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MESSENGER

Vol. 2, No. 1, March 1975 Minnesota Interlibrary Telecommunications Exchange
Wilson Library, University of Minnesota Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

MINITEX CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM

The MINITEX Reference Workshop Weeks have been planned to provide a continuing education experience for Reference Librarians from MINITEX participating libraries. Over seventy-five percent of the library resources in Minnesota are located in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The opportunity to spend a week viewing collections, examining new, expensive, and specialized library resources, and making the acquaintance of collection librarians and other resource persons is, we believe, an invaluable experience for MINITEX librarians which will aid in the cooperative sharing of resources.

The goals of the week-long workshop are threefold: we wish to assist visiting librarians to (1) become more familiar with how MINITEX requests are handled; (2) become acquainted with MINITEX resource libraries; and (3) find out more about other MINITEX services. The workshops also provide an invaluable experience in social and professional communication. Workshop participants spend the week interacting with the librarians and staff members of MINITEX, the University of Minnesota and other Twin Cities libraries, and getting to know one another as well.

There have been four or five participants in each MINITEX workshop. Each is the designated MINITEX librarian of a library in a given geographic locality. For example, the participants from the Mankato area represented the libraries of Mankato State College, the University of Minnesota-Waseca Campus, Gustavus Adolphus College, and the Minnesota Valley Regional (Public) Library. The groups are small enough to be easily accommodated by any library department and yet are sufficiently diverse to provide a variety of questions, comments, reactions, and ideas. The small number is also easily accommodated in one automobile, one elevator, one lunch table, and so on, which makes touring and travelling very manageable.

The idea of bringing together academic, public, and, in some instances, special librarians from the same geographic locality for a continuing education experience appears to be unique. Usually, this type of experience consists of programs or "packages" designed to meet identified needs of specific library personnel. Such activities are prepared and sponsored by individual libraries, library schools, state library agencies, library associations or library networks. Whether the focus is placed on the individual, the temporary group or the organization, the participants are almost always from a like occupational situation (i.e., reference librarians, law librarians, library trustees), but from differing geographical localities. This manner of organization

focuses on the participants' function in a library but seldom, if ever, places emphasis on communication with counterparts in local institutions, sharing of local resources, or meeting needs of library users locally.

MINITEX member libraries have accepted the concept that recurring needs and basic materials that support an institution's curriculum are the responsibilities of local libraries and are best met by them. It is this concept of local and regional sharing that underlines the MINITEX program. By bringing together the librarians from one area, a situation is created in which they are able to inform each other of local needs and resources and find out what resources are available that might be acquired locally and which ones would be too specialized or too expensive for local acquisition. A week of sharing thoughts and expressing ideas while attending the workshop helps foster communication on the local level when librarians return from their week with MINITEX.

Visiting librarians usually pool their automobile transportation to the Twin Cities, and the driver is reimbursed for mileage. They share rooms at a motel very near the campus of the University of Minnesota where the MINITEX Central Office is located. Participants are reimbursed for their Twin Cities expenses. The more substantial contribution to the week's expenses, however, comes from the home library which allows a professional leave of absence for the workshop participant. Without the cooperation of these libraries in making arrangements to cover desk hours and fill other obligations, and in scheduling leaves to coincide with a set date, this program would not be possible.

The MINITEX Workshop Week program is arranged and conducted by the Assistant Director of MINITEX. This resource person has a general knowledge of MINITEX policies and procedures, is in touch with the day-to-day operations of the document delivery service, and works with the reference service. Her associate membership in the University Library Faculty and University Library committees provides a familiarity with the University Library units and an acquaintance with staff librarians; membership in local chapters of state and special library groups strengthens ties with local libraries included in the MINITEX workshop tours.

Whenever possible MINITEX staff members take part in the workshop week program. They accompany the visiting librarians on tours of campus libraries, and of the Twin Cities libraries as well. Staff members who are involved with the day-to-day operations of the MINITEX program provide another source of information and another communication link for the workshop participants.

