

# Access to Information — Can Schools Provide It?

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"I'm sorry. That issue is missing from our collection. Why don't you try the public library or the community college? They should have that issue for you to use."

Does it sound familiar? Have you felt guilty that you could not provide the resources your students need? Do you find yourself referring students to other libraries, not even sure whether or not the item will indeed be available? There must be a better way.

There is. School library/media coordinators are establishing a link to other libraries by sharing resource information — be it a simple list of periodical holdings or a microfiche copy of a union list of serials of the libraries in the community. To make contact with other libraries, school library/media coordinators are beginning to utilize on-line bulletin boards and electronic mail.

Cooperation among school libraries had its beginning with system level centralized acquisitions and processing. Often the system level supervisor provided this service to the teachers or teacher-librarians who were in charge of the school library. Expensive items such as 16mm motion picture films were purchased by the school system for all teachers to share. Gradually the film collections were loaned to other libraries and school library networking was on its way.

In 1978, the Task Force on the Role of the School Library Media Program in the National Program quoted the National Commission on Libraries and Information Services in defining a *library network*.

Two or more libraries and/or other organizations engaged in a common pattern of information exchange, through communications, for some functional purpose. A network usually consists of a formal arrangement whereby materials, information, and services provided by a variety of types of libraries and/or other organizations are made available to all potential users. (Libraries may be in different jurisdictions but agree to serve one another on the same basis as each serves its own constituents. Computers and telecommunications may be among the tools used for facilitating communication among them.)<sup>1</sup>

## Research Reports

Literature on school library cooperation is

scant. Research reported in 1981 by Barbara Immroth revealed that the multitype library network in Colorado successfully includes schools.<sup>2</sup> Writing in 1982 on a study of attitudes of school library media specialists on networking Ann Carlson Weeks stated, "Few references are made to this participation [school libraries and other types of libraries] in the body of literature dealing with multitype networks."<sup>3</sup> She continued, "Information available on the topic is primarily philosophical or descriptive in nature, appearing in professional journal articles and conference papers geared toward the school library professional audience. Few evaluative studies have appeared in the literature."<sup>4</sup> What has been happening?

The research generally concerns two factors relating to networking — the holdings of libraries and the attitude of librarians. As supporting evidence of the value of sharing resources, Marilyn W. Greenburg studied the collections of school libraries for evidences of an overlap or duplication of holdings. Over 50% of the titles were unique to an individual school collection; they were not duplicated in other schools. She identified factors that contribute to the availability of library materials in secondary schools. Schools which demonstrated a high availability of books and materials participated in interlibrary loan.<sup>5</sup>

Carol A. Doll researched the overlap of school and public libraries collections in Illinois in 1980. She found that the average overlap in school collections was 30 percent and the average overlap in school and public library collections was 50 percent. School collections differed from each other more than they differed from public library collections.<sup>6</sup>

Weeks surveyed the media specialists in New York State. The school librarians there ranked interlibrary loan as one of the most important services they would like to add to their program.<sup>7</sup> In 1985 Peggy Chapman conducted an attitude survey of public and school librarians in a large metropolitan city in North Carolina. She reported that, "While both groups agreed that there are many benefits to be derived from networking, many more public librarians than media specialists expressed a willingness to participate in

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inter-library cooperation.<sup>78</sup> You see, there is a wide variance in attitudes of school library professionals concerning the sharing of resources.

Two years ago Mary Holloway, writing for *North Carolina Libraries*, identified the assets that public school libraries can bring to a multi-type library network. First, there are over 2,000 school library/media centers just in North Carolina. Second, both print and nonprint resources, along with the equipment to utilize audiovisual materials, are available in these schools. Third, microcomputers are already in the schools and are being used for instruction as well as library management. Holloway went on to identify short and long-range plans for school participation in a statewide network.<sup>9</sup>

An overview of the role of school library/media centers in multitype library networks was presented by Janice K. Doan in 1985. In addition to Holloway's reasons for school library participation in networks, Doan points out that the school library is the entry point for future adult library users. If we want adults to have access to resources, we must also provide the service to school children, young adults, and educators.

