Integrating Vendor Products/Services into the Automated Acquisitions Environment: An Introduction

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The ALCTS Automated Acquisitions/In-Process Control Systems Discussion Group 1994 annual meeting took place in Miami Beach. The author wanted this meeting to focus on a very timely issue and to provide a forum in which the audience could interact with the discussion leaders on a topic guaranteed to affect many of the participants in the near future. For that reason, the topic "Integrating Vendor Products/Services Into the Automated Acquisitions Environment" was selected.

With the development and implementation of automated acquisitions systems, the role of the vendor is becoming increasingly important. This is evident as more and more vendor products are developed and integrated into library procedures. Libraries are entering into a period when the vendor's role in the local automated environment is changing. The subsequent effect of these changes on daily workflow is affected as well.

The first speaker, Elizabeth Parang, Head Serials Librarian at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, discussed how her library makes use of the Internet in their daily acquisitions procedures. E-mail, remote login to Blackwell's CONNECT and Yankee Book Peddler's FOLIO, ftp of their approval records, and professional development uses of the Internet were discussed. Connection to these resources through the Internet has altered workflow dramatically as staff members are intensively trained in how to incorporate these products into their daily procedures.

The discussion then focused on a very key topic, namely PromptCat, a product that sets a library's holding symbol on OCLC at the time the library receives a title on their approval plan. An exploration of Michigan State University's pilot project with OCLC's PromptCat and Yankee Book Peddler was given by Kay Granskog, Head of Firm Order Acquisitions at MSU, and Marda Johnson, Manager of the Product Implementation Department at OCLC. Both Granskog and Johnson were asked to give an overall synopsis of how PromptCat works and then discuss its affect on workflow and its implications for the future.

Granskog began her discussion by indicating to the audience why MSU felt a need for PromptCat - namely, a good number of uncataloged pockets exist at the library. She then focused on the steps involved in setting up this pilot project and discussed the two different phases of the test. She gave detailed information on the project itself and how PromptCat operates. She was extremely informative and the audience appreciated both her approach to the topic and the level of detail presented. Johnson then discussed PromptCat from OCLC's perspective. She discussed the reason for the prototype and the service requirements needed to make it work, namely timeliness, record selection issues, record matching issues, pass-through implementation and reporting capabilities. Johnson focused a bit on the future marketing plans of OCLC for this

product. She detailed the fields in which PromptCat matches the OCLC record to the record supplied by Yankee Book Peddler. She also gave statistics on the results of their pilot project with Michigan State University.

Audience interaction with the discussion leaders was good. There is much interest in this topic, and that was evident from the types and number of questions asked. The audience came away with not only some very practical information on this future resource, but with a good idea of what the future might hold in store for technical service procedures and workflow. The text of Granskog's and Marda Johnson's presentations follow.