On the first day of their visit the librarians meet in the MINITEX Central Office where introductions are exchanged

and the plan for the week's activities is reviewed. The interaction of participants begins here and continues throughout the week over lunches and coffee breaks, in transit and on tours. Common situations are seen from different points of view; unique information resources are shared by all. Tours are conducted the first day in the Reference and Government Publications divisions of Wilson Library (the University's main library), and ample time is allowed to examine new and expensive reference materials. The group also has an opportunity to visit the headquarters of the Minnesota Union List of Serials (MULS), also located in Wilson Library at the University of Minnesota. Here they talk to the Data Base Manager who answers any particular questions they might have about sending in update information on their serial holdings for inclusion in the MULS microfiche updates.

Participants visit the MINITEX Serials Exchange at the Gifts and Bloc Purchases Division of the University Library, also located in Wilson. Back issues, incomplete runs, unwanted gifts, and volumes that have been replaced by microfilm are sent to this location for exchange among MINITEX participating libraries. An efficient index of items on hand enables the University staff librarian to quickly find items requested on want lists submitted by MINITEX libraries. There is a rapid turnover; items not wanted or needed by any libraries are sold in bulk along with other University discards. There is no system of credits or charges for materials donated or received and there is no list made of items on hand, which keeps paperwork to a minimum. Last year over 8,000 items were exchanged by this service. Most materials are received in the boxes used to transport MINITEX materials. Serials to be delivered to libraries are shipped in the boxes along with other MINITEX materials.

The second day is usually spent in the city of St. Paul. Here the librarians visit the Legislative Reference Library. The history, organization, and holdings of this library are explained by its Director. Although its primary concern is to serve the Minnesota Legislature, this special library and its staff have readily provided materials and information to library patrons throughout the state via the MINITEX network.

The Minnesota Historical Society is the next stop. A walking tour is given through the library's reference room and stacks while the scope of the collection and its arrangement are described. Comments on the library's history and the building's architecture add to the interest of the tour. The visitors see the Newspaper, Audio-Visual, and Manuscripts divisions, and there is usually time for a quick tour of the current exhibits on display in the building.

The tour of James J. Hill Reference Library, a private general reference collection, specializing in business, economics, science and technology, is always enlightening. Its history and development are described by a staff librarian along with information on one of its current specialties, the standards collection. St. Paul Public Library, a large metropolitan institution, seems like familiar territory to most librarians. Its printing division, where signs, brochures, and bookmarks are made, illustrates one aspect of librarians' creativity.

In addition to the Hill Reference and St. Paul Public libraries, which are next door to each other, visits are also made to the headquarters of two library networks: CLIC (Cooperating Libraries in Consortium) and OPLIC - Interlibrary Loans (Office of Public Libraries in Cooperation). CLIC, housed in Hill Library, features telephone access to a

Union Catalog of holdings of the seven participating local private college libraries and Hill Library. Requests for materials are telephoned to the Union Catalog, locations are found, and materials are requested from libraries holding them. Requests not filled at the Union Catalog are forwarded to St. Paul Public or MINITEX. A courier transports the items back and forth among the eight member libraries, the Legislative Reference Library, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul Public Library and the MINITEX Central Office. The OPLIC - Interlibrary Loan headquarters, located in St. Paul Public, receives requests via teletype or mail from the state's public libraries. Requests not filled by the St. Paul Public Library, or by the other major metropolitan public libraries, are fed into the MINITEX network for possible retrieval from the University or other non-public libraries. The visits to the two network headquarters provide an enlightening and informative contrast to the MINITEX Central Office and its operations. Visiting librarians also have a clearer idea of how MINITEX operates and interfaces with CLIC and OPLIC.

The third day of the workshop week begins with the participants' attendance at the weekly staff meeting of the MINITEX Central Office staff. Here they have a chance to meet more staff members and listen in on the latest developments in MINITEX programs and procedures. Afterward the group travels to Hennepin County Library's Southdale Area Branch which has won national awards for its architectural design. The physical plant proves to be a librarian's dream. Tours of the Popular Library and Information Services are conducted by amiable staff members. The tour of the Media Lab which provides a variety of A-V equipment for public use is a special treat.

