1997

Library Tech Notes

The UNLV Libraries Technology Committee

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CAMILLE'S COMMENTS

A third group of library staff have recently been set up with Lotus Organizer. This latest group included staff who teach in the classrooms, members of Cabinet, and staff in Government Publications and Interlibrary Loan. Jason Vaughan recently held two sessions on cc:Mail for Windows and Lotus Organizer and will conduct them again when we set up the next round of users. Lotus Organizer has a calendar manager feature that can be used as an appointment book and group scheduler. Contact Jason for copies of his handouts if you weren't able to attend the training session. We have set up "calendars" for the Library Conference Room, Classrooms 106 and 107, and conference room J02-105. To reserve the classrooms or room 105, contact Colleen Freeman, Kay Tuma, or Vicki Nozero; for reserving the Library Conference Room, contact Deanna. Lotus Organizer users are able to view the calendars for these rooms to check availability before contacting the appropriate party.

Section/Unit Heads interested in having Lotus Organizer accounts set up for their staff should let me know. Typically we have set up accounts for groups of 10-15 each time, so the next round could include several Sections/Units. Orders were placed last month for three new products from Innovative Interfaces, Inc. These "products" are actually new software functions for our INNOPAC system. The INNOPAC Module Coordinators, Jason, and I met to review products currently available as well as several new products introduced with Release 11. We recommended four new products to then Dean Myoung-ja Lee Kwon as well as re-indexing of the INNOPAC database. Re-indexing will be arranged with Innovative Interfaces for later in the year once we have finalized what re-indexing is needed. (Laralee Nelson is chairing a task force on re-indexing the database.) The three new products ordered are: Electronic claiming of serials, additional load profiles to interface with Yankee Book Peddler's GOBI system, and Web access management software. Electronic claiming of serials will allow us to transmit claims for missing issues of periodicals electronically to our primary vendor (in this case EBSCO). This will enable us to quickly notify the vendor as we discover missing issues which will increase our ability to get these issues while they are still available from the publisher. Electronic claiming will also reduce the labor-intensive aspect of printing claims and preparing them for mailing, and it will reduce postage costs.

Two additional load profiles were purchased that will allow Acquisitions staff to search for book titles accessible via Yankee Book Peddler's GOBI system (a Web-based online ordering system) and then download these titles into INNOPAC creating order and brief bibliographic records. Once the records are created, order record information is transmitted back to the GOBI system. The order is filled and invoice/billing information is then downloaded into INNOPAC overwriting this information onto the appropriate order records. Acquisitions staff will not need to re-key order information into INNOPAC for titles ordered from GOBI which will result in a tremendous time savings. The third product is the Web access management software released this fall. This software will allow us to provide access to our Web-based resources for patrons who are connecting to these resources from off-campus using an Internet service provider or some other system that is not part of the campus' domain of IP addresses. Patrons will be prompted for identification (such as a name and barcode number). The INNOPAC system will check this information against the patron database, verify that the patron is a valid user (i.e. a UNLV student, faculty, or staff person) and will then "serve up" the appropriate Web page for the resource. These resources would be licensed Web-based products like the indexes available from SilverPlatter, Information Access Company (IAC), etc. Kathy Rothermel and Marilyn Vent have already begun discussions with Innovative Interfaces, Inc. so that the electronic claiming and load profiles for GOBI will be installed based on our needs and specifications. The Web access management software will be installed after we get Release 11 (expected in November).

Camille Clark Wallin
Murmurings From a Listserv Owner

Owning and moderating a listserv has been one of the most enjoyable activities in my professional career. On one hand, you get to "talk" with just about everybody interested in issues that typically interest you. You also get the hassles of dealing with errors, goofiness and flames. This part is what I really enjoy. Not the flames (when someone writes something that could be inflammatory about an issue that is important to another subscriber), but the goofiness. This is a term that the other GOVDOC-L moderators and I use to describe some of the contests we get in with subscribers about the content of a message. Most of the goofiness comes from people who don't realize that they just made a personal response to a message in a potentially public way. Before I ramble on, I should explain what a listserv is, for those of you out there who may not know. A listserv is a software program installed on a server for managing e-mail discussion lists. When someone sends a message to a certain discussion list on the listserv, it is broadcast to the individual e-mail accounts of all the list's subscribers.

