



OhioLINK Update

Volume 1 Number 1 January 1995

Welcome to OhioLINK Update

OhioLINK Update is the newsletter of the Ohio Library and Information Network. This first issue presents portions of the just-released OhioLINK 5-Year Progress Report which details the making of OhioLINK from the original vision statement in 1989 to the latest additions to the now fully-functional library network. In later issues of Update, news and developments will be featured.

Why OhioLINK?

In 1989, after several years of investigation, the Ohio Board of Regents published a benchmark report describing the growing problems for information management for libraries in Ohio higher education. In concert with the creation of four regional depositories to cope with overcrowded library shelves, the report called for the creation of the Ohio Library and Information Network to solve a number of issues including resource sharing and information access. And over the last five years, OhioLINK has begun to do that. OhioLINK's job is not done: the issues continue to grow and intensify.

Information Problem Still Growing

The ways in which society finds and uses information are changing dramatically and at an increasing pace. A great deal of published

material is appearing in electronic formats, not only textual but graphical and audio. These may, in some instances, replace printed articles or books entirely, but often are in addition to and expand the utility of the material. The volume of published materials – books and journals – is expanding rapidly. The costs of acquiring, cataloging, and storing these items is increasing at a rate that outstrips the resources of both public and private research universities and colleges. A single library can no longer expect to have a comprehensive collection of materials in a variety of useful formats, even in highly specialized areas.

People Need Efficient Information

People who need regular access to information – students, faculty and researchers in business, industry, and government – cannot keep up with the ever increasing volume of published

material and with the changes in the way that this material is accessed, transmitted and manipulated for use. Experts in specialized fields and people investigating fields new to them are daunted by the challenge of identifying the resources they need and mastering the complex and varying formats in which those resources appear.

All users of information are plagued by the difficulty of getting rapid access to the material they need. As use of electronically delivered multi-media information grows, so will demand for network infrastructure and workstation access.

The OhioLINK Solution

There is a sense that all these factors are evolving more rapidly and powerfully than anticipated in 1989. This report outlines the progress made in creating and implementing OhioLINK and looks at the OhioLINK solutions for the information problem.

Snapshot of OhioLINK: Libraries, Services, Faculty, Students

460,000 Students

Of the 460,000 student users that OhioLINK eventually will serve each year, more than 350,000 already have full access.

41 State & Research Schools

Twenty-seven state colleges and universities, Ohio's two major private research schools, and the State Library of Ohio have implemented local OhioLINK systems. By the end of 1995, all of the 41 state and research schools will be providing OhioLINK to their faculty and students.

Large Single Collection

The OhioLINK Central Catalog boasts more than 5 million titles of the collective libraries. It is estimated that when complete, the catalog will give single-point access to more than 7 million titles (14 million volumes).

Internet Access

OhioLINK has become a major gateway for users to the wealth of information resources on the Internet. OhioLINK provides connections to thousands of resources on its "Gopher" menus, giving users an easy-to-understand way of navigating and finding information they need.

Key Databases Provided

Users across the state have direct electronic access to information in 26 academic databases:

- business journal articles
- newspaper articles
- dissertations
- health sciences journal articles
- science and technology journal articles
- arts and humanities journal articles
- books around the world

Online Borrowing

The single most important development for Ohio's students and faculty is the availability of online borrowing. OhioLINK has put the power to borrow in the hands of the user any time.

When the Central Catalog shows an item somewhere else in the state, all the user has to do is make a few keystrokes to tell OhioLINK to deliver the book. The user will have it within days. No jotting down citation information, no filling out inter-library loan forms, no tracking down available copies, no travel, no waiting three weeks or more for delivery. For the user, it is self-serve statewide library access, easy and fast.

Convenient to Use

Users have one-stop shopping to all of the OhioLINK resources wherever they have online access: home, office, lab, or library. They can access a large variety of information through a small set of familiar interfaces.

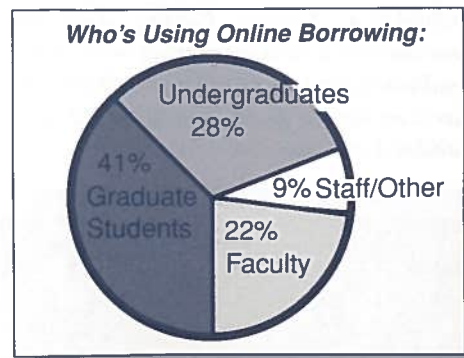


Figure 1. Online Borrowing has proven popular among all academic patrons. Forty-one percent of the items requested online were borrowed by graduate students.