A sharp contrast to Hennepin County Library is Minneapolis Public Library and Information Center, situated in downtown Minneapolis. The city's public library is the state's largest, and its resources, particularly in business, art, and music, rival most collections in the Midwest. It is the home of ECOL, a state-supported ecology library which provides library materials directly to anyone in the state. Visiting librarians also have a chance to find out about some of MPLIC's activities: INFORM, the business reference and document retrieval service; the Minneapolis Star and Tribune Indexes, which are produced by MPLIC; and the workings of the Municipal Reference Library. The library's extensive collections of business directories, government documents, pictures and photographs, music scores, and foundation information are viewed by the MINITEX workshop participants who are well aware that they have only scratched the surface of the information resources available here.

Some time is spent in the MINITEX Central Office during the week with the staff librarian in charge of processing the incoming requests for materials from participating libraries. Librarians have an opportunity to ask questions about the procedures to be used at their libraries and the MINITEX staff can point out any problems that have come about in filling requests from a particular library. A session is also scheduled with the MINITEX Reference Librarian who explains about the reference service. Visiting librarians who may not have used this service find out that information needs that cannot be met with local library or community information resources may be transmitted by a toll-free call to MINITEX. The resources of the University of Minnesota and other metropolitan libraries are utilized and long distance phone calls are placed when necessary to help provide answers to reference questions, usually within

24 hours. Patrons may relate their questions directly to the MINITEX Reference Librarian during regular workday hours. Answers are either telephoned or mailed directly to the patron. The service also provides an opportunity for professional consultation among librarians when searching for sources of information.

The fourth day of the workshop week begins with a tour of the Biomedical Library on the University of Minnesota campus. Staff librarians describe the collection and show visitors the automated technical processes and minicomputer systems. An on-line computer search of MEDLINE is demonstrated and its capabilities are discussed. The visitors learn about the Twin Cities Biomedical Consortium and the Midwest Health Science Library Network of which the Biomedical Library is a participant. It is through these channels that MINITEX is able to obtain specialized library materials relating to the biological sciences for outstate students, faculty and citizens. The thorough tour of this specialized collection of materials with its links to even greater resources is invaluable.

On-line computer searches on the ERIC and Psych Abstracts data bases are next on the day's schedule. These are demonstrated by a librarian in the Education Library at the University. The same search is done on the two data bases which gives a vivid illustration of the capabilities of searching and the variations that can occur in different subject fields. Participants are invited to suggest search questions and even sit at the terminal and type out their own searches.

The schedule for Thursday afternoon is kept open so that workshop participants may plan their own programs. Some options include tours of the other campus libraries, either self-guided, by a MINITEX staff member, or by the collection's librarian. Participants have thus visited the Law, Education, Art, Music, Chemistry, Pharmacy, Engineering, Geology, Natural History, Botany, Veterinary Medicine, Biochemistry, Forestry, and Plant Pathology libraries. Others have spent more time examining new reference works of locating resources of a particular interest to some of their regular library patrons.

Friday's program features a morning trip to the St. Paul campus libraries via intercampus bus. A sit-down tour with a staff librarian is in order after the long week. The collection and its organization are explained by a staff librarian. A description is given of the CAIN data base for on-line computer searching in agricultural subjects. The participants are well versed in this subject area by now and ask thoughtful questions about the data base's attributes and its shortcomings. As in other library tours and visits, the issues of library budgets, storage problems, service priorities, staffing needs, and publishing trends are talked out over another cup of coffee. Before leaving the campus, the group visits one of the five departmental libraries of the St. Paul campus. The Entomology, Fisheries and Wildlife Library with its considerable holdings of ecological interest provides numerous examples of the types of information and library materials of general interest that are to be found in specialized library collections.

A wrap-up discussion of the week's activities is held at lunch on Friday. There is so much to talk about by this time that having to eat lunch seems almost an inconvenience. Some of the highlights and disappointments, delights and frustrations of the week are discussed. Usually everyone adds notes to a list that s/he has been keeping all week, as the group recalls names and phone numbers of people they met, important files of information that were kept in

libraries they visited, titles of reference works or journals they had seen for the first time, statistics they had read or heard, and so on. Notes are also kept on questions to look into and program arrangements and details that might be changed for future workshop weeks. Suggestions about MINITEX procedures from workshop participants are brought up at the next MINITEX staff meeting.