Replies are also broadcast in turn, giving the exchange the flavor of a public discussion. We use the term "listserv" loosely to mean "discussion list," though many separate discussion lists are normally managed from a single listserv. I currently own and moderate three listservs, the most lively and active of which is GOVDOC-L. GOVDOC-L is one of the oldest listservs in libraryland. It was originally conceived in 1976, but went national in 1989. I joined the team of moderators in 1990 and became one of three owners in 1992. The chief owner is at Penn State University, where the list is located. Of the five people on the GOVDOC-L team, all but the chief owner share the moderating duties.

Being a listowner differs from being a moderator mainly in that you may be held liable for the content of discussion. It also involves keeping the software updated, and the list archived. Moderators, on the other hand, oversee subscriptions, requests for information and assistance, and the daily operation of the list. I spend more than a little time as moderator issuing commands for people who are new to the listserv software and haven't got the hang of issuing commands for themselves.

There have been two court cases (of which I am aware) which created the precedent of making listserv owners responsible for content. The most influential was at Kent State when a subscriber sued all the owners and moderators of a library list because they rejected the plaintiff's post, citing the fact that it did not fall within the purview of the list. Since this rule was not included in the User's Guide, the plaintiff won the suit, and the message was sent through.

The owners and moderators of a list work together to insure that the list is credible, reliable and working smoothly. It is common to find the owner and moderator are the same person, especially for small lists. However, the larger the number of subscribers, the more work involved and the need for more help. There are two kinds of moderators: the posting moderator and the errors moderator. I do very little errors moderating. This entails receiving all the error messages from the server when nodes are down, a subscriber's mailbox is full and rejecting posts, or a host of other problems. As a posting moderator, my work is to make certain that the messages distributed to the more than 2000 subscribers of GOVDOC-L are within the guidelines of the list. These guidelines were established by the creator of GOVDOC-L in the late 1970s and were updated in 1992. We work very hard not to change the overall flavor of the list.

Some people classify list moderators as censors, because we have the power (and responsibility) to reject messages that are inappropriate for the list. I know that for GOVDOC-L, we spend a lot of time discussing a questionable post. We look first to make sure the subject is within the parameters of documents librarianship or government information policy. This is the tricky part, because a large number of our subscribers are Congressional staffers or journalists. If a message is deemed too personal or too inflammatory, it is rejected with a polite message explaining the problem. If the subscriber is adamant about posting to the list, we then poll all the moderators. We rarely find ourselves in agreement. If a post is submitted that is completely outside the scope of our list, we try to recommend a more appropriate list and provide that address.

As I mentioned before, working with listservs is a lot of fun. A really active list like GOVDOC-L demands a lot of time, but you don't have to be a computer geek to be involved. If you have any questions that weren't addressed in this article, please drop me a line at quinna@nevada.edu. As you can probably tell, I can talk a lot about listservs—almost as much as government publications.

Aimee
Book Review

Net Guide: Your Complete Guide to the Internet and Online Services by Michael Wolff

Want a handy desk reference of web sites and newsgroups that emphasizes solid descriptive content and is inexpensive? This paperback might fill the bill. Like a kid with a toy catalog at Christmas time, you are drawn into this resource and find yourself making lists of sites with useful information. It's great to be able to browse through site listings online, and keyword searching is a great tool too, but here is another tool that helps you get where you need to go. There is nothing better than having a book in hand that allows you to flip through "organized information" and highlight what you need. Updated information is provided at the YPN site (www.ypn.com/), but do you really want to browse through web page after web page when you can pinpoint the resource you need in a few seconds from your nifty little reference book? This seems like the kind of resource that should on the shelf beside your dictionary and thesaurus. Net Guide is one in a series from Wolff New Media, the publisher of Netbook series, which brings an editorial approach to information on the Internet and online services.


