Agenda item #5
MnLINK Update

MnLINK User Group Conference

We had over 170 attendees at the MnLINK User Group meeting held at the Northland Inn in Brooklyn Park on Friday, November 2. Joshua Ferraro, Release Manager for the Koha project and President, Technology at LibLime presented the keynote “Open Source Library Automation, All Grown Up.” His keynote on open-source ILS systems was well-received as were the other presentations provided by Heather Hessel of the University of Minnesota, Ralph Horton of OCLC PICA and Karen Calhoun of OCLC. Feedback from the evaluations was very positive.

MnLINK Gateway Software Upgrade

Ralph Horton, OCLC PICA, Vice-President U.S. Operations, presented a session at the MnLINK User Group meeting that highlighted upcoming functionality and future plans for the ZPORTAL/VDX software. The long-awaited functionality that will allow for mediation of requests based on cost and publication date will be coming with the 3.2.2 upgrade expected in January 2008. In anticipation of this functionality the MINITEX/MnLINK ILL Committee was asked by the MnLINK Gateway Operations Group to make a recommendation on criteria that might be used for the cost/date parameters. This is an excerpt from the committee’s statement:

The Committee suggests a date of publication within the past 12 months and a purchase price of $10 (or less) as starting points for a discussion of the review criteria. The committee recognizes that varying local collection development policies and staffing issues may result in different server sites using different criteria. The Committee further suggests that staff review of requests meeting the criteria focus on improved collection development and the development of purchase-on-demand mechanisms to improve customer service and control interlibrary loan request volume.

The Committee has identified several potential consequences of implementing staff review of requests meeting the review criteria:

- the need to devote additional staff time to reviewing requests
- the need to develop effective and efficient mechanisms for reviewing requests, coordinating collection development and interlibrary loan activities, and expediting final disposition of the requests
- the need to develop more effective and efficient methods of notifying a patron of the status of his or her request.

It is expected that libraries will determine the date/cost parameters that meets the needs of their users and staff. The configuration is done at the server site level allowing each site to make an independent decision. The parameters are optional and libraries may choose to use either/or cost and date as criteria for staff mediation. It is hoped that this functionality will provided options to libraries for collection
development and to purchase materials rather than go out on interlibrary loan when appropriate. The latest copy of the *MESSENGER* includes an editorial by Bill DeJohn discussing the concept of buy vs. borrow as a way to meet the information needs of library patrons. See the article at: http://www.minitex.umn.edu/publications/messenger/Default.aspx

**Future Plans for ZPORTAL/VDX**

Plans for ZPORTAL as the user interface for VDX extend through the 2009 version of the software currently called the “Jupiter” release. Beyond this date there is a plan within OCLC to develop a consolidated end-user interface. This would replace the current ZPORTAL front-end. The VDX software would be used for group resource sharing. The name currently used is WorldCat Exchange and will include either a Group Catalogue or WorldCat Local front-end depending on needs. The ZPORTAL authentication pieces will be used with the front-end search tool, other features of ZPORTAL will be used as well. There are pilot libraries using this combination of WorldCat Local and VDX. There is an option to place holds on books with NCIP in place. Ralph Horton has provided Becky Ringwelski with a live demo of the pilot software. MnLINK is keeping a close eye on these developments to see what the impacts will be on the functionality and licensing for the Gateway.