A formal evaluation of the MINITEX Reference Workshop Weeks has not been undertaken as yet. All participants are asked to write a critical summary of the week to be sent to the MINITEX Director, and most are asked by their libraries to give a talk or write a report for the benefit of other staff members.

MINITEX has attempted to set up a similar reference workshop program for local librarians. Librarians from the Twin Cities (the CLIC librarians and members of the Reference Division at the University of Minnesota) were invited to tour some of the MINITEX resource libraries in the Twin Cities. The tours were conducted during a week-long period and participants could sign up for any or all tours. The local librarians provided their own transportation and no meals were arranged for the group. Since most librarians had seen at least some of the other libraries in the program, no one signed up to go on all the tours offered. Also, due to work commitments, no one was given the entire day off to participate in the workshop tours. As a result the groups did not have the cohesiveness that the tours for the outstate groups had, and they did not run as smoothly because people arrived late, left early, did not know other participants, and so on. More work needs to be done on the planning of programs for local groups. Certainly, the fact that seventy-five percent of the library resources are in the Twin Cities area would lead one to believe that most of the state's librarians are there also, and that they need to obtain more bits of information from their abundant local resources than do their counterparts outstate.

In its proposal to the state legislature for the 1975-77 biennium, MINITEX has asked for funding to expand its continuing education program to include one-week training sessions at the MINITEX Central Office for 100 librarians from participating libraries and twelve annual regional workshops. It is hoped that such funding will make possible the improvement and expansion of the MINITEX Reference Workshop Weeks and other programs which will contribute to the cooperative sharing of library resources for the benefit of all Minnesota citizens.

A typical program for the MINITEX Reference Workshop Week:

Monday:	10:00 am	Tour of MINITEX office and introduction to MINITEX activities.
	1:00 pm	Tour of Wilson Reference Department
	3:00	MULS Office
	3:30	MINITEX Serials Exchange Program
	4:00	Tour of Government Publications
Tuesday:	9:00 am	Tour of Minnesota Legislative Reference Library
	10:30	Tour of Minnesota Historical Society
	2:00 pm	CLIC Union Catalog

	2:30	OPLIC interlibrary loan headquarters
	3:00	Tour of St. Paul Public Library
	4:00	Tour of James J. Hill Reference Library
Wednesday:	8:00 am	MINITEX staff meeting
	10:00	Tour of Hennepin County Library-Southdale Area Library Branch
	1:00 pm	Tour of Minneapolis Public Library and Information Center
	3:00	MINITEX requests
	4:00	MINITEX Reference Service
Thursday:	9:00 am	Tour of Biomedical Library
	11:30	ERIC, Psych Abstracts searches
	Afternoon	Individual program
Friday:	9:00 am	Tour of St. Paul campus libraries
	11:00	Wrap-up session and evaluation

**OUTSTATE MINITEX REFERENCE WEEK
PARTICIPATING LIBRARIES,
GROUPED BY GEOGRAPHIC LOCALITY**

Austin-Rochester:	Albert Lea Public Library (SELCO) Austin Community College Austin Public Library SELCO Regional Consultant University of Minnesota Hormel Institute
Fargo-Moorhead:	Concordia College Lake Agassiz Regional Public Library Moorhead State College North Dakota State University
Mankato Area:	Gustavus Adolphus College Mankato State College Minnesota Valley Regional Public Library University of Minnesota-Waseca
Northfield:	Carleton College St. Olaf College
St. Cloud:	Great River Regional Public Library College of St. Benedict St. Cloud State College St. John's University
Miscellaneous Grouping:	Bemidji State College LeSeuer-Waseca Regional Public Library Southwest Minnesota State College University of Minnesota-Morris

MINITEX REFERENCE SERVICE

The MINITEX Reference Service was initiated in October, 1973, as an extension of the document delivery service, in recognition of the fact that sources for filling information needs cannot always be readily identified. Library users need not be discouraged if their local libraries do not have the reference books, bibliographies, or other resources to answer their questions.

