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Southern Oregon University and Rogue Community College Libraries:

Partners in Access

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Having seen the growing success of the Orbis Borrowing feature and knowing of a similar "request" feature available in the SOU Library Catalog, Sue Burkholder, Southern Oregon University Library Director, convened a SOU Library Materials Delivery Workgroup. Its charge was to develop and implement a materials delivery system whereby RCC and SOU students enrolled in credit courses along with RCC faculty and staff could electronically request circulating materials from the SOU Library. Requesting these materials could be done electronically on-site at the Riverside Research Center in Medford, SOU's Mary Phipps Center in Medford, the RCC Library in Grants Pass, or via Internet access from an individual's home computer. The Jackson County Library Services courier service was already in place, with weekday delivery and pick-up of materials from its fifteen branches and RCC, SOU, and Josephine County libraries. Delivery of requested materials for pick-up by students within 24 hours was the optimum goal.

Southern Oregon University (SOU) Library's recent implementation of a patron-initiated, electronic materials request feature enabling Rogue Community College (RCC) students to order materials electronically from the SOU catalog and have them delivered to RCC libraries is just the latest instance of cooperation between these two Southern Oregon libraries. In 1979, the library directors of SOU and RCC along with those from Umpqua Community College and the Oregon Institute of Technology signed an agreement that allowed students at these institutions reciprocal on-site checkout privileges of circulating items.

The annexation of Jackson County into the Rogue Community College District in 1996 prompted Southern Oregon University and Rogue Community College to begin an expanded, collaborative education program. A new RCC Medford campus was developed in several existing downtown Medford buildings, one of which houses the Riverside Research Center (RVC), a small library with a modest reference collection and a number of PCs with access to electronic databases. At the same time, SOU began offering courses at the RCC Grants Pass campus and expanded course offerings at its Mary Phipps Center in Medford. The four-year implementation plan will culminate in RCC teaching more lower-division transfer courses while Southern concentrates on providing more upper-division and graduate offerings.

In September 1997, a regional library planning group composed of representatives from SOU, RCC, and the Jackson County libraries met to discuss issues in providing extended services to SOU and RCC students in Medford and Grants Pass. The group discussed reference services, course reserves, the return of library materials, interlibrary loan, hardware/software at each site, and the services already provided by the various libraries to SOU and RCC students.

Initially, the SOU work group was made up of the Head of Circulation Services (Deborah Cook), the Head of Public Services (Connie Anderson), the Distance Education Librarian (Harold Otness), and the Head of Technical Services (Teresa Montgomery). After the work group met several times to frame the initial planning phase, representatives from RCC libraries joined including the Director of Library Services (Lynda Kettler), Coordinator, Jackson County Library Services (Thomas Miller), and Library Services Specialist (Marian Masters). From March through June the group met eight times and formulated a plan to develop procedures, policies, and handouts; to download RCC student, faculty, and staff patron records into SOU's system; to train RCC staff to use SOU's circulation subsystem; and to access SOU's catalog via public computers at each site. Many details needed to be discussed and fleshed out. Regional access funds were used by the SOU Library to purchase additional patron records for the SOU Library online system, two more online access ports, delivery bags, a drive-up book drop for the RVC Library, and a drop box at the SOU Library.

Both Deborah Cook and Teresa Montgomery had been involved in the planning for Orbis Borrowing and this expertise proved invaluable for designing the SOU/RCC materials delivery system. Even so, configuring the online system (Innovative Interfaces) to accept requests from students at off-campus sites was complicated and challenging. The research on implementing the "Request" feature was significant. Decisions needed to be made to choose the best "Request" configuration. Many codes and options needed to be set up in a variety of tables in several places within the system. Test patron records mimicked RCC students and faculty and test requests were placed at the end of May. New staff logins and authorizations were established to permit RCC staff at Medford and Grants Pass to connect to the SOU

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circulation system to renew materials, edit patron records, and collect fines.

The plans were completed before scheduled and implementation of the patron-initiated electronic materials request function occurred in July 1998. The final piece was the load of RCC student, faculty, and staff patron records into the SOU Library circulation subsystem. During the summer, RCC staff input patron records directly and testing was completed in August. During the first two weeks of Fall 1998 term classes, about 3,900 RCC patron records for students and 300 RCC faculty and staff were successfully loaded into the SOU online system.

The joint Southern Oregon University Library and Rogue Community College Library Materials Delivery Workgroup collaboration worked well since all members readily saw the potential benefits in creating this type of request/delivery system for their students. This ability to work well as a team did not come as a surprise. Over the years RCC, SOU, and Jackson County libraries have met for monthly luncheons that have established a foundation of mutual respect and trust as well as an understanding of the challenges and problems unique to our institutions and region. These institutions are well represented at the three yearly Southern Oregon Library Federation (SOLF) meetings. Total commitment and support for the

project from all members of the work group was the key to its successful implementation.

Although SOU students are not yet able to access RCC libraries' collections online, with RCC's migration to a new library automation system, this is a future possibility. The partnering between SOU and RCC libraries currently exists in several additional areas. Along with pick-up and return of library materials at RCC sites in Medford and Grants Pass, SOU students

may use resources within these libraries. This cooperative, collegial attitude will work toward providing accessible library resources to SOU students as well as RCC students, many of whom will matriculate into the University's baccalaureate programs.

As of the end of October there have been only a few requests, but they have steadily increased. A relatively slow steady growth to this local system will allow participants to iron out any bugs yet to show up. The electronic patron-initiated request for SOU materials is so new that a full academic year will need to transpire before it can be evaluated. Stay tuned. **Q**

Thirty Years (*continued from page 1*)

TRUE PARTNERSHIP

When LSCA funding ended for the ORULS Project in 1988, the staff positions of editor and assistant also ended. Administrative duties were reassigned to State Library staff, but the sizable job of inputting holdings data for approximately 60 non-OCLC participant libraries remained. Once again, with the true partnership of Oregon libraries, a new, distributed system emerged. Since 1988 ten ORULS agents have been union listing holdings for non-OCLC participant libraries. Some agents have assumed geographical responsibility, some represent consortia, and some union list for a specific type of library. Over the past 10 years the cooperating libraries and their heroic agents have included:

Blue Mountain Community College, Tony Svetich; Chemeketa Community College, Paula Poole and Claudia Gillis; Deschutes County Library, Martha Pyle; Linfield College, Mary Margaret Benson; Oregon Health Sciences University, Patrice O'Donovan; Portland Community College, Berniece Owen and Birgit Wedel; Portland General Electric Company, Barb Buckley; Southwestern Oregon Community College, Mary Jane Fisher; Umatilla County Special Library District, Dea Nowell; Washington County Cooperative Library Service, Linda Lybecker, Mary Cutting, Angela Mei and Barbara O'Neill.

THE PRESENT, THE FUTURE

As of October 1998, there are 160 ORULS participant libraries, approximately 100,000 serial titles, and 250,000 holdings. ORULS data is in demand. Over 75 libraries have placed orders for the upcoming 11th microfiche edition, with inquiries from as far away as Guam.

What will be the next challenge for ORULS? Whatever it may be, past history indicates that through the partnership of Oregon libraries, the challenge will be met, and statewide union listing of serials in Oregon will continue.

ORULS is available on the web: <http://www.osl.state.or.us/oslhome/orulshome.html>

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