### **Schools Collections in a National Bibliographic Database**

Several school systems across the nation have become members of a state or regional vendor of the national bibliographic data base compiled by OCLC in Dublin, Ohio. *School Library Media Annual 1985, Volume Three* lists 58 school libraries and library systems which are members of a network and direct users of OCLC services as of April 1985. "Other school users receive OCLC services via a contract with an OCLC member, such as a processing center, state library, public library, or academic library."<sup>10</sup>

Most academic libraries and large public libraries in North Carolina subscribe to the services of SOLINET, the vendor for OCLC. Acquisitions, cataloging, and interlibrary loan activity is done on-line with either a direct computer line or with a microcomputer and dial access with a telephone. Two school systems, Greensboro and Charlotte-Mecklenburg, are members. In both systems it is used primarily for cataloging in the centralized processed service. Therefore, the OCLC record does not identify the individual school which has an item, only that it is held by a school within the system.

### **Schools in State and Local Networks**

*New York City.* The New York City School Library System (NYCSLS) is a state-funded pro-

gram which seeks to provide a coordinated approach to library service in the public and non-public schools of New York City. The high school libraries were given the option to join NYCSLS. An agreement between the principal and librarian on one part and the Library Unit of the Board of Education on the other, enables the school to become a part of the New York City School Library System. As an incentive, the Library Unit, using LSCA Funds, provides a modem and the phone installation charges if the school principal agrees to purchase the computer system and pay the monthly phone bill. Presently, 20 of the 111 high schools in New York City are members. Their goals are to enrich library collections and enhance library services through the sharing of materials and information. The NYCSLS contracts with the New York Public Library which operates the Metropolitan Inter-Library Cooperative System Database, MILCS. MILCS contains most of the holdings of the major public libraries in the New York metropolitan region and the NYCSLS Database. The NYCSLS administers the interlibrary loan program through which member libraries may borrow materials from one another as well as from other school library systems and public, academic and special libraries. This summer elementary, intermediate and junior high school libraries are installing computers and telephones to begin participation in the NYCSLS.

Three other programs are administered through NYCSLS — cooperative collection development, homework hotline, and computerized information retrieval (online data base use). Cooperative collection development is gaining in popularity. In NYC participants met to identify collection strengths and needs. Based on these results, the system designates one library to strengthen or develop a special collection. Subjects of these special collections include areas such as folk tales, ethnic literature, Asian countries, history of specific periods of American history, computers, law, and specific sciences. An informal agreement allows materials to be borrowed by member libraries. The idea of cooperative collection development is one which should be considered in North Carolina, not only by individual administrative units but also among neighboring systems and public libraries.

*New York State.* The Legislature appropriated \$3.9 million to foster the development of 48 school library systems. Each system is developing a computer-based union catalog of materials in the schools within the system. An interlibrary loan and delivery system is being established. Each system is to become a member of one of the nine

state public, academic, and special library networks. A recent study of the interlibrary loan activity of these schools in New York showed that 85% was between schools, 9% was with public libraries, and 6% was from other types of libraries. Within the state, adjoining school districts are meeting for cooperative collection development planning. Unnecessary duplication of expensive items is prevented. (One school purchased *Newsbank* and distributed the index on microfiche to cooperating libraries.) District and regional depositories have been established as "last book repositories."

*Alaska.* Schools in the Anchorage School district are fully participating members of the Alaska Library Network. The holdings of district libraries are on microfilm. High school libraries may dial into Western Library Network (WLN) for holding information as well as for electronic mail. Also available is a microfiche catalog of the holdings of the twenty-eight systems that belong to WLN.<sup>11</sup>

*New Jersey.* The state library is providing leadership in the development of six regional library cooperatives. The interim planning committees in each region included school librarians. Emphasis during 1986 has been in network membership approval by superintendents and boards of education followed by reference services, citation location, interlibrary loan, and delivery. The computerized data base is the next phase.<sup>12</sup>

*Connecticut.* In a recent presentation at a session at ALA, Catherine Murphy, Stanford, CT, explained school and public libraries use of OPACs (Online Public Access Catalog). Teachers, students, and the library staff have subject access, as well as author and title access, to the collections of member libraries. Murphy identified eight ways that OPACs affect collection development.