If a patron has a question that cannot be answered with

local library or community information resources, a toll-free call to MINITEX may be placed by the reference person. The question is described to the MINITEX Reference Librarian and possible sources for answers are discussed. If the patrons are at hand, they can speak directly to the MINITEX librarian to be sure that the question is understood. If patrons are not present (which is often the case since librarians frequently spend additional time searching before placing the call) the patrons' names and telephone numbers are supplied so that they can be contacted if any other information or clarification is needed during the search.

Questions are also transmitted to MINITEX via teletype or through the mail. Whatever the format, three items of information are requested: (1) the patron's name and phone number; (2) the source of the patron's information; and (3) the sources already checked by the local librarian.

The resources of the University of Minnesota and other metropolitan libraries are utilized and long distance phone calls are placed when necessary to help provide answers to questions, usually within 24 hours. Answers are either telephoned or mailed directly to the patron. Frequently during the discussion with the local librarian, possible sources are mentioned that have not been checked locally. In this way the MINITEX Reference Service also provides an opportunity for professional consultation among librarians when searching for sources of information.

In addition to MINITEX (document delivery) funds, support to include public libraries came from LSCA Title III funds, from which \$20,000 was granted to conduct a pilot demonstration project to test the need and value of a state-wide reference and information network. One of the benefits of the program is that it gives reference librarians who work in small isolated libraries a sense of community with other reference librarians.

The MINITEX Reference telephone is attended by a professional librarian in the afternoons from 1:00 to 4:30. Mornings are used for searching collections. From January to November, 1974, the reference service was administered by a full-time Reference Librarian, with the help of the Assistant Director of MINITEX, and since August, 1974, a Graduate Library Assistant (library school student). Since November the reference work has been carried out in the following manner: the Assistant Director attends the telephones in the afternoons to take questions and formulate search strategies, and, as time permits, to search the card catalog and Reference Room in Wilson Library. Most searching on questions is done in the mornings by a Graduate Library Assistant and in the afternoons by a half-time reference librarian. The system works fairly well. The Assistant Director, being a full-time staff member, provides coordination, continuity, and back-up help for the reference service. Her experience with the MINITEX Reference Workshop Weeks provides insight to potential sources of information from other Twin Cities library collections. The Graduate Library Assistant has a broad general knowledge of reference materials and an invaluable familiarity with the University library collections. The half-time reference librarian has a technical background with experience in special libraries in the Twin Cities area, and further complements the expertise of the reference personnel.

One of the unique aspects of this reference service is the financial resources that have allowed the librarian to call the patron and discuss the problems of the question after the search has commenced; or to call anywhere in the United States to obtain an answer to the question. If, in the judg-

ment of the librarian, a long distance call will shortcut a lot of valuable search time, that method of locating the required information is used.

Because of the schedules of the MINITEX reference staff and the fact that the University of Minnesota library collections are in so many different physical locations, it is difficult to deal satisfactorily with questions requiring an immediate reply, but in emergencies the MINITEX staff does what it can.

Questions involving medical diagnosis and treatment or legal procedures are discouraged. Librarians never know the medical history of the patient, the complicating or mitigating circumstances of the patient's condition, and other necessary background information. Since the latest information on diagnosis and treatment appears in the voluminous medical journal literature, selecting articles for library patrons would necessarily mean editing the research findings. Furthermore, not all journal literature is accepted as valid by the medical community. If the librarian turns to reference books — even current ones — the information is not guaranteed to be up to date or relevant to the particular case at hand. MINITEX staff are more than willing to provide books or copies of articles recommended by the patient's (patron's) physician.

Answering legal questions involves many of the same problems as those dealing with medical literature. Patrons are referred to local legal aid societies, county and state attorneys for assistance.

Members of the MINITEX reference staff appreciate feedback from librarians and patrons, especially in cases where information sent is insufficient or not what the patron had in mind. No user surveys have been made; however, the staff has received many written and verbal "thank you's".

