



OhioLINK Update

Vol. 3 No. 1 March 1997

Original Vision Becomes Reality with New Service Plans

Satellite images, pictures of artifacts and paintings, electronic maps and numeric data from the U.S. government and other sources – these are just some of the types of information that we are planning for availability through OhioLINK. The original vision of OhioLINK extended well beyond text-based materials. Rapidly developing technologies and their constantly improving economies will allow the vision to turn into reality.

Ohio Supercomputer Center

OhioLINK is finalizing its implementation plans to begin providing digital images, geographic data and numeric data to its 500,000 patrons in conjunction with the Ohio Supercomputer Center (OSC). These initiatives will unfold and blossom over the next several years. Through this collaborative effort, OhioLINK and OSC, both projects of the Ohio Board of Regents, will create a central access system that will accommodate users with various needs and equipment capabilities. Much of the information acquisition will be done by OhioLINK and its participating libraries. OSC will serve as a large-scale storage facility, offering multi-terabyte storage capacity (each terabyte contains about as much information as 138 million typed pages) and a high-speed connection to the Internet.

Digital Images

Images will be viewed through the WWW interface individually or as part of a collection. By using scanners, OhioLINK member institutions will be able to contribute images to the system, making parts of their collections usable statewide that were previously unavailable except for in-library use, such as maps, slides and archival materials. This will be organized very similarly to the Central Catalog, with the owning library acknowledged in the attached record. OhioLINK also will purchase image collections from commercial sources to deepen the

breadth of material available.

Although still under development, the project calls for patrons to be able to find and view images in many ways. Users will be able to search for images by catalog record or by content, such as color or texture, viewing them one at a time or several at a time in a “thumbnail” size. Users will even be able to print or download the items for future study.

Scientific and Social Science Numeric Data

Most of the numeric information will fall into two categories: social sciences, such as government, and scientific data.



Government information, for example the census, has always been free and available to everyone, but being organized through OhioLINK, the information will be much more accessible and pliable. Much scientific data is currently not uniformly available statewide; mounting the information centrally will allow all OhioLINK patrons access to detailed data on subjects such as rainfall and pollution.

Students at both four-year and two-year colleges need access to numeric data. Users will be able to get the answer to a specific question, “What is the population of Peru?” or obtain a data set to analyze in detail, such as the monthly temperature measurements for all of the weather stations in Northern California.

Geographic Data

U.S. government geographical data currently available at OhioLINK institutions represents only a tiny fraction of the total information available. With more and more data being created, there needs to be an effective way to manage the deluge and turn it into useful information. Up to now, these geographic data files have been made available by various individual libraries’ efforts. The data varies from institution to institution and the efforts required to mount the information are being duplicated. Central access means that the work must be done only once, and a much wider set of information is available to all patrons statewide.

Through OhioLINK, users will be able to find, select and retrieve portions or all of a geographic data collection. The answer to

“Where is a place with a median rainfall below 10 inches?” becomes not just a listing, but a three-dimensional map of each location for the user to study. Our first priority will be to provide up-to-date information on Ohio.



Additional Benefits

Not only will the images and geographic and numeric data aid students’ research, the system will allow instructors to create unique reserve collections of images or data sets for use in classroom instruction and will act as a potential publishing outlet for faculty research.

Information owned by OhioLINK-participating libraries that becomes part of this new system can eventually be made available statewide beyond the academic community, aiding K-12 education and broadening access to Ohio residents, much as the Central Catalog has done for the last five years.

Speed of OhioLINK New Services Development in Question

The proposed funding levels for Ohio higher education in the next State Biennium are well documented in the Ohio press. The tight budget impacts OhioLINK. We are grateful that a budget increase has been proposed. It is well below the original request which would allow us to move ahead aggressively in electronic journal full text as well as the cutting-edge services noted in this *Update*.

We believe we have demonstrated an enormous value to the state for its generous support to-date. We believe these benefits can be extended and exceeded by our new service plans. We are hopeful the Ohio General Assembly will see fit to fund OhioLINK as generously as possible. If you wish to voice your support, please contact your library dean/director or LRC director for further details.



