WESTERN REGION REPORT
1978-79

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ABSTRACT

This report is a brief account of recent progress made in library automation in the four Western provinces, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. The report does not aim to be totally inclusive and some events, which are related in more detail elsewhere in these proceedings, have beem omitted.

MANITOBA: This year has been one of consolidation and continued planning in Manitoba. Most libraries which have automated some processes have been assessing their current operations and are currently considering what direction to take with new developments. UTLAS established its first Manitoba customer in 1979 when the University of Manitoba went online in January. Also at University of Manitoba Peter Marshall began developing a quick indexing system for noncataolgued and vertical file material based on UCS Quic Quick an IBM package. The records for this system will be tagged in a way which will make MARC conversion possible if this is desired at a later date. University of Manitoba will also upgrade and expand its circulation system this year. As well as hardware this will include the addition of Key-word-in-title search facilities, which will only be available to public service librarians.

SASKATCHEWAN: Progress this year has been slow but encouraging. The University of Saskatchewan produced a COM catalogue of its 200,000 odd machine readable records for the Provincial Library which in turn resulted in an increase in the ILLO activity between the University and the public library system. Also at the University of Saskatchewan's library, the PDP 11 based circulation system entered the programming phase in February; data base load will probably take place in June.

The University of Regina, having stabilised its UTLAS operation has turned its attention to spreading the CODOC gospel. The first stage was the successful negotiating of 3rd party user rights for the University of Calgary (see below). Within the Province, University of Saskatchewan, the Provincial Library and the Association of Government Libraries are taking an active interest in this system and its potential for shared cataloguing.

Automation is a topic of some concern to the Provinces public libraries and considerable progress has been made towards a cooperative automation project this year. The Provincial Library hired Dr. A.J.S. Ball to update the earlier studies (1976) done by the Government Systems Centre and to help formulate plans for automating Central Cataloguing and the circulation systems. As a result of these studies the Provincial Library, Regina Public and Saskatoon Public have agreed in principle to jointly develop an online cataloguing network which will be interfaced to automated circulation systems. The next few months will be devoted to ironing out the legal and organizational barriers involved in starting an inter-type library network. These three libraries

see themselves as initiators in the network and want the Regional Library systems, the University, Government and College Libraries to join the network at an early date.

In February Saskmedia inititated its online film booking system. This allows requesters toll free access to the Regina Centre where terminal operators can place reserves immediately. Turn around time for bookings is less than 2 minutes. This increases the flexibility and the reliability of the booking system by several orders of magnitude. Eventually the system will provide online access to Saskmedia's union list of films.

ALBERTA: The pace picks up as one goes further west; Calgary Public now has one branch and the Central Library fully operational on the Plessey Module 4 circulation system. Joyce Tomie is now sure that the next few months will see four more branches online with the remaining eight branches going online as soon as their recon projects are completed. In Edmonton Public the CLSI version 23 seems to have passed its acceptance tests in December and the retrospective conversion, now being done online at UTLAS, has passed 100,000 records. The first COM catalogue will be delivered in March and the first online service, Main Audio Visual,will be operational on March 28th. EPL plans to have all branches online and full operational before May 1st.

On the University scene Calgary is going to do significant development work on the CODOC package. Data input will use a key-edit system and all files will be updated in batch. However, Calgary intend to provide online access to their CODOC database which will include online access to an authority file derived from the online indexes. This feature should make the cooperative projects evissioned between U of C, U of A, U of R, U of S and the building of a Prairie Union File very feasible.

In Edmonton the University of Alberta has committed itself further to the UTLAS network for the short term although it is continuing to examine DOBIS as a package for providing and integrated library system for the University of Alberta libraries. During the next year University of Alberta will sign the shared authority file (SHARAF) project inititated by BCUC at UTLAS and will begin adding its name authorities to the BCUC files. U of A will also load its retrospective database into the UTLAS system and use the UTLAS authority control funcitons to rationalise and control entries. However, University of Alberta, like BCUC, appear to be committed to repatriation in the long run.

Other developments in Alberta include a Union Serials list project which will be organized by Olga Anderson on behalf of the Alberta Libray Assoication. This will involve the merger of the major machine readable union lists already in existence for University of Alberta, University of Calgary, College Libraries and Provincial Government libraries. Also in Edmonton, EPL will start an online local history database this year using the SPIRES system at the University of Alberta. Content will cover Edmonton and Northern Alberta. Last but not least, University of Calgary will begin its own recon project this year by passing its circulation database against the retrospective MARC file to provide MARC compatible records for its TESA systems.

BRITISH COLUMBIA: This report will be out of date before its printed!
I can't do justice to the developments in B.C. over the last year. The name
authority file for U of B.C. has been completed and the SHARAF arrangement with
BCUC, University of Alberta, NLC, Mississauga Public and UTLAS was success-
fully negotiated. The college Recon will be completed this year (79) as
will be the Recon for Richmond Public. The universities, UBC, UVIC and Simon
Fraser will spend about $700,000 on recon this year. Developments for the
future will oscillate about the repatriation – national network axis. Paul
Baldwin, the director of BCUC has gone on record as favoring the transformation
of UTLAS into a user-controlled national network while BCUC Management
Committee is very dissatisfied with UTLAS services, especially Batch-CATSS.
On March 19th, the BCUC executive will recommend the purchase of the
Washington Library network software (WLN) for $200,000 dollars. SFU has
ADABAS and the University librarian, Tedd Dobb, will recommend that SFU
purchase the WLN software in the first instance until BCUC can find a
permanent home for its database; UBC is rumored to be interested in upgrading
its systems to accomodate the BCUC/WLN package. Tedd Dobb cited dissatis-
faction with the responsiveness of the UTLAS governing structure and the
necessity for automated, co-ordinated acquisitions systems for the colleges
as major arguments in favour of the WLN replication.

In the public library sector, Vancouver Public has gone to tender for
an automated circulation system. The other libraries of GVLF (Greater
Vancouver Library Federation) are anxiouxly anticipating the outcome of this
competition because they would all like to be able to purchase similar
systems in order to facilitate conversion and networking. A decision should
be forthcoming in April. For further information on whats happening in B.C.,
contact BCUC, they seem to have a finger in just about every pie.