Better cataloging improves access; networking makes other collections accessible; improving the catalog record makes selection of materials more accurate; new ways to search the catalog makes searches faster and more successful; successful and unsuccessful searches can be recorded and used in evaluating new acquisitions; bibliographies and inventories can be used to increase collection usage and aid in the weeding process; acquisition modules of the online catalog can provide records of materials purchased by classification and subject and can be compared to online catalog use; circulation statistics can be compared to the collection and goals set for increasing sections which have high usage.<sup>13</sup>

In developing a record for a bibliographic data base, Murphy pointed out that schools require unique fields such as grade level, curriculum area(s), special aspects, and relationships to other curriculum areas. She warns that, "School library media specialists need to become more aware of standards so that they are not disen-

franchised in the larger automation world." (Murphy)

*Colorado.* The Colorado Regional Library Service System, in operation since 1976, included school library media personnel as equal partners in the development of the state network. RLSS has provided inservice programs for the school library media personnel and worked for passage of legislation which included schools as equal members in multitype library cooperation. Links have been formed to enable smaller school districts to utilize ILL, reference computer searches, and communications from RLSS.

In other states, schools are becoming active participants in library cooperative networks, i.e., Illinois (through ILLINET), Indiana (18 systems in INCOLSA), Ohio (OHIONET), Pacific Network of OCLC (6 systems in PACNET), Montgomery County Maryland (MILO), and now, in North Carolina - Wilson Library Network, and CLEVE-NET.

*North Carolina.* In our state, multitype library cooperation has been supported with LSCA grants administered by the State Library. These local cooperative networks have been called ZOCs, Zones of Cooperation. Two projects involve school library media centers.

CLEVE-NET. The high schools in Cleveland County were included from the beginning in the proposal to form a multitype library network. A history of cooperation and reciprocal borrowing through use of a common library card for the libraries in Cleveland County provided the foundation for their ZOC project. With Cleveland County Memorial Library as the center, CLEVE-NET links two public libraries, a technical college, four high schools, and a private college (Cleveland County Memorial Library, Mauney Memorial Library in Kings Mountain, Cleveland Technical College, Burns High School, Crest High School, Kings Mountain High School, Shelby High School, Gardner-Webb College). The first project of the network was an on-line union list of patrons. Second was the Union List of Serials, accessible both in print format and on-line. The third project, which is still in the information gathering stage, is an on-line local information file of community agencies and organizations. Electronic mail provides resource sharing opportunities and personal contact among the librarians. Public events, college programs, and school activities are posted on the electronic bulletin board. The Project Director for CLEVE-NET is Douglas Perry, Director, Cleveland County Memorial Library.

Each high school in the network received a computer, printer, modem, and telephone. Al-



though school patrons were not added to the on-line list, schools have added their holdings to the Union List of Serials.

**WILSON COUNTY LIBRARY NETWORK.** After overcoming the technical difficulties of linking a variety of brands of microcomputers, the Wilson County Library Network began operation in the fall of 1985. The headquarters of the network is the Wilson County Public Library. Other members include two academic libraries, three high schools, a hospital library, and the School for the Deaf (Atlantic Christian College, Wilson County Technical College, Fike High School, Hunt High School, Beddingfield High School, Wilson Memorial Hospital, and Eastern North Carolina School for the Deaf). The interactive electronic mail/bulletin board system is used to transmit interlibrary loan requests, reference requests, and professional information among member libraries. Projects being developed include a consortium union list of serials, union list of audiovisual materials and a union list of patrons. Peter A. Bileckyj, Reference Department, Wilson County Public Library, is Project Director.