Paulette Nelson

Technology Book List

(HD662.2.G 7623 1997)

(T 58.5.C655 1996)

(NA 2728.1445 1997)

(QA 76.9.C66 L84 1996)

(QA 76.9.U83 R36 1997)

(QA 76.9.C66 R62 1997)

Ready Reference Using The Internet

A nice alphabetical listing of subjects with links. Although this site is designed for school librarians, I've found it very useful in answering questions about specific Internet sites.

http://k12.niu.uchicago.edu/ref.html

ELECTRONIC JOURNALS ON THE WEB.
More are added all the time. Here's a current listing.

http://www.edoc.com/ejournal/

The GABRIEL PROJECT
The objective of the partners participating in the GABRIEL PROJECT is to create the tools that will help universities to apply the model of the European Virtual PhD. Get a glimpse of what's being done with these seminars.

http://orac.sunderland.ac.uk/~usocm/gabriel/gabriel

PreText MAGAZINE
Issue 1 of this new e-journal features The Digital Library. Be sure to read "The Librarian is Dead, Long Live the Librarian."

http://www.pretext.com/

Will El Nino affect our weather this winter? Keep an eye on the weather at STORM97
http://www.storm97.com/
http://www.storm97.com/

THE LIPSTICK LIBRARIAN
Words fail me! Visit this site the next time you're feeling burnt out.

http://www.teleport.com/~petlin/liplib/index.html

Kay Tuma
The PC Mechanic

The Upgrade Decision

Sooner or later, your computer will be obsolete. Although that sounds obvious, those of us who grew up in the days when an appliance might last 15 or 20 years (yes, there really was such a time) have still not gotten used to the idea that our computers, which in some cases cost as much as a compact car did back in the eighties, are now obsolete a few measly years later. The joke about your computer being obsolete before it leaves the store is not really very funny anymore (except to the manufacturers, of course).

Things aren't really as bad as all that, though. The truth of the situation is that your computer is only obsolete when you decide it is. This might mean that it is 1) too slow, 2) doesn't have enough disk space, 3) won't run software that you want to run, or 4) any combination of the above. If you're still happy running DOS programs you bought in 1985 and those programs do everything you want, then your 1982 IBM PC isn't obsolete at all.

For most of us, though, sooner or later we become dissatisfied with what that expensive box on our desk can do. The solution, of course, is to "upgrade." Meaning exactly what, though? Let's ignore for a moment the option of simply buying a brand new machine, and look at the alternatives.

"My computer is too slow." There are two solutions to this problem. You can speed up the processor or add memory. To speed up the processor, you can either replace the chip or the motherboard. This is not quite as simple as it sounds. Your PC was designed with a specific processor (also known as the CPU; examples are the 386, 486, and Pentium chips) in mind, and simply plugging in a new processor generally won't work because the other chips in your computer won't be compatible with it. The most drastic solution is to replace the entire circuit board (known as the "motherboard") in your PC, chips and all. This isn't quite as expensive as it sounds; a good chunk of your PC's price is tied up in the power supply, floppy and hard disk drives, case, etc. and you can reuse all these. In addition, you can usually reuse the memory chips on your old motherboard. The major expense is your time; while replacing a motherboard is not exactly kitchen table brain surgery, it helps to know what you're doing. Fortunately, starting with the 486, manufacturers began planning ahead for ways to make money on the "upgrade" market and started designing motherboards which would later accept a faster chip, often called an Overdrive chip. However, be sure you have the correct upgrade chip for your machine, as they aren't interchangeable. Actually, the biggest speed improvement you can make on most PCs, especially if you're running Microsoft Windows and have 8 or less megabytes of memory to start with, is to add more memory. This used to be very expensive (as high as $1000 per megabyte at one time) but is now much cheaper. Although it might not seem like the amount of memory available should have any effect on speed, it does because it reduces the amount of swapping between memory and your hard drive that your computer has to do. A hard drive, no matter how fast, is typically 1000 times slower than a memory chip.

