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Chaos-Scanning the Bar Code on Serials

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where currently much depends on server/network architecture, which publishers are involved, how the journals are accessed through an OPAC (for example) and the time involved to do the processing and analysis of the transaction logs.

A recent request on one of the list-servs in the UK just about sums up the current situation (the names have been changed to protect the innocent):

"Here at **University A** a small working group made up of Library Services staff is considering how best to take forward our e-journals policy. There has been a considerable element up until now of 'wait and see,' and it may be that we are not alone in this. We are reluctant at the moment to go for electronic only, not least because of problems over archiving and access for users who are not academic staff or students."

"In common with other institutions, we are now faced with increasing costs combined with continuing demand from users. We should like to find out how other institutions are tackling this dilemma.

- Have you conducted any formal surveys amongst your users?

- Are extra funds being made available? If so, has this policy been driven by library staff or by library users?

- If extra funds are not forthcoming, are you re-distributing your existing budget? If so, which areas are being squeezed?"

It is not just academic libraries that are concerned with these questions, but also major corporate and public libraries, publishers and subscription agents. But probably not authors! I am writing this column at the end of 1999, and you are reading it at the beginning of 2000. By the end of the year ahead we may be in a better position to answer these questions, and just as important start to understand what the impact of the answers is going to be on all the participants in the long chain from author to reader. In the meantime I hope that you have found something of interest from time to time in this column. 🍀

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Chaos — Scanning the Bar Code on Serials

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At the November 19, 1999 meeting of **Book And Serial Industry Communications (BASIC)**, a result of the merger of the **Book and Serial Industry Systems Advisory Committees — BISAC and SISAC**, a noted bar code film master manufacturer reported that a major serial publisher had questioned the utility of printing the **SISAC Bar Code Symbol** on their journals. In an attempt to document the need for that bar code, I sent a message out on Serialst on November 21, asking those scanning the bar code to say so. The following is a summary of the responses.

Librarians told us that the following American ILS systems CAN scan the SISAC Bar Code Symbol: **ExLibris; Horizon; Innopac; Innovative's Millennium Serials; NOTIS; and SIRSI's Stilas**. We also were told that the Pica system in Germany can do so. We hope that this prompts the other ILS vendors to provide this capability as well.

Elna L. Saxton, Head, Periodical Services Department at University of Cincinnati Libraries said, "I recently found that in a sample of 925 periodicals, 32% had a SISAC bar code," a fact we did not know before. Thanks, Elna.

Comments in support of the benefits of scanning include the following: "Not all titles have it, but we appreciate it when it's there." **Nancy Cadmus**, Serials Assistant, Grinnell College Library.

"I use them when they are available, it makes checking in a breeze. I wish more publishers would use them. If there is anything else that can be done to help influ-

ence publishers to use them, please let me know." **Deej Baker**, Periodicals Coordinator, Alderman Library, **University of Virginia**.

"We'd *love* to have this functionality, and are looking for it as we search for a new ILS. Please tell this publisher to keep those bar codes on there!" **Kim Maxwell**, Serials Acquisitions Librarian, **MIT Libraries**.

"At **University of California, San Diego** we are upgrading to a new system with the capability to scan SISAC codes. Wouldn't it be tragic if we acquired a system with that capability just as it disappears?" **Crystal Graham**, Head, Digital Information & Serials Cataloging and Serials Librarian, **University of California, San Diego**.

"I asked the two women who check in all of our serials what they thought and they were aghast that it would be removed. They really like it and makes checking in so much easier." **Susan Mueller**, Director of Technical Services, **The University of Montana, Mansfield Library**.

"It speeds up our processing and we really like using them. We wish more of our journal publications used SISAC codes!" **Sharon Wiles-Young**, Team Leader for Information Organization, **Linderman Library, Lehigh University**.

My thanks to all of those quoted above and the others whose support for the bar codes have resolved the question of their utility and convinced the journal publisher to keep them on their serials in the future! 🍀