OhioLINK Seeks Improved Database Searching with RFP

It has been four-and-a-half years since OhioLINK first implemented access to its first statewide databases, *ABI/Inform* and *Periodical Abstracts*, via the interface common to our library catalogs. It has been two-and-a-half years since access to the first six Ovid medical databases was initiated. Through these two interfaces we now deliver 29 databases. Software technologies have improved and blossomed with the World Wide Web, increasing availability of related full-text material. In parallel, the expectations of OhioLINK users are increasing as they gain experience.

It is incumbent on OhioLINK staff and its members' librarians to periodically review our services with the goal of providing the best possible services to patrons. The rapidly changing Internet environment mandates that we do so at this time.

With the support of the OhioLINK Governing Board and the Library Advisory Council, OhioLINK issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) at the end of January soliciting bids from vendors for a possible replacement for the III and Ovid software currently used to make its reference databases available to users. III and Ovid were asked to respond to the RFP, along with five other vendors in a process which is expected to last until mid-July 1997.

This RFP sets the agenda for improvements to be made in access to reference databases during the next several years. Some highlights of the improvements sought by the RFP include:

Searching

- Multiple database searching: the possibility of submitting a search to multiple databases simultaneously, e.g. *MEDLINE* and *Biological Abstracts*;
- Better full-text searching, including enhanced support for proximity and phrase searching;
- Transfer searching: the ability to do a search in one database, then ask to have it applied to a second database; and,
- Multiple fields searches: a broader ability to do searches that use multiple database fields, for example author and subject.

Profiling

Creation of a mechanism whereby users can create a search and ask to be automatically notified via e-mail of new articles added to the reference database that match their search criteria.

Output

User control over how search results are displayed and delivered will be enhanced. Users will be given a greater opportunity to determine what part of their results are displayed or delivered via print and e-mail, and to determine how those results will be sorted.

Links to Full Text

Direct links between the article citations and full-text journal articles from UMI, Academic Press, and other sources as required.

If you have questions about the RFP, please contact David Barber, OhioLINK new services development director, at david@ohiolink.edu.

How to connect to OhioLINK:

