



OhioLINK Addresses Users' Strategic Needs with New Search Software

Work on the new web-based OhioLINK citation database search engine continues according to schedule. The new software, purchased to manage 27 of OhioLINK's 29 current III and Ovid databases, goes live with 17 III databases this summer. The 10 Ovid databases are scheduled for a January 1999 cutover. The Central Catalog is not affected.

Two current III databases are not migrating to the new software. Dissertations Abstracts will be delivered through the vendor, while the future delivery of Article First is still under discussion.

At the initial cutover, the user accessing any one of 17 current III databases will find a system equally capable with today's III system. ABI/Inform and Periodical Abstracts deliver Power Pages articles, databases still link to the Central Catalog holdings, and the user with a question can access on-line help. The user will also be greeted with a clean, new interface and the presence of new options including a search history, not found on the current III system.

"Users won't lose any capabilities, and they will gain one or two new items in the new interface," according to Anita Cook, OhioLINK director of library systems, "The system that goes live in July includes what we consider necessary, and we have plans for additional enhancements not seen in this first release."

History

OhioLINK originally investigated the citation database search engine market to find a system able to grow with both the advances in information technology and the demands of OhioLINK users. The search engine RFP cited OhioLINK's strategic objectives, including the need for enhanced integration with the new full-text services, as reasons for investigating a new system. Deficiencies in the III mounted databases, like the lack of multi-index searching, multi-database searching, and search histories, also created the desire for a new system. Evaluation of the vendor replies led to three options: the status quo, converting the III databases to Ovid, or converting all the databases to a locally controlled, commercially supported system. Dataware Technologies was selected as the vendor, because it offered versatility and long-term cost-effective enhancement and maintenance.

Short and Long Term Benefits

The new search software reduces the number of interfaces presented to OhioLINK users, and it facilitates the on-going process of

adding new institutions to OhioLINK. It also gives OhioLINK more control over the system's future direction.

The use of a single interface and search engine for the citation databases simplifies the user's experience. The user has a common interface for all the affected databases, rather than one interface for III delivered databases and another for Ovid delivered databases. It also will facilitate future enhancements to benefit the user. For example, a user will enter a search in one

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- Anita Cook, director of library systems

database, and, if the user isn't satisfied, the user can then transfer this same search to another database without having to reenter the search.

The Dataware license is an unlimited site license. Unlike the current licensing agreements with III and Ovid, the cost of the system software remains constant as new libraries join, and OhioLINK controls the allocation of costs. This allows OhioLINK to offer its resources at a more affordable rate to Ohio's small private colleges. Other freedoms OhioLINK gains with the new locally controlled search engine include which new options are delivered and when. OhioLINK can now choose to design links between its citation databases and its new full-text collection without the collaboration of competing vendors.

Implementation

The transfer of so many databases creates many tactical issues. Scheduling, local compatibility, staff training, access by disabled users, and general system usability are major issues OhioLINK is addressing as July nears.

The III databases go live on the new system in July. Libraries will not lose their current III access immediately. There will be an overlap period for both current web and telnet versions of these 17 databases. OhioLINK plans to continue this overlap through the summer and then discontinue the III supported interfaces before the fall term. Users without web access may be able to continue using OhioLINK databases on the new search system through a LYNX client but without the full functionality found on the web.

Prior to the transition, affected library staff can learn about the new search engine and user

interface in a specially designed training program. Regional training sessions will be scheduled across the state in June for "training the trainers." Those selected by their institutions to attend will receive training about the system and how to train others about it. A second series of "training the trainers" is projected for the end of the year. The second set of sessions will prepare staff for the Ovid databases' transition.

Designed for the User

Making it usable is, of course, OhioLINK's foremost mission. Advanced capabilities and cost-effectiveness have little meaning to OhioLINK users, if they don't find the system usable. The user interface is being designed in conjunction with the User Services Committee, a standing OhioLINK committee made up of OhioLINK institutions' reference staff -- those on the front-line with users -- and the User Advisory Council, a group of representatives from our members' library advisory committees. An accompanying set of user documentation, also created under the guidance of the User Services Committee, will debut in conjunction with the new search system. In addition to this input, a usability test will be completed during the introductory phase. This test will allow the OhioLINK staff to evaluate and correct any system deficiencies.

Compatibility with systems for disabled users is also currently under investigation. A well-informed consultant with current adaptive technology experience will advise the system developers about compatibility with the needs of disabled users.

If you have any questions about Dataware and its implementation, contact Anita Cook, director of library systems, at anita@ohiolink.edu.