STATUS REPORT

Library Catalogs & Central System

30 institutions served. In November 1992, the OhioLINK Central Catalog was activated with the combined collections of six libraries. By December 1994, a total of 24 libraries (serving 30 institutions) had installed local OhioLINK systems, with 19 of them completely loaded into the OhioLINK Central Catalog. By the end of 1995, the Central Catalog will include the original 17 university members, the State Library of Ohio, and the 23 Ohio community and technical colleges.

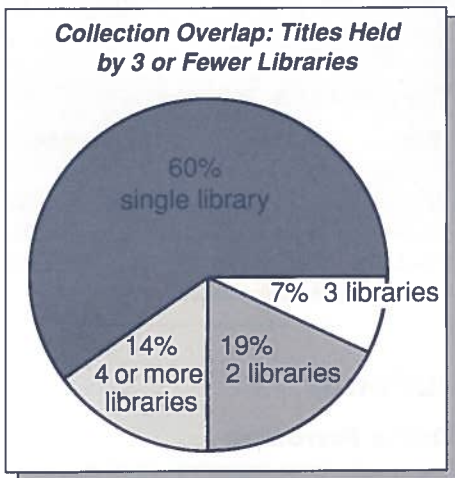


Figure 2. 86% of the titles in the OhioLINK Central Catalog are held by three or fewer of the 19 libraries. Users benefit from a broader collection than available locally.

People are using the system heavily. Usage of the Central Catalog doubled in 1994 to more than 1 million searches. It will accelerate as local catalogs are added and more users have the online borrowing capability.

Large collection with many unique items. OhioLINK is building a large, rich catalog with each member library contributing

a substantial number of singularly held items. 60% of the titles are available from only one of the 19 schools that have contributed thus far (Figure 2). Users are benefitting from single-point access to a large number of items in the Central Catalog that are not available to them locally.

More than books. The catalog records for many newly published non-fiction books are enriched with tables of contents for chapters and chapter authors. Also included are the 400,000 records of the Center for Research Libraries.

Efforts continue to ensure that all of the library materials are represented in the catalog. Electronic records will be created for a vast number of government documents and for major resources held in microfilm collections. Audio-visual, manuscripts, music, and other specialized, unique materials with research value are earmarked for addition.

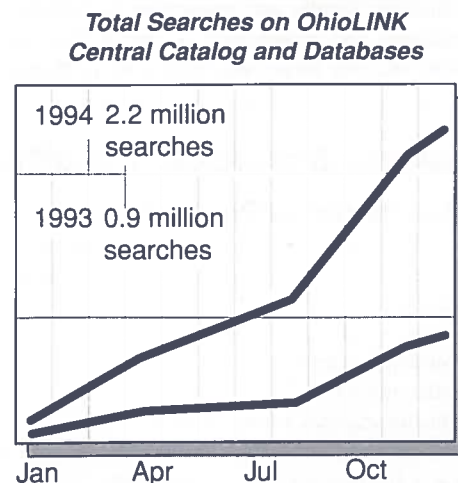


Figure 3. Users have been flocking to the OhioLINK Central Catalog and four commercial databases, making more than 3 million searches to date. Usage will skyrocket as users become familiar with the 22 newly added databases.

Resource Sharing & Document Delivery

Statewide borrowing service is fast. One of OhioLINK's first priorities was to improve the reliability and speed of book loans between member libraries. In November 1993, a statewide ground courier service providing 48-hour delivery was introduced at over 50 locations. By September 1994, this had grown to over 100 locations including many non-OhioLINK colleges. Delivery of items stored in the regional depositories is included.

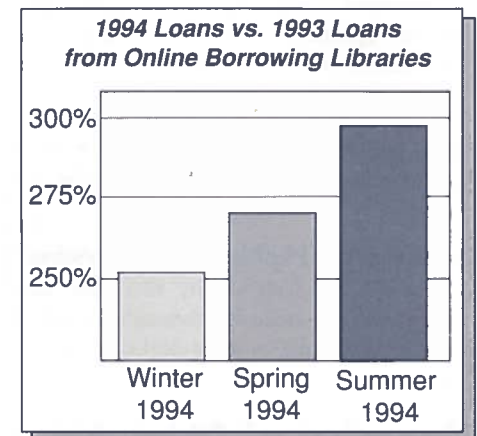


Figure 4. Loans from libraries with online borrowing to all other OhioLINK libraries have tripled since the availability of online borrowing.

