursue.

### **APLN closing**

- We changed the pickup location from APLN to APLP for all requests with a pickup location of APLN.
- We emailed all patrons with email addresses who were affected by this change.
- We generated mailing labels and mailed 77 notices on UHLS letterhead to the patrons without email addresses who were affected by this change.
- Before the closing, we removed APLN as a pickup location in the HIP, and put a notice there to inform requesters.
- We wrote a report (<https://horizon.uhls.lib.ny.us/reports/apln.html>) for APL staff to use to see which libraries APLN patrons are using since the closing.

### **UHLS Cataloger**

The Database Maintenance Advisory Council is asking ASC to consider hiring a cataloger to work at UHLS for the reasons listed in the attached document: *why\_we\_need\_cataloger.doc*. Also attached are comments from Database Maintenance Advisory Council members (*why\_we\_need\_cataloger\_comments.doc*), and a list of database problems sent at our request by the libraries' staffs (*why\_we\_need\_cataloger\_problems.doc*).

### **Serials Summary Holdings**

CDLC is updating their Union List of Serials and will use the Serials Summary Holdings reports on the web reports page (<https://horizon.uhls.lib.ny.us/reports/>) to update our holdings. We've asked all the libraries to check their holdings on this report and send any corrections to UHLS by email (to [jthornton@uhls.lib.ny.us](mailto:jthornton@uhls.lib.ny.us)), paper, or any other means.

### Authority control

On Sunday 7/15 we imported our semiannual authority control files from LTI:

	Added	Overlaid
Children's	1	1
Names	1435	5620
Subjects	80	663
Changed bib records	0	6312

### Patron PINs

We discovered that some patrons have no PIN in their records. We could correct this with a script by copying the last four digits of their phone numbers to their PIN's.

For all patrons in the database: 9398/224246 (4.2%) have no PIN.

For all non-expired patrons: 6014/162545 (3.7%) have no PIN

### Sporadic HIP problems

We had two instances of corrupt indexes on the HIP, indicated by spurious results from keyword searches. We don't know the cause, but the cure requires that we run the mass indexer to completely rebuild the index. This takes almost four hours to complete and so is pretty disruptive. We'll try to minimize the downtime from these unpredictable events by running the mass indexer in the background once a week.

### New reports

We added three reports to the web reports page (<https://horizon.uhls.lib.ny.us/reports/>):

- Most Requested Items (past 7 days)
- Most Requested Items (past 30 days)
- Most Requested Items (past 365 days)

They're self-explanatory.

### Database access problem

We worked with the vendor to solve a problem with accessing *Children's Literature Comprehensive Database*, which was inaccessible from outside our network for several days.

### **Email your patrons (with an attachment)**

As part of an incipient TROY project, we developed a way to send an email, including an attachment such as a *MS Word* document, to every patron who has an email address in the system.

### **'New items' lists**

As we decided at the last ASC meeting, the "new items" lists (<http://horizon.uhls.lib.ny.us/newitems/>) are now sorted by call number instead of title.

The lists for "All libraries" are still sorted by title because there are no call numbers in the displays, since call numbers are local.

### **Mail server upgrade**

We upgraded the mail server software, the most obvious result of which was the handling of spam. We tweak this constantly to try to manage the enormous and growing volume of spam sent through our system.

### **'Large print' limit**

We added a 'Large Print' limit to the Advanced Search screen in the HIP. This was a struggle, for us and SirsiDynix. Next we'll add limits for 'Downloadable audiobook' and 'Downloadable e-book.'

### **Newcats**

There are no longer any NEWCAT records in the database. Thanks to you all for cleaning these up.