The following summation of the types of questions asked was written by Beverly Thiede, former MINITEX Reference Librarian, now Head of Information Services at Hennepin County Library:

No statistics have been kept according to the subject or topic of the request. The following information is general in nature and is presented to illustrate the breadth and variety of the questions.

From October 1973 to November 1974 we were asked the same question only twice. First we were asked to find a list of Naturopathic Colleges in British Columbia, and the second time we were asked for a list of Naturopathic doctors in the United States.

The majority of questions has been for biographical information. Students and faculty are interested in the background of authors. Leaders of organizations try to locate speakers, and they also want material for introductions. Frequent requests occur from the public on artists' biographies. We also have looked for various historical figures, for example: "Please provide a brief description of Charles Thorold, who was an alderman and sheriff in London in 1706". Fortunately for us this family was covered in heraldry sources. Numerous requests are made for addresses and descriptions of organizations, businesses and publishers.

We have had many questions about the meaning and origin of words, phrases, and "forgettable" quotes.

A considerable amount of time has been spent with census material, federal and state bills and resolutions.

Types of questions received:

How did New York City spend its portion of the Federal Revenue Sharing funds in 1973?

Illustrations of symbols for revolutions.

Crude oil prices and production statistics national and worldwide.

Sign language manual in Finnish for a deaf person.

Financial ratios in the auto parts industry.

Bibles in Pidgin English.

Diving and decompression tables.

Phases and the rise and set time of the moon in August, September of 1862.

How to train the horses used in mounted police patrols.

Crime rate in India.

Tanning of sheepskins leaving the wool on.

How to sell insurance with the use of audio visual aids.

Number of registered voters in Atlanta, Georgia.

Breeders of Beefalo (this was before the national and local press coverage).

A patron requests the origin of a brown glass bottle from the early 1900's with the word Benetol on it.

Date of the establishment of Betcher, Minnesota (patron wanted to place a plaque on a building).

Picture of a Carboy.

Ski jump record of John and Ole Mangseth in 1907 and 1908.

Montagnards and other ethnic groups in southwest China.

Physical description of the British Transport ships in the Charles River on April 1775.

Reason for the decline of the frog population in Minnesota.

Are there alligators in the New York City sewers?

How to make a two-person horse costume.

MINNESOTA UNION LIST OF SERIALS

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

January 1975 saw the publication of the long awaited First Edition of the Minnesota Union List of Serials (MULS). The edition consists of five volumes totaling 3628 pages. The arrival of this edition marked a climax in the project which had begun three and a half years before in 1971.

The project began when MINITEX participants agreed to devote a portion of the document delivery funding to the creation of a union list of serials for the state of Minnesota. Contributing to this decision was the fact that over three-fourths of the requests coming into MINITEX were for photocopies of journal articles and the existing serials reference tools were proving inadequate for verifying and locating titles within the state.

During the Summer of 1971 the project was set up in conjunction with the Systems Division at the University of Minnesota Library. In August of the year the information gathering got under way. For the purpose of the project the term "serial" was defined in the broadest possible sense. Hence, journals, periodicals, transactions, proceedings, memoirs, annuals/yearbooks, monographic series (*if* series added entries appear in the catalog of the contributing library), newspapers, looseleaf services, in fact any title which is published over a period of time and for which there is no foreseeable end will be found in MULS.

Since it was the largest single library in the state and since the project was actually housed on the site, data from the University of Minnesota Library system was the first to be coded. Almost exactly a year later the Preliminary

Edition of MULS was published. This contained most of the University's serial titles as held by the Coordinate Campus libraries. The Preliminary Edition in two volumes consisted of 1566 pages and contained over 37,000 titles plus cross references and added entries.