Beginning in January 1994, library users were able to make online requests for books from other OhioLINK libraries while using the OhioLINK Central Catalog. Coupled with the 48-hour delivery service, online borrowing has given OhioLINK users one of the fastest and largest borrowing services in the country. The service has expanded from an initial eight institutions to 19, with the rest of the libraries to be added throughout 1995.

Libraries are loaning more than ever. The impact of online borrowing has been tremendous. The eight initial online borrowing libraries had a three-fold increase in loans to other OhioLINK libraries (Figure 4). All levels of researchers are taking advantage of the ease and speed of online borrowing. Of the 75,000 loans made from January 1994 to December 1994, faculty borrowed 22% and graduate students 41%. Undergraduates accounted for 28% of the loans (Figure 1).

Feedback

OhioLINK is one of my most valuable research resources. It's easy to access and borrowing is faster and more efficient than inter-library loan. But OhioLINK doesn't just allow for more expedient research; it also enables deeper research. By providing an extensive network of university libraries that I can borrow from, OhioLINK often supplies me with information that I simply couldn't, or shouldn't, do without.

*Chad Ferguson, Graduate Student
Department of English, Wright State University*

Reference Resources & Capabilities

Core set of databases in place. OhioLINK has begun to install a "core" of commercial databases covering citations to materials of many academic disciplines. Twenty databases are now available directly on the OhioLINK system with six more through gateways on the network. Additionally, numerous academic, governmental and commercial resources scattered across the Internet are available via the OhioLINK and individual institution "Gophers" (software programs providing easy access and network navigation).

Libraries can better develop local collections. The core databases are being provided to all OhioLINK libraries cost-effectively. For many, it is a significant expansion of information – information that was not affordable individually. Libraries who previously licensed these databases individually, can now redirect their funds to specialized, non-duplicative databases and to development of local collections.

Databases Available on OhioLINK

ABI/Inform (Business)
 AIDSLine
 Anthropological Literature
 Applied Science & Technology
 Art Index
 Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals
 Biography Index
 Biological & Agricultural Index
 Book Review Digest
 CancerLit
 Cumulative Book Index
 Dissertation Abstracts
 Education Index
 Essay & General Literature Index
 Handbook of Latin American Studies
 Health Planning & Administration
 Hispanic American Periodicals Index
 History of Science and Technology
 Index to Legal Periodicals
 Library Literature
 MEDLINE
 Newspaper Abstracts
 Nursing & Allied Health
 Periodical Abstracts
 PsycINFO
 WorldCat (OCLC)

What's Next for OhioLINK

To be a leader in statewide information systems means to pursue new information resources that help solve the Information Problem. While continuing to utilize effective, traditional library practice, OhioLINK libraries will evolve with new techniques and services through the cooperative OhioLINK program. The short timeline required to pursue this evolution is exciting and challenging. Electronic document delivery, full text databases, digital imaging, and more are in our future.

Moving More Materials, More Quickly.

OhioLINK will move ahead simultaneously on several fronts. For items that will be supplied by other libraries we will transmit items electronically more rapidly and effectively. We will extend online borrowing to journal articles. We will seek to expand our sources of electronically stored documents to improve access, analysis, display, and delivery.

Adding Databases.

We will continue to add selectively to the "core" of databases to ensure widespread coverage across academic disciplines. We will branch out to provide an electronic "ready reference" desk and full-text resources.

Making Full-text Fulfill Its Promise.

OhioLINK will take advantage of the growing amount of electronically stored documents. These sources offer the ability to deliver documents much more rapidly and cost-effectively than inter-library loan. OhioLINK is testing in four institutions the request and retrieval of electronically-stored journal articles. Stored at the OhioLINK central site, these can be transmitted within minutes to user-determined printers or fax machines at work, home, lab, or library.