The school system has recently purchased new computers for the high schools to allow all members to take advantage of the share-ware that the Network has obtained. School library/media center activity on the system was picking up as the school year ended. [Note: See articles on Cleve-net and the Wilson Library Network in this issue.]

### **School Participation in Networking in North Carolina**

What does this mean for school/library media centers in North Carolina where even a telephone is a rarity? First, do your homework. Seek the advice of consultants in Raleigh — both in the Department of Public Instruction and at the State Library. Read, read, and read about the elements involved in networking.

Networking works, even without telecommunications. Local schools can develop plans and procedures to participate in cooperative collection development. Lists of periodical holdings can be shared with local colleges and public libraries. Just today, a community college librarian needed an educational journal for a patron. She suspected that one of the schools in the county would have it — but the schools have not provided the college a listing of our holdings, even though they have provided a listing of their holdings to the schools. With consolidation of schools many libraries have duplicate copies of reference materials. How do you find out who could use

that second copy of *Current Biography* 1954?

Have you learned to use electronic mail? Many areas of this state have bulletin board services available for a nominal fee. No more "telephone tag!" Visit the ZOC projects in the state which include school libraries. Visit selective users of the North Carolina Information Network.

The key to sharing is advanced planning. If your county has not formed an association of librarians, start one. Work together to plan the sales pitch to be presented to appropriate administrators. The administrator must be convinced of the values of the network before being presented with membership fees, yearly maintenance fees, telecommunication costs, and other expenses.

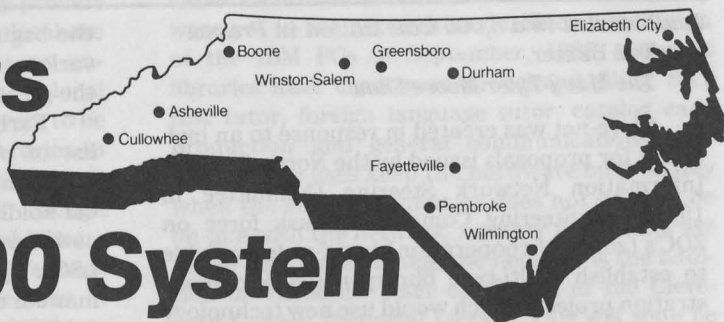
Why network? School library/media coordinators are vendors of information. The quantity and quality of information will be enhanced with networking. Students of all ages should not be denied the access to information just because their own school library/media center does not subscribe to a specific magazine or cannot afford a special reference tool. Networking is sharing. Sharing begins in each administrative unit and each county. Networking is not a question; it is a necessity.

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# OCLC UPDATE

## Unanimous Decision for LS/2000 System



**L**ibraries at twelve campuses of The University of North Carolina have unanimously agreed to purchase the LS/2000 system. Installation of the first four systems has begun. All systems will be installed by June 1987.

In November 1985, the University of North Carolina released a request for proposals which aimed to provide integrated library systems at twelve of its campuses. In March 1986, following evaluation of the eight responses, all twelve libraries recommended the selection of the LS/2000 system.

*According to Dr. Robert W. Williams, Associate Vice President, Academic Affairs, "The University of North Carolina looks forward to a most satisfactory association with the LS/2000 system. Of special significance to us is the fact that the LS/2000 system is a product of OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc., whom most of our libraries have depended on for computerized cataloging, interlibrary loan, and related services. The LS/2000 staff at OCLC provides the level of vendor support and product development that The University needs to afford maximum service to its users."*

With these additions, OCLC now supports 79 LS/2000 computer installations serving 143 libraries throughout the United States and the United Kingdom.

### LS/2000 Sites

Boone	Appalachian State University
Elizabeth City	Elizabeth City State University
Fayetteville	Fayetteville State University
Greensboro	North Carolina A & T State University University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Durham	North Carolina Central University
Winston-Salem	North Carolina School of the Arts Winston-Salem State University
Pembroke	Pembroke State University
Asheville	University of North Carolina at Asheville
Wilmington	University of North Carolina at Wilmington
Cullowhee	Western Carolina University

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