Subsequent funds to continue the project came from the State Legislature through the Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Commission (MHECC) and through the Office of Public Libraries and Interlibrary Cooperation (OPLIC). During the next two years the Minnesota Union List of Serials was expanded to a statewide configuration with the addition of the following collections: Minneapolis Public Library and Information Center, six State College libraries, 15 private four-year colleges, 24 state agency libraries including the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul Public Library, James J. Hill Reference Library, 15 regional public libraries including all of the MELSA (Metropolitan Library Service Agency) libraries, five seminary libraries and the Mayo Clinic Library. North Dakota State University and Veteran's Administration Hospital Library in Fargo were added along with the Tri-College Universities list. Some further activity also took place with the University holdings. Titles from the Bio-Medical Library which had not been included in the Preliminary Edition were added. Several thousand closed titles within the main library were also identified and added as were many titles in the Ames Library, Special Collections, the Public Administration Library, the Government Publications Division and the Immigrant Archives Collection. The holdings from the Hormel Institute were added, as well. A few areas still remain to be finished, but for the most part the University entries are now complete.

In September 1974 when the magnetic tape for the First Edition was generated for the photocomposer, the data base contained more than 71,000 distinct titles plus approximately 34,000 cross references and added entries. It is now possible for librarians and patrons throughout the state to find out where or whether specific titles are held. It hopefully will no longer be necessary for an outstate library to request journals from the Twin Cities when a library much closer holds the same title. This type of information will enable kinds of cooperation which formerly were only wishful thinking. It is hoped that programs in cooperative acquisition and retention policies can be generated among library groups. This type of joint effort can help to eliminate costly duplication and storage while also assuring that the most complete range of titles remains available to the widest possible group of users.

Cooperation is earnestly being sought in keeping MULS up to date, and it is expected that funding for this activity will be forthcoming. It is hoped that each contributing library will regularly report all changes in their serials holdings; this includes additions, cancellations, deletions, title changes, etc. Without this kind of effort on the part of all concerned, the entire project will become less worthwhile in the long term by simply becoming more and more out of date. Update material is constantly being processed by the MULS staff and it is hoped that quarterly issues will be produced on microfiche. At the present time, the plan is for each update to completely supersede all former publications so that a user never has more than one place to check for a title.

As an illustration of the importance which can be attached to subsequent issues of MULS, it should be mentioned that since the cut-off date for the First Edition, not only have the libraries in the Twin Cities

Biomedical Consortium (TCBC) been added to the list, but many other holdings have been affected by cancellations, withdrawals, etc., due to budgetary considerations. These changes, additions, and deletions will all be reflected in the first fiche update.

STANDARDS

When the MULS project was first begun a decision had to be made concerning which format standard was to be followed. The MARC II Serials format had recently been issued by the Library of Congress MARC Development Office and seemed a logical choice. This, indeed, was the decision. Although not all fields have been employed, this has not precluded the addition of others at any appropriate time. Generally speaking, our MARC entries are organized into four sections. The first two parts, the leader and the record directory, concern only the programmer since they never print out in any file but are, rather, used by the computer to handle input. The third part of the record consists of control field tags. We use two of the available tags—the 008 or fixed-length data elements and the 009 tag which lists in ascending numerical order the four or five digit holdings location numbers. The variable-length fields comprise the fourth and main portion of any record and are, for the most part, what is seen in one of the printed entries. The variable-length tags employed are: L.C. Card Number, International Standard Serial Number, Main Entry-Personal Name, Main Entry-Corporate Name, Main Entry-Conference or Meeting, Title Edition, Imprint, Abbreviated Journal Title, General Notes, Contents Notes (brief), Notes on Volumes or Numbers, Notes on Supplements, Notes on Indexes, Notes on Indexing or Abstracting Coverage, Added Entries, Holdings Statements and Cross References. The holdings statements contain not only the statement of material held and the information to uniquely identify the holding location but may also contain pertinent call number(s) and/or give information concerning the holdings at that particular locale. Subfield levels are encoded in all variable-length fields for ease in sorting and retrieval as are indicator values where applicable. In addition to the variable-length tags, three fixed-length elements are given in the printed volumes; these are the beginning date, the ending date and the locally assigned ID number.

The MULS staff has tried as far as possible to adhere to the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules (North American Text) and towards this end each entry is taken through a careful and quite exhaustive verification procedure. This course of action has resulted in a degree of uniformity among participants which has not been true in the past. As new national and international standards such as ISDS and ISBD(S) have evolved, they have been carefully watched and any officially accepted changes are consequently adopted as quickly as possible.