Carrying Sound and Images

We must begin to look at "documents" more broadly. Our collections, and those available to

OhioLINK 48-hour Delivery System

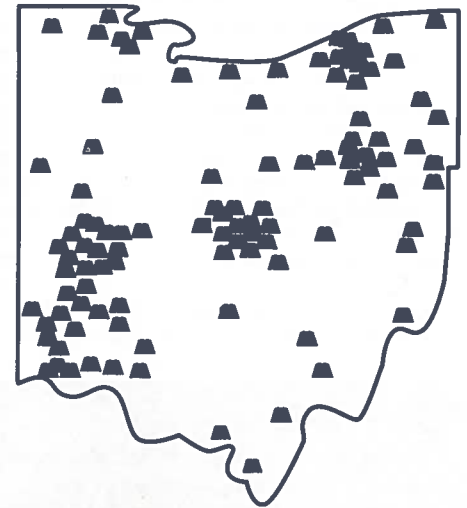


Figure 4. There are more than 100 sites, including eighteen non-member institutions, on the OhioLINK routes. Users are getting materials dramatically faster than through traditional inter-library loan.

us on the network, are rich with graphical and audio-visual materials (photographs, paintings, sound recordings, and manuscripts, as examples). Traditionally, access to these materials has been limited. Electronic storage and transmission provides the promise that these resources can be much more broadly used.

Providing Easy and Powerful Interfaces.

The tools are at hand to provide easy-to-use but quite powerful software to facilitate access, display, and use of electronic information. The Scholars Workstation, Graphic User Interfaces (GUI), and other developing tools will be aggressively pursued to aid both the basic and sophisticated users. ■

Feedback

OhioLINK has made it much easier to teach research courses and graduate courses that depend on up-to-date library resources. As a faculty member, I teach every student I have to use it. Students on regional campuses have often been considered second-class citizens because they didn't use main campus library resources. OhioLINK has changed that and the Ohio State Marion students have easy access to the main library and the other libraries on OhioLINK.

*Dr. Marvin Bratt, Director, University Classroom of Tomorrow
 Associate Professor, Educational Theory and Practice
 College of Education, The Ohio State University at Marion*

OhioLINK Member Institutions & Installation Dates

University of Akron, 1993	Medical College of Ohio, 1993
Belmont Technical College, 1995	Miami University, 1992
Bowling Green State University, 1992	Muskingum Technical College, 1994
Case Western Reserve University, 1992	North Central Technical College, 1994
Central Ohio Technical College, 1994	Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine, 1993
Central State University, 1992	Northwest State Community College, 1995
University of Cincinnati, 1992	Ohio State University, 1994
Cincinnati State Technical & Community College, 1995	Ohio University, 1994
Clark State Community College, 1995	Owens Community College, 1995
Cleveland State University, 1994	Rio Grande Community College, 1995
Columbus State Community College, 1994	Shawnee State University, 1994
Cuyahoga Community College, 1994	Sinclair Community College, 1994
University of Dayton, 1994	Southern State Community College, 1994
Edison State Community College, 1995	Stark Technical College, 1994
Hocking Technical College, 1995	State Library of Ohio, 1994
Jefferson Technical College, 1995	Terra Community College, 1995
Kent State University, 1994	University of Toledo, 1994
Lakeland Community College, 1995	Washington State Community College, 1995
Lima Technical College, 1994	Wright State University, 1992
Lorain County Community College, 1995	Youngstown State University, 1993
Marion Technical College, 1994	

OhioLINK Update

Vol 1 No 1 January 1995

OhioLINK Update is a periodic publication of the Ohio Library and Information Network intended to provide information on the developments of the OhioLINK project. For more information, please call or write:

Elizabeth Timmons, Editor
OhioLINK Update
2455 North Star Road Suite 300
Columbus, OH 43221
(614) 728-3600
timmons@ohiolink.edu

OhioLINK Governing Board

Judy Hample, University of Toledo, Chair
A. L. Addington, Shawnee State University
Eloise Clark, Bowling Green State University
Myron Henry, Kent State University
David Jamison, University of Akron
Shirley Palumbo, Columbus State Community College
James Scanlon, Youngstown State University
Rusty Stephens, Belmont Technical College
David Stewart, Ohio University
Paul Unger, Owens State Community College
Richard Zdanis, Case Western Reserve University
Ex Officio:
Elaine Hairston, Chancellor, Ohio Board of Regents
E. Garrison Walters, Ohio Board of Regents
Don Tolliver, Kent State University
Arnold Hirshon, Wright State University
Barbara Inzina, Ohio University
Thomas J. Sanville, Executive Director, OhioLINK

Feedback

As a small university library with a modest materials budget, being able to redirect funds for other needs has a real impact. We have cancelled several expensive database subscriptions since the databases are also available on OhioLINK. And we will be able to cancel 15 duplicate paper indexes for additional savings. We plan to use the savings to help implement a CD-Rom network with resources that our faculty and students cannot get through OhioLINK.

Tess Midkiff, Library Director, Shawnee State University