"I don't have enough disk space." Before you buy a new PC, look at adding a bigger hard drive to your existing PC; you can now buy one with over 2 billion bytes of storage (compared to the 40 million that PCs came with as recently as 1990 or so) for under $300. If you don't want to go through the mild trauma of installing it yourself, many computer stores will do it for you (for a small fee, of course). Another alternative is "removable storage" (see "The 100 Megabyte Floppy Disk" from the November 1995 TechNotes, for example) which in effect allows you to swap in spare disks of 100-1000 megabytes as you need them. Some of these are extremely easy to install (typically you plug them in between your printer and your computer's printer port, run some software so your PC will recognize them, and you're ready to go). Just be sure the computer store convenient to you stocks the disks; some brands are much easier to find than others.

"My old PC won't run the new software I want to run." Why not? If it's because the software needs more memory or disk space, you may just need to upgrade those as described above. In addition, some software lists a particular chip as a requirement (such as "Pentium 75 or higher"). In some cases, you may find that the manufacturer is simply trying to avoid dissatisfied customers who find the software runs unacceptably slowly for them; if you don't mind the speed penalty, you may get along just fine. However, if you're going to have to upgrade the memory, the hard disk, and the motherboard, look at the other alternative: a new PC. They're far cheaper now than you might expect.

Lamont Downs
How to Download a List From INNOPAC Using Serving FTP

Before downloading a list, you need to have the IP address of the machine you are using for the download, Serving FTP software (While in Program Manager look for a group called Library Network. An icon for Serving FTP should be there), the login name and password installed along with Serving FTP. If you have downloaded lists before, it is the same ID and password. After a list has been run, sorted etc., choose a print option. Depending on how you processed the list either: S > START print OR P > PRINT all of the data in the review file records (you will be prompted to answer 2 formatting questions).

At the next menu select 3 > File save. You will be prompted to enter a file name (8 characters or less). After the filename is entered, the cursor will sit blinking. Don’t touch anything. Let it blink (this may take a while if you want records from the end of a long file). The file will start streaming down the screen. (If you change your mind at this point and want to forget about downloading the file, type the letter 's' to stop.) The streaming may pause then resume, so wait until it is all done. After the file has been saved, you will automatically be returned to the ----LIST RECORDS---- screen. Select Q > QUIT. You will be back at the numbered list of slots. Type Q for quit. At the *** MANAGEMENT INFORMATION *** menu, Select T > Send records out of INNOPAC via FTP.

At this point, turn on the Serving FTP software. Change to the Program Manager window, look for the Library Network group, double click on the group and double click on the Serving FTP icon. That is all that is needed to activate the software so your computer can receive the file. Go back to the INNOPAC window. At the ‘Transfer files using FTP’ screen, there is a list of files. All of them have a .p extension which is automatically added by INNOPAC. The file you just saved should be there with the .p extension. Select F > FTP a print file to another system. You will be prompted to: Enter name of file. Type in the name of the file without the .p extension. The INNOPAC FILE TRANSFER PROGRAM screen will appear. Sending a file to a remote machine: Remote machine ID: <Type your computer’s IP address><Enter> Login name: <Type in your login name><Enter> Password: <Type in your password><Enter> Name of file on remote machine: <Type in a file name>. If you haven’t started the Serving FTP software yet, do so now or the file will not be transferred. After typing in the filename, press <Enter>. The file will start downloading.

When the file has finished downloading, ‘Transfer completed’ will appear on the screen along with ‘Press <SPACE> to continue’. After you press the spacebar, ‘Press <SPACE> to continue’ will appear again at the bottom of the screen. This takes you back to the ‘Transfer files’ screen. At this point, the file should be in the download directory on your computer.

You can bring it up in a word processor to make sure everything is there. Once the file has been downloaded, it should be removed from the list on the ‘Transfer files using FTP’ screen. Up to 15 files can be stored there at any one time so don’t forget to delete or others won’t have space to download their files. To delete: Select <R> REMOVE files. Enter the number of your file at the prompt. You will be asked to confirm: Remove file _______p? (y/n) Type ‘y’ to delete the file. Q > QUIT Quit INNOPAC. Close Serving FTP. The End

Michaelyn Haslam

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Library TechNotes is a monthly publication of the UNLV Libraries, BOX 457001, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Las Vegas NV 89154-7001

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