As a result of this conformity to accepted standards, the Minnesota Union List of Serials data base has been chosen as one of the start-up files for the CONSER (Cooperative Conversion of Serials) Project.

CONSER

The CONSER Project had its unofficial beginnings at an informal group meeting which was held at the Las Vegas ALA meeting in 1973. The meeting was called for the purpose of discussing the generation and maintenance of machine-readable union files of serials. Although the meeting was to have been small and no formal publicity was given to it, 25 people representing 20 institutions in the

United States and Canada were in attendance.

Three major concerns surfaced during the meeting. These were: the general lack of communication among the groups who had or were in the process of producing machine-readable serials files, the basic incompatibility among these files and the apparent confusion and/or misunderstanding concerning existing and proposed bibliographic description and format standards.

Several things happened as the result of this meeting. It was decided by those present that such a group ought to continue and a charge was given to three members to prepare a position paper outlining the need for such a group; also, a steering committee was selected. A meeting of that committee was funded by the Council on Library Resources (CLR) in September of 1973. The purpose of the meeting was, according to Richard Anable one of the project's prime supporters, to "establish a mechanism for cooperatively converting a comprehensive retrospective bibliographic data base of serials".

It was generally agreed that the project was a worthwhile one and moves were made to find a sponsoring agency, since neither the discussion group nor the steering committee had legal status. Following discussions with several groups, it was decided that the Council on Library Resources was the most appropriate institution to serve as interim manager. The agreement is stated in these terms because it is expected at the end of a two or possibly three-year period of rapid file building that the project will be passed to a permanent manager, most likely the Library of Congress.

As Mr. Anable stated in the objectives for the steering committee, the approach is two-pronged. First of all is the desire to arrive at some agreed upon set of practices to be used in file building. To this end several working groups were formed to discuss various aspects. These concerned themselves with holdings statement notations, working communications and authority files. A fourth group, which is addressing itself to the matter of training, has subsequently been formed.

The second prong of the approach was to establish a mechanism for cooperatively converting a comprehensive retrospective bibliographic data base of serials. To achieve this goal two things were sought: a) an existing system to house the project (at least during the interim phase) and b) one or more suitable large data bases to use as a start-up

file. The Ohio College Library Center (OCLC) was chosen as the system to house the file and the Minnesota Union List of Serials (MULS) was chosen (in conjunction with the MARC-S and Canadian MARC serials files) to be the major start-up base.

Progress is being made on the project. Last December a contract was signed between OCLC and CLR for the use of the OCLC system. In January the MULS file was delivered via CLR to OCLC in preparation for the mounting of the data on the OCLC system. Terminals have been received at the Library of Congress (and NSDP), the National Library of Medicine and the National Agriculture Library and tests are being made. Other libraries such as SUNY and Cornell already have terminals, since they are members of OCLC. The other initial participants should be receiving their terminals within the next month or two. The entire project should be in operation by this summer.

The goal for a two-year period is to create a file of 200,000+ records in which the highest possible level of bibliographic integrity will be maintained. The matter of creating a true union list through the addition of holdings statements has not yet been completely discussed, but a decision should be forthcoming in the near future.

The CONSER Project is an exciting one for many reasons and worthy of support. We in Minnesota can be proud that our state file will be providing the basis for cooperative activities at an even higher level.

CONFERENCE CALLS

One further act of cooperation should be mentioned; this is the monthly conference call held among the serials librarians of the University Coordinate Campus libraries, those of the State College libraries, and the CLIC coordinator. In an attempt to avoid the cancellation or withdrawal of unique material, lists are prepared monthly by the serials librarians for the purpose of accepting the responsibility for retention and binding. These are then checked against the MULS master file, annotated, copied and sent out to all the participating librarians. On the phone calls any problems, requests, etc., are discussed. With the appearance of the new edition of MULS it is hoped that checking at the sites will help to avoid cancellation and/or withdrawal of unique titles even before getting to the conference call stage. Hopefully, other such cooperative ventures may be an outgrowth of MULS in the future.