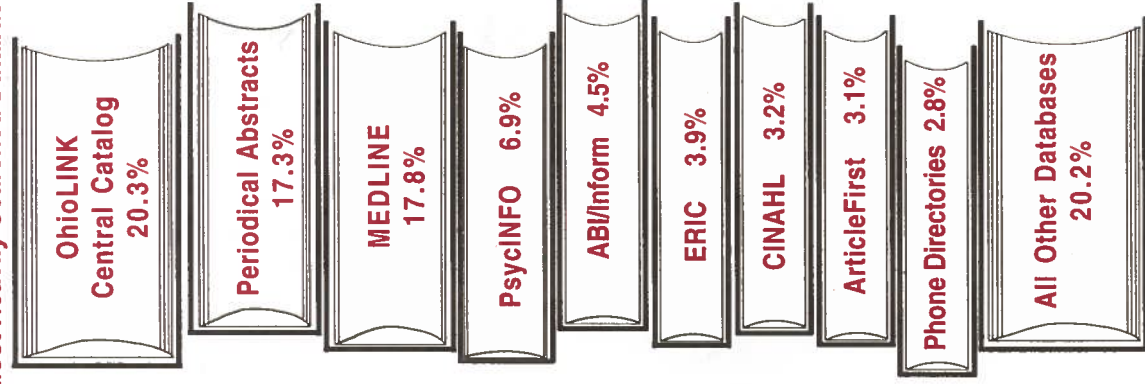
<http://www.ohiolink.edu>

telnet cat.ohiolink.edu

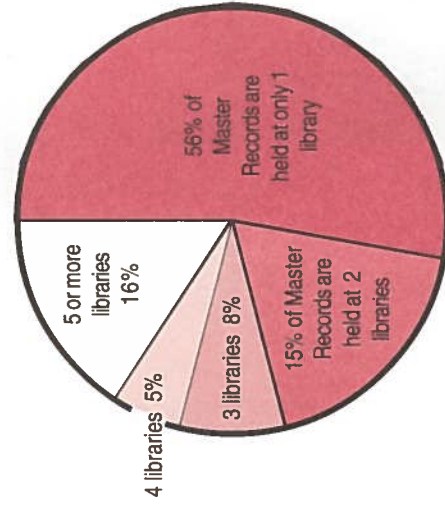


Calendar Year-End Statistics for 1996

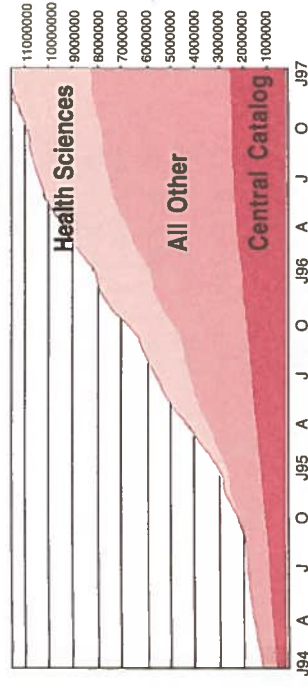
Most Heavily Searched Databases



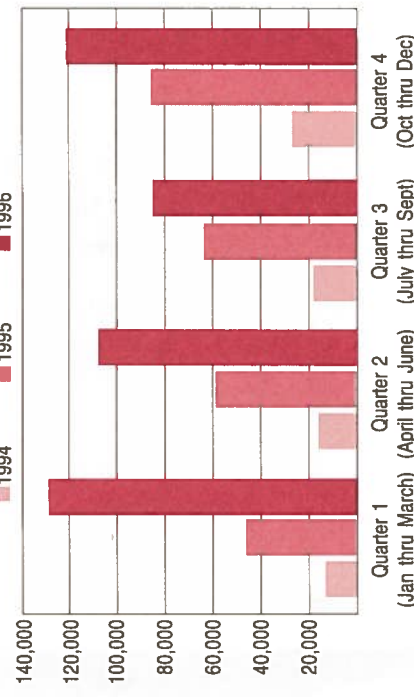
Central Catalog Master Records by Percentage of Libraries Physically Holding each Item



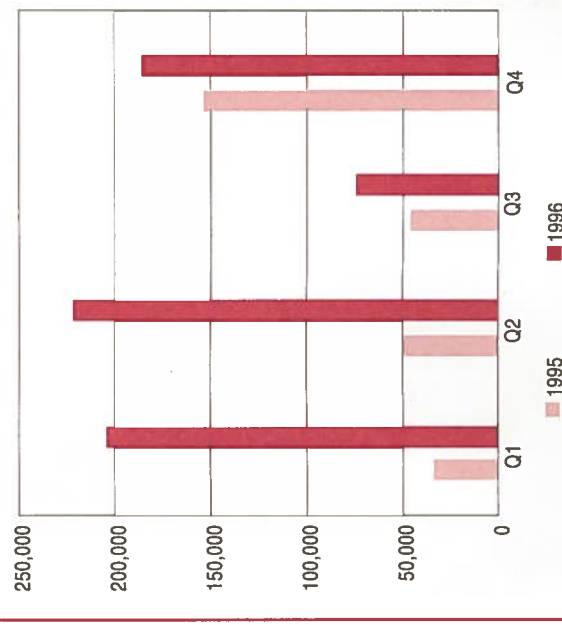
Annualized Searches - Central Site and Gateways



Patron Online Borrowing By Quarter



ABI/Inform-Periodical Abstracts Full Text Articles Delivered



ISI Databases Availability Delayed

Exceptionally slow response times in the beta test software has delayed for nearly five months access to three databases from the Institute for Scientific Information, *SciSearch*, *Social SciSearch* and *Arts & Humanities Search*. The vendor is completing version 2.0 of the necessary search software.

The trio was set to debut in September, but version 1.0 of the search interface often took up to ten minutes to return results of a search. The databases are scheduled to become available to OhioLINK patrons in early spring. The precise date is a function of the successful completion of 2.0 testing.

OhioLINK reached the agreement with ISI in July 1996 to be the first customer to gain WWW access to bibliographic data, full-length author abstracts and cited references from over 8,000 science, social sciences, and arts and humanities journals through the three databases.

