

Foreword

Howard F. McGinn, Jr., Guest Editor

This issue of *North Carolina Libraries* is devoted to the topic of NETWORKING. Since the King Research study in 1982 and the subsequent creation and funding of the now-famous ZOCs (Zones of Cooperation), Networking has undergone significant development in North Carolina. In the 1984 Summer issue of *North Carolina Libraries* John Welch, in his introductory remarks, posed these questions. He asked: "What is the future for networking in our state? Will we develop a vast, integrated, multitype network of libraries or find that our networking needs are handled more efficiently by local or regional ZOCs? The answer to these intriguing questions will unfold for us as we continue to examine and experiment with networks." And the answers have, indeed, been unfolding.

The past year has seen the implementation of the North Carolina Information Network, a statewide information service that is being designed to function as the "information infrastructure" that the state needs to continue its educational and economic development into the 1990's. The North Carolina Information Network is the state's "Good Roads" of the future. But the network and its programs are the results of successful projects created, developed and implemented by talented and resourceful North Carolina librarians during the past ten years. The ZOCs worked and are being used as models for the rest of the state. The North Carolina Online Union Catalog, maintained at OCLC, Inc., began operations in late May of this year. It provides unprecedented access to the resources of North Carolina libraries of all types to all libraries in every corner of this geographically diverse state. Access to the OCLC Interlibrary Loan subsystem and the late Fall 1986 introduction of the North Carolina Union List of Serials expand even farther the use of these dial access services. For the first time our libraries can now afford to use the massive North Carolina Databases at OCLC via dial access using any standard microcomputer and telecommunications. Soon the State Library will launch a one year test of an electronic mail/bulletin board service and will make available to the far-flung librar-

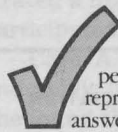
ies of the state access to over 700 major business, technical and educational databases. Other information networks will soon follow.

But Networking in North Carolina is very alive on the local and regional levels. Electronic mail/bulletin board programs are in operation, local union catalogs and union lists of serials are being created, automation continues in many libraries, retrospective conversion projects are numerous, and the University of North Carolina's Linknet program is just entering its start-up phase. The Triangle Research Libraries Network (TRLN) nears completion and is serving as a national model of cooperation. The western North Carolina network linking Appalachian State University, Western Carolina University, and the University of North Carolina at Asheville is well into development.

John Welch's questions can be answered. The networks of North Carolina are vast, integrated,

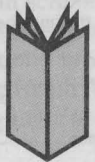
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multitype networks, *and* vital sophisticated local and regional networks. This issue describes some of these success stories. Remember, these articles do not predict what the author thinks will happen. They reflect what is now happening in North Carolina. Diane Kester describes how networking can aid the school library; she discusses school library networking developments in other areas of the country. Douglas Perry and Peter Bileckyj describe the successful electronic mail/-bulletin board systems they developed in Cleveland and Wilson Counties respectively. Deborah Babel tells how a bibliographic network is being constructed to serve the needs of our mountain area public universities. Don Beagle shows how his Lee County Library automated and began the retrospective conversion of the system's collection by using Dynix and the Lee County computer facility. Barbara Anderson and Joy Wilson describe the development and implementation of business, demographic, and statistical database services at the Forsyth County Library System. This writer presents his thoughts on the role of networking in economic development. Finally, in a

marvelous example of international networking, Marjorie Lindsey, Multitype Library Cooperation Consultant for the State Library of North Carolina until her retirement in 1985, describes her participation in a networking conference conducted by the government of Nepal during her recent several month assignment in that country.

Since the last issue on this topic in *North Carolina Libraries* in 1984, the North Carolina Information Network and the many local and regional networks, have begun operation. The future has arrived, aided by rapid advances in microcomputers and telecommunications. But more than this, the future was brought to us by the hard work, talent and dedication of many North Carolina librarians. Technology didn't make the network possible; people have. And because the spirit of cooperation and common purpose continues to grow among libraries and librarians of all types in the state, we will be able, in a way, to constantly have the future as part of the present. I hope you enjoy this Networking issue of *North Carolina Libraries*.

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