Databases affected by July software transition

- ABI/Inform
- Applied Science & Technology Index
- Art Index
- Article First
- Biography Index
- Biological & Agricultural Index
- Book Review Digest
- Cumulative Book Index
- Dissertation Abstracts
- Education Index
- Essay & Literature Index
- Index to Legal Periodicals
- Library Literature
- A Matter of Fact
- Medical Electives
- MLA
- Newspaper Abstracts
- PAIS
- Periodical Abstracts

OhioLINK Works Toward Software Contract and Standards for Multimedia Services

As reported in the March 1997 *Update* new service plans were announced in order to realize OhioLINK's original vision of making a variety of types of multimedia information available to the community. In June 1997, two RFPs were issued to support this endeavor, and the process of evaluating proposals is nearing completion. Additionally, standards for indexing and digitizing multimedia information are being developed and new content – from within OhioLINK and elsewhere – is being considered.

RFP

The Multimedia RFP process, initiated in June 1997, is almost complete. In December 1997 a committee charged with evaluating the RFPs recommended that OhioLINK pursue contract negotiations with The Bulldog Group and Informix. In January 1998, OhioLINK staff members presented the recommendation of the Multimedia RFP committee to the Library Advisory Council and the OhioLINK Governing Board. Both groups approved the recommendation. The system proposed would use Informix's Online Dynamic Server as the underlying database system. Bulldog will provide the management system that will work with the Informix database. This system will provide the web-based environment for cataloguing, searching, browsing, and using multimedia information.

Standards

With the RFP process nearing completion, standards for digitization and indexing multimedia information must be determined in order to begin database building as soon as the software is purchased. The four subject committees currently evaluating these standards are:

- Art and Architecture
- Biology and Life Sciences
- Geography and Earth Sciences
- Humanities, Archives, and Music

These groups are recommending methods to describe images and other multimedia data, including the appropriate database structures and descriptive terminology necessary to make this type of information useful. The committees are also making recommendations on how images should be scanned and other information digitized – the quality and color requirements, as well as the equipment that should be used.

Content

OhioLINK is reviewing multimedia content from a variety of sources. Among OhioLINK institutions, interest in digitizing collections is coming from archives, special collections, departmental libraries, slide libraries, and individual faculty members. Content ranges from archival manuscripts to photos of industrial machinery.

External sources of multimedia data are also being considered. Partnerships with local museums, public libraries, and historical societies are being explored. Commercial sources of images in art history are currently available and are under review by the Cooperative Information Resources Management Committee. OhioLINK is looking for additional vendors of digital images and other multimedia information.

If you have questions about the RFP, multimedia standards, or potential multimedia content, please consult the staff area of the OhioLINK web site or contact Charly Bauer, assistant director of library systems - multimedia databases, at charly@ohiolink.edu.

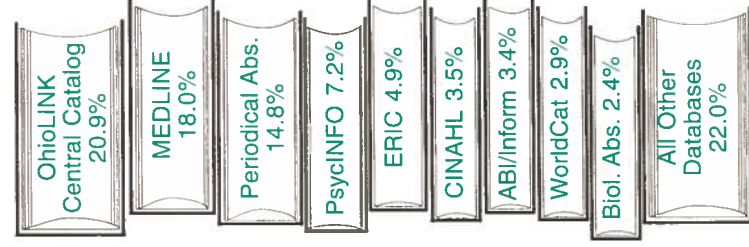
How to connect to OhioLINK:

WWW
TELNET
cat.ohiolink.edu

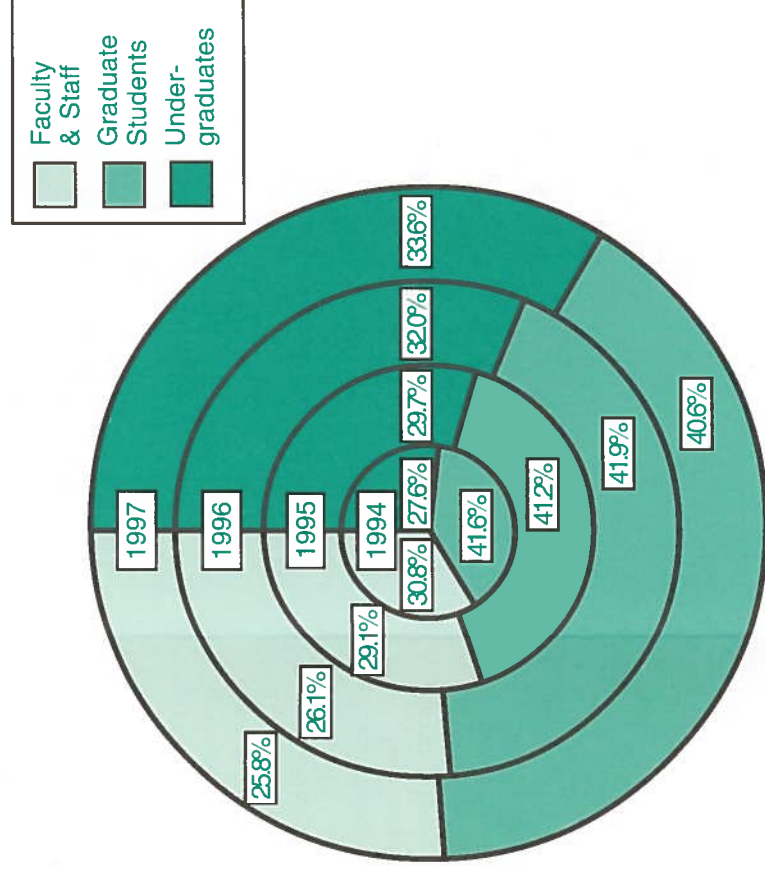


Calendar Year Statistics for 1997

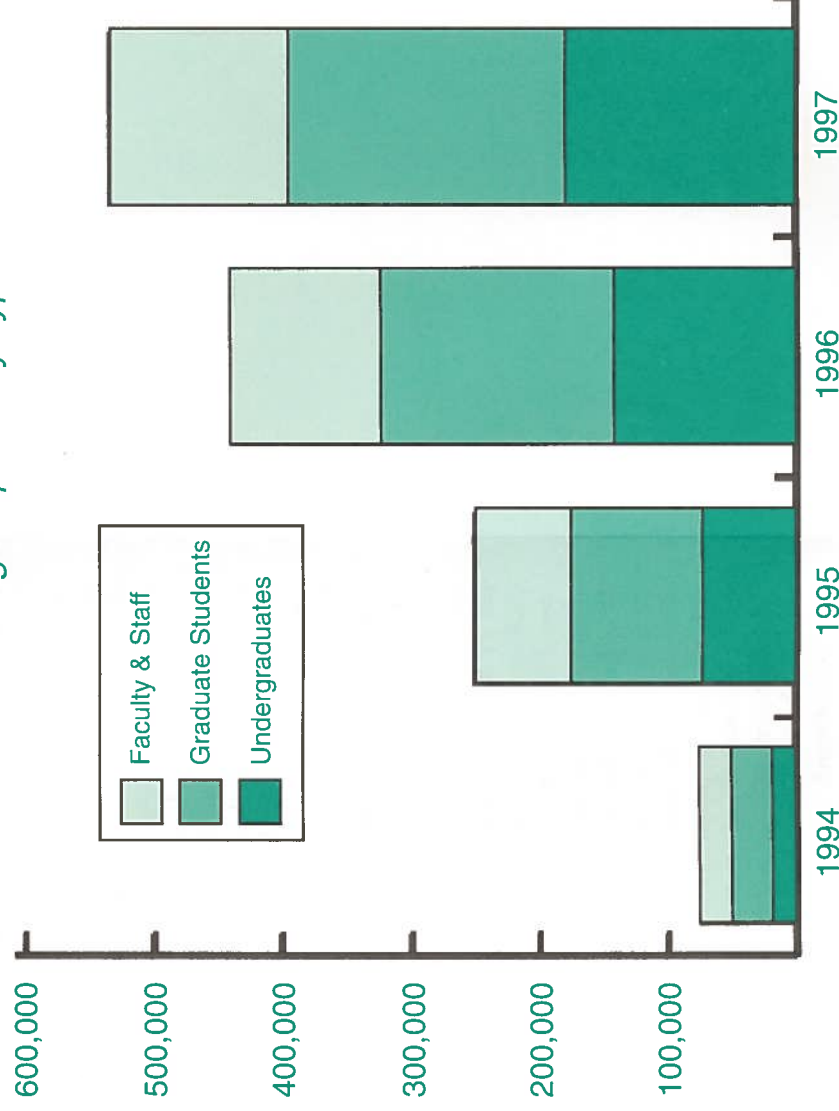
Most Heavily Searched Databases



Who's Using Online Borrowing (1994 - 1997)



Patron Online Borrowing Requests by Type of User



In Brief ...

Electronic Journal Center Brings Multiple User Access to Formerly Limited Resources

OhioLINK's collection of online full-text journals articles will increase tremendously upon the release of the Electronic Journal Center, EJC.

Previously hoped to debut in January, the EJC should make its appearance early in the spring. Users will find the EJC on the OhioLINK homepage. It will provide multi-publisher electronic journal access through a single search engine search process. Elsevier Science and Academic Press titles will be the first collections accessible through the system, and OhioLINK is currently negotiating with a variety of other commercial and private publishers to expand the EJC collection of titles.

17 Private Institutions to Join OhioLINK in 1998

John Carroll University joins OhioLINK as an individual participating member, while 16 private Ohio colleges and universities join as the OhioNET operated OPAL consortium. This raises the number of private institutions to 32, and the total number of institutions affiliated with OhioLINK to 73.

Expectations are that John Carroll's records will be loaded in July and it will be active on the OhioLINK online borrowing system in September of this year. For the OPAL consortium the expectation is that records will be loaded in September; it will be active on the online borrowing system in October. Members of the OPAL consortium are: Antioch College, Athens of Ohio, Baldwin-Wallace College, Bluffton College, Defiance College, University of Findlay, Franciscan University of Steubenville, Heidelberg College, Malone College, Mount Carmel School of Nursing, Mount Union College, Muskingum College, Otterbein College, Tiffin University, Wilberforce University, and Wilmington College.

New Databases available through OhioLINK

Two new databases are debuting on the OhioLINK system. All OhioLINK institutions now receive the Annual Bibliography of the English Language (ABELL) and the Bibliography of American Literature (BAL). ABELL contains records of all scholarly articles, doctoral dissertations, books and reviews published in English since 1920, and BAL has the literary works of approximately 300 American writers prior to 1930.

Grants Promote Web Resources for Learning

OhioLINK will announce the second round of Instructional Web Site grant awardees this spring. Currently, OhioLINK hosts nine such sites at <http://iws.ohiolink.edu>. New awardees will receive up to \$5,000 in funding to get their websites operative for this fall. The goal of instructional websites is to stimulate innovative ways for higher education faculty to improve the quality of classroom instruction through the use of the Internet, World Wide Web, OhioLINK, and local library resources.

OhioLINK Member and Participating Institutions with Installation Dates

Universities listed in italics are expected to join the OhioLINK system during 1998.

Antioch College, 1998
 Athenium of Ohio, 1998
 Baldwin-Wallace College, 1998
 Bluffton College, 1998
 University of Akron, 1993
 Belmont Technical College, 1995
 Bowling Green State University, 1992
 Capital University, 1996
 Case Western Reserve University, 1992
 Cedarville College, 1996
 Central Ohio Technical College, 1994
 Central State University, 1992
 University of Cincinnati, 1992
 Cincinnati State Technical & Comm. College, 1995
 Clark State Community College, 1995
 Cleveland State University, 1994
 College of Mount St. Joseph, 1996
 Columbus State Community College, 1994
 Cuyahoga Community College, 1994
 University of Dayton, 1994
 Defiance College, 1998
 Denison University, 1996
 Edison State Community College, 1995
 University of Findlay, 1998
 Franciscan University of Steubenville, 1998
 Heidelberg College, 1998
 Hiram College, 1997
 Hocking College, 1995
 Jefferson Community College, 1995
 John Carroll University, 1998
 Kent State University, 1994
 Kenyon College, 1996
 Lakeland Community College, 1995
 Lima Technical College, 1994
 Lorain County Community College, 1995
 Malone College, 1998
 Marion Technical College, 1994
 Medical College of Ohio, 1993
 Miami University, 1992
 Mount Carmel School of Nursing, 1998
 Mount Union College, 1998
 Mount Vernon Nazarene College, 1996
 Muskingum College, 1998
 Muskingum Technical College, 1994
 North Central Technical College, 1994
 Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine, 1993
 Northwest State Community College, 1996
 Oberlin College, 1995
 Ohio Dominican College, 1997
 Ohio Northern University, 1995
 The Ohio State University, 1994
 Ohio University, 1994
 Ohio Wesleyan University, 1996
 Otterbein College, 1998
 Owens Community College, 1995
 Rio Grande University and Comm. College, 1995
 Shawnee State University, 1994
 Sinclair Community College, 1994
 Southern State Community College, 1994
 Stark Technical College, 1994
 State Library of Ohio, 1994
 Terra Community College, 1995
 Tiffin University, 1998
 University of Toledo, 1994
 Ursuline College, 1997
 Washington State Community College, 1996
 Wilberforce University, 1998
 Wilmington College, 1998
 Wittenberg University, 1997
 College of Wooster, 1996
 Wright State University, 1992
 Xavier University, 1996
 Youngstown State University, 1993

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