On the Road Again....

OhioLINK to conduct another round of Regional Briefings

Staff from participating libraries will soon have the opportunity to get the scoop on the OhioLINK "big picture" as OhioLINK prepares for a second round of regional briefings later this spring.

More than 600 library staff across the state attended the first set of regional briefings in the fall of 1995, when OhioLINK staff conducted 14 sessions in seven cities. Attendees learned about the consortium's inception, accomplishments and goals for the future. Each of OhioLINK's four working committees - Cooperative Information Resources Management, Databases Management & Standards, Inter-Campus Services and User Services - held break-out sessions to explain their purpose, answer questions and solicit opinions on various topics in each of their respective areas.

Much has changed since the first set of meetings took place. Thirteen private liberal arts colleges are now participants in OhioLINK. The Central Catalog has grown from five million records and 12 million items to 6.2 million records representing 23.3 million items. Searching the Central Catalog and all of the research databases is much more dynamic and user-friendly with the proliferation of WWW technology. While there will be much to discuss, these two things stand out: the changing way patrons are receiving their information as we venture into not only more full-text documents, but into images, numeric and geographical data, and the possibility of improving our primary research database interface providers with the issuance of an RFP in January 1997.

We look forward to seeing many of you again, and meeting many new people at the upcoming sessions. Watch the OhioLINK Listserv for announcements.

Four Private Colleges New OhioLINK Participants

Four Ohio private liberal arts colleges are new participants in OhioLINK. Capital University, Mount Vernon Nazarene College, Ursuline College and Ohio Dominican College bring the number of private colleges participating to 13, and the total number of institutions affiliated with OhioLINK to 54.

Capital University's records have already been added to the Central Catalog and the library is active on the OhioLINK system. Mount Vernon Nazarene is set to begin in April, and Ursuline and Ohio Dominican will follow in the summer.

Historically OhioLINK has consisted primarily of publicly funded higher education institutions, but in 1995 the consortium began admitting Ohio private liberal arts colleges. Not only will each of these four institutions contribute unique items to the 6.2 million records in the central catalog, but they also will increase the possibilities for on-site borrowing. Patrons from OhioLINK-participating institutions have borrowing privileges extended to them from every other OhioLINK institution if the patron elects to visit these libraries in person.

OhioLINK Member and Participating Institutions, Including Installation Dates

University of Akron, 1993	Miami University, 1992
Belmont Technical College, 1995	Mount Vernon Nazarene College, 1996
Bowling Green State University, 1992	Muskingum Technical College, 1994
Capital University, 1996	North Central Technical College, 1994
Case Western Reserve University, 1992	Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine, 1993
Cedarville College, 1996	Northwest State Community College, 1996
Central Ohio Technical College, 1994	Oberlin College, 1995
Central State University, 1992	Ohio Dominican College, 1997
University of Cincinnati, 1992	Ohio Northern University, 1995
Cincinnati State Tech. & Comm. College, 1995	The Ohio State University, 1994
Clark State Community College, 1995	Ohio University, 1994
Cleveland State University, 1994	Ohio Wesleyan University, 1996
College of Mount St. Joseph, 1996	Owens Community College, 1995
Columbus State Community College, 1994	Rio Grande University and C.C., 1995
Cuyahoga Community College, 1994	Shawnee State University, 1994
University of Dayton, 1994	Sinclair Community College, 1994
Denison University, 1996	Southern State Community College, 1994
Edison State Community College, 1995	Stark Technical College, 1994
Hocking College, 1995	State Library of Ohio, 1994
Jefferson Community College, 1995	Terra Community College, 1995
Kent State University, 1994	University of Toledo, 1994
Kenyon College, 1996	Ursuline College, 1997
Lakeland Community College, 1995	Washington State Community College, 1996
Lima Technical College, 1994	College of Wooster, 1996
Lorain County Community College, 1995	Wright State University, 1992
Marion Technical College, 1994	Xavier University, 1996
Medical College of Ohio, 1993	Youngstown State University, 1993

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OhioLINK Update, published semi-annually provides information on the developments of